http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/

Research Commons at the University of Waikato

Copyright Statement:

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

The thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author’s right to be identified as the author of the thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author’s permission before publishing any material from the thesis.
I Muri i Te Āraí: Ko Ngā Mōrehu Ka Toe:  
Healing Processes in  
Tangihanga for Wāhine Māori.

A thesis  
submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree  
of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Māori Studies and Psychology  
at  
The University of Waikato  
by  
Keriata Paterson  

2015
Abstract

I Muri i Te Ārai: Ko Nga Mōrehu Ka Toe: Healing Processes Inherent in Tangihanga for Wāhine Māori.

This study involved a qualitative examination of the healing elements of tangihanga as described by eight female Māori respondents whose loss was not spousal but was dearly loved. Few substantive contemporary works on the subject of tangihanga experiences and processes existed (Nikora & Te Awekōtuku, 2013).

To contextualise, western society’s cultural death practices were explored from an interdisciplinary perspective. Literature on death and bereavement, the western contemporary funeral industry, the medicalisation of death, western gender roles in death and bereavement, hygiene and contamination issues, ethnicity and cross cultural studies were discussed. These provided an international background against which this study made explicit the cultural differences of death practice and grief in tangihanga for Māori.

Cultural issues for Māori were then discussed in terms of grief, literature on tangihanga, research about Māori women, women and death, issues for Māori women researching Māori women, and where colonization placed Māori women in society. I then described the traditional procedural processes which were sequentially carried out upon the death of a person. I noted the existence of modern variations in death practice, particularly among urban-based Māori. The diverse situations in which we as modern Māori have found ourselves were discussed with some historical context, however it was noted that despite change and diversity, we continued to share many experiences. The perpetuation of tangihanga has been important to the resilience and survival of Māori culture.

Preparation for field work was outlined, including interview development and recruitment of respondents. The interview experiences, analysis of information provided, the development of theory and identifying themes were described. The rationale for exploring the backgrounds of the respondents in terms of whānau upbringing, cultural values, and cultural identification over time were discussed. Specific tangihanga were explored in depth as case studies, with analysis and
discussion throughout each korero. Key themes in the respondents’ accounts were identified, of the grief and healing processes, examining culturally defined gender contributors to recovery. Social structures and support, ritual, spiritual beliefs and grief practices were described. Aspects of modern life or even tradition which hindered the healing process were identified, as was the impact of grief on the life respondents lead subsequently.

The findings of the research were next discussed. The narratives supported existing literature that the tangihanga was an effective forum for sharing and expression of grief, honouring and farewelling the deceased, and ensuring that members of whānau pani were supported, protected and nurtured by others. Attending tangihanga from childhood allowed respondents to enjoy a sense of belonging and comfort. Two respondents whose childhoods had featured acculturation, felt confusion about their roles and expectations but overcame these feelings when they later learned more about their culture. By adulthood each of the respondents was in a position to control and influence choices made for the tangihanga, thus enabling them to grieve fully.

In the final discussion my theoretical model was presented, limitations of the research discussed, and future research recommendations made.
Acknowledgements

The Tangi Research Programme: Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora, Professor Ngāhuia Te Awekōtuku, you offered me a place in the study at a time when I really needed and appreciated it. You both provided me with an extended period of inspired academic and cultural supervision. Tēnā korua. Dr Neville Robertson, who came in to assist with supervision in the latter phases, tēnā koe Neville.

The programme was funded by Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, the Marsden Fund of New Zealand and the Health Research Council of New Zealand. Other financial support was given to me by The Māori Excellence Awards from the SMPD, MPRU, a University Fees Scholarship, and the Hauraki Iwi Trust Board Fisheries Scholarships.

Ihaka (Chas) Te Whetu, thanks for giving me the kupu Māori for the title. My little group of fellow Māori PhD friends, you know who you are. Saburo Omura, thank you for your friendship and technical advice. My Tamaatērā whanaunga, thanks for the support and for your rising anxiety about my finishing this thesis. Tēnā koutou. To my best friend Jos – I owe you big time. Thanks for everything and my gratitude to you will never be forgotten.

Finally, and most importantly, to the participants – who were generous and kind in sharing stories of their most painful times, their most healing times, and all that happened between. I am so grateful for your sharing. Your contribution to understanding of tangihanga is unique to you, and valuable to us all.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my Grandparents:
Naki Makareta (Royal) and Matia Parkes Swainson
And
Esme Constance and Albert Victor Paterson
And to my parents:
Ataneta Keriata and William Alexander Paterson
Personal Statement

My name is Keriata Paterson. I am a mature woman and identify as Māori. My maternal grandfather, Matia Parkes Swainson, was of Ngāti Toa Rangatira and Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga whakapapa. My maternal grandmother Naki Makareta Swainson (nee Royal), was of Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga and Ngāti Tamatearā (Hauraki) whakapapa. On my father’s side my descent is Scottish-Australian, Dad’s grandfather being a true “hellfire and brimstone” Scottish Presbyterian Minister, who served at St Andrews Presbyterian Church, Parramatta in Sydney, for forty years. I know little about my great grandmother, other than that as the wife of a Scottish Presbyterian minister, their lives were deliberately austere. Both my Scottish Australian Grandfather and my Māori Grandfather were accountants. I joke that they used all the mathematical genes for a couple of generations to come.

Education was highly valued by both sides of my entire family. My mother Ataneta qualified as a Physiotherapist at a time when there were few if any other Māori in that field, and my Grandmother Naki qualified as a dental Nurse even earlier which must have been a very lonely road. My grandfather Matia was the head accountant of the Union Steamship Company and as such my Grandparents at times travelled internationally, after the war during which my grandfather fought in the Māori Battalion while my Nanny Naki supported the family. Naki was a founding member of the Māori Womens’ Welfare League with her sister in law, the wife of Rangi Royal, and the family were active members of Ngāti Pōneke as they lived in Eastbourne, Wellington at a time when this was an exciting and stimulating time for Māori leaders and academics.

I have spent much of my life attempting to reconcile within myself the vast differences between my parents’ cultures, particularly when my experience was that my mother relinquished her culture for that enjoyed as the mother of four children, and wife of my father, together a socially active couple in Hamilton where my father was a General Practitioner for many years.
My own identity as a child sent to Pākehā schools which had no Kaupapa Māori element and no Reo was taught (the fifties and sixties), was confusing. I was bereft of affirming experiences of being Māori and yet did experience racism. As such I was forced to work very hard at finding, feeling, grieving and healing my Māori identity, which took many years.

My university studies were always in the direction of facing this challenge and trying to learn about my people and my culture. Thus my undergraduate degree was a Psychology Major with a first supporting subject of Māori Studies. My Masters thesis “Wāhine Maia me te Ngāwari Hoki: Māori women at Periodic Detention in Kirikiriroa, their life difficulties and the system”, was an in depth examination of the lives of Māori women embroiled in recidivist offending, conviction and sentencing. My participants’ many social disadvantages were viewed in a context of wonderful personal resilience and the womens’ support of each other.

I regret not publishing papers at the time I completed my Master's thesis, as I was focused on training and becoming a Clinical Psychologist, and I was under obligation to a Corrections Psychological Services Bursary, to carry on this path. I should perhaps have pursued a PHD while still comfortable in the university system, which is much harder to return to as a more mature student. Apart from the altruistic motivation of “helping people”, throughout my clinical training and career I brought, along with my then few Māori colleagues, a bi-cultural focus to a predominantly mono-cultural field. This was a big motivator for the twelve years I worked as a clinician.

When my mother passed away I experienced prolonged and deep grief while still working as a clinical psychologist. Through this experience I could not help but feel a deep empathy for the grief experienced by others who were bereaved.

At this late stage in my working life I was offered an opportunity to work towards achieving a PhD under the auspices of the Tangihanga Research Project, by Professor Ngāhuia Te Awekotuku and Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora. I have learned much and have shared the painful experiences with my participants which we all endure in some way, in losing our loved ones.
Notes on Language or Terminology

In this study, the country in which the study is based will alternatively be referred to as Aotearoa, the Māori name (literally “the land of the long white cloud”), or New Zealand, the name given by the Western discoverers. In many cases the Māori terminology for Māori processes will be used, and for first use, the English translation will be in brackets. There is also a glossary of Māori words used in the thesis, which is Appendix I.

For interest, and to place a cultural perspective, the word Māori is defined in Williams’ (1985, 7th Edition) Dictionary of the Māori language as firstly “normal, usual, ordinary”; secondly “Native, or belonging to New Zealand”; thirdly “Person of the native race, New Zealand”; and fourthly, “freely, without restraint, without ceremony, without object”. The indigenous people of Aotearoa would identify themselves tribally. Since non-Māori moved to this country, the word Māori has come to be understood as “the indigenous people of New Zealand”. This meaning has so widely been used that it is common terminology in everyday use and all main-stream media.

The term “Pākehā” used by Māori for Non-Māori, is described in Williams’ (1985 7th Edition) Dictionary of the Māori language as firstly, a person of predominantly European descent; secondly, foreign; thirdly, a silver eel, and fourthly, a flea. Partly due to beliefs that the term is derogatory, and partly because some people do not wish to be defined by other peoples, some non-Māori believe it is offensive to be so defined. However as it is a commonly used descriptor, in this thesis I will utilise the term Pākehā with the assurance that no offence is intended. Non-Māori New Zealanders at times prefer to be called “New Zealanders” or “Kiwis” (after our prized indigenous flightless bird).

There was an unfortunate period in not so distant history whereby in Aotearoa, State practices reflected racist beliefs about “levels of” blood as a signifier of racial purity. Prior to 1974 to be deemed Māori was to have at least fifty percent “Māori blood” (Te Hiwi, 2007, in Levy, Nikora, Masters-Awatere, Rua & Waitoki, (Eds), 2008). I myself recall times when I was asked to define myself in terms of blood portions when at school while being “set up” for a racist joke by another student.
It must be said that in the past I have heard many Māori also refer to themselves with the above terms, in what I would suggest was internalised racism. In recent times there has been a great resurgence of pride, understanding, learning and identification in being Māori. Simultaneous with the popular culture of the unacceptability of overt racism, more Māori feel safe to self-identify in terms of their stance on issues of everyday politics.

In this thesis, for the New Zealand context, the term “Western” refers predominantly to those who brought their culture and laws from Britain, the main colonising country, or what was considered by new immigrants as “the Mother Country”, England. This continued for several generations. Only a few years ago (when I was a child) some New Zealand born non-Māori would call themselves English (or Irish or Scottish). Identification with England and the British Monarchy was such that New Zealand was very much seen by Pākehā New Zealanders as still a British colony, and that Britain was “home”. Photographs of the Monarch took pride of place in many “sitting rooms”, and reproductions as seen on cake tins and other paraphernalia were prized (and still are by some). Even on 16 April, 2014 as the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge left New Zealand with the infant Prince George, the public and the media have placed a great sense of occasion and reason for celebration on the Royal visit.
# Table of Contents

Abstract i
Acknowledgements iii
Dedication iii
Personal Statement v
Notes on Language or Terminology vii
Table of Contents ix

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION
Thanatology: The Study of Death 1
Grief 9

## CHAPTER TWO: TANGIHANGA AND WĀHINE MĀORI 23

## CHAPTER THREE: TANGIHANGA PROCESSES 33

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE WIDER CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH 49
Māori Diversity and Commonalities 49
The Perpetuation of Tangihanga 50
Māori Urbanisation 50
Christianity 52
The reciprocation of influence 53
Employment pressures 54
General Public misperceptions of Tangihanga 55

## CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY AND METHOD 57
Research Objectives and Methodology 57
Methodology 58
Self-Reflection and Reflexivity 62
Interview development 76
Identifying and recruiting Respondents: 80
Information Analysis and Theory Development 84

## CHAPTER SIX: INTRODUCING THE PARTICIPANTS 85
Summary of demographic characteristics 89

## CHAPTER SEVEN: ANGELA 97
Background 97
A Specific Tangi: The death of Mana 101
What did the Tangihanga contribute to Angela’s Grief Resolution? 108
Reflexive considerations about this interview and Case Study: 109

CHAPTER EIGHT: HANA 111
  Background 111
  A Specific Tangi: Hana’s Daughter Mel 112
  What did the Tangihanga contribute to Hana’s Grief Resolution? 118
  Reflexive considerations about this interview and Case Study: 119

CHAPTER NINE: HUIARANGI 121
  Background 121
  A Specific Tangi: Dad passes away 131
  What did the Tangihanga contribute to Huiarangi’s Grief Resolution? 138
  Reflexive considerations about this interview and Case Study: 138

CHAPTER TEN: KĀRENA 141
  Background 141
  A Specific Tangi: Kārena’s Mother 145
  What did the Tangihanga contribute to Kārena’s Grief Resolution? 148
  Reflexive considerations about this interview and Case Study: 150

CHAPTER ELEVEN: KATRINA 153
  Background 153
  A Specific Tangi: Katrina’s mother 159
  What did the Tangihanga contribute to Katrina’s Grief Resolution? (Mother’s Tangi) 162
  A Specific Tangi: Katrina’s Father 163
  What did the Tangihanga contribute to Katrina’s Grief Resolution? (Father’s Tangi) 165
  Reflexive considerations about this interview and Case Study: 166

CHAPTER TWELVE: MEREANA 167
  Background 167
  A Specific Tangi: Mereana’s Mother 170
  What did the Tangihanga contribute to Mereana’s Grief Resolution (Mother’s Tangi) 176
  A Specific Tangi: Mereana’s Father 178
  What did the Tangihanga contribute to Kārena’s Grief Resolution? (Father’s Tangi) 188
  Reflexive considerations about this interview and Case Study: 189

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: NGĀWARI 191
  Background 191
  A Specific Tangi: Ngāwari’s father 196
  What did the Tangihanga contribute to Ngāwari’s Grief Resolution? 211
  Reflexive considerations about this interview and Case Study: 212

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: TONI 215
xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Thanatology: The Study of Death
This first chapter covered issues relevant to the study of Death, Death Ritual, Bereavement and Grief. These have long been the subject of scholarly investigation from an interdisciplinary, international perspective, however the focus of this chapter was first on exploring these subjects in the context of majority western society, as they have influenced Pākehā society in Aotearoa (New Zealand).

Death and Social influences on Pākehā Culture in Aotearoa
In Aotearoa, initially settlers from the British Isles had to prepare and bury their own deceased, with no undertaker's services available. Prior to World War II, home death was still at that time very much the norm for Pākehā, and the dead body was usually kept at home before burial (Hera, 1996). As the Pākehā population grew, builders became more available to make coffins, and undertakers as specialist business began from 1840 in the larger centres (Ninness, 1988: 102). As the predominantly British settlement increased, attitudes and practices from the undertakers and upper classes of Victorian England were transmitted and influenced Aotearoa, modified in some instances by the subculture and religion of the mourners.

In Britain, there was pre-war evidence of increasing resistance to the rigorous death rituals of the nineteenth century (Bourke, 1996). The Anglican Church campaigned for funeral reform in the 1830’s, based upon the inclusion of pagan symbolism (Howarth, 1997). Following this, the National Funeral and Mourning Reform Association, the Church Burial, Funeral and Mourning Reform Association were founded along with the Church of England Funeral Reform Association (Bourke, 1996). Economics, morale, and simplicity were all factors in the social drive towards reform.

Other significant factors have been hypothesised to explain the changes in mourning practice over time. Bourke (1996) argued that nineteenth century death ritual was fundamentally connected with the societal norm of dying at home.
In Aotearoa, although by that time approximately a third of Pākehā deaths occurred in hospitals, it was usual for the dead body to return home. Funerals departed from the residence of the deceased person and their family (Dickey, 1980:30). Following the First World War, changes in Western death ritual were influenced by the images of multitudes of anonymous deaths in battlefields, as well as fear of contamination from the corpses of cholera and typhoid. Cremation was popularised in this context. The increase in popularity of cremation in Britain was interpreted as an avoidance of decay (Davies, 1996).

Although the history of post-contact funeral practices was initially influenced largely by the British funeral industry, after the Second World War greater influence was taken from the United States of America. The American “death industry” popularised the viewing of the embalmed corpse, which was similarly seen as a denial of deterioration (Davies, 1996).

*Celtic Influences*

The Irish settlers brought their own death culture to Aotearoa. They traditionally believed that when a person died they were moving on to a better one in the afterlife and that this was a cause to celebrate. Wakes were traditionally held in the home of the deceased or at the home of a close relative, thus being known as the wake house. A room would be prepared for the deceased, once the parlor, but more often these days a bedroom is used (Delaney, 1973; O'Suilleabhain, 1976).

After death a window was opened to allow the spirit of the deceased to leave the house, with a clear path always kept. After two hours the window would be closed to prevent the spirit from re-entering. The body would be washed and dressed and ‘laid out’, traditionally in white. Male deceased would have been freshly shaved. A rosary would be wrapped around the hands and a cross placed around the neck depending on the religion of the deceased. Candles remained lit at the head and foot of the coffin while the deceased was still present in the house. Family members or close friends would take turns staying with the deceased at all times. All clocks in the house would be stopped at the time the person died and all mirrors covered or turned to face the wall as a mark of respect. Curtains would remain closed ((Delaney, 1973; O'Suilleabhain, 1976).
In earlier times ‘keening’ would take place, when the women family members would cry and wail over the deceased. However this has become less practiced. Traditional wakes have not been consistently solemn. Memories and funny stories about the deceased would be shared by friends and family. Refreshments would always be present, often including alcohol in spite of the churches’ efforts to prevent this. Community traditionally contributed food to wake houses, which tended to have a constant stream of visitors ((Delaney, 1973; O'Suilleabhain, 1976).

On entering the wake house visitors would be met by a close family member and after offering their condolences they would be taken into the room where the deceased is. They would go to the coffin and stand for a few minutes paying their respects or saying a prayer. Then they would be taken into the other room and offered refreshments ((Delaney, 1973; O'Suilleabhain, 1976).

Depending on the religion of the deceased’s house prayers were said twice a day with everyone in the house present to say the responses. A special rosary for the dead was traditionally said around midnight before the visitors left ((Delaney, 1973; O'Suilleabhain, 1976).

*The Funeral Procession*

Wakes could last for a few days to allow people to come from afar to pay their respects. The wake would end when the body was taken out of the house for the last time and moved to the local Church. On the day of the funeral the coffin was carried by 6 males, usually family or very close friends. A Hearse lead the procession to the Church with family & friends following behind the males carrying the coffin ((Delaney, 1973; O'Suilleabhain, 1976).

The funeral mass was usually in duration of 45 minutes with priest and loved ones speaking about achievement made by the departed. Again, the coffin was carried by family & friends to the cemetery. If the procession was to pass the house of the departed it would stop as a mark of respect. People not part of the funeral ceremony would allow the procession to pass ahead as a sign of respect for the deceased ((Delaney, 1973; O'Suilleabhain, 1976).
Embalming emerged as a practice in Aotearoa around the 1940’s (Ninness, 1989:86). Early accounts emphasised the importance of ameliorating death and reducing the effects of grief in survivors. One article, for example, stipulated that it was the ‘instability’ of dead human tissue that resulted in the retention of ‘many pagan customs’, and that the adoption of embalming would allow for a modernisation and rationalisation of funerary ritual (NZFD March 1953: 71).

Embalming was offered by only a small number of urban funeral directors. Before the second half of the century and even in the 1960s it was often reserved for bodies which required transportation between towns and cities in New Zealand (Morris 1968: 28). Funeral practitioners initially promoted embalming as an important public health measure that prevented ‘obnoxious odours’ and ‘gases’, and allowed bodies to be presented in a ‘wholesome’ manner (NZFD June 1940: 1; NZFD March 1943: 84). For the funeral industry, the eradication of pollution, smell, and germs is paramount to a successful viewing (Walter, 2004). The significance of sanitation, preservation, and cosmetic effect, as well as the benefits derived from the creation of a ‘memory picture’ were increasingly considered (NZFD December 1964: 53).

Hygiene, fear of contamination
Whereas recent science has denied a real risk of contagion from dead bodies killed by trauma, chronic infectious diseases such as hepatitis B and hepatitis C, HIV, enteric intestinal pathogens, tuberculosis, and cholera would require care in dealing with the cadaver. In New Zealand there is no legal requirement for bodies to be embalmed, and nothing preventing any of the criteria and practices of natural burials. Dead bodies are said not to pose any special or particular health risk in the first five days after death provided they are adequately refrigerated and there is no evidence of any significant ante-mortem infection (Delahunt, Dempster and Browett, 2003).

Any lay anxiety that cadavers may be contaminating has more recently been contested in New Zealand by practitioners such as the owner/operator of “Living Legacy” based in Nelson, and “Natural Burial” in Wellington. Aligning themselves with the ‘green movement’ they portray death as natural and non-polluting (Selket, 2010). This challenge to the proponents of the idea of death contagion in the funeral
industry was supported in a literature review by Morgan (2004), who concluded that cadavers present a very small risk to the public.

In Western society, the funeral industry began to be perceived as virtually essential in its role of handling the dead. This was for two reasons. In the larger part of the European-descended population and culture, the basic premise of the need for specialists to prepare the dead for viewing and ceremony, was the conception of dead bodies as something unpleasant and not to be dealt with by ordinary people. Language in written and verbal communication with the bereaved was utilised to apparently necessitate embalming practices as part of the preparation of the body (Selket, 2010).

The funeral industry took on the role of provision of coffins and “viewing” space, notification to the public in terms of death notices, assisting in choice of many elements of post-death ritual and burial. In addition the funeral industry offered itself as an indispensable service, offering support, sympathy and other forms of guidance to bereaved families. Recently the diminishing role of religion in Aotearoa has resulted in modification of the funeral industry. Increasing secularism and use of celebrants instead of clergy, and the personalisation of services by the bereaved, have challenged the traditional relationships between funeral directors and religious ministries (Selket, 2010).

In the current environment, the funeral industry has adapted to both religious and secular influences, and has also begun to acknowledge and accommodate environmental issues, pagan-based methods, and the Māori and Pacific world view.

The funeral industry and written science have specialist terminology for periods where the deceased is separated from the living. This terminology refers to the period between preparation of the body and public viewing, as liminality (Selket, 2010).

For Pakeha in Aotearoa, the modern funeral industry encouraged mourners to experience the body visually and in close proximity, to assist mourners to fully acknowledge death and in turn engage with the deceased (Selket, 2010). There have been progressive elements in Pakeha society however where much more personalised ceremonies have taken place with “Celebrants” or friends and family
conducting the mourning rituals, contributing their own belief systems and ways of grieving and demonstrating their love to the deceased. Where the bereaved have previously needed assistance and direction from Funeral Directors, they are now more commonly taking their own power to memorialise their loved ones.

Funeral Director Premises

The utilisation of funeral director premises became increasingly important in the twentieth century. By 1910, the dead were increasingly stored at undertakers’ premises before burial, particularly if the person had died in an institution. Removing the body to funeral director premises after death was regarded as efficient and sanitary. Taking the body home, in contrast, was portrayed as inconvenient, ‘old-fashioned’, and a threat to the mental well-being of the bereaved (New Zealand Funeral Director (NZFD) December 1955: 136). This was particularly important with the increasing practice of embalming, where relatives of the deceased were ‘well advised’ to allow funeral directors to remove the deceased to the ‘specially equipped preparation theatre at the funeral director’s establishment’ (NZFD September 1960: 27).

A few undertakers modified their facilities to include small chapels that could be used for funeral services but until the 1970s most firms continued to use local churches. Many families, particularly those without church affiliation, were finding it increasingly difficult to find an ‘appropriate’ venue for the funeral and an individual to conduct the service. A declining number of New Zealanders belonged to the four main Christian denominations and an increasing number professed to have ‘no religion’. City councils around the country offered a partial solution by building crematoria which included alternative funeral establishments. By 1967 one third of all funerals were held in crematorium chapels (Morris 1968: 28), which also eliminated the need for a cortege and resulted in an increased number of single service funerals, where the committal was included in the service.

These funerals were a sign of increasingly simplified and functional funerary rites, which in turn reflected rationalised approaches to death. These changes were of increasing concern to funeral directors who felt that councils were ‘dictating the format of funerals’ (The Funeral Directors of New Zealand, 1997), and that with
increased crematoria involvement, there would be no need for a funeral director. A number of funeral directors began building multi-purpose funeral premises. These new funeral home chapels could be used for religious or non-religious funerals and were particularly well adapted to the emerging life-centred funeral conducted by funeral celebrants. Most of the new premises also included catering facilities for refreshments after the service. Participants in the present study felt that this development reflected increasing privatisation and the modern desire for ‘one-stop-shopping’.

**Cremation**

Cremation has become a central component of the New Zealand funeral industry and is closely correlated with the contemporary focus on personalised post-mortem practices. Funeral reform movements in the nineteenth century promoted cremation as a sanitary, cost effective, and aesthetically satisfying form of disposal. Cremation was described as a scientific process that eliminated deadly diseases, utilised valuable land more effectively, and was generally cheaper than burial. Cremation was also promoted as precluding the possibility of being buried alive, and the ‘discomfort’ associated with graveyard services (Dunedin Cremation Society 1903). The first crematorium in New Zealand was erected in Karori, Wellington, in 1909 but cremation was slow to gain widespread public acceptance. It was not until the 1950s and 1960s that the rate of cremation increased significantly, accounting for approximately sixty percent of disposals by 1970 (Ninness 1990).

In the 1960s, municipal crematoria began to build funeral chapels (*NZFD* June 1961: 1). Some funeral directors realised the potential for cremation authorities to integrate vertically and include funeral directing services. A significant number of funeral directors during the 1960s and 1970s were also concerned by the time restrictions imposed by crematoria and the subsequent abbreviation of funeral ceremonies. As a result a number of funeral directors constructed multi-facility funeral venues in the 1980’s which included funeral chapels and reception lounges for refreshments after the funeral service. Some funeral directors also installed their own cremator units during this period and began offering a wider range of disposal services.
The disposal of ashes was initially considered by some funeral directors to prolong grief (*NZFD* March 1977: 6–7), but monumental masons and funeral directors began to offer more personalised memorial options that allowed greater mourner involvement. Currently ashes can be scattered by crematoria staff or funeral directors, deposited in columbaria, or buried in cemetery ash plots with plaques or headstones. Alternatively, cremated remains can be taken by family members and buried or scattered in locations with personal significance. Burial and personal placement of ashes have superseded institutional scattering in the last two decades and some funeral directors and celebrants provide ceremonies for this final treatment. (Sites: New Series · Vol 4 No 1 · 2007)

Secular Funeral Celebrants

Funeral directors emphasised that the emergence of secular celebrants marked a significant shift in the provision of funeral services in New Zealand. Funeral celebrants represented a New Zealand response to a changing societal situation. During the last two decades celebrants promoting life-centred funerals have become a fundamental feature of personalised funeral practices. Although there is a regional variation in the availability and utilisation of celebrants, (Sites: New Series · Vol 4 No 1 ·) conducted between 40 to 70 percent of all funerals in urban areas.

Marian Barnes pioneered this development in New Zealand in the late 1970s. Barnes believed that funerals focused exclusively on religious interpretations of death and that these interpretations were often incongruous with the life and personality of the deceased. Celebrant funerals did not specifically challenge religious beliefs, but provided an alternative for the increasing number of non-church-going individuals (Barnes 1991).

Celebrants are usually lay-people with no formal, institutionalised role, and many promote themselves as ritual specialists, fulfilling the sociological and psychological needs of an increasingly secular society (Schafer 1998). The life-centred ceremonies conducted by these individuals attempt to provide meaning at the death of a particular individual, as well as legitimisation for this life in terms of secular values. Some of the larger funeral firms around New Zealand currently employ their own specialised funeral celebrants, while funeral directors
occasionally function as funeral celebrants in a few of the establishments surveyed in this study.

**Grief**

Grief is the emotional response to the experience of loss (Stroebe, Stroebe and Hansen, 1993; Thompson, 1997). Loss and grief are fundamental to human life. Grief can be defined as a natural and normal reaction to loss including its physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioural and spiritual manifestations. Grief is the price we pay for love, and a natural consequence of forming emotional bonds to people (Hall, 2011).

Grief is a common human experience, and the bereaved are believed to be recognizable by the symptoms and behaviours they exhibit (Laurie & Neimeyer, 2008). Often assumed to be universal, the experience and expression of grief may vary widely between individuals and across different cultural groups (Stroebe, Gergen, Gergen, & Stroebe, 1992). No picture of bereavement is descriptive of all individuals within a cultural group. Grief is recognised as a socially constructed entity. Therefore the definition of “good grieving” as that characterised by the open expression of emotion comes under scrutiny (Thompson, 1997).

**Conceptualisations of grief - Stages**

To pay proper homage to the history of the study of grief, Freud’s major theoretical contribution on grief should be noted, his paper “Mourning and Melancholia” (1917/1957). This work profoundly shaped professional grief intervention for nearly half a century. Freud’s ‘grief work’ involved working towards breaking the ties that bound the bereaved to the deceased. Three elements were involved. Freeing the bereaved from bondage (sic) to the deceased; readjustment to new life circumstances without the deceased; and building of new relationships. This separation required acknowledgement and expression of painful emotions. The grief work model stressed the importance of ‘moving on’ as quickly as possible to return to a ‘normal’ level of functioning (Hall, 2011).

Theoretical perspectives conveying grief as universally experienced have resulted in ‘grief resolution’ models and strategies of intervention including developing prescriptions in terms of stages, phases, and tasks and the notions of recovery,
resolution, and treatment (Kübler-Ross, 1970; Bowlby, 1980; Parkes & Weiss, 1983).

Perhaps the best-known model is that postulated by Kübler-Ross in her text “On death and dying” (1969). Based upon her clinical work with the dying, her model was one of anticipatory grief; how an individual responds to a terminal diagnosis. This model involved five stages of grief – shock and denial; anger, resentment and guilt; bargaining; depression; and acceptance. Failure to complete any of these stages predicted a variety of complications.

More than any other work of its time, it brought consideration of the field of death and grief to the fore. Her contention was that to understand and come to terms with death involves recognising its many faces. According to Kübler Ross (1969) any approach for comprehending and acknowledging one’s own death or that of another can only be achieved by bringing death into all public spaces.


Largely due to the influential work of Kübler Ross (1969), some researchers continued to conceptualise and describe grief in terms of ‘stages’. Latterly they have provided cautionary emphases that these do not happen in a neat and orderly manner, but rather in an oscillating and overlapping mixture of emotions and responses. Kübler-Ross’s perspective has subsequently been empirically rejected (Hall, 2011).

Although Stage theories had a certain appeal bringing a sense of order to a complex process and promising 'recovery', they were ultimately seen as incapable of capturing the complexity, diversity and idiosyncratic quality of the grieving
experience. Stage models did not address the multiplicity of physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs experienced by the bereaved, their families and intimate networks. In spite of these shortcomings, the concept of stages of grief has become deeply ingrained in our cultural and professional beliefs about loss (Hall, 2011). They have been routinely taught as part of the curriculum in medical schools and nursing programs for years (Downe-Wamboldt & Tamlyn, 1997).

Whereas early “stage” theories of grief lost popularity because of their rigidity, later models have identified patterns and relations in the grief experience. One of the most influential grief theories is the Dual-Process Model of Stroebe and Schut (1999). This describes grief as a process of moving between two contrasting modes of functioning. In one, the griever engages in emotion-focused coping, and in the other, the griever engages with problem-focused coping and is required to focus on the many external adjustments required by the loss. The model suggests that the focus of coping may differ from one moment to another, from one individual to another, and from one cultural group to another (Hall, 2011).

Worden (2008) postulated grieving as an active process that involving acceptance of the reality of the loss; processing the pain of grief; adjusting internally, externally and spiritually to a world without the deceased; and finding an enduring connection with the deceased in the midst of embarking on a new life. Worden (2008) also identified seven determining factors critical to appreciating the seriousness of the loss. These were: who the deceased was; the nature of attachment to the deceased; the manner of death; historical antecedents; personality variables; social mediators; and concurrent stressors. Death-related factors, such as physical proximity, levels of violence or trauma, or a death where a body is not recovered, all can pose significant challenges for the bereaved (Hall, 2011).

Life’s most grievous losses disconnect us from our sense of who we are and can set in train an effortful process of not only re-learning ourselves but also the world. For many the desire to 'make sense' and 'find meaning' in the wake of loss is central. The reconstruction of meaning has been identified as a critical issue in grief (Neimeyer & Sands, 2011).
Paths of Adjustment to grief

In Grief studies more recently, attention has broadened from a traditional focus on emotional consequences, to one which also considers cognitive, social, cultural and spiritual dimensions. Loss can provide the possibility of life-enhancing 'post-traumatic growth' as one integrates the lessons of loss and resilience (Hall, 2011).

Bonanno, Wortman, Lehman, et al. (2002) found that resilience was the most common pattern and delayed grief reactions were rare. Five distinct trajectories covered the outcome patterns of most participants: common grief or recovery; stable low distress or resilience; depression followed by improvement; chronic grief; and chronic depression.

The death studies literature has consistently reported that the grief experience was affected and influenced by many variables and their interactions. These are the circumstances of the death, the relationship to the deceased, with closer relationships between the deceased and the bereaved usually yielding a potentially more distressing grief experience (Breen & O’Connor, 2007). The characteristics of the bereaved individual, including age, cognitive style, coping strategies, gender, and their spirituality or religion were also identified as factors in the experience of grief.

Previous trauma and current life crises have been identified as influencing factors in coping with grief, and the support given to the bereaved, their perception of how helpful their support has been, were important. Other influencing factors were the availability of death and grief professionals, and the attitudes of the bereaved toward their grief (Breen & O’Connor, 2007).

Due to the many factors affecting the bereaved, many authors agree that to a certain extent, every grief experience is unique (Kellehear, 2001). Contextual factors all affect an individual’s grief experience and, as such, should not be viewed as unimportant outside factors, but instead may be considered as important as the grief experience itself (Breen & O’Connor, 2007). Therefore the concept of grief as “unique” renders incompatible the theory that there can be a “typical” grief
response, which can be worked through as a pattern of stages, (Breen & O’Connor, 2007).

Clinical Views: “Measurement” of Grief

A number of Psychometric measuring scales and inventories have been devised and used over the years by psychologists. These include the ‘Texas Grief Inventory’ (Faschingbauer, Devaul, & Zisook, 1977), the Inventory of Complicated Grief (ICG-R; Prigerson & Jacobs, 2001) which contains 30 questions assessing the severity of grief symptoms on a Likert Scale, and the Continuing Bonds Scale (CBS; Field, Gal-Oz, & Bonanno, 2003) consisting of 11 questions rated using a Likert-type scale to grade the severity of grief ‘symptoms’. These have been criticized for the unnecessarily pathologising, and attempting to measure grief experiences.

Medical and psychological views of grief have resulted in descriptions such as ‘morbid’, ‘unresolved’, ‘abnormal’, ‘complicated’, ‘chronic’, and ‘prolonged’ (The ‘symptomatology’ of grief and the concept of ‘grief management’ (Lindemann, 1944), have judged the prolonged or emotional expression of grief as abnormal.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (Fourth Edition) DSMIV, stated that “Bereavement” should be “diagnosed” when the reaction was an expectable response to the death of a loved one. If the reaction was “excessive” or “more prolonged than…expected”, then Adjustment Disorder should be diagnosed (American Psychiatric Association 1994, pg. 626).

The “syndrome” of Bereavement-related depression was acknowledged as being a “culturally sanctioned response” with bereaved persons and their social milieu accepting depressive symptoms as “normal” whereas “patients with primary affective disorder experience their condition as “a change”. This diagnosis was made within a Western social norm. Social norms were acknowledged as culturally determined but in addition there were many different interpersonal, intra-personal and experiential factors noted which may affect the duration and severity of grief.
The DSMV asserted that grief and major depression may exist simultaneously. The death of a loved one was a common precursor for a major depressive episode, during continued grief (Pies, 2012).

Uncomplicated grief is usually healthy and adaptive, as distinguished from major depression. For example, the new manual (DSMV) notes that bereaved persons with normal grief often experience a mixture of sadness and more pleasant emotions, as they remember the deceased. They experience pain intermittently rather than continuously, as would occur in major depression (Pies, 2012).

Normally a grieving person may hope that things will get better. The difference between grief and clinical depression is unrelenting gloom, despair, and hopelessness. In addition there is impairment of daily functioning (Pies, 2012).

In the United States (and in most countries), grief theory has predominantly described the experiences of the dominant white culture (Laurie & Neimeyer, 2008). Cultural sub-groups have received little attention from grief theorists. In America this is despite researchers having frequently acknowledged that African-American grief has largely been ignored (eg. Rosenblatt & Wallace, 2005a). One comprehensive exception to this trend was a study of African American grief processes (Laurie and Niemeyer, 2008).

Sheldon (1998) noted that up to a third of bereaved people develop a depressive illness. However, the question of what is perceived as acceptable or disordered grieving, are critical judgements that need to be contextualised to have meaning. There are many intra-cultural differences. Dyregrov and Matthiesen (1991) found gender, employment or being at home, made a difference in speed of grief resolution following the death of a child. The inference taken was that the potential for intercultural difference is strong and cultural context is a crucial dimension to attend to in attempting to understand grief.

**Grief over the Death of a child**

Research has indicated that the death of a child is one of the most tragic events that can occur within a family or whānau. The death of a child is usually seen as traumatic and tragic because a child is not expected to die and thus it seems
unnatural and difficult to accept. With a child’s death, future dreams, predicted relationships and experiences are lost and this can affect whānau for the rest of their lives (Clark & McCreanor, 2006).

Contextually, cultural issues affecting bereavement are vitally important feature in attempting to understand grief. As stated above by Breen et al (2007), the previous issues of trauma (such as colonisation and exploitation) may further detrimentally affect indigenous peoples’ experiences of loss and grief at the death of a child (Clark & McCreanor, 2006; Smith, 1999).

_involvement of children in funerals_

In colonies of British origin, including many Pākehā New Zealanders, there has been an avoidance of children’s exposure to death and terminal illness by parents and adults (Granot, 2005). For the same reason of perhaps ill-advised protectiveness of children, adults modeled emotional suppression associated with grief (Granot, 2005; Smith, 1999), preventing funeral attendance by children (Drewery & Bird, 2004). This modeling of withheld emotion resulted in the development of a similar lack of visible demonstration of grief in adult children of those who so taught them (Smith, 1999; Dyregrov & Yule, 2008; Granot, 2005; Jacob, Nikora & Ritchie, 2011).

_Philosophical and Social transformations brought about by Death_

Recent ethnography points to vital connections between the living and dead. The social identity of the living is believed to be deeply affected by the disposition and memorialisation of the dead (Kaufman & Morgan, 2005). Death can be more than the end of an individual’s life, but also an initiation into an afterlife, a rebirth for the deceased. Death can be seen as an event important to the remaining social group, and is often followed by a ceremonial process by which the dead person becomes an ancestor (Hertz, 1960 [1907]).

Recent anthropological studies have focused on analysis of changing relationships between the dead and the living. These include the transformation of the identity of the bereaved, the role of memory in constituting death and the dead, the transformations of the materiality of the corpse and the soul which mark both the
staged constitution of death itself, and the disruption or healing of relationships among the living, and between the living and the dead (Kaufman & Morgan, 2005).

The social construction of bereavement has been highlighted and has demonstrated the diversity of ritual behaviour around the world. A conceptual division has occurred between ethnographic studies of observable behaviour and psychological studies of inner thoughts and feelings (Hockey, 2001). This aspect was seen as an important part of this research project, as the dynamic of immediate and visible behaviour was informed by or informed that which is more subtle, and less easily discerned or perceived.

Sociological literature prior to the 1980’s focused primarily on the marginalization of death in (Western) society (Hockey, 2001, 2002; Howarth, 2000; Walter, 1996; 1998). Since then it has been acknowledged that medical, psychological, and religious discourses placed the individual in a subordinate relationship to the ‘expert’ (Valentine, 2006).

*The Medicalisation of Death*

The Medicalisation of Death, while involving a series of pre-death decisions associated with palliative care and a certain degree of power over death-related decisions, and therefore not obviously affecting death ritual or mourning, is included here because it does affect the experience of the bereaved, either negatively or positively.

Sociologists were the first to investigate how mid-twentieth century dying in the United States was organized and understood, through organisational rules of the hospital, especially the way medical staff interacted with patients and families (Glaser & Strauss, 1968; Sudnow, 1967, cited in Kaufman & Morgan, 2005). The qualification to speak about death and the audience, whether emotions are shown or concealed, when and if death can be expected, were seen to be socially and bureaucratically determined (Kaufman & Morgan, 2005).

For anthropologists and others, the content and structure of communication between patients and doctors signified issues of control and power (Kaufman & Morgan, 2005). The ways in which hope was created, deployed, or rescinded through
physician-patient interaction were described by Good et al., (1990). Recent ethnographic attention has turned to hospital practices which either unnaturally prolong life or facilitate death (Muller 1992; Zussman 1992). The quest for “death with dignity”, a natural death (without medical intervention) is seen to empower patients and their families. A distinction between “good” and “bad” deaths has become an international topic of interest (Johnson et al. 2000; Seale & Van Der Geest 2004).

The change from personal, familial care, to the increase of medical care of the dying, and the involvement of funeral directors in dealing with the body, has been seen as contributing to the stigmatisation of death (Kellehear, 1991). A lack of exposure of ordinary “lay” people to death and dying has contributed to a sense of discomfort around death.

*Western Gender Roles in Death and Bereavement*

In the area of care of the dying, dead, and bereavement, there has been and remains a pronounced gender differentiation (Hockey, 1997). Until the medicalisation of death in the eighteenth century, Western women were in charge of all issues relating to death and the dead body. Subsequently, women continued working in menial care tasks for the dying, while medical practitioners were considered to have the expertise (Field et al, 1997).

There are important differences between women and men, with regard to both causes of death, and places of death. Where men are more likely to die at home, women are almost twice as likely to die in nursing and residential homes. This is partly attributed to women’s comparative longevity (Field et al, 1997). Female relatives provide the majority of non-professional caring. Where the husband is the primary caregiver there is a greater likelihood of outside care-givers and medical assistance (Field et al, 1997).

Since the late 1950’s a resurgence of the caregiving roles of women has occurred with regard to the dying and bereaved, which is seen as resulting from both the increasing death-awareness movement in the United States, and the Hospice movement in Britain (Field et al, 1997).
Emotions are influenced by gender norms and expectations (Thompson, 1997). In the situation of mourning, the expression of grief has predominantly been the role of women, particularly in the Victorian era when women were expected to wear mourning dress for months and exhibit sober behaviour. By contrast, bereaved men wore every-day clothes and an arm band.

After the two world wars, there have been freeing societal changes in acceptable emotional expression. Men are less discouraged by socialisation from expressing emotion (Thompson, 1997), and have in the past fifty years been more able to express emotion publicly than previously (Hockey et al, 2001).

Lupton (1998) described the increased social acceptability of expressed emotions, particularly for men. This has replaced the previously gendered compartmentalisation of emotion which encouraged the male mastery of emotions, whereas women have remained associated with emotionality and sensitivity.

*Death, Gender and Ethnicity*

Gender and ethnicity remain salient features of social identity throughout life and in death. Social scientists have focused more on the universality of death and bereavement, rather than the many differences affected by these distinctions (Field, Hockey and Small, 1997). Age, ethnicity, social class and gender profoundly affect the ways people experience death, dying and bereavement. How a society deals with death is believed to reveal a lot about that society, especially the demonstrated value placed on the individual (Field et al, 1997).

Also important to the grief process are the socio-cultural factors of mourning rituals, cultural customs and traditions and how relevant they are to the bereaved, which are the main focus of this study.

The issues of gender and ethnicity have previously been neglected by both sociological and anthropological literature about death. The neglect of gender in the death and bereavement literature was compared to the general academic neglect of gender prior to the 1960’s. This was addressed by second wave feminism, and subsequently concerns about the neglect of this topic have brought about an upsurge of discussion and analysis (Field et al, 1997).
Prior to the increased role of professional undertakers in Britain, women did most of the laying-out. They would be either women in the family or local women known for being good at this work. In Roman Catholic communities the nuns were known for laying out the deceased (O'Regan, 1991:20-21) and later District nurses also performed this work. Sometimes though undertakers were called in after the district nurse had done the laying-out (Hera, 1996). The undertaker's role was to supply the coffin and transport. Only those without family and friends were laid out at the undertakers (Dickey, 1980:30, 37).

In the current century for Pākehā New Zealanders death has moved more from the home, apparently mirroring what is occurring in other Western dominated countries (Hera, 1996).

Over the last few decades international, national and local movements have challenged and brought change to Western-influenced death practices. Women have been in the forefront of these movements, particularly the hospice movement originating in England in the late 1950’s and 1960’s and now active in Aotearoa (Hera, 1996). The hospice movement in Aotearoa has begun to move dying and death back into the community by providing people dying of cancer and their carers with informal and clinical services.

A person’s gender is now viewed as an important cultural factor based on more than sexual differences. The ways in which the body itself is perceived are gendered, including the dying body (Field et al, 1997).

Cross-Cultural Studies

In the Anthropological literature, non-Western cultures have been studied and viewed as having more “natural” ways of dealing with death. Hockey, (2001) described grief and loss rituals as having been ‘romanticised’.

Significant differences exist regarding the expression of grief between societies and cultures. However, few studies have focused on how different cultural groups express grief (Eisenbruch, 1984; Rosenblatt, 1988).

Laurie and Niemeyer’s (2008) comprehensive study of African American bereavement is written from a clinical perspective and utilises some pathologising
terms of bereavement. Nevertheless it is humanistic in terms of the holistic attribution of history, racism, institutional mistrust, and socioeconomic disadvantages, to the bereavement rituals and subsequent behaviours of a range of African American peoples.

There are some marked similarities to, and significant differences from some cultural traditions of Māori. African Americans share with other minority populations, many factors which are additional to the remnants of their cultural traditions, and may contribute to a distinct grieving process (Laurie and Niemeyer, 2008).

Poverty, racism, and oppression have increased stress on African Americans which are likely to contribute to the ways in which African Americans experience death and dying (Holloway, 2003; Rosenblatt & Wallace, 2005b). They share with many indigenous populations, including Māori, a comparatively shorter life expectancy. Therefore there is a greater likelihood of experiencing the premature loss of a loved one (Rosenblatt & Wallace, 2005b), and a greater likelihood of experiencing the death of a close family member or relative (Kochanek, Murphy, Anderson, & Scott, 2004).

**Death ritual**

Death ritual, or mourning, describes observable and often public behaviour, whereas grief is a private emotion (Lofland 1985, cited in Hockey, Katz, and Small, 2001). This stated discrepancy between grief and mourning is seen as arising from a convention which separates internal experience and external expression. There is debate regarding whether mourning practices shape the experience of grief, or whether grief motivates mourning practices (Hockey, Katz, and Small, 2001).

Where contemporary Western death ritual is described as diverse, Howarth (1996) has asked whether a coherent account of death ritual should be attempted. Unfamiliar to the indigenous, particularly of New Zealand, is the description of death as having undergone a “revival” (Walter, 1994, 1996).

Two predominant themes are identified among the latter modern experts – increasingly refined theories about dying, death and bereavement, and a post-
modern attitude confirming the rights of individuals rather than cultures or groups, to choose their own methodology (Walter, 1994, 1996). In contemporary Western society there is a diversity of shared death rituals (Walter 1996).

Important historical western societal changes influencing the current diversity are noted as the following: secularisation and diversification of religious belief and practice, social and geographical mobility, consumerism and environmentalism, changing conceptions of home and hygiene, the effects of the multiple traumatic deaths in both world wars, and the professionalisation of care of the dying and disposal of the dead (Hockey et al, 2001).

The philosophical questions arising from the radical changes in Western death ritual now involve the current existence or popularity of death ritual, whether there is value to death ritual, and how this is manifested in religious, philosophical, personal, community or even national settings (Hockey et al, 2001).

This first chapter has introduced my thesis by contextualising the predominantly contrasting cultural practices of non-Māori, of western society, explored from an interdisciplinary perspective. Literature on death and bereavement, the western contemporary funeral industry, death ritual, the medicalisation of death, western gender roles in death and bereavement, cross-cultural studies, the issue of hygiene and fear of contamination, death, gender and ethnicity, and grief have been discussed to provide a British/American context, and how these countries have influenced Aotearoa New Zealand practices. Against the above issues this study makes explicit the cultural differences by which Māori cultural practices are able to bring about emotional, spiritual, and psychological healing, in this case particularly for Māori women in bereavement.
CHAPTER TWO: TANGIHANGA AND WĀHINE MĀORI

In this chapter the focus narrows from the interdisciplinary, international perspective to issues pertaining to the indigenous iwi (tribal nations) of Aotearoa (New Zealand). This is an introduction to the historical influences of European or Western contact on ancient bereavement practices. In addition there is an introduction to the unique position of Māori women both within the culture and often necessarily across cultures.

In Chapter One, scientific literature informed about actual risk of contamination, and the reason Funeral Directors have been more commonly consulted by Pakeha. Māori culture has a long established history of comfort and normality around preparation of the tūpāpaku. No sense of fear of contamination has been experienced but rather involvement of those close to the deceased, in readying their loved one for their next journey. There is no real fear of death and disease contagion as such, but rather, that death itself more generally has a contaminating “effect”, the effect of tapu. It is this that requires cultural regulation, and gives rise to customary practice in the Māori world (Nikora, personal communication, 2014).

In New Zealand, most bodies are buried within three to five days or less. Within this time, is the period the Funeral industry refers as the liminal space in which the deceased is left alone. To Māori, the idea of a liminal space, leaving the tūpāpaku alone is thought of as “cold” or “unloving.” For this reason it seldom occurs, unless the whānau is blocked from approaching the tūpāpaku by medico-legal processes, or other circumstances, which can cause great anguish to the surviving whānau members. The effects of this type of intervention are discussed personally in several of the case studies of this thesis.

For Māori, largely due to the traditional practice of having the deceased lie visible for variable periods, surrounded by the living, the use of contemporary embalming processes has been encouraged by the funeral industry. However in many areas the tradition of Māori been stalwart, and this has been accepted and supported by the funeral industry, and incorporated in their practices, if funeral directors are used at all. Rather the option of embalming and “beautification” is offered but the whānau’s decision has been more readily accepted.
Traditional Māori tangihanga are said to now have some influence on Pākehā approaches to funeral and burial practices. However, with a more multi-cultural society some funeral directors argue that they are seeing a more Pacific flavour in Pākehā funerals (Ngata, in Schwass, 2005). There was a time in New Zealand when only Māori and Pākehā funeral rituals were acknowledged as predominant and important. However other cultural practices have reflected the ethnic, cultural and spiritual diversity in New Zealand (Schwass, 2005).

*Contextual Cultural issues for Māori with Grief*

In spite of the influences of colonisation and the increased mortality rates (Ajwani et al, 2003; Pomare, 1995; Walker, 1990), Māori have continued to value the relevance and importance of traditional cultural practices regarding death. At the current time gatherings around death, whether tangihanga (grieving) or unveilings of head-stones, retain a far stronger cultural significance for Māori than do funerals in the non-Māori population. Life and death are closely interwoven in the cultural fabric of the Māori world, with deceased tūpuna integrated into everyday existence (Marsden, 1968; Tauroa and Tauroa, 1986). These are described in detail in the Tangihanga section.

*Medico-Legal Processes*

When there is some doubt about the cause of death of a loved one, the grief of the whānau can be greatly compounded by being kept away from the tūpāpaku or body. The inability to fulfil the cultural imperative that demands that the tūpāpaku not be left alone, especially in cold, impersonal, clinical surroundings, and not knowing when or in what condition the tūpāpaku will be returned, add to whānau pain and reluctance to surrender care of the tūpāpaku (Clark & McCreanor, 2006). The coroner’s process when applied sensitively can be a definite contribution to the wellbeing of bereaved families. The problems cited have particularly been with the delays in judgements, which left the whānau in limbo often for months and the dependence on the goodwill and skills of particular individuals (Clark & McCreanor, 2006). However more recently there has been an increase in the number of Māori coroners, and considerable commitment by New Zealand Coroners to achieve cultural competency.
The Tangihanga Literature

The dearth of in-depth literature on death, dying, bereavement, grief and tangihanga in te Ao Māori has been theoretically attributed to traditionally held apprehensions that such work carries the inherent risk of “karanga aituā”, calling misfortune by drawing attention to it (Nikora & Te Awekōtuku, 2013). It effectively urges researchers towards greater sensitivity and ethical conduct.

In noting the paucity of written accounts of Tangihanga, the following authors who were involved in the genesis of the Tangihanga Research Programme, Nikora, Te Awekōtuku, Rua, Temara, Maxwell, Murphy, McRae & Moeke-Maxwell (2010) noted the informativeness of traditional sources such as apakura (lament, song of grief), waiata tangi (laments, song of mourning), family manuscripts, and descriptive, detailed oral accounts such as McLean & Orbell, 1975; Ngata & Jones, 1980; Servant, 1973; Te Rangikāheke, 1854 (Nikora et al, 2010).

Nikora et al (2010) also took note of ethnographic observation and reminiscences such as provided by Best, (1924) and Buck, (1966 [1929]). Much earlier ethnocentric observations such as Cook, (1955[1728–1779]), Cruise, (1824), Fox (1983) and Maning (1887) were also examined. From later times, Marsden (1932), Pollack, (1976) Te Awekōtuku, (2004), Nikora, Te Awekōtuku, Nikora, Rua & Karapu (2007), Williams, Williams & Porter (1974) are noted as requiring further study. One commentator alone (Phillips, 1954) was noted to have considered the impact of Europeans on tangi (Nikora et al, 2010).

Oppenheim (1973) wrote one scholarly monograph almost forty years ago. Tangihanga as part of other Māori gatherings have been addressed by Beaglehole and Beaglehole (1945, 1946), Metge (1976) and Salmond (1975) which commentary was informative rather than analytical. However two powerful pieces stood out, first by Dansey (1975), who described the fundamental keys to Māori culture as being land, people and inter-generational ancestry. Dansey explained that claims for burial in a particular location are usually made on the basis of shared whakapapa between the claiming party and the deceased or other close connections. The claim serves several purposes; the claiming party has a collective interest in burying the deceased in the place that will maintain the continuity of their whakapapa lines thus reinforcing whanaungatanga.
A second very significant work was the insights described by Ngata (2005) on Maori Death, dying and grief. (In M. Schwass (Ed, 2005). Like other significant Maori scholarly work, this work like most of these were not stand-alone publications, but chapters in books. Ngata’s work was commented upon by Clair, Piripi, and Reid (2005). The subject of ownership of tūpāpaku was written about by Tomas (2008). Witana (1997) wrote from a Māori counsellor’s perspective, and male perspectives were provided by Edwards, McCreanor, Ormsby, and Tipene-Leach (2009).


Until the Tangi Research Programme was undertaken by Nikora et al (2010), there was no definitive historical or contemporary published account of tangihanga and the Māori experience of death which captured its transformational effects. By 2014, there were numerous valuable contributions to the literature by those who were engaged in the study. To date, the following topics have been examined under the auspices of the Tangihanga Research Programme:

Jacob’s Unpublished Masters Thesis (2011) about Māori Children’s Conceptions of Death and Tangihanga investigate Māori children’s experience relating to death and tangi through the eyes of Māori parents. Five areas were explored with Māori parents. These were childhood experiences of Māori parents relating to death and tangi, parental conceptualisation pertaining to ideas of an afterlife, how and when Māori parents talk with children about topics relating to death, tangi and an afterlife, how Māori children understand and conceptualise these events, and finally, how these practices will continue on in the future.

McRae’s (2010) Unpublished Masters Thesis, “Tangi and State Funeral: Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu & Prime Minister Norman Kirk”, discussed a comparison between the State funerals and tangihanga of The Māori Queen and a Prime Minister. McRae argued that media representation of the tangi of Te Arikinui was largely about social, cultural and symbolic capital. In media saturated societies
such as Aotearoa/New Zealand, through mainstream media outlets, Te Arikinui’s tangi event claimed a dominant space in the lives of Māori and non Māori alike. She concluded that both were about the ritualized performance of grief and mourning, and required the appropriate social, cultural and symbolic capital for their enactment.

Wihōngi’s Unpublished Masters Thesis (2013) was titled “Tangihanga: Through the eyes of young Māori women”. Wihōngi found that the young women were able to express their grief in an open and supportive environment surrounded by their whānau. The tangi was also a place of learning about tikanga and kawa in relation to tangihanga. This occurred by observation, participation, and instruction from older family members. Thus the tangi provided the opportunity for the transfer of cultural knowledge between generations, suggesting the importance of the role of tangihanga in providing them with access to Māori communities and cultural learning.

*The research about Māori women, women and death.*

This subject requires an understanding of both the current literature on Māori women, particularly by Māori women, and literature on female roles in traditional Māori society, particularly regarding death, grief, and Tangihanga. Prior to The Tangihanga Project of which this thesis is part, this was a small but growing body of knowledge.

Hera’s (1996) Unpublished PhD Thesis was an important exploration of this issue with analysis of two cultural groups’ (Māori and Pākehā) including interviews with nine older Māori women’s experiences of death, grief and tangihanga. Hera sought to understand and influence after-death policy, practices and beliefs in Aotearoa through an eco-feminist approach. Hera’s thesis aimed to de-mystify the health information and advice from medical professionals, develop and share self-help information validating the knowledge, experience and needs of women, in the area of after-death practices.

August’s (2004) Unpublished Masters Thesis “The Māori Female – Her Body, Spirituality, Sacredness and Mana. A Space within Spaces”, examined the ways in Māori women and their bodies are constituted within particular cultural spaces, for
example urupā (Māori cemeteries). Bodily rituals, and the impacts of colonization on these bodily rituals, were explored to reveal a ‘non-western’ perspective on exclusion. Kaupapa Māori research and postcolonial theory were combined to produce research that respected and nurtured Māori practices (August, 2004).

August (2004) described the Māori perspective in terms of Māori women as connected to Atua, and as powerful, sacred and life-giving. Participants’ feelings towards restriction from cultural spaces during menstruation or pregnancy varied from western perspectives towards exclusion and marginalization. Instead of feeling restricted from particular spaces, participants felt there was a respect for particular spaces, respect for their bodies, and for tikanga. Participants respected the cultural spaces organized by higher forces of power such as tapu, warning ramifications for all if tikanga was not respected. August posited that Māori knowledge about the female body was essential for the protection of our identities as Māori women. Knowledge and understanding of the power passed down through whakapapa from Papatuanuku and other Atua wāhine, allowed Māori women to engender respect. Understanding our identity enables Māori women to tell our own stories or histories, providing a true perspective for future generations (August, 2004).

Huia Tomlins Jahnke’s Unpublished Masters Thesis (1997a), “Whaia te iti Kahurangi: Contemporary perspective’s of Māori women educators”, was a qualitative investigation of the experiences of six Māori women educators of Aotearoa New Zealand. This study revealed the importance of the ancestral home-place to their identity as Māori. Understanding of home-place constructs was found to reinforce and maintain a sense of cultural identity. Memories were reinforced through physical links to the land, knowledge of whakapapa, living close to whānau, the importance of the marae (tribal meeting complex) and experiences of the Māori language. These characteristics were found to be of vital significance to a secure identity as Māori which emerged as significant for the participants in the study (Tomlins Jahnke, 1997a).

Wāhine Maia, Me te Ngāwari Hoki: Māori Women and Periodic Detention in Kirikiriroa, Their Life Difficulties and the System (Paterson, 1992), was my own unpublished Masters Thesis describing the many hardships yet incredible resilience
of Māori women involved in the Justice (Corrections) system. My research was qualitative, interviewing six Māori women who had been sentenced to Periodic Detention in Hamilton. The study contextualised the womens’ lives in terms of the results of colonisation, acculturation, educational and socio-economic disadvantage. The women shared the disadvantages of other life stress due to violence and abuse from partners, histories of trauma and abuse, low self-esteem, and the use of drugs and alcohol as primary coping strategies. In view of the historical precedents and the position the women found themselves in, there remained a social group with remarkable adaptive strategies and personal courage, who were neglected or maligned by mainstream society.

Kyro Selket’s (2002) unpublished Masters Thesis for Victoria University, “The Contested Space of Lesbian Funerals: the Lesbian /Straight negotiation and the implications for Funeral Industry Practice” is an important contribution to the issue of womens’ roles in funerary practices. Utilising qualitative methods Selket presented and analysed experiences of seven respondents’ stories, with a methodological approach of post structuralism, feminism and queer theory. This was a scholarly effort to attempt to educate the reading public and enhance lesbian mourners’ opportunity to experience the therapeutic effects of legitimate public grieving.

Roles of Māori Women in Society
In modern times it has become a common belief that in Māori culture, leadership was usually dominated by men, and that in Māori society power was used over women by men. But it has been evidenced that that traditional Māori society did not believe male roles to be more significant than female roles (Mikaere, 1994). Traditional Māori spiritual and cultural principles acknowledged balance, reciprocity, interdependence and interrelationship between all members of society, and people with the environment.

There have been many stories of powerful women in Māori history. Language, particularly whakataukī (proverbs), reflects the importance of women in the culture. "He wāhine, he whenua, e ngaro ai te tangata" (by women and land men are lost), referring to the essential nourishing roles that women and land fulfil, without which humanity would be lost (Pere, 1987). This has been explored by a range of
contemporary writers, including Te Awekōtuku, (1991); Kahukiwa, Irwin & Ramsden, (1995); and in the Māori feminist journal Te Pua (1992-1994).

Makereti (1986) maintained that Māori women were not traditionally regarded as possessions. They retained their own names upon marriage, their children were free to identify with the kinship group of either or both parents, and conception was not associated with sin or child-bearing with punishment and suffering but was seen to be uplifting and a normal part of life. When a woman bore her partner a child, he reportedly held her in even higher esteem (Makereti, 1986).

Assault on a woman, either sexual or physical, was regarded as extremely serious and could result in actual death or in being "declared dead" by the community, within such a social culture a symbolic death in itself. The community intervened to prevent and punish marital violence in a very straightforward way (Milroy, 1994).

As an oral culture, waiata, haka, and whakataukī were primary means of transmitting knowledge, the vehicles through which ancient concepts and beliefs have been passed down to us today. Women played an important role in the maintenance and transmission of iwi history and knowledge, it is clear from the numbers of waiata tawhito that have been composed by women, and also that the roles of women traditionally included leadership (Mahuika, 1975; Te Awekōtuku et al, 2007). These were positions of military, spiritual and political significance.

Stories of dominant Māori women have continued to influence later generations. Wairaka is said to have saved the Mataatua canoe from floating out to sea; Hinemoa seized the initiative and swam across Lake Rotorua in order to be with Tutanekai; Heni Pore of Te Arawa fought against the British troops in support of the Kingitanga during the 1860's, and in the battle of Gate Pa at Tauranga in 1864. Hinematioro of Pourewa, Te Tai Rawhiti, was “an invincible fighter...a powerful ariki, much loved and honoured by the people” (Te Awekōtuku, 2007 pg 76). Waikorapa, of Pukehina, was also a woman of high lineage, who led war parties into battle.

Te Rangi Topeora, of Ngāti Raukawa and Ngāti Toa descent, fought in battle alongside her brother, Te Rangihaeata. She was a signatory to the Treaty of
Waitangi, a powerful landowner, and a prolific composer of waiata. Her mother, Waitohi, was Te Rauparaha's sister, a leader in her own right and a known military strategist (Mahuika, in King (ed.), 1975; Macdonald, Penfold, & Williams, 1991; Coney, 1993). In living memory of course outstanding examples of women in leadership have been Te Arikini Dame Te Atairangikaahu, Te Puea, (founder of Tūrangawaewae, composer, poet and significant visionary of the Kingitanga movement), Tuaiwa Eva Rickard, Heeni Materoa Carroll, (Poverty Bay entrepreneur, major land owner and political strategist), and Dame Whina Cooper.

Through the acculturative process Māori concepts, beliefs and myths have been reshaped and retold in ways which have undermined mana wāhine - the authority and prestige of Māori women (Henry, 1994). The Judeo-Christian ideology of Pākehā has led to a patriarchal re-definition of gender relationships in Māori culture (Ramsden, 1994) with a re-interpretation of Māori women in the context of the superiority of a male God (Te Awekōtuku, 1991).

Pākehā patriarchal institutions dominated and superimposed Christian morality and Victorian values in Aotearoa New Zealand which have over time seriously eroded the cultural, social, political and economic structures of Māori people (Kōtuku Partners, 1994). Christianity undermined and damaged the rightful place of women within original Māori society, leadership according to whakapapa rights (Te Awekōtuku, 1994). Māori kuia were the keepers of tribal law, and Te Awekōtuku (1994) stated that Māori women were carvers, which challenges modern claims that Māori carving has traditionally been a masculine realm.

Other examples of the undermining of mana wāhine concerns speaking rights on the marae have become seen as, and represented as, belonging to men (even when they cannot speak te reo). Karanga, waiata and tangi as well as whaikōrero all count as traditional oral text (Anderson, 1994; Henry, 1994; Irwin, 1992; Te Awekōtuku, 1994). The karanga (call onto the marae) is a women-only oral tradition as is the apakura (Irwin, 1994). Women are needed to begin important rituals with the karanga (Anderson, 1994).
The traditional forms of Māori women's karanga are of no less importance than male forms of dialogue such as whaikōrero (Henry, 1994). In some tribal areas such as Te Tai Rawhiti, Taranaki and Heretaunga, high-born women do have the right to whaikōrero on the marae (Irwin, 1992; Pere, 1987).

Mana wāhine symbolizes and defines the status, power and authority of Māori women represents Māori women's matrilineal descent from Papatuanuku, the Earth Mother (Kotuku Partners, 1994). Traditional evidence of mana wāhine are the conceptualisation of whare tangata (the house of the people, the bearers of human-kind) and Papatuanuku (mother earth), (Anderson, 1994; Pere, 1987) and as such have great mana and deserve respect, and should only be addressed with words and concepts which foster equivalent respect and mana.

Pere (1987) asserted that within her tribal groups women are of paramount importance, the mana of women in terms of being the first communicators on the marae. Pere says in her iwi of Tuhoe, no self-respecting male will go on to the marae without being accompanied by a woman.
CHAPTER THREE: TANGIHANGA PROCESSES

In this chapter I will describe the traditional procedural processes which were, and are sequentially carried out around and after the death of a person. I note that in these modern times and particularly among urban-based Māori there may be variations on these procedures, although at the same time, the inner psychological or spiritual meaning may be held by the whānau pani (the mourning family).

I note this distinction because for various reasons described in the Case Studies I will be presenting, not all of the procedural steps may be seen to be followed, except within the intent of the mourning women. This phenomenon will become clearer in the participating women’s own kōrero (narratives).

I include this chapter which may be experienced as stating the obvious for those embedded in Māori culture, but for non-Māori or those unfortunate in being alienated from their own culture by none of their own doing, (ie degrees of post-contact acculturation, their whānau or personal history) it may assist immensely in bringing to light the spiritual rationale these traditions signify.

Māori have extremely rational reasons for the rituals which underpin every step of each ceremony. These begin with the spiritual belief and the respect and acknowledgement which are accorded the act. It must be noted that in some cases the original rationale for the rituals, or the details involved in the rituals may have been lost, but for a few places and people remaining least affected by Pākehā contact and influence. Alternatively cross-cultural marriages or relationships, and post contact religion may bring about compromise and combinations of rituals. These differences can be seen in two of the women’s kōrero (stories), which begin in Chapter 8. First, however, an explanatory description comes with the following title and subtitles.

*What is Tangihanga?*  
Tangihanga refers to a range of Māori cultural mourning rituals. These traditionally began on the return of the deceased and the whānau pani (bereaved family) to their marae, although in modern days some whānau mourn their deceased in their own homes. Some then take the tūpāpaku to church for a Christian ceremony, and some
then move on to the marae. Once the deceased arrives at the marae, the death is shared with the greater community such as friends and non-whānau (Nikora, 2007). Tangihanga is for Māori, a customary way to respond to death. It is an enculturated pattern learned through repeat experiences which often, although not always, begin in childhood (Nikora, 2007).

The tangihanga may proceed over a few hours or a few days (Nikora et al., 2010). Greeting rituals such as karanga, lamentation and emotional mourning, whaikōrero, (oratory), traditional waiata tangi (dirges), reciting of whakapapa (genealogy) to explain and clarify historical connections, karakia (prayer), and speeches of farewell. Portraits of ancestors and deceased relatives are exhibited, and the deceased is never left alone by those who love them. They are conversed with as if still present. On the early morning of the day of burial, final farewells are said, and the casket is closed. The final memorial service is followed by the burial. The ritual cleansing of the deceased’s house and feasting completes the process, releasing the family to everyday life (Walker, 1992, cited in Nikora et al, 2010). Where Nikora has provided us with a succinct and compact description of tangihanga, the following provides some additional details.

Death: Language and Causal Attributions

For Māori, the word mate is current for both sickness and death, with the distinction in meaning conveyed by both context and tense used. The present tense with mate means that the person is sick and the past tense means that he or she is definitely dead. The act of dying, of drawing the last breath, is known as whakahemohemo (Buck, 1982).

In Māori culture, it is seen as much preferable to visit a person while they are still alive. This is referred to as “te kanohi kitea”, or “the seen face”. Although nothing may be said, whānau are usually aware of those who have visited and those who have not. Those who miss seeing the person before they pass away can be overcome with guilt, anxiety and shame (Tangaroa, 1988).

In the language, the cultural nuances can be perceived: Aitu is a more traditional term for sickness. Mate aitu particularly applies to accidents and death by accident. Sickness attributed to spiritual malevolence was earlier known as mate atua but
more recently as, mate Māori (Dansey, 1975), also referred to as “the Māori bullet”. In the event of serious illness, it is normal for friends and whānau to gather around the bedside to provide every kind of support for the person and their family that may be needed (Dansey, 1975).

The perceived reason (causal attribution) for both sickness and death remain important to many Māori. This is because of the many behavioural and spiritual rules involving tapu and tikanga (correct behaviour) which may be breached with intention, in ignorance, or in other extreme ways. Transgressions, particularly deliberate ones, may have dire consequences for the person involved. Malevolent influences or spirits may be identified as the cause of death, as identified by a tohunga or spiritual expert. A course of remedial action can be recommended and taken (Dansey, 1975).

On 28 November, 2010, Māori News and Current events television presenter Scotty Morrison (Te Arawa) asked of Maui Solomon, Runanga Head of Kai Tahu, whether he believed that the recent catastrophic earthquakes in Christchurch and the recent mine disaster at Pike River were Tohu – signs that perhaps Papatuanuku (our Earth Mother) was displeased, or that in some way things were on an atua (high spiritual) level, awry. Solomon responded with a smile that he felt that these were “natural” events, to be expected and coped with by humans. The question being asked was reflective of the traditional way of thinking, still held by many. The “rational, worldly” explanation as always in te ao Māori, remains at odds with the spiritual causative links made by many.

Similarly, on the programme Marae (2 April, 2010) Professor Pou Temara advised in a television interview that where a hara (transgression) is committed (by breaching tapu), even in ignorance, then a price will be paid for that transgression. If not by the transgressor, then by that person’s whānau - children, or mokopuna. This admonition brings fear into the hearts of those who have been brought up either traditionally, biculturally, or even with modern (Western) beliefs, which has an added corollary of assisting people to be more aware in the future.

Later on the same programme, unaware of Professor Temara’s statement (personal communication, 2 April, 2010) Associate Professor Waimarie Nikora conversely
advised that more modern practices, such as keeping the ashes of a loved one in the house, were acceptable and may assist people in their grief. Thus scholarly Māori represent both traditional and modern thought which alternatively bring fear and restriction, or freedom from tradition, and modern, consensual grief procedures.

As Death Nears:
Just prior to death, or perhaps the day before, a dying person may request some article of food which she or he desires. The food so desired would be obtained for the sick person, however distant or difficult to procure. The same applied to the waters of a certain stream of deep meaning to him or her. That water would be obtained for the person to drink before passing away (Best, 1905).

In entering and leaving the world (the person) is under strong tapu. All wishes, instructions, and advice of a dying person, the property he or she left to his descendants are referred to as “oha”, referring to a relic, keepsake. If there was a dying speech it was called “whakatau-oha” (Best, 1905) or as an “Ohākī” (personal communication, Te Awekōtuku 2 July, 2014).

Sometimes the dying person may be farewelled by those assembled people before they expire, but most of such speeches are made after death, when the body is lying in state. The wailing also sometimes commenced when the person was very near death, or at other times the wailing commenced when the breath left the body. The farewelling remarks of the people at this time were generally not long speeches, but brief formal sayings: “Farewell, O father! Go to your ancestors. Depart to Hawaiki. Farewell. Go to Paerau” (the spirit world, Hawaiki) (Best, 1905).

Tuku Wairua (Release of Spirit)
When a person is near death, this procedure may be performed to help the spirit depart from the body. It is believed that if not so assisted, the wairua could become restless and wander, or stay. Historically tuku wairua was performed by a tohunga (spiritual expert), but in modern times this ceremony may be carried out by a family member familiar with this rite, or a minister or priest may be called to give the dying person a blessing, according to the beliefs of the whānau.
Te Mate (Death)
At the moment of death, the tūpāpaku (body of the deceased) is traditionally believed to be in a state similar to sleep (Best, 1905). Though separated from the body it is believed that the wairua may visit known places and loved ones before its ascension to Te Rerenga Wairua (where souls depart for their journey to the spiritual home).

Culturally Sanctioned Physical Expressions of Grief
The widow (or in older times sometimes widows) and near female relatives cut all or part of their hair short. One way was to cut off all the hair very short with the exception of one small patch on the left side of the head. This was left the original length and was allowed to hang down. It was called a “reureu.” The cut hair was buried with the tūpāpaku (McDonald, 2011).

In historical times, the chief mourners cut the skin over the upper body and even the face with an obsidian flake to let the blood flow as a relief to the intensity of their grief. Some would rub charcoal into the cuts to make an indelible record of the mourning (Te Awekōtuku, Nikora, Rua, & Karapu, 2007). Christian missionaries forbade this act (Best, 1905) and the practice has in these days virtually ceased, except perhaps in the version of memorial tattoos (Te Awekōtuku, Nikora, Rua & Karapu, 2007). In modern times, the bereaved may take a moko or traditional tattoo on the skin to signify their love and grief for the deceased (Te Awekōtuku et al, 2007). This is “he tohu aroha” (a sign of affection or sympathy).

Sometimes a widow committed suicide on the death of her chiefly husband. Maning (1887) described witnessing that the suicide of a rangātira’s two eldest wives was stated as part of the chief’s last words. This was reportedly complied with on the same night. It has been argued that in fact the grief of the wives was so deep that they wished to join their husband and raNgātira in death, and that Maning misunderstood or misrepresented the situation (personal communication, Enoka Murphy, Ngāti Manawa, wānanga Tangihanga 11 October, 2012)

Traditionally, widows and other close mourners would fast during the period of attendance on the tūpāpaku, but were persuaded to take light nourishment at night. This nourishment might be that which suited people who are both in emotional shock and grief, and required to be without exercise for some days.
On the death of a person, particularly a person of consequence, a lament (waiata tangi) would be composed by relatives and sung during the period of mourning, usually when speeches are being made. Many old-time laments have been preserved for generations, and allude to ancient historical events (Best, 1905, Ngata, 1959; Ngata & Te Hurinui Jones, 1980; 2006; Ngata & Mead, 2007).

The apakura (dirge), sung by mourners is usually an ancient composition. It is named after a famous ancestress, Apakura, who was regarded as an exemplar of the art of mourning Polynesia in about the ninth century (Best, 1905).

**Duration and procedure of Tangihanga**

The duration of tangihanga have varied over time. Until the end of the nineteenth century, they could go on for weeks, or even months in the case of persons of great mana. The tangi of King Tawhiao in 1894 reportedly lasted nearly two months (King, 2003). Early in the twentieth century, Public Health legislation was passed to curtail the duration of tangihanga, and in modern times tangihanga tend to be held from three days to a week, depending on the circumstances of the whānau.

These days, very few Māori families have their dead taken from the hospital mortuary to the undertaker's chapel until the funeral, away from sight in a closed casket. The dead in most cases are conveyed to a house, wharenui or meeting house, whare mate (a special small house where the deceased may be mourned), or tent on a marae (Rua, 2010). There, around the open casket they are surrounded by pictures of others who have died before, the family gathers to mourn and to greet other mourners who arrive (Dansey, 1995).

**Tono (Claiming of the deceased)**

Many or most Māori descend from more than one lineage, and thus the tradition of claiming the deceased, with traditional and valid arguments whereby one iwi or hapū has more right to do so, remains an important factor. This is important because the final marae on which the tūpāpaku lies, often predicts the place of burial. The burial place is very important both because of other deceased already lying in the intended urupā being related to the tūpāpaku, and also because the living want their loved one to lie within an area which they are able to access and show their love and devotion to the deceased.
The tono is therefore the deputation from one or other rohe or marae to which the tūpāpaku belongs, strongly requesting for the tūpāpaku to be taken to their particular marae or buried in a certain urupā (cemetery). This usually takes place in the area where the death has occurred. It is seen as important for the deceased to be returned to the land of his or her tūpuna.

While a tono is an honour paid to the deceased, in modern times, lack of cultural understanding mean that ill-feeling, hurt and anger can occur, either when there has been a cross-cultural relationship, or when close whānau wish to keep the deceased close by for various emotional and practical reasons. The tono may also go against the stated wishes of the deceased. In some cases in more recent times, these disputes have occurred between Māori whānau and Pākehā spouses of the deceased. There are sometimes long kōrero between the parties, and at times one party dominates over the other, resulting in serious and long term grievance and even legal action. There have been some heated disputes which have resulted in legal battles and even disinterment and re-burial, not to mention hurt feelings and anger (Edge & Nikora, 2010; Tomas, 2008). The case studies I present describe two other such cases (previously unpublicised) personal to the women participating in this study.

*Tono for a woman married outside her hapū*

Makereti (1986) described what happened in her times, if the wife of an inter-tribal marriage died. When her hapū came to tangi (mourn) over her, they would during their whaikōrero, request that her body be taken home to her kainga. If the husband and his people consented, they would go in great numbers to accompany the body home. If the husband and his people did not consent to having the wife’s body removed, she would be buried at her husband's urupā (Makereti, 1986).

*Arrival of the tūpāpaku to the Tangata Whenua (Home People)*

Tangata whenua, having prepared to welcome the tūpāpaku back to the marae, await their opportunity to mourn. In some areas, kawakawa leaves are woven into tauā (mourning wreaths) upon the heads of the manuhiri and tangata whenua.

The symbols of death are green leaves, particularly those of the kawakawa which made into a wreath for the head, are termed pare kawakawa. In modern times if these cannot be easily accessed, weeping willow or ivy may be worn. Men, if
wearing a hat, sometimes wear a sprig of green in their hatbands. In these post colonial times, the Victorian influence of black clothing is common, particularly for women.

Formerly, depending on the tribal area, widows would wear a cap of dry seaweed or other material, termed a potae tauā, during their period of mourning, which continued for an indefinite time after their husband's death (Buck, 1982; McDonald, 2011).

Kuia position themselves in front of the wharenui, focussed on preparing to welcome their manuhiri and their dead. They turn their attention to the tūpāpaku as it lies positioned to enter.

Adornment of the tūpāpaku
The tūpāpaku is likely to be adorned by at least one korowai (fine feathered cloak, Kiwi feathers being the most prized), placed by women who are the kaitiaki (guardian protectors) of Tāonga (treasured possessions). In modern times this would be placed over the casket, whereas in older times the cloak was draped around the deceased. Pounamu jewellery and weaponry belonging to the deceased or their family were usually laid on the breast of the corpse as appropriate (Malcolm-Buchanan, Te Awekōtuku, & Nikora, 2010). In later times, framed enlarged photographs of the deceased and some of the deceased next of kin were displayed near the body (Buck, 1982; Te Awekōtuku, 1996).

The Whakatau
The tūpāpaku or body of the deceased lies in state, in one of a number of various tribally traditional positions. In Te Arawa the tūpāpaku lies to the right hand side of the wharenui, in Tainui on the verandah, or at the rear of the wharenui, in Tuhoe, in a special tent or purpose-built shelter (Rua, 2010).

Mourners arrive to pay their respects. The process begins with the karanga (call of welcome), performed by the woman or women of the marae, and responded to by the visiting group, as they slowly approach. The karanga consists of words and emotions that both welcome the body and the spirit to the marae and acknowledge its journey to his or her ancestors. At this time the women also bid farewell to the ancestors of the deceased and to all others who have died. The family and
descendants of the dead are also mentioned. The party comes to a stand before the house of the dead and weep loudly with roimata (tears) running down their cheeks and hupe (mucus), dripping from their noses. These are physical demonstrations of the grief felt inside.

The family and friends of the tūpāpaku shed their tears openly and express their grief audibly. Sorrow, loyalty and love are expressed towards the deceased. Kinship ties are acknowledged. The ancestors of the tribe are a vital part of the mourning and at the end of the whaikōrero the speaker expresses sorrow at the loss of past ancestors, as well as the present deceased person. Thus in death the loved one is acknowledged as part of the great ancestral line further linking the tribe to the past. Following each speech a supportive and appropriate waiata is sung to support the speaker and that which has been said.

When responses have been made by host and manuhiri and the process has come to a conclusion for that visiting group, lines are formed by which each manuhiri hōngi’s each host who were present at the ceremonial process. The tangi (grieving process) is a cyclic repetitive process which takes place over several days as groups come from near and far to participate in the tangihanga.

Oratory is directed as if the person were still alive and listening. Any speeches made during the tangi are spoken directly to the body because Māori believe that even though the body is no longer functioning, the spirit of the loved one is present and continues to be aware of everything that takes place. This practice once again reinforces the assumption that though the body has ceased to function, the soul continues to be aware its family and tribe (Mahuta, 1981; Rerekura, 2008), and the person is considered still present.

_The Kauta and the Wharekai_

Unseen at this time is a large group of workers preparing and cooking large amounts of kai and setting up the whare kai, the dining room. The travelling mourners are invited at the end of the process to eat and drink in the whare kai. They may also be sung to or entertained by the host workers. This process nurtures wairua (spirit) and tinana (body), and as will be described later, performs the important function of whakanoa, the lifting of tapu from the mourners.
Attitudes to the deceased
A significant belief among Māori is that the body of the deceased should not be left alone at any moment after death until it is buried. Māori believe the dead are to be cared for, cherished, mourned, spoken to and honoured. Most Māori want to see their dead, to be with them until that ultimate committal to the earth. Legal, medical and undertaking processes which cause delay to the family accessing their loved one, can cause deep distress and anguish.

Po Whakamutunga (the last night before Burial)
Returning to the present day, on the last night before burial, whānau and friends will gather in the wharenui for an evening of remembrance of the deceased person. This may include stories about the person while alive, and there are often much laughter and reminiscences, and sometimes those with musical talent may sing, play, or even dance for the deceased and the whānau. This is an occasion which can lift the heart even as the whānau are grieving.

The day of the burial, further farewells are said, prayers and further waiata sung, precious momentos may be placed in the casket to accompany the deceased. Then the lid is sealed onto the casket for the last time. At this point there is usually a funeral service often officiated by Christian clergy or Tohunga, at the marae or church.

The tūpāpaku at this stage will be carried and/or driven from the marae, to the urupā (cemetery) to be buried. At the urupā, further whaikōrero (speeches) will take place, karakia (prayers) will be offered, waiata (songs or hymns) sung, and the casket will be ceremonially lowered. Sometimes a haka (honouring war chant) may be done at the interment, sometimes a karanga (ritualistic wailing call) will be called, as the coffin is gently lowered into the ground. Sometimes the deceased’s favourite waiata may be sung.

Nehunga (Burial)
In modern times, burial at an urupā (whānau, hapū or tribal cemetery), is the most common choice for Māori. Particularly in our own urupā, there is the knowledge that we will be surrounded by tūpuna and whānau, that we will not be forgotten, and that our grave will be tended. Burial is more common than cremation, although
cremation is increasing, with the urn frequently buried in the urupā (Nikora et al, 2013). Cremation is a relatively modern convention in Maoridom. For those who have an affinity for modern non-Maori spiritual thinking, they may scatter the ashes in a meaningful place to the deceased, which could also be interpreted as returning the remains of their loved ones to Papatuanuku, Earth Mother. Scattering the ashes over water is another issue. While popular amongst some other cultures, in Aotearoa the issue of human remains being tapu, and being deliberately placed in natural water sources is discouraged. Water sources such as rivers and the ocean both propagate food sources and are held to be spiritually cleansing. These are recent issues which are still potentially sources of consideration, if not contention.

Traditional variations in disposal of tūpāpaku are another topic in itself, which will not be discussed here but can be found in the work of prolific historical writers Best (1904; 1924), Dansey (1975), and Te Rangi Hiroa (1982).

After lowering of the casket, mourners will be invited to symbolically sprinkle soil on to the coffin, and or drop a flower on to the coffin, while saying a final farewell. When all have been given this opportunity, in some areas whānau members will begin covering the coffin with soil, and compressing the soil until there is a mound. Mourners then begin to leave the urupā, symbolically cleansing themselves with water (or in Northland, bread), and prayer at the gate of the urupā.

The group, on return to the marae may be called back on by a kai karanga. When they return to the marae, there are further karakia and waiata or himene, and finally, the hākari as described next.

**Hākari (Feast, Thanksgiving Meal)**

The Hākari is the feast after the nehunga (burial) which acts to both nurture and whakanoa (lift tapu from) the process and the mourners.

The entire Tangihanga process is a way of farewelling the dead and comforting the living. It is proper, satisfying, comforting, leaving the grieving when all is over with no more tears to shed and fit to take up the business of life once again. Those who have participated feel both emotionally drained and emotionally refreshed (Dansey, 1995; Witana, 1997).
Tapu of the house where a death has occurred

In earlier times, Māori chose to die in the open air. A death occurring in a building, imposes a tapu over the premises. The appropriate ceremony can remove various forms of tapu, but there is perceived something sinister and lingering about a death tapu. Many feel uncomfortable about sleeping where someone has died (Te Rangi Hiroa, 1982). The traditional treatment for the removal of a death tapu over a house was to burn it down. In older times a small dwelling could be burned down or abandoned without much loss but meeting houses were too valuable to be destroyed (Rua, Rua, Te Awekōtuku & Nikora, 2010; Te Rangi Hiroa, 1982).

The only possible way of saving valuable houses was by not allowing anyone to die in them. Thus when patients became seriously ill, they were removed to a temporary shelter quickly made or, in later times, to a tent. For people of note, the temporary shelter or tent was erected near the meeting house and facing out onto the marae. If they died there, no further arrangements were necessary for the next stage in the proceedings (Rua et al, 2010; Te Rangi Hiroa, 1982).

If death occurred elsewhere, the tūpāpaku was conveyed immediately to a shelter or tent near the meeting house so as to face out on the village marae. This was necessary because all public demonstrations of grief by visiting tribes had to take place on the marae. The shelter for the tūpāpaku also accommodated the widow or widower and some of the closest relatives who remained with the body until burial took place. The term whare mate (house of the dead) was applied to the shelter and the people within it. The terms whare potae and whare tauā both mean house of mourning, but they are used figuratively to apply to the period and state of mourning and not to an actual house (Best, 1905; Te Rangi Hiroa, 1982).

Practices other than burning the whare for purification, are more often used in modern times, including Tuhoe, who until recently utilised a temporary whare mate specifically for a tangi, which was subsequently destroyed. Tuhoe now utilise a permanent whare mate (Rua, Rua, Te Awekōtuku & Nikora, 2010).

Modern practices involve the removal of the tapu of death through karakia and the sprinkling of water, or in the North, the use of cooked food (potato or paraoa rewena), to whakanoa or remove tapu.
Takahi Whare (Tramping/Cleansing the House)
Following the Hākari, the Takahi Whare is carried out. Although the deceased has been buried, the tapu and spirit still prevail at home and must be freed, uplifted and encouraged to set out upon their journey. This process involves chanted prayers and the use of water or special food to ensure the spirit of the person does not remain. Following this ceremony, thanks are given to all who participated in helping the family. Warmth and life are brought back into the house. Following this the family is not left alone. Close relatives may stay on for some time, or visit regularly (Tangaroa, 1988), to comfort and raise the spirits of the close bereaved.

Te Kāwe Mate (Carrying the Memory of the deceased)
Some time following the funeral ceremonies, between a month or a year, the relatives of the deceased would form a party and proceed to visit other places and other subtribes or tribes as an uhunga (mourning party). This was to kāwe te mate (convey the death) to other divisions of the tribe, to those with strong whakapapa (genealogical) links to the deceased. When they arrived at a village the party would go through the same weeping and lamentation as already described, with the speeches also of a similar nature. Any and all persons of the two parties who have died since such parties last met to mourn for their dead, would be mourned (Best, 1905). In contemporary times, the bereaved carry a framed portrait of the deceased to display and weep over.

Hura Kōhatu (Headstone Unveiling)
This is the modern day unveiling service and blessing of the gravestone. Dansey (1975) and others have suggested that this practice has replaced the ancient practice of Hahunga, or exhumation and secondary burial process. After the person has been dead for a year or more, the family will then hold a Hura kōhatu service to remember him or her. The stone is covered before sunrise, consonant with the belief that the spirits of those gone and the gods are present watching. The final event in the grieving process is the unveiling of the memorial stone. This takes place some time after the deceased has been buried – from one to five years (Tangaroa, 1988). Sometimes this duration is determined by the financial situation of the bereaved family, or other circumstances such as some of the whānau having chosen to reside in another country (usually for work opportunities), and the need to co-ordinate travel and employment breaks.
Roles of Māori Women in Tangihanga

The above examples of women in leadership are well known. However as a major role-player in the tangihanga, all over Aotearoa women perform daily the practical, the spiritual, the emotional, the directive, the protective, and the ritualistic roles in the context of the dying, the deceased, the funereal, the grieving and the healing aspects of the cycle of life in Māoridom.

Māori women are so intrinsically essential to the tangihanga that it is difficult and perhaps inappropriate to extricate their roles from the beginning to the conclusion of the ceremonial process. Some of Māori womens’ many acts, roles, responses and duties are described above in the general description of the tangihanga process. To follow, are experiences I have had, explanations and subtleties which have been given to me over the years by elders – kuia, or those senior to me who have known tikanga.

Women nurse the dying. They karakia, sing to, awhi and tautoko the dying and the whānau. They ritualistically, spiritually and literally cleanse the body and dress the body for lying in state. They organise much of the practical, and direct protocol where needed. They sit for days in company of the deceased. They karanga (ritualistically chant) the visitors to the tangi. In this karanga they are able to tell the manuhiri any other situation which has occurred – (for example “there are now two bodies at this tangi” (Te Awekōtuku, 1991), which means that the return call must reflect understanding and acknowledgement of that information. The karanga has a mystical aspect to it which elicits truly emotional weeping in the staunchest of mourners. It is an invitation to the dead, as well as the living, whose voices respond.

On the manuhiri side, the women lead by their karanga, the manuhiri on to the marae. While doing this they are also invoking the spirits of the related deceased, honouring the deceased lying in state, and bringing a mutuality of shared grief as a Tāonga to the host side. If they have been told anything during the host side’s karanga, they must adjust and respond to that call, both listening and calling at the same time, a highly skilled act. They direct the less sure where to sit or stand, both on the tangata whenua side and the manuhiri side.
When physical movement has settled, Māori women continue lamenting in the apakura, an emotion-rendering vocal act which is quieter, but as powerful as the karanga. In doing this they “hold” in a spiritual and actual way, the process of the tangihanga. They intuitively know and decide what the duration of this ritual should be.

Māori women at a tangi are able to subtly admonish and cause “bad behaviour” (by anyone) to cease, in many and varied powerful ways. They know, choose and sing or chant in ritualistic support of the speaker. They can even dictate (if they wish), the profoundness or depth of the waiata in response to their opinion of the whaikōrero or speech. They are able to stop or curtail a whaikōrero if it is deemed inappropriate, and sometimes even if it is too long, by standing and beginning a waiata.

When formal ceremonies are over and it is time for hōngi and harirū (handshaking, hugging in some instances if close), women again help direct the unsure. They keep the line moving in a seemly and subtle way, acknowledge the mana of, and warm the visitors with the depth of their greeting, even through grief.

At this stage the host women indicate the “release” of the manuhiri from the situation of immediate mourning, determine whether the ringawera (those in charge of the nurturing and whakanoa function of provision of kai (food and a cup of tea). They assist those who wish to use the ablutions (both for practical reasons and to spiritually cleanse) to find the wharepaku (toilet blocks). They relieve the whānau pani in staying by the deceased should the whānau need to be spelled momentarily.

All of the above described will be repeated many times throughout the tangi, and many other duties may be forthcoming during the tangihanga. A tremendous spirit and endurance is required of these women, which is untold by them. It is hoped that some justice has been given and will be given with gravity and respect by this research.

In this chapter I have described the traditional procedural processes which were and still are sequentially carried out around and after the death of a person. I have noted that in these modern times and particularly among urban-based Māori there may be
variations on these procedures, although at the same time, the inner psychological or spiritual meaning may be held by the whānau pani (the mourning family).
CHAPTER FOUR: THE WIDER CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

In this chapter I discuss the diverse situation we as modern Māori find ourselves. I describe some of the historical influences which helped bring about our changes, and note that yet we continue to share many experiences. The perpetuation of Tangihanga as a grief process is one important way in which our culture has survived with resilience against many oppositional factors. Māori urbanisation, pressures of employment, the role of Christianity, and other practical considerations are described to inform and contextualise the many considerations which are required of Māori women arranging, attending, working at and through, and grieving at tangihanga.

Māori Diversity and Commonalities

Māori are not a singular homogenous group. Māori are diverse. This diversity may relate to tribal differences, socio-economic circumstances, acculturation, cultural affiliation, different levels of access to the Māori world and language (Durie, 2003e). However, while acknowledging diversity, there are also commonalities of experience collectively shared by Māori as an ethnic and cultural group (Smith, 1996; Durie, 2001). Regardless of the two factors, despite the diverse realities of Māori, most Māori prefer to identify as Māori.

As described by Nikora (personal communication, July 2014) in the 21st Century living as Māori has increasingly diversified. Māori have become urbanised, have engaged mainstream New Zealand, have formed unions with people of contrasting cultures with families and whānau becoming culturally blended, and of course inventive. With this new cultural diversity there have evolved new cultural ways of engaging with life and being in life engaging with the Māori world experienced episodically (Metge 1964; Salmond, 1975) through holidays and visits to iwi homelands and whānau now living at a distance from each other, to marae of strangeness, and people unfamiliar (Nikora, personal communication, July 2014). Therefore there is a wide continuum of familiarity Maori women feel when attending tangihanga, with the most benefit being accrued by those who understand and feel comfortable within the rituals.
The Perpetuation of Tangihanga

It has been an accepted principle that cultures evolve and change with the passage of time (Dansey, 1995). Conjecture and educated estimation can only suggest to us how tangihanga would be conducted had Aotearoa remained somehow untouched by or isolated from other peoples. However, we should acknowledge that majority culture through the power of law, employment, health, religion, economics, technology, education, the media and at times a general lack of cultural understanding and empathy, has influenced or imposed change on the tangihanga process. However death and tangihanga have never stopped being important and being acknowledged in ritualistic ways, much as they have for centuries.

Social influences affect how much we as Māori lean towards the perpetuation of our death traditions. Upbringing, exposure to tangihanga, comprehension of expectations, explanations, spiritual reasoning, and at times opposition by influential others. Whānau who have adopted “western” practices due to religion or western upbringing, cross-cultural marriages where one parent influences the process towards or away from tradition, can cause opposition.

Rosenblatt (1997) described the tensions and heartaches of competing and incompatible death rituals. This is referring to societies where acculturation has occurred and people are conflicted by having mixed understandings of death, grief, the spiritual world, and traditional rituals (Rosenblatt, 1997), very much as has occurred in New Zealand. It is acknowledged that across cultures, there is a well-documented tendency for family tensions and conflicts to occur or intensify quite commonly in the emotionally charged atmosphere of grief and mourning following the death of a family member.

Māori Urbanisation

One of the very influential factors in the historical context of how Māori lived, was the advent of Māori urbanisation. This was socially engineered during the 1930’s, when the Department of Labour and Employment directed many Māori to work in essential industries in the cities. This was apparently seen as a positive move and strongly encouraged by many of the Māori tribal committees of the day (Orange, 2003). Many rural Māori also moved of their own accord to assist with the War effort, while others were attracted by the availability of employment and higher
wages in the urban setting. Education was another key motivator, although secondary schooling was not compulsory at that time. Work and social activities were probably the greater attraction for young people (Broughton, Grace, Ramsden & Dennis, 2001).

Between 1950 and 1980, 60% of the Māori population moved from rural areas to cities and towns (Taonui, 2013). Many of these migrants were willing to escape the poverty of their tribal homelands, albeit a situation which could bring about loneliness and culture shock (e.g. Nikora, Guerin, Rua & Te Awekōtuku, 2004). Between 1840 and 1950 tribes had lost 95% of their lands, and rural Māori families were often forced to survive on low incomes from labouring and seasonal work. Despite moving to the cities they largely remained at the lower end of the economic scale, but urban poverty was seen as the preferable option to rural destitution (Taonui, 2013), with higher incomes and a wider range of more regular employment opportunities (Nikora, Guerin, Rua & Te Awekōtuku, 2004; Taonui, 2013).

Taonui (2013) described the situation of urban Māori as becoming concentrated in areas of poorer housing such as Aranui in Christchurch, Porirua in Wellington, and Ōtara, Ōtāhuhu and Ponsonby in Auckland. They often experienced discrimination and prejudice in education, health, housing and work opportunities. Urban Māori were doubly alienated, as they were rejected by the dominant Pākehā culture and yet lived at a distance from their centres of traditional culture (Taonui, 2013).

Another factor increasing Māori urban drift was the exposure to the greater world brought about by World War II. Different life experiences brought about a worldliness and adventurousness which were infectious to friends and whānau who had grown up in the rural lifestyle. In addition, some moved simply to escape, or avoid conflicts at home (Collette and O’Malley 1974; Hohepa, 1964; Metge 1964; Ritchie 1963).

At the same time, the Māori population more than doubled its size between 1936 and 1961, partly due to a decreasing mortality rate, particularly infant mortality (McCreary 1968). This placed pressure on rural lifestyles and on Māori families reliant on lands which had become fragmented by Pākehā “land legislation” (Davey and Kearns 1994; Scott and Kearns 2000).
Many Māori were prevented from building on their own land. Without the ability to build housing on their own lands that had been set aside as “papakainga” lands (Davey and Kearns, 1994), many simply had no choice but to migrate and find shelter elsewhere. For these reasons, a large proportion of younger Māori, as well as some older, moved away from homelands and into the city. This situation made great differences to the predominantly rural Marae, particularly in terms of continuing to commemorate and grieve the dead in tangihanga, given that many were now living and working in towns and cities.

Nikora, Guerin, Rua & Te Awekōtuku (2004) documented the social consequences for Tuhoe in migrating to the Waikato for studies and employment, in these current times. Loneliness for their homeland, the expense of frequent trips home for replenishing visits or tangihanga was reported as making things difficult for urban-based Tuhoe, although there were also positive effects such as a strengthening of pride in tribal identity. These issues, perhaps less documented, occurred for other iwi throughout the country.

**Christianity**

A huge influence on both traditional (Māori) culture and western culture, has been both the influence of Christianity, and its subsequent waning. Walter (1997, p169), stated that “the business of dying in the West is today a very largely a secular affair...Modern death is therefore characterised by tension and accommodation between Christian ideas and secular, rational processes” (Walter, 1997, p169). In Aotearoa, it has been noted that there is a further tension and accommodation – Christian ideas, secular, “rational” processes, and cultural beliefs and processes (Salmond, 1975). Some of my case studies demonstrate that there need not be a tension, because several of the women have reconciled their cultural and religious beliefs quite comfortably, in ways which make personal “sense”.

Two reasons are suggested for the growth in popularity of secular funerals in Britain (and perhaps by inference Aotearoa/New Zealand, where church attendance and the normality of regular contact with the vicar or priest have become far less frequent). These are firstly, a move towards the integrity of death rituals matching the chosen life of the deceased. Secondly and following from the increased secularity of
society, it is less likely that the priest, minister, funeral director or “celebrant” has knowledge of the deceased or the mourners (Walter, 1997).

Whereas in non-western societies death ritual often provides an important rite of passage both for the bereaved and the deceased, this does not seem the case for the role of contemporary Western funerals. Rather, there arose a post war cultural ideal of a quiet and undemonstrative funeral process (Martins, 1983). This may have been consistent with the traditional British middle and upper class cultures, whereby excessive displays of emotion were viewed as inappropriate (Hockey, 1993).

Hockey (1993) interviewed a range of British clergy whose views of emotional expression at funerals reflected an effort to change in response to the new understanding that the controlled release of emotion at funerals may be an emotionally healthy behaviour, to be encouraged. However, in the examples given by Hockey, the quoted “permission giving” statements designed as encouragement to grieve more transparently, were in themselves reflective of an unconscious judgement. Implicit in many of the provisions of advice was the implication that the expression of emotion is not socially comfortable, but as specialists of the realm of death, the clergy can tolerate emotion because they now know it is better for the bereaved.

Similarly while attempting to be flexible to adapt to modern families’ desires to bring their own input to the funeral, some of Hockey’s interviewees expressed prejudice against change, emotion and spontaneity, citing potential emotional expression which may embarrass everyone involved (Hockey, 1993).

This cultural interpretation showed an incomprehension and intolerance of the natural expression of emotion, the empathy, love and compassion of the mourners gathered, and the tribute towards the deceased person. Apart from the primary elements of grief and acknowledgement, the basic behavioural requirement of a funeral service was the repression of visible emotions (Hockey, 1993).

**The reciprocation of influence**

Following the settlement of Europeans in Aotearoa, (ie, post contact), western values have been imposed on traditional Māori tangihanga practices, initially by the
adoption of various forms of Christianity. Dansey (1995) remarked that Māori could be found whose basic attitudes are little changed, although the forms by which these attitudes were expressed may well be quite different. On the other hand adherence to a religious faith which has come into the country in the period since first contact, may have brought about attitudes which are the same as anyone else who subscribes to that faith (Dansey, 1995; Salmond, 1975).

Many aspects of the cultural processes of tangihanga have continued to be strongly embraced by Māori despite being an indigenous people outnumbered extensively by people from another culture. Māori culture remains rich in tradition, with death and mourning rituals remaining fundamentally intact among traditional Māori. At a tangihanga one of the major objectives is the elicitation and validation of emotions.

The wider culture of Aotearoa has in many instances adopted some modified aspects of tangihanga practice, particularly in terms of the deceased being brought home, to lie ‘in state’ among the mourners. While acknowledging that the Irish Wake has also been influential, and Pacific cultures residing in Aotearoa have similar practices, tangihanga is the practice to which most non-Māori have been exposed. This is particularly due to intermarriage in its various forms, and to the combining of whakapapa with all the relevant implications.

Media attention to the tangihanga of well-known personages such as Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu (McRae, 2010), Sir Howard Morrison, and the weaver Diggeress Te Rangiuatahi Te Kanawa, entertainer William Taitoko (Billy T. James) and his whānau (Nikora, Te Awekōtuku and Tamanui, 2013), and long term Labour Member of Parliament Parekura Horomia, whose tangi was actually “live streamed” to the public via the media.

An inference could be taken that those who have adopted parts of tangihanga practice have also seen and experienced the efficacy of these practices in facilitating the experience of grief.

**Employment pressures**

In spite of the acceptance, respect and even adoption in some cases of the principles of Māori cultural practices, New Zealand employment support for those undergoing
grief do not necessarily reflect this minority view. For people who are in paid employment, there is frequently pressure to return to work before the bereaved may be ready. This may be perceived as greater for Māori because of the extra time and practical considerations around tangihanga.

Bereavement leave in employment situations tend to have defined and limited boundaries, usually from days to two to three weeks. For a longer period many employees are expected to apply for “special leave”, “sick leave”, or “annual leave”, and they may experience both employer and social pressure if they exceed the “normal” time for grief. Employees may be offered psychological or counseling services in order to speed their return to functioning in the employment sphere.

Similarly, Breen & O’Connor (2007) found in their Australian study of grief that many informants were concerned following the deaths of their loved ones about getting time off from paid work. Most reported that their employers allowed them to take time off, but decisions to return to work were significantly influenced by economic concerns, and most participants re-commenced work within a few weeks of their loss. The workplace culture was described as tending to avoid, ignore and disenfranchise grief by promoting the notion that grief in the workplace was inappropriate or unacceptable (Breen & O’Connor, 2007), and the equation of time and money precluded a place for grief (cf. Kugelmann, 1992).

**General Public misperceptions of Tangihanga**

Contentious funeral arrangements of less public families have both informed and misinformed the general public. Of the less public, focus is often on the cross-culturally misunderstood controversies involving the rights of non-Māori bereaved in the context of iwi claiming the deceased (Tomas 2008) such as the contentious case of James Takamore and his long term partner Denise Clarke. This situation has just been announced in the news (July, 2014) as a High Court ruling whereby the tūpāpaku of Mr Takamore was to be exhumed from his hapu ūrupā after years of litigation, and buried at a place of Ms Clarke’s choosing. However the latest turn of events has proven otherwise.
These public debates have at times created discomfort for other Māori who have engaged in bi-cultural relationships and for those who have been looked to for representation and interpretation of their Tikanga or cultural practice by non-Māori.

The practice of tono in claiming the tūpāpaku is common and is indicative more of aroha for the deceased, and concern for the ongoing care and remembrance of the person than the power and control issues which may be perceived by Western media and the non-Māori public.

Yet in spite of the protestations which occurred in this act and those cases which have been described in the media, in Te Ao Māori (the Māori world or culture), it is more widely understood. Claiming the tūpāpaku of relatives is a practice which honours the deceased and their significant relationships, aspires to enhance togetherness across time and space, and addresses the ongoing spiritual and mental wellbeing of the loved ones and those remaining (Nikora et al, 2013).

If there is to be a tono, it could be debated in many different locations shortly after death. These include hospitals, funeral homes, private homes, community halls and marae. Tono are not always angry disputes and are most commonly resolved early in the mourning period so that the tangihanga is able to proceed peacefully (Nikora et al, 2013).

In the Māori world, the value of the individual embodies, reflects, magnifies and is magnified by the mana of the collective people who grieve and honour that individual.

This chapter has been written to provide an informative background, contextualising the many procedures, thoughts, prayers, acts of devotion, belief systems and practical considerations which are required of Māori women. In particular this is a background from which the eight participants who have informed this thesis, stand out as diverse exemplars of the many paths of Māoritanga (in this instance, “being Māori”) as they expressed and experienced their grief, loss, and subsequent healing or adjustment, after losing a beloved person in their lives.
CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

Research Objectives and Methodology

Research Objectives
This study involved an intensive examination of all of the healing elements of tangihanga as experienced and described by certain women of whānau pani, the immediately bereaved. It explored tangihanga practices and the processes of grief and loss experienced by the female bereaved, in this cultural context.

For this research I interviewed eight female Māori participants who had lost significant loved ones to death, had been through the tangihanga process, gradual recovery from grief, and life in the following period. The Aim was to:

- describe processes of grief and healing through the cultural process of tangihanga.
- identify key themes in accounts of the grief and healing processes
- particularly examining cultural and culturally defined gender contributors to recovery
- describe the impact of the experience of grief on the life participants lead subsequently.

This subject has not been comprehensively researched, and the many factors which interacted on each other from inner (psychological) and external factors, made it important that these narratives were contextualised stories of recovery from loss and grief investigated within the fullness of their cultural, social, economic, political, spiritual, emotional and gender specific environments.

The Academic Context of this Research
This study represented but one aspect of a much larger study conducted under the auspices of the Tangi Research Project led by project leaders Linda Waimarie Nikora and Ngāhuia Te Awekōtuku. The departments involved were the Māori and Psychology Research Unit (MPRU) and the School of Māori and Pacific Development (SMPD), Waikato University. The project leaders held a profound awareness of the element of spiritual risk, and the sensitivity and guidance required
for the study of this subject. Therefore, two tohunga (ritual experts) and an ordained Anglican deacon were involved in all aspects of the programme (Nikora & Te Awekōtuku, 2013).

Although I was part of a larger team, “The Tangihanga Research Project” studying many other aspects of death, dying, grief and tangihanga, I chose the particular area of research, conducted the research in this thesis (under supervision): planning, literature search, the ethical proposal, conducting multiple interviews per participant and transcribing. I carried out all subsequent analysis, writing of findings and discussion. The subjective and experiential orientation of the project lent itself to the use of thematic and narrative analysis techniques to investigate themes and processes; these are described more fully in the later section on methodology. Particular attention was paid to levels of cultural comfort and the potential intervention of acculturation in decision-making and experiences of expressing and recovering from grief.

This thesis is a specific but significant part of the entire research area regarding Māori death, bereavement, grief, the tangihanga process and many other aspects of this broad topic, both historical and current.

**Methodology**

In this part of the chapter I will describe the methodological approaches chosen for this research. This includes describing the methods I employed to collect data, defining and discussing the approaches I chose to utilise. In addition, I will discuss participation recruitment, the interview process and ethical issues which I needed to address.

I used in this research an approach known as Bricolage (Derrida, 1981), or a combination of methodological approaches. This involved utilising whatever methodologies were available and appropriate. If one methodology proved unhelpful, it could be disregarded and another more proficient for the research taken up. In utilising Bricolage, I brought together a set of methodological tools which not only opened up my methodological approach, but raised the importance of discussing some of the dilemmas faced by myself as a researcher (Grafanaki, 1996).
As researchers draw together divergent forms of research, they gain the unique insight of multiple perspectives. Thus, a complex understanding of research and knowledge production prepares bricoleurs to address the complexities of the social, cultural, psychological, and educational domains. Sensitive to complexity, bricoleurs use multiple methods to uncover new insights, expand and modify old principles, and re-examine accepted interpretations in unanticipated contexts (Kincheloe, 2001).

Using any methods necessary to gain new perspectives on objects of inquiry, bricoleurs employ the principle of difference not only in research methods but in cross-cultural analysis as well. In this domain, bricoleurs explore the different perspectives of the socially privileged and the marginalized in relation to formations of race, class, gender, and sexuality (McLeod, 2000; Pryse, 1998; Young & Yarbrough, 1993; cited in Kincheloe, 2001).

Comprehending my personal process was important to how I utilised the methodology and the methods I had chosen. In the next section I explain why this is so, and also describe other recommended aspects of research which assisted in strengthening the integrity of the research. In my own “tool kit” or bricolage of research methods I used Qualitative Research, Self-Reflection, Reflexivity, Autoethnography, Narrative Interviewing, Kaupapa Māori research, and Case Study Methodology.

The Rationale for using Qualitative rather than Quantitative Research methods
Theory in the field of mortality research has had its genesis in both qualitative and quantitative methodology (Thorson, 1996). Quantitative methods reached ascendency in the 1990’s when academic prejudice against non data-based research existed. Debates existed about issues of objectivity and detachment and it has been argued that the subjectivity of qualitative research can blur findings and cause problems with reliability of data gained from participants (Oakley, 2000). However it has increasingly become clear that qualitative research methods more appropriately and adequately represent the experiences of the bereaved than quantitative, positivistic methods (Fleming & Robinson, 2001; Riches & Dawson, 1996; Silverman & Klass, 1996).
A central feature of most qualitative research is the interactive nature of data collection, which generally involves direct and meaningful communication between the researchers and the participants. A qualitative approach to bereavement research also makes possible the exploration of questions regarding meaning, experience and understanding after the death of a loved one, the results of which contribute to an ever-developing model of grief that focuses on the complexity of human relationships and the connectedness of individuals to those living and to those who have died (Neimeyer & Hogan, 2001; Silverman & Klass, 1996). The focus is the achievement of understanding, the recognition of collaboration with participants, and an emphasis on holism, acknowledgement of all contextual issues (Rennie, 1994, 1995a, 1995b).

Having previously utilised a qualitative approach to my Masters thesis (Paterson, 1993), I knew the benefits of qualitative research methods to explore sensitive subjects related to Māori womens’ life experiences. A greater depth of unexpected information was able to be explored, a far greater level of trust and interaction was achieved, and in general the strength of the participants’ voices was heard clearly in an holistic and empathetic context.

*The Emotional Experience of Death and Bereavement Research*

For qualitative researchers it is important to be clear about whether we are causing or exacerbating pain when we ask research participants about their experience of the death of their loved one, or whether we are rather bearing witness to the pain that is already there.

Many Western researchers report experiencing a level of discomfort with witnessing intense emotion, especially what they refer to as ‘negative’ emotion (eg. sadness). Fear and avoidance of intense emotion expressed by some Western researchers can lead to a conclusion that it is best not to ask about topics that could elicit an emotional response. This cultural norm can leave bereaved individuals feeling isolated in their experience as a result of no one talking about their deceased loved one, appearing to have forgotten him or her (Buckle, Dwyer & Jackson, 2009).
The research that one undertakes is loaded with emotional content in that the researcher is expected to have an emotional attachment to their topic, which must be played out through the ‘passionate’ immersion in the topic whilst retaining the critical capacity to reflect contemplatively (Bondi, 2005). While emotions are argued to interfere with the rationalism of research and can be considered the rationalist’s ‘other’, emotions are intrinsically interwoven into research.

As a Māori researcher the advantage of having a life experience of familial or cultural comfort with emotionality can have the benefit of transmitting a sense of comfort and ease to the participant in distress. The interpersonal relationship between researcher and participant is fundamental in qualitative research. The rapport and trust which develop, allow for a deepening of our comprehension of what we are studying (Cartwright & Limandri, 1997). Qualitative research is emotionally involving in ways seldom experienced in quantitative research (Rennie, 1994).

Qualitative researchers need to be empathic listeners with an emphasis on partnership between the researcher and participant (Schulz, 2000). The relationship should have an emphasis on equality (Kvale, 1996; Schulz, 2000). Qualitative researchers should be prepared to ask about experiences that are painful, and thus empathetically listen to the person, particularly if he or she is distressed. Bereaved participants almost always expect the discussion of their losses to be painful, but do not tend to be deterred by this expectation. Most bereaved participants welcome the opportunity to express their grief and may take exception to the researcher attempting to interrupt or circumvent their pain (Parkes, 1995).

With “witnessing” or participating in the sharing of a painful bereavement story comes a sense of empathic responsibility which is an intrinsic part of the process. Collaboration and empowerment have the potential to be therapeutic for the participant. Participants often feel helped by the research interview and can benefit directly from the experience. Therefore, by the expression of grief in an empathetic situation, the participant experiences healing as well as benefitting the researcher and the consumers of the research (Buckle, Dwyer & Jackson, 2009).
Tolich (2002, pg 166) went so far as to say that “what an informant says about a topic (for example, grief), may harm the researcher”. The ability of the researcher to cope with their emotions (Cook & Bosley, 1995; Hynson et al., 2006), is among the most appreciated qualities the interviewer can show are compassion, authentic interest, warmth, kindness, being non-judgmental, and listening attentively (Cook & Bosley, 1995; Hynson et al., 2006).

On this final point, in Western research this would signify empathy without actually crying with the participant. In Māori culture, some participants might be comforted, gratified, and listened to, should the researcher demonstrate empathic emotion. Here there is a major difference in cultural expectations, with Western researchers perhaps citing boundary issues with over-empathising, and Māori participants experiencing “coldness”, with insufficient empathy.

**Self-Reflection and Reflexivity**

*Self Reflection*

The researcher needs to have an honest, clear and self-reflective relationship with herself based on what she brings to the process (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & Steinmetz, 1991). The illusion of neutrality must be acknowledged in any research endeavour. The extent to which researchers recognize and document their subjectivity and bias is all important (Buckle, Dwyer & Jackson, 2009). Qualitative researchers need to identify their theoretical orientation, expectations, assumptions, values, previous relevant experience and any other aspect of their world view which may play a role in the execution of the research interview and in the analysis of data (Elliott, Fischer, and Rennie, 1999).

Practiced self-reflection assists in identifying other influences contributing to the researcher’s subjectivity. This process does not negate the influences but in developing personal awareness, the researcher can acknowledge her pre-existing biases, allowing the participants and consumers of the research to have awareness of the researcher’s identified subjectivity. The researcher’s relationship with herself can enhance the beneficial aspects of the research experience for the participant.

The qualitative researcher acknowledges and values subjectivity, both in the researcher and the participant (Rennie, 1994; 1995c). Thereby the participant is
alerted to the idea that the researcher values personal experience, and that the in-depth interview demonstrates that the researcher finds their personal, subjective perspective important and interesting. Therefore, not unlike the therapy context, many participants find this interaction validating and therapeutic.

The awareness of subjectivity should facilitate the goal of understanding the phenomenon of interest within the participant. Sharing subjective experience with the participant can be better achieved by initially clarifying points of confusion or misunderstanding. The researcher may also identify personal reactions and work towards putting these aside to maintain focus on the participant’s perspective (Rennie, 1994; 1995c).

The important principles of self-reflection are honesty, clarity and owning my perspective (Elliott, Fischer, and Rennie, 1999) as the researcher. This implies personal control, personal responsibility and personal creativity (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & Steinmetz, 1991). Journaling my own thoughts, insights and processes throughout the interviews and data gathering and analysis was helpful in maintaining a balance.

The process involved exploration of my own experiences, the interaction between my own intuitive processes and those of the participants, explanations of the decisions taken through the course of interviewing and data analysis; and working through of any issues arising relevant to engaging participants (eg Carroll, 2001). In this way, my own experiences became an explicit part of the data set, making transparent my own assumptions, biases and views.

Other opportunities I had to reflect and discuss ideas were regular wānanga and hui where I was able to present and/or discuss with other Tangi project students and stakeholders (Māori community members) the issues of topic, process and progress. Of course there was regular supervision to keep “fuelling” the direction in which I was heading as a researcher. Public presentations about our projects also provided feedback and stimulated thought.

**Autoethnography**

Autoethnography arose after Postmodernism inspired a "crisis of confidence" in the 1980’s which introduced new opportunities to reform social science and re-
conceive the objectives and forms of social science inquiry. Scholars became troubled by social science's ontological, epistemological, and axiological limitations (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Stories were identified as complex, constitutive, meaningful phenomena that taught morals and ethics, introduced unique ways of thinking and feeling, and helped people make sense of themselves and others (Adams, 2008; Bochner, 2001, 2002). Also there was an increasing need to resist colonialist, sterile research impulses of authoritatively entering a culture, exploiting cultural members, and then leaving to write about the culture while disregarding relational ties to cultural members (Ellis, 2007; Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011).

Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience. This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act. A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography. Thus, as a method, autoethnography is both process and product (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011).

Autoethnography is a “genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural” (Ellis & Bochner, 2003, p. 209). Auto-ethnography is a story-telling activity (Jones, 2003). Story-telling has a strong tradition in Indigenous cultures and therefore has come to be recognized as a powerful tool within Indigenous research (Smith, 1999).

Auto-ethnography can thus provide a subjective narrative of a particular person’s experiences. It allows for personal voice and ownership of one’s lived experiences, as interpreted and related by that particular individual. A sense of personal exposure and vulnerability may occur, with a sense of introspection and reflexivity, from which it can be difficult to extricate oneself for the purposes of an academic exercise.

Autoethnography attempts to extract meaning from experiences, rather than to offer a purely descriptive account of the lived experience (Adams & Jones, 2008). It is
“analytically reflexive”, creating spaces for dialogue to extend to include informants beyond the self, thus offering insights into theorizing social and cultural realities (Adams & Jones, 2008, p. 375).

Having experienced various forms of grief and loss in my own life, and also having worked with many others in grief, I did not expect to experience difficulty in immersing myself in the subject. I would be able to empathise with my participants but not so become so over-involved that my emotions prevented me from keeping a focus on the narrative of my participants.

**Reflexivity:**
Reflexivity refers to the process of examining, monitoring and revising relevant beliefs and practices as conditions evolve (Giddens, 1990). Reflexivity works on many levels. The researcher works to question the relationship between herself and the participant by acknowledging similarities and differences. By doing this she positions herself and recognises the bias in herself as the researcher (Rose, 1997). Power differences and similarities are reviewed in the light of our personal beliefs and ideologies (Selket, 2002). There is a great importance in acknowledging how the researcher’s work is affected by these factors (Haraway, 1991; Harding, 2000) because ignoring this causes a potential risk of misrepresenting the information provided by the participants.

**Reflexive, Auto-Ethnographic Accounts**
As recommended in the literature described above, I utilised self-observation, supervision and journaling. I was in a constant process of examining my own life experience and attempting to be sure that my empathy did not involve a belief that my experience was the same as that of participants. As described above I needed to own and rectify potential power imbalances and misunderstandings. My own upbringing, cultural and socio-economic experiences growing up were different from some of those of my participants, and as such I needed to monitor and analyse the expression of my subjective reactions to the narratives I heard. As the researcher I worked to achieve honesty, clarity and self-reflection about owning my own perspective (Elliott, Fischer, and Rennie, 1999). This implied personal control, personal responsibility and personal creativity (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & Steinmetz, 1991).
A typical page example is included as Appendix VI to exemplify some excerpts of my own reflexive, auto-ethnographic accounts. An additional exercise I undertook (but do not include) was writing up my own experience of the death and tangihanga of my mother. In doing this I was inspired by Ballard (2009), who wrote the very moving “Grandpa’s Call: Conscience, Ethics, and Aporias”, both as the grandson of his dying grandfather, and as an academic engaged in Communication Ethics. This was an extremely emotional exercise which in a way I made difficult by describing my story to my computer, not having a person sitting with me. Of course I discussed the emotional experience during supervision on the subject, but this was after the telling.

As a qualitative researcher I recognised the need to demonstrate skills of self-reflection and be able to identify their theoretical orientation, expectations, assumptions, values, previous relevant experience and any manner in which my world view which could affect the integrity of the research (cf Buckle, Dwyer, & Jackson, 2009). While these efforts still do not result in neutrality in any research endeavour, as the researcher I would be more able to recognize and document my subjectivity and bias.

Valentine (2005) proposed the importance of the researcher thinking about her own identity, and how that identity will shape the interactions that she has with others. This process is known as positionality, and involves the practice of engaging in self-reflexivity (Valentine, 2005). By identifying and utilising various positionalities and incorporating them into the methods I used, I was attempting, as the researcher, to recognise power relationships between the participants and myself.

Bereavement research from a participant-centred perspective
Research participants contribute enormously to the progress and promise of research in advancing the human condition. Participants’ interests are central to the research and that they are much more than subjects to be studied. Interactive methodology implies a much more active and meaningful role and sense of ownership for the participants (Stanley and Wise, 1993). Additionally, in a participant-centred perspective, the researcher takes a role of the learner (Glesne, 1999).
Even within the same study, individual participants may have a different understanding of the information provided in the informed consent process. For this reason, accuracy, honesty and sensitivity in informing potential participants about proposed research helps to build a trusting relationship between researcher and participant.

Participants in qualitative bereavement research frequently realize benefits as a result of their participation. Although researchers are not acting as therapists in the qualitative interview, it is important to be cognisant of the often painful issues associated with grief and loss and the skills required to appropriately interview individuals about this topic (Cook, 1995; Parkes, 1995). Researchers should receive sufficient training to conduct the interview in a professional and supportive manner, with knowledge of the process and expression of grief (Dyregrov, 2004; Hynson et al., 2006; Parkes, 1995).

The desire to integrate the politics and practice of social science with the nearness and power of death has motivated reflexive ethnographies (eg. Behar, 1996; Shepard, 2002). The work of culture has allowed exploration of how the personal and the professional are able to be combined to explore the depths of death ritual and bereavement.

Panourgia’s (1995) personal and professional ethnography of Athenian death encompassed the above theoretical and experiential advice, while speaking through her indigeneity as the ethnographer (Friedl, 1997). Apart from her theoretical interests in self, other, and the double roles in her research, what I found validating was that as a native researcher/participant she was an expert describer of self-in-family. She described instances of inclusion and exclusion from family identity and property (Panourgia, 1995).

Points of cooperation and events which caused long-lasting conflict were so similar to the many complexities of Māori whānau that it felt like she gave permission for these events, loyalties, rivalries and insults to be truly relevant to the discussion of current cultural events. She defined the cultural rules, discussed deviations from the rules, and consequences of not abiding by them. These very human events were
echoed in the case studies of my own participants thus sharing elements of the human condition which brought me a feeling of likeness to our two cultures.

Narrative Interviews
The fundamental element of qualitative research is narrative. Observation of events and experiences are interpreted to make sense out of what has happened in our lives. Narrative is the universal means of this interpretation. People use inductive reasoning to draw generalizations from particular observations, and in a sense it is therefore believed to be trans-cultural (Thorson, 1996).

Whereas deduction, quantification, and uses of logical empiricism are viewed as characteristic of Western modes of thinking, narrative is seen by some to transcend culture because virtually all cultures rely on narrative. Various permutations of narrative have importance to all people, and what we learn of other cultures is interesting mostly in that these elements of humanity have common roots (Thorson, 1996).

Narrative Psychology refers to researching experiences through participants’ stories, with “story” meaning any account comprised of events ordered into a sequence over time. This is a natural form of daily communication, by which people assemble order and meaning in our lives, finding sense by analysing experiences, understanding our own and others’ feelings and behaviour. The stories people tell convey their own perspectives on events. The listener hears the communicator’s perspective of what occurred, but also filters the information through his or her own experiences, and both parties construct a consensual truth and understanding (Lapsley, Nikora, & Black, 2002).

Ethical Issues
There were many ethical concerns to be considered in embarking upon this research, as described in previous qualitative bereavement studies (e.g., Buckle, Dwyer, & Jackson, 2009). These included protocols for culturally appropriate selection and interviewing procedures. A high priority was identified as working with the sensitivity consonant with the vulnerability of those undergoing the process of loss and grief. In the instance of my research, the loss was not necessarily a recent one, but I was extremely aware that grief feelings may remain fresh and be awakened on discussion, even after years since the bereavement.
To explain, the core aspect of data collection, the interactive nature direct and meaningful communication between the researchers and the participants is frequently flagged as the most potentially harmful aspect of qualitative bereavement research by research ethics boards (Buckle, Dwyer & Jackson, 2009). Naturally, the bereaved have been conceptualized as vulnerable and in need of protection in the research process.

Researchers are warned about the inherent dangers of our positions within powerful institutions such as universities. These dangers could begin at the very moment a researcher identified the field of investigation, however with the well-being of, and correct ethical approach to, the community of interest, risk is greatly minimised. Researchers are encouraged to actively clarify, to think about the ways in which their identity can influence their interactions with participants (McDowell, 1992).

The researcher can hold a privileged position, especially in the early stage of the interviewing process (Rose, 1993; 1997; McLafferty, 1995; Gilbert 1994). The researcher decides the topic of investigation, who the participants might be, and how potential participants will be approached. The researcher also decides what the questions will be, and how the questions will be asked. Some of the interview criteria are at times (although not in this instance) imposed upon the researcher through funding criteria guidelines, supervisors, and departmental requirements. Therefore the power balance may be seen to flow and not necessarily be stable. For this reason my own “positionality”, described above, was revealed in the Introduction of this thesis.

On a positive note, two bereavement research studies where both the researcher-participant relationship and the research interview were perceived as beneficial by participants were described by Buckle, Dwyer & Jackson (2009). I was also able to predict from my training and background in clinical psychology, that an interview process exploring the complex, personal issues of grief could well be experienced as beneficial to participants, and this was indeed reported to be the case by most of my interviewees following their participation.
The issue of informed consent

The qualitative researcher is in a personal interaction with the participant, actively witnessing the impact of the interview process while participating, and able to address concerns that arise (Grafanaki, 1996). Therefore the qualitative interview is probably the most effective of all research methods at assessing ongoing informed consent. Process consent is a mutually negotiated, ongoing progress (Smythe & Murray, 2000) integrated into the continuing relationship between researcher and participant (Burgess, 2007). At the same time opportunities arise to erase the differential power relationships between researchers and participants (Halse & Honey, 2005).

In the instance of this thesis, the interview questions were guidelines only, and a more flexible and negotiated process occurred, in accordance with appropriate cultural norms of behaviour. Initially I verbally explained the purposes for exploration of the research topic, followed by providing each participant with a research summary sheet to read and keep. Next, if each participant agreed to continue, I read out the consent form and asked each participant to date and sign it. The consent form is included as Appendix IV and includes the possibility of withdrawing from the research process at any stage prior to submission and printing. Issues which assisted the continuation of trust were recommendations from one to another if participants were known to each other (naturally not mentioned by me, participants were anonymous from my perspective but if they chose to disclose to others that was their choice to do).

Kaupapa Māori Research methods

Kaupapa Māori Research, an indigenous approach to research which was developed in New Zealand. This ethos and methodology emerged out of growing discontent with traditional (Pākehā) research disrupting and mis-representing Māori life and culture. Kaupapa (agenda/philosophy) Māori research challenges the dominance of the Pākehā worldview in research, in parallel with the manner in which feminist research challenged patriarchal thought and methodology.

Kaupapa Māori research emerged from within the wider ethnic revitalisation movement that developed in New Zealand following the rapid Māori urbanisation of the post World War Two period. This revitalisation movement blossomed in the
1970’s and 1980’s with the intensification of a political-consciousness among Māori communities. Historically, indigenous peoples had not seen the positive benefits of research, and this naming of research has provided a focus through which Māori people, as communities of the researched and as new communities as the researchers, were able to engage in a dialogue about setting new directions for the priorities, policies and practices of research for, by and with Māori.

More recently, in the late 1980’s and the early 1990’s, this consciousness included the examination of ethical research practice (Te Awekōtuku 1991b), and featured the revitalisation of Māori cultural aspirations, preferences and practices as a philosophical and productive educational stance (Bishop, 1999; Te Awekōtuku 1991).

Research efforts involving Māori, employing Māori, by and for Māori (Bishop 1996; Cram, 1997) build on the pioneering work of Linda and Graham Smith in developing Kaupapa Māori research as a valid research methodology. These approaches (Smith, 1993, Smith & Pihama, 1995) being based on Māori knowledge and teaching, and are therefore concerned with positive social transformation through the application of research methodology (McManus, 1997).

Kaupapa Māori research is based on the principle that indigenous approaches to research seek positive and improved outcomes for the participants and their wider communities (Smith, 1999). Many Māori are now much more aware of the effects of research and its potential to empower or disempower different groups (Cram, 2001; Edwards, 1999) and have developed a natural sense of suspicion of non-Māori research being conducted in their communities. Māori have become more aware of culturally appropriate practices for meeting and interacting in ways that are uniquely Māori as Māori researchers redefine best Māori practice and thus construct difference positively for the benefit of Māori. Māori practices and principles are becoming normalised as “good research practice” in working for and with Māori in diverse fields (Royal-Tangaere, 1997) of social action.

There are significant dimensions to Kaupapa Māori research which make it differ from traditional research. The operationalisation of self-determination or Tino Rangatiratanga by Māori people (Bishop, 1991, 1996; Smith, 1990, 1997; Smith,
1999) is pivotal. The shift of locus of power and control towards Māori, in terms of initiation, benefits, representation, legitimation and accountability in research is also important. The research is located in another cultural frame of reference/world view. Kaupapa Māori research is collectivistic, and is orientated toward benefiting all the research participants and their collectively determined agendas, defining and acknowledging Māori aspirations for research, whilst developing and implementing Māori theoretical and methodological preferences and practices for research (Bishop, 1999).

A fundamental purpose of research is to acquire knowledge. For Māori the purpose of knowledge is to uphold the interests and the mana of the group; it serves the community, towards the betterment of their iwi and for Māori people in general (Cram, 1992).

Western academia has been described as claiming, citing and redeveloping knowledge, and having a tradition of defining truth by disproving alternative narratives (Love, 2004). By contrast, Māori view knowledge as a Tāonga, a spiritual gift which is to be protected, and handed on to those who can be entrusted with its preservation and wise use. The sharing of knowledge is viewed as an act of generosity and trust (Love, 2004, Levy, 2007). For that reason the negotiation of the sharing of knowledge with the researcher is a very personal decision and transaction of trust, neither given nor taken lightly. The ethics, belief systems and operationalisation of the goals described above are part of both my politics and my training, and are implicit in this thesis.

Kaupapa Māori concepts and values were espoused as the most compatible with the content of the research and the range of participants. Durie (1996) notes the importance of using methods which are appropriate to Māori. Critical factors are viewed as Māori participation in the design of the project, the incorporation of Māori world views, and a reflection of the diversity of Māori.

Kaupapa Māori research aims to provide an avenue for research to be carried out in a safe and respectful manner for all those involved in the process. The following concepts for conducting kaupapa Māori research have been described as follows: “Aroha ki te tangata” (respect for the people), “Kanohi kitea” (the seen face, that is present yourself to people face-to-face), “Titiro, whakarongo…korero” (look, listen…speak), “Manaaki
ki te tangata” (share and host people, be generous), “Kia tūpato” (be cautious), “Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata” (do not trample over the mana of people), and “Kaua e mahaki” (don’t flaunt your knowledge) (Smith, 1999 p.120).

Smith’s (1999) method of research uses a collaborative approach that exemplifies power-sharing between the researcher and the participants. As my participant group for this study was mature Māori women like myself, I reflected about how to conduct my interviews in a way which showed the ultimate sensitivity. Interviews were face to face; being aware and cautious about how I approached topics and providing an environment that allowed the participants to share their stories. This also meant using language that was appropriate for this participant group. This approach was a strong attempt to provide an environment where participant’s thoughts, feelings and opinions are respected and valued (cf. Smith, 1992).

**Kaupapa Māori research and Case Study Methodology**

It is important to contextualise Māori culture for the wider academic audience (particularly those who are not New Zealanders), and the case study is a powerful strategy to achieve this (Willig, 2008.) The case study is a form of qualitative descriptive research. It refers to the collection and presentation of detailed information about a particular participant or small group, often including the accounts of subjects themselves. The case study looks intensely at an individual or small participant group, drawing conclusions only about that participant or group and only in that specific context. Case study researchers are not seeking to discover a universal, generalizable truth, nor usually look for cause-effect relationships. Emphasis is placed on exploration and description (Gerring, 2004).

Despite the increasing use of case studies in research, some researchers are reluctant to accept case-based research as a legitimate approach to knowledge production and dissemination. Concerns about the use of case studies are expressed in reliability and validity, about research design, reliance on small groups, researcher bias, and a lack of statistical generalisability (Hodgetts & Stolte, 2012). Critiques of case-based research also propose that case studies present more risk of researcher bias and the tendency of scholars to confirm their own preconceived ideas, thus rendering the findings invalid. This criticism reflects a lack of understanding of what is involved in case-based research where researchers are closely engaged with
people they are interviewing, which creates opportunities for confirming or falsifying assumptions.

In spite of this criticism, in comparing case-based and quantitative research approaches, social research is about relationships between people (Hodgetts & Stolte, 2012). Case studies generate unanticipated findings by focusing on particular cases in depth to identify social relationships, processes, and categories that are at the same time recognisable or typical, and unique (Hodgetts & Stolte, 2012).

In addition, researchers involved in case-based research are not usually engaged in the search for universal truths. Case studies are designed to produce particular knowledge about certain contexts and human actions. The matter of most concern is the usefulness of the case to facilitate a deeper understanding of what is happening in a particular context.

Contemporary Māori Experience
As an experienced psychological clinician, I was conscious of the unique sensitivities and potential risks inherent in this research environment. For the reasons described above in the Methodology section, I used qualitative methods to appropriately engage with bereaved women who were participants of the study, and hear their subjective experiences of loss to allow a fuller engagement with this topic.

The Use of Narrative Interviews
As suggested in previous pages, the main data gathering approach in my study was utilising narrative interviews, with eight participants who have experienced the death of a significant person or people close to them. As I explained in the previous section, the stories people tell convey their own perspectives on events. The listener, (in this case myself as researcher), hears the participant’s perspective of what occurred, but which also distils the information through his or her own experiences, and both parties construct a consensual truth and understanding. In this way communication about experiences is socially constructed through processes of constructing meaning (Lapsley, Nikora, & Black, 2002).

Using this methodology I engaged in a series of interviews with each participant to explore her experiences and understanding of the death of a loved one, and the tangi
sequence. The psychological, spiritual, mental, and even physical transformational processes participants experienced were of interest to the research. As well as these factors, I was interested in the changes of role within their whānau which the bereaved experienced due to the loss of the role of the deceased person within that whānau, or even hapū and iwi. Other matters of interest were the women’s experiences of the imposition of time constraints, and employment pressures, and how these have affected the ability of the bereaved to grieve in a “healthy” way. To this purpose, the components of what constitutes “healthy” grieving are explored.

*Issues to be considered by Māori Women Researching Māori Women*

Te Awekōtuku (2007) discussed the many issues which beset Māori women in our changing roles – traditional behaviour expected of us, yet paradoxical requirements placed upon us by our roles as academics, researchers and women in the modern world we are required to navigate. Definition by self and others, humility, “femininity”, rural versus urban, tribal patriarchy, the expectation to be silent in public fora. The influence of traditional protocol issues and expectations on women’s behaviour and choices remains major.

These issues have created paradox and consternation for female Māori researchers, particularly when the information most prized was that held by the older generations. Unless there was a close and warm whakapapa connection it would be difficult for the young researcher to prove herself worthy, and trustworthy of receiving the kōrero. The well-known tauparapara “Kaore te kumara e kōrero motona nei reka” is relevant here – “The kumara does not sing/speak of its own sweetness” (Te Awekōtuku, 2007).

Embedded in Maori culture has been the custom of maintaining humility. If anyone recommended the skills and attributes of a particular person, it should be those who know them, whereas in western culture, academia and career development, humility could be interpreted as a lack of confidence, an inability to “promote oneself”. This conflict of evaluation can be disabling to the aspiring academic or professional.

The rights and roles of women within the hapū and tribal environments have been guided by complex dynamics. Whakapapa, the value placed, age, tuakana-teina relationships, who guides and protects the young woman, how a questioning mind
may be tolerated, nurtured, or even discouraged. A curiosity or desire for understanding can be seen as out of place and threatening (Te Awekōtuku, 2007).

Within this chapter I have described the qualitative research methods I chose to use for this research. I have explained how I have used a combination of compatible methodologies which collectively are referred to as Bricolage (Derrida, 1981) and provided rationale for using these methods. These methodologies (narrative, case studies) have been found to be most compatible and empowering of participants who are willing to tell their stories in the context of their own truth and feelings.

As was explained to the participants, these stories contributed to the examination of the topic of the research, and have been contextualised in the areas in question, in each case study. They have also been explored in the context of my own self-examination (reflexivity) and ownership of the way my world view and experiences may influence my exploration of the subject. Thus the research does not claim to be objective, but more honestly is necessarily subjective and self-challenging (for myself as the researcher), and therefore must be analysed from an autoethnographic perspective. In the following chapter, I will discuss specifics in terms of how I began to utilise the methods with my potential participants.

**Interview development**

I developed a comprehensive set of open-ended interview questions which was to be piloted during the first couple of interviews. If deemed necessary, the interview guide could have been adapted and used as the basis for all further interviews, however changes were not necessitated.

**Identified themes for exploration**

These were the following:

- **Background:** (Whānau upbringing, Cultural values, and Cultural identification)
  
  Cultural learning: (Te Reo, Tikanga, Karanga, Learning about Tangihanga).
  
  Experiences in Education; (Racism, lack of biculturalism in the majority culture.)
  
  The role of Spirituality / Religion
• **Specific Experience:** (A Specific Tangihanga; particular things which were helpful or comforting to you during the tangi? Were there any events which upset you or caused you more distress than you were already under?” “Were there any employment events or pressures which caused you stress or distress?”)

*Rationale for Background Questions*

**Whānau upbringing, Cultural values, and Cultural identification:** The interview questions were based on literature (Edge & Nikora, 2010; Houkamau & Sibley, 2010; Te Hiwi, 2007; Jacob, 2011; Wihōngi, 2013), my own observations through life, previous study, years of work with a Māori Mental Health team, discussion with other bi-cultural or adult children of mixed (cross-cultural) marriages or relationships, friendships or familiar relationships with those whose parents were both Māori, and understanding of the wide range of acculturative experiences to which Māori can be subject.

I was particularly interested in Tangihanga as a spiritual and psychologically healing experience, across the range of potentially acculturative life journeys many Māori are subject to. If one had lived an aculturated lifestyle and engaged mostly in a Pākehā lifestyle, how would the tangihanga experience be perceived? Thus I wanted to investigate social structures and support, ritual, spiritual beliefs and practices as described by those women who described experiencing their grief. I wanted to investigate conversely, aspects of modern life or even tradition, which may have either helped or hindered their healing (Edge & Nikora, 2010; Houkamau & Sibley, 2010; Jacob, 2011; Wihōngi, 2013; Tomlins Jahnke, 1997a; Te Hiwi, 2007).

To contextualise the way in which each participant experienced her described tangihanga, many aspects of their upbringing potentially influenced the manner in which she was able to experience the tangihanga. Being able to fully comprehend the processes and their significance was posited to be a factor in the full engagement of the tangihanga. Therefore the following areas were explored: Cultural learning: Te Reo, Tikanga, Karanga, Learning about Tangihanga.
This was because engaging in ritual behaviour in a public setting without knowing whether one is behaving as expected can induce anxiety and take away some of the emotional benefits of knowing one is safe from critical thought, albeit veiled. Within a prescribed behavioural setting (following tikanga), the more predictable the expectations of behaviour, the more the women would be able to mourn freely.

Those factors in growing up from childhood (questions entitled “Experiences in Education”, “Racism, lack of biculturalism in the majority culture” (cf. Te Hiwi, 2007); “The role of Spirituality / Religion”), which could and did detract from the feelings of cultural comfort were particularly of interest. The culture of either parent or caregivers, (cf. Edge & Nikora, 2010; Houkamau & Sibley, 2010); the setting of the home within the community and pro-Māori or racist experiences in the home, community, and schooling (cf. Te Hiwi, 2007); contribute to the shaping of each woman’s cultural identity and reticence or pride in undertaking Māori cultural experiences (cf. Jacob, 2011; Wihongi, 2013), and those experiences being “normal” to them, or “abnormal” – unusual to their experience, and thus bewildering, incomprehensible, or anxiety producing (cf. Edge & Nikora, 2010; Houkamau & Sibley, 2010).

**Cross-cultural Intermarriage:** Many cross-cultural families have been required to negotiate their way through the tensions and demands of their different cultures, and this need has either increased stress and compounded the grief the bereaved were experiencing, or ameliorate it (Edge & Nikora, 2010). These “tensions” indeed create discomfort and propels individual and whānau either away from their culture of origin, to rediscover and reclaim their culture of origin and displease others, or to find a combination that they can cope with which pleases the majority of those involved (cf. Edge & Nikora, 2010; Houkamau & Sibley, 2010).

The interviews were relatively unstructured, aiming to obtain a coherent narrative of previous cultural and life experience, loss and grief, recovery and life afterwards. The schedule of questions was not necessarily strictly followed, but presented themes of interest to the research so questions could follow any unpredicted areas as the interviews progressed. The interview content areas are briefly described below, and the Interview Schedule is appended at the end of the thesis (Appendix
V), and the reasons for choosing the areas of questioning are described in the following section.

*Rational for Specific Experience Questions*

**A Specific Tangihanga:** This was the title for discussion of a memorable, painful, death and roles, experiences, explicit details chosen for narration by each woman who was participating. This was the kōrero which was a fluent re-telling of the experience of the tangihanga of their loved person. Under the above subject I included specific questions to stimulate and encourage recollections of outer, observable events, inner reflections, or spiritual experiences. These may have been discussed by the women as a natural part of their kōrero.

However if the information did not emerge, the extra prompts or questions entitled the participants to mention events which they may not have felt as free to discuss, or had not thought to mention. These were: “Were there any particular things which were helpful or comforting to you during the tangi? (practically or spiritually, events you or others interpreted as tohu of some kind, emotionally, other?)” (Nikora, Masters-Awatere & Te Awekōtuku, 2012; Nikora, Te Awekōtuku, & Tamanui, 2013; Jacob, 2011; Wihōngi, 2013; Nikora & Te Awekōtuku, 2013). “Were there any events which upset you or caused you more distress than you were already under?” (Other people’s behaviour, medical care events, events you or others interpreted as tohu of some kind?)”; “Were there any employment events or pressures which caused you stress or distress?”

Finally, there were reflective questions for the participants, looking in retrospect at the womens’ experiences of grief, tangihanga and healing: “Looking back, do you feel overall you were able to grieve for your loved one in a “healthy” way?” “Is there anything you would rather have done, or happened differently?” This question was designed to stimulate retrospective reflection which may elicit different answers in the duration since the tangihanga or even since the reflection process during questioning (Jacob, 2011; Wihōngi, 2013; Nikora, Masters-Awatere & Te Awekōtuku, 2012; Nikora, Te Awekōtuku, & Tamanui, 2013; Nikora, & Te Awekōtuku, 2013).
I have described above the areas of questioning. The actual questionnaire, designed as a subject plan only, can be found as Appendix V.

**Identifying and recruiting Respondents:**
For this research I mainly utilised the techniques of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling involves the researcher identifying people believed to be able to provide relevant information and insights to the research. Specifically for this research, I was seeking mature Māori women who had attended tangihanga involving their own personal bereavement. In terms of the type of relationship each woman had with the person she lost through bereavement, I did not choose, or attempt to exert control over the bereavement relationships which were described to me.

To own my own personal status at the time I was considering approaching others for their personal kōrero (stories), I was at the time in a state of whakama (shyness, social withdrawal). This caused the task of approaching others to seem paralysingly difficult, and thus my data collection period took place over a prolonged period. My first approaches were to two mature women I knew well. One I had worked with previously, and with whom I had a respectful, reciprocal relationship. This was “Kārena”, who agreed graciously.

Then I approached a very dear and close Aunt, more like a sister to my mother. I knew her story would be fascinating. However she declined, somewhat to my (unexpressed) surprise. She then became ambivalent and said with concern, “But who will do it for you, Dear?” She was more concerned for my feelings and needs which was typical of her. I assured her that I would have no problem, not knowing whether this was strictly correct at the time. I include this little story, as it is so typical of our kuia to be caring of us as they are concerned for their own feelings, boundaries, privacy or old grief.

Next an acquaintance/new friend was suggested to me, and I gratefully followed up this offer. I moved then to a much loved cousin of mine, with whom I had lost touch for some years due to our coincidental transience, and recently re-connected. I had unknowingly missed the death and tangihanga of her middle son, whom I had previously known as a young boy. This devastating loss was grieved and re-grieved by both of us together during the interviews, and was as personally helpful to the
guilt that I felt for not having known and been there to support her, as it was for her to weep again and tell the story of what she had experienced.

Some time later, I was speaking to a friend/colleague/whanaunga (probable distant relative) who offered to speak to me of a recent loss. Thanks to this participant I had a very small “snowball” effect, with two recommendations made to her close contacts. Snowballing involves potential respondents gaining trust and recommending participation in the research as a positive experience to further potential respondents (Sarantakos, 1993). One of these (“mini snowball” interactions) occurred, and the other withdrew due to family illness.

I then interviewed another cousin at our mutual papakainga at Komata, where she was grieving the loss of her adult son. This was a prolonged day of stories and grief, whereby my cousin told me so much about herself she shared more than either of us expected. She was surprised when she received her transcript but of course I assured her that the details which were personal to her and not related to her bereavement, did not have to be included.

Finally one of my supervisors suggested a mutual senior relative (very close to her as whānau toto, and related to me by virtue of marriage to, and being the mother of my own cousins) whom I would not have had the courage to ask, under the circumstances. This Aunty was incredibly focussed and generous in her response, given that she was about to travel overseas. She told me the painful story as a great gift of kindness and generosity to me.

Thus the losses were of a son, mothers, fathers, a brother, a daughter, but there were no spouses in my participant group. My supervisors at a late stage in the thesis raised this as a potential cause for concern, as readers of the thesis may be expecting a full representation of types of loss. In examining what may seem to others a glaring omission, I realised that as a single woman at this time in my life, perhaps I had not addressed the issue of not deliberately seeking a woman who was willing to discuss the loss of her partner. Equally grandparents and mokopuna (grandchildren) could have been represented, as in Māori society such relationships can be extremely close.
However, returning to the way in which I had sought participants, I realised that my real truth was that the original participant group of eight women who agreed to participate in the research, was the group I was grateful to engage with. The group in itself provided a deeply rich set of stories, and I should just ensure I signal the lack of spousal bereavements to the reader, so that alternative expectations would not be disappointed.

The Life Experiences of Participants

Participants’ demographic characteristics are described in a later section, under the term Summary Interviews. These include self-described ethnicity or cultural identity (although the primary ethnicity is assumed to be Māori, self-descriptions sometimes differ); gender; general area(s) of birth and upbringing; information on age, occupation, and family status (partner, children, any related information of importance to the participant).

The whakapapa (tribal descent lines) of participants is nearly always described. In Te Ao Māori, (the Māori world), whakapapa is extremely important. Individual people are viewed not as individuals as much as part of group identities, as descendants of tūpuna (ancestors), with all the history, politics, deeds and misdeeds, loyalties, enmities, and tribal characteristics, which are attributed to the individual. Generalities borne of historical relationships may be ascribed before any personal knowledge of the person is experienced.

Thus whakapapa is a descriptor for Māori as much as, or more than, for example, occupation may be for a Western person. Therefore to allow identification of one’s whakapapa immediately identifies or narrows the “field” for identification.

For those who might wish to, “guessing” the identity of a participant becomes easier, thus potentially jeopardising the anonymity of the participant. I would have been pleased to be able to identify the whakapapa groups of all participants, because this would enrich the information for those who understood tribal history and characteristics. However one participant wished both to have a pseudonym and a with-held whakapapa descriptor, which of course I needed to honour.

Most other participants were happy to have a pseudonym, but one participant wished to give her true name and iwi (descent line) because it was part of her life
philosophy. This participant also did not wish to have her transcript sent to her (which I did otherwise with participants to check for errors in representativeness and fact).

I have described above the areas of questioning. The actual questionnaire, designed as a subject plan only, can be found as Appendix II.

Throughout the thesis, I have discussed the women in alphabetical order. I initially made the decision to group the participants according to the depth of their cultural experiences, which as it appeared, may well be a predictor of their comprehension, comfort and ability to “grieve positively”, with few other factors causing them distress. However I wished to be careful that in attempting to analyse and situate the information in the manner I had intended, that I would not be seen as making judgement on one or another of the participants.

This was far from my desire and intention, and indeed I myself would have identified with the grouping which through no fault of our own, was not enculturated in a natural way in our upbringing, and shared the many emotional pitfalls of needing to learn by painful adult experience, our own culture, tikanga and language, as much as we could. Therefore I decided to continue presenting the information, this time the case studies, in the alphabetical order of their pseudonyms or name, and later analyse the information as it presented.

Having completed each interview, I transcribed the digital recordings, (a very moving process in itself), and returned them to each participant in full. Most of the participants responded that they believed their transcript to be true to the interview. Three of the women were concerned about the personally identifying details and wanted to be sure that names were changed, two felt that they had been harsh in describing other peoples’ behaviour, and one did not wish to read the transcript but was fine for me to go ahead.
**Information Analysis and Theory Development**

As the transcripts were sanctioned by each participant, I summarised the general demographic and life experience details for inclusion to the thesis. Then I began the initial processes of thematic analysis to describe the information.

I carried out multiple, detailed readings of the case studies in order to develop a systematic and comprehensive description of the patterns and variations on the topic. Next I organised each phenomenon into the themes I had identified, and identified any new themes.

Finally after a great deal of reading, thought, and processing, I was inspired to create a pictorial model which I felt both represented and explained the processes of grief within the procedural cultural guidelines and principles of death and tangihanga.

In the above chapter I have described my Research Objectives and Methodology chosen, with explanations for my choices. I introduced the women who participated in the research. I have also described the areas of demographic difference or similarity, with tables representing the information. In the following chapter, I began to present the case studies of the participants, in alphabetical order. Because Katrina and Mereana were sisters, their stories were presented together in the same chapter.
CHAPTER SIX: INTRODUCING THE PARTICIPANTS

In this part of the chapter, the women who participated in this research will be introduced. Following their short summary introductions, I group their demographic details. Firstly, in short summary reports identifying their demographic characteristics and where allowed, their iwi affiliations. Following that, each woman’s narrative describing a tangihanga which was particularly meaningful to them and therefore painful and poignant, will be presented.

Angela was a fifty four year old woman at the time of interview. She was working in the field of auditing cultural policies and practices in the Health sector. Angela was the mother of four children and three mokopuna, some of whom lived in Australia. She has brought up all her children “on the marae”, in this case meaning that they actively experienced and participated in marae life.

Growing up, Angela was the middle child of eight, six of whom were still living on the home farm when she was growing up, on her mother’s papakainga surrounded by her close whānaunga. In the middle of the farm was the hapū urupā. There were three families living there, with seventeen children, all close cousins, who always played together.

In terms of whakapapa, on her maternal side Angela was Hauraki (Ngāti Tamatērā) and Otaki (Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga). Angela’s father was Te Arawa. Although growing up in the Hauraki region, Angela and her siblings all spent holidays in Rotorua so they had opportunities to feel that they knew and belonged with their father’s whānau as well.

In her kōrero, Angela contributed her experiences of losing through death, a number of her immediate whānau. As a powerful and knowledgeable woman within her whānau, she discussed her choices and influences in arranging the tangihanga of each of these loved ones. The chosen focus of her kōrero for this research was the sudden death of her brother and the complexities of his Tangihanga. These are discussed in detail in her Case study.
Hana was a married woman in her sixties with adult children, and mokopuna. She was of Te Aitanga a Hauiti descent, and was well respected in the Education field, tikanga Māori and her faith. As a child, she was raised at Tolaga Bay by her grandmother, along with two other mokopuna. Her parents lived twenty miles away, but visited Hana once a month.

Although having attended many tangihanga throughout her life, Hana chose to contribute the kōrero of her daughter, Mel’s, death and tangihanga. Mel was married, a mother of five children. Two of these children were still very young when Mel died. Hana and her husband Wally made the decision that they had to move to Australia to help raise their mokopuna.

Hana’s kōrero was a detailed account of a fight for life, then an extended preparation of the entire whānau, for her daughter’s death. Finally, Hana described the tangihanga process as it began in Brisbane, then arrived in Auckland, traveled to Hauraki, then the arrival at Tolaga Bay.

All of the thoughts, prayers and considerations which went along with the untimely death and tangihanga rituals, were described, even including the eventual return to the rental house they had lived in, and Mel had died in. One interesting feature of Hana’s contribution is the way she spiritually and intellectually reconciles her fierce confidence in her Māoritanga, at the same time being an active member of the Latter Day Saints faith.

Huiarangi was born to parents who were both of Māori descent but from different iwi (tribal groups), which she chose not to disclose for the research.

Huiarangi was raised in an urban environment. This was different from her siblings, who had all been born in their mother’s area where her parental whānau had moved after her paternal grandparents had sold their farm (on an ancestral farm property). Her parents had (separately) grown up on farms which involved a generational commitment, they both still had quite strong connections to their whānau. They had all their wider whānau around them, growing up. This meant that Huiarangi was raised with tangihanga from childhood. She also heard te reo
(Māori language) spoken, although not enough to speak or fully comprehend. She later had opportunities to learn te reo formally, and is now fluent.

For this research Huiarangi described her childhood experience and interpretation of tangihanga, and later the very different sensitivities of being adult and organising the tangihanga of her parents.

The potiki or youngest child, Huiarangi brought her parents to live close by her own whānau, so she could look after them as they aged. She then moved her father into her family’s home, as her mother passed away.

Only months after her mother died, her father was diagnosed with a serious illness. Huiarangi nursed her father while working and child-rearing, and her father’s tangihanga is the major focus in her case study.

Kārena was in her mid-sixties at time of interview. She had lived in Rotorua since birth, while being brought up to maintain her own tribal identity as Ngāti Porou. Kārena was married with adult children, and was a specialist nurse in Mental Health services for the elderly for a local District Health Board (DHB).

Having grown up with te reo and tikanga, and having attended many tangihanga, in fact not having had much exposure to the Pākehā lifestyle as a child, one of Kārena’s distinctive contributions to this thesis was to kōrero about her adjustment to the majority Pākehā life.

Kārena’s most personal contribution was an in depth kōrero about the illness, death and tangihanga of her beloved mother, and all of the cultural, tribal and practical considerations which went with this tangi.

Katrina was a forty year old Health professional. On her maternal side she was from an iwi of Hauraki, and her father’s genealogical origins were not explicit. She was married and had four children - two teenaged sons, one teenaged daughter, and a girl of seven years. Her husband was of Samoan heritage. As well as ensuring her children’s familiarity with Tikanga Māori, the whānau also went to Samoa to see her husband’s family. Her own family of origin (Katrina and her siblings), is now connected in a manner which it has not been before. Both of her parents have
passed away, after separating many years previously. For the research, Katrina speaks about the tangihanga of both parents, with many years, learning and experience between them.

Katrina’s contribution to the tangi project was kōrero about the diverse personal experiences of the tangihanga of both of her parents, years apart. Although saying she wanted to talk about her father’s tangi, throughout her kōrero she frequently referred to the tangi of her mother. She expressed the belief that although taking place with many years between them, and although divorced, their lives had somehow become similar, and their deaths were in some ways interconnected, and had many similar points of reference.

Mereana was at interview a forty three year old academic, married Māori woman with three children, and one mokopuna. She was the tuakana (elder sister) of Katrina. She was home-schooling her youngest child, a son. As told by Katrina, Mereana’s parents had been of different cultures, her mother being Māori, of Hauraki, and her father apparently non-Māori, although this became less clear in latter times.

Mereana’s mother died many years ago when Mereana was young and much less comfortable in her Māoritanga. Her father passed away quite recently. Mereana’s kōrero was about the many differences between her experiences of her mother’s tangi, and her father’s more recent Tangi/funeral. Her father’s recent death was an opportunity for Mereana and her sisters and brothers to have much more power in the organisation of her father’s tangi, which although initially naturally painful, they all found very healing. Mereana’s kōrero is about her father’s tangihanga, and all of the historical familial conflict and healing which occurred as a result.

Ngāwari was of Te Arawa and Tainui whakapapa, and was in her early thirties when interviewed, and the mother of two sons. She had recently separated from her long term partner. She had grown up within her paternal rohe of Rotorua, and was immersed in marae-based activities from early childhood. Her parents both worked and at the same time raised her older brother, herself, and at different times, nine other whāngai (cared for as in fostering) children from both sides of the whānau.
Ngāwari’s career was in academia. She had engaged in research for several years, and was most recently teaching at a tertiary level. She brought an intellectually reflective element to her experiences, which was enlightening.

Ngāwari’s participation in the research focused predominantly on the recent tangi of her dearly loved father. The rich kōrero she shared about her father’s tangi is both moving and informative, in terms of negotiating personal history and dynamics and tikanga Māori.

**Toni’s** predominant whakapapa in her up-bringing, was Waikato Tainui, and she was descended from Tainui waka (literally canoe, in this case meaning ancestral descent line) on both maternal and paternal sides, also being Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga and Ngāti Tamātērā. A fifty four year old woman at time of interview, Toni was the mother of four children, and had four mokopuna (grandchildren).

When interviewed, Toni was living in Hamilton, looking after an elderly uncle and her youngest son who had sustained a head injury as a young adult. Her only daughter, who had been whāngai’d by her ex-partner’s parents, was married and living in Australia, and she had had three sons and mokopuna, but her beloved second son Jimmy Boy had passed away at the age of twenty three, as the result of an incidence of asthma.

Toni’s kōrero for this research was about the death and tangihanga of her beloved middle son, and all of the emotional, inter-tribal, sub-cultural, and practical considerations which went with her son’s tangi.

To summarise the demographic characteristics of the women and thus show the range of respondents and their life experiences, I have described their various areas of self description:

**Summary of demographic characteristics**

*Ages:* Huiarangi and Ngāwari were in their early thirties when interviewed Katrina and Mereana were in their forties, Angela and Toni were in their mid-fifties, and Hana and Kārena were in their mid-sixties at time of interview.
Areas of up-bringing: Angela and Kārena grew up in (different) rural areas, Angela in her own tribal area, and Kārena in a non-related area. Both returned frequently to another tribal area to which they belonged. Hana was whāngai’d at Tolaga Bay (her papakainga) by her grandmother, although her parents visited monthly. Ngāwari was raised in her paternal rohe of Rotorua. Katrina and Mereana were raised in small-town situations away from their own tribal areas, and Huiarangi and Toni grew up in urban situations, Huiarangi away from her tribal area, and Toni within one of her tribal areas.

Whakapapa: On her maternal side Angela was Hauraki (Ngāti Tamateā) and Otaki (Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga). Angela’s father was Te Arawa. Katrina was of Hauraki and English descent. Hana was of Te Aitanga a Hauiti descent. Huiarangi chose not to disclose her whakapapa for the research. Mereana’s mother was Ngāti Hako, Hauraki, and her father apparently non-Māori, although this became less certain in latter times. Ngawari was of Te Arawa and Tainui whakapapa. Toni’s predominant whakapapa in her up-bringing was Waikato Tainui, and she was also descended from Tainui waka through Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga (Otaki) and Ngāti Tamateā (Hauraki).
### TABLE I: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Age at time of Interview</th>
<th>Whakapapa (Descent lines)</th>
<th>Area in which participant was raised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>Mid fifties</td>
<td>Ngāti Tamatērā Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga. Te Arawa</td>
<td>Rural Hauraki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hana</td>
<td>Mid sixties</td>
<td>Te Aitanga a Hauiti</td>
<td>Rural Tolaga Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huiarangi</td>
<td>Early thirties</td>
<td>Not disclosed for research</td>
<td>Urban Auckland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kārena</td>
<td>Mid sixties</td>
<td>Ngāti Porou</td>
<td>Rural Rotorua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katrina and Mereana (sisters)</td>
<td>Both in Forties</td>
<td>Hauraki Ngāti Hako Ngai Pākehā</td>
<td>Small town Waikato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngāwari</td>
<td>Early thirties</td>
<td>Te Arawa Tainui</td>
<td>Urban Rotorua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toni</td>
<td>Mid fifties</td>
<td>Waikato Tainui Ngāti Tamatērā Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga.</td>
<td>Urban Hamilton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Religious Backgrounds:**

Although religious up-bringing was not a question asked in the interviews, the subject of spiritual beliefs in adulthood was raised. This led to an exploration by some participants, of religion as it had influenced their belief systems and also their coping with grief. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (L.D.S. or Mormon Church) featured quite strongly, as did Roman Catholicism. The Ratana Church was mentioned, as was the Anglican Church. Not all participants’ narratives
included religions originating out of New Zealand, but without exception, Māori spiritual beliefs were expressed as part of the participants’ accepted belief systems, or compatible with the religion they espoused.

*Adult Whānau situation:*
Angela was married and the mother of four children and three mokopuna, some of whom lived in Australia. Katrina was married and had four children - two teenaged sons, one teenaged daughter, and a girl of seven years. Her husband was of Samoan heritage. Hana was a married woman with adult children, and mokopuna. Kārena was married with adult children, and had mokopuna both in New Zealand and Australia. Mereana was married and had three children, and one mokopuna. Ngāwari was the mother of two sons with a gap in ages, and she had recently separated from her long term partner. Toni had also recently separated from her long term partner. She was the mother of four children and the grandmother of several mokopuna.

*Occupation:*
Angela was working in the field of auditing cultural policies and practices in the Health sector, Katrina was a health practitioner. Hana had worked in Education and education policy, and then retired and was rearing her mokopuna. Huiarangi was studying for a further degree. Kārena was a specialist nurse in Mental Health services for the elderly for a local District Health Board (DHB). Mereana was home schooling her youngest child while also studying for a higher degree, Ngāwari was bringing up her younger son while studying and employed in an academic setting. Toni was living in Hamilton, looking after an elderly uncle and her youngest son who had sustained a head injury as a young adult.
TABLE II: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Adult whānau situation</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>Māori spiritual</td>
<td>Mother of adult children and grand-mother</td>
<td>Health sector auditor cultural policies and practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hana</td>
<td>Latter Day Saints</td>
<td>Mother of adult children and grand-mother</td>
<td>Retired Education policy analyst, currently rearing her mokopuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huiarangi</td>
<td>Māori spiritual</td>
<td>Mother of young children</td>
<td>Educator and completing post graduate degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kārena</td>
<td>Māori spiritual</td>
<td>Mother of adult children and grand-mother</td>
<td>Nurse working in Māori Mental Health and Elderly Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katrina</td>
<td>Latter Day Saints</td>
<td>Mother of growing children</td>
<td>Health practitioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mereana</td>
<td>Māori spiritual</td>
<td>Mother of growing children (adult and child)</td>
<td>Following tertiary studies, educator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngāwari</td>
<td>Māori spiritual</td>
<td>Mother of growing children (adult and child)</td>
<td>Following tertiary studies and in teaching role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toni</td>
<td>Māori spiritual</td>
<td>Mother of adult children and grand-mother</td>
<td>Caregiver for elderly uncle and head-injured young son while studying at Whare Wānanga</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Growing up: Contributors to Cultural Identity:

Angela, Hana, Huiarangi, Kārena and Toni all grew up attending tangihanga as children, as a natural part of life. Hana, Kārena, and Toni grew up with te reo spoken at home, and were bilingual. Angela, Hana, Ngāwari and Toni grew up in one of their own tribal areas. Katrina and Mereana were raised outside their own tribal areas, had little or no experience of their culture, whānau or reo as children.
### TABLE III: CONTRIBUTIONS TO CULTURAL IDENTITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Grew up attending Tangihanga</th>
<th>Grew up speaking Te Reo</th>
<th>Grew up in own Tribal Rohe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hana</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huiarangi</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kārena</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katrina Mereana (sisters)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngāwari</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toni</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Shaded box indicates affirmative
*Unshaded box indicates negative
TABLE IV: BEREAVEMENT DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Preparation For death of The loved one</th>
<th>Relationship With the deceased</th>
<th>Cause of Death</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>Complete shock And trauma</td>
<td>Favourite brother</td>
<td>Car accident Drunk driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hana</td>
<td>Prepared by the duration and severity of illness</td>
<td>Beloved Daughter</td>
<td>Cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huia-rangi</td>
<td>Prepared by the duration and severity of illness</td>
<td>Much loved father</td>
<td>Leukaemia Old age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kārena</td>
<td>Prepared by the age of the deceased and recent illness</td>
<td>Elderly Mother</td>
<td>Old age Recent illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katrina</td>
<td>Shock And trauma</td>
<td>Mother, relatively young</td>
<td>Mother:Heart problems Father: progressive Neurological disease and hospital “superbug”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mereana</td>
<td>Shock And trauma</td>
<td>Mother, relatively young</td>
<td>Mother:Heart problems Father: progressive Neurological disease and hospital “superbug” **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngāwari</td>
<td>Shock And trauma</td>
<td>Much loved Father</td>
<td>Unexpected Collapse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toni</td>
<td>Shock And trauma</td>
<td>Young middle son</td>
<td>Asthma attack **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: the two deceased with asterisks died on the way to hospital due to there being only one ambulance attendant.
CHAPTER SEVEN: ANGELA

In this chapter, the first of the participants, Angela, tells her kōrero about the unexpected death of her most beloved brother, his tangihanga, and her grief.

Background

Whānau upbringing, Cultural values, and Cultural identification

Angela described the warmth and cohesiveness of growing up on the family farm in Hauraki—her papakai nga which included the urupā. She was surrounded by relatives—her nana lived down the drive, uncles;

“There were seventeen kids from the three households. We did things all together”...There was a comfort in being surrounded by all the brothers, sisters and cousins. Yes, very much so. Because we played together, slept together, fought together, swam together, did everything together.”

Although her whānau was Māori, it was a time when English was the main language to be used. So elders were bi-lingual as it suited the situation but the children were not raised with their language, although they might hear it spoken:

“Everything was very European dominated”.

Angela’s situation was further enriched (or complicated) by spending holidays in her father’s tribal area in Rotorua, where she perceived people spoke (English) differently, and also by attending public and then Catholic schools:

“I learnt very early on to adapt to the environment that I was in, as to how I’d speak. When I went to (Dad’s home area) Rotorua, I learned to speak in their twang. And we used to get slapped when we got back for speaking that way. My father was brought up in that language and my mother said “you don’t speak like that”. So when I was growing up there were three different areas that you had to adapt to.”

“How I hold myself and conduct myself, it was all by observing and copying how they did it. European was quite a dominant culture back then. And even though we were out here and we’re Māori, a little wee Māori community here, we were still very dominated.”

School life

Angela grew up with the dominance of what was then called the “European” culture (New Zealand non-Māori, mainly from Britain). Their first school was a convent school in Paeroa that was 95% majority Pākehā and 5% Māori. There the teaching was hellfire and brimstone so the upbringing there was very European. Angela said she fit in very well at the convent, because her mother was very strict on
etiquette, manners and speech. Conversely in the country schools she subsequently attended there was probably about sixty percent Māori. So there were many Māori pursuits such as the kapa haka group.

Angela first focused on her marriage and motherhood:

“My first three children were born here (Hauraki area), and then we moved over to Rotorua and I was still in that European type mode and um...I still am. To an extent where I’m at work and things like that and different areas, I can chop and change.”

Then she became involved in her own education and finally working in the Health Department which in those times meant being in a Pākehā world, and to some extent relinquishing part of her Māori identity. Angela described the sense of her growing pride in her indigeneity:

“...Being Māori I didn’t feel it right until I lived in Rotorua. I’m Māori, be proud of it...now, I’m Māori within and outside. My Māori comes first and foremost with me. And it wasn’t until nearly twenty years ago that I started really acknowledging other blood within me...and that it was ok to accept that side as well and to be comfortable with it. And I had to get to my twenties, and moved out of home, to be able to feel like that”.

Angela is the middle child of eleven, yet all her siblings turn to her for their advice about Māoritanga.

“Anything Māori or whakapapa or anything like that, they’ll ring me and ask me. Because I’m the one that’s embraced it.”

Learning Te Reo
Not having learnt Te Reo as a child, like many other Māori of her age-group, Angela had to make various efforts to learn her language. She tried to learn from formal classes and from books. However her abilities did not develop:

“You know why it didn’t come? Because I wasn’t ready. Your culture, your Māori, the ihi within you, and wehi, you’ve got to want it, and it comes out when it’s ready. When you try and force yourself to speak, it doesn’t happen. Because what you’re doing is, you’re thinking in English, and you’re trying to speak it in the reo. So it doesn’t happen. Your Māori calls you when you’re ready.”

It took until adulthood when Angela felt really confident. She is now very comfortable in both worlds and accepted in both worlds. In her work life, she works in total immersion with Kura Kaupapa, audits all their policies and processes, all in te Reo.
Cultural Identification:
Angela said that looking Māori and feeling Māori were two totally different things. Over the years she learned to accept and be proud to be Māori both within, and on the outside. She started to feel Māori.

“It’s a very hard thing to try and explain. But it was only ’til I moved to Rotorua that I felt Māori and was comfortable to be Māori, and not try to adapt in that area, even though I was accepted in the European world as well as Māori. You fight against yourself. Now being Māori, in “colour” and “features”, and actually feeling the ihi within, is totally different. You were judged a lot by your character, by how you speak, how you behave.”

A sense of place and the concept of home are tied to the notion of identity (Sarup, 1996). From a Māori perspective, the concept of “home-place” means one’s ancestral place and the associated cultural sites of: tūrangawaewae (a genealogical right to belong to a place); marae (tribal community complex); iwi kainga (tribal village); urupā (ancestral burial sites); awa (ancestral rivers within tribal boundaries) and maunga (ancestral mountains) (Jahnke, 1997a).

These sites are situated within specific tribal boundaries, by which all Māori can claim an identity through genealogical links. Those who know these links will acknowledge them in formal situations through a system of mihimihi or formal greetings, whereby the names of their river, mountain, marae and tribe are told and recognised as symbols of individual and collective identity. The relationship a person has with each of these sites is considered on both a physical and a metaphysical level. Non residents to the home-place can return to carry out active participatory roles in family and tribal affairs, and those living in the home place are recognised to maintain “ahi-kaa,” that is literally “keeping the home-fires burning” (Jahnke, 1997a).

The very interesting thing about Angela’s allegiances is that she was born and grew up in the Hauraki, was schooled there, had her children there, was part of a tightly aligned large whānau group of aunties, uncles, cousins and siblings all living on their ancestral land. Yet her holidays in her father’s rohe of Te Arawa, then her adult experiences of moving to Rotorua, brought about a change of allegiances. She still called Hauraki home and brought her loved ones back to Komata, to Puketotara, the family Urupā. Yet she preferred to identify herself as Te Arawa:
“When I moved to Rotorua, and found my Māoritanga within me, I embraced it full on, and I’m Te Arawa first and foremost. They asked me where I was brought up, where I was from, and I’d say Hauraki and they’d say oh, Ngāti Maru. I’d say no. Ngāti Tamati Maru. “So (she names the uncles) of Ngāti Tamati they never refer to me as my name, they call me “Te Arawa”. And I say “and proud of it”.

It could well be that Angela’s final comfort with her Reo, her culture, and herself as a Māori woman, even though she always knew that she was Māori, all occurred in Rotorua. This may well be also because the heightened colonisation and racism in the Hauraki which forced Angela to become a “cultural chameleon” (who could fit in anywhere), was less pressured in Rotorua.

The fact that she was like the “home planet” to her siblings, where she moved, they moved, meant that she always had her support group around her (or she was the main support person), and her siblings all knew their roles. The other interesting aspect of Angela’s leadership of her whānau, her siblings older and younger, they all gravitated to Angela, as did many others as will be seen in this case study.

Learning the Karanga, and being called upon to Karanga
Whereas in previous times, learning to karanga (ritual call on the marae), would normally be taught by women to younger women, Angela learned due to a tribal acknowledgement that because of acculturation, more youth (both men and women) needed formal teaching, which was done at tribal wananga for the purpose. Her Uncle taught her to karanga. This happened because it was a time on the marae, where they had to bring kawa back into the fold. There were a lot of the younger generation not coming through on to the pae or in to the marae.

Subsequently Angela began to be asked (or told) to karanga for various closer relatives who had died, on her Hauraki side. She provided great detail of her experiences of developing as a kai karanga, starting with great anxiety, to the point where she was asked by kuia before they died, if she would karanga for them.

Learning about Tangihanga
As detailed above, Angela grew up with tangihanga as a natural part of life. Her whānau lived reasonably close to her Marae, and the ancestral urupā was on the family farm where she lived. The private road to the urupā led straight past her
house. She said “when there was a tangi it was very much in our lives, and it was quite a central point”.

**A Specific Tangi: The death of Mana**

Mana was Angela’s closest brother, friend and protector. As her older brother, he stood by her in all her troubles in life and they were very bonded. Mana was the first person her close family had lost. She found out about his death in a vehicle accident by being rung by his wife, who was hysterical.

Angela insisted on being taken straight to the hospital to see Mana. His friends tried to dissuade her. She fought them and ordered them out. Mana was completely battered from his neck down. She exposed his body and ran her hands over his injuries. She cried and cried, heartbroken. Mana was held waiting for autopsy.

Mana’s wife had arrived at the hospital. She was told what had happened so far and what was going to happen because we had a pathologist on board by that stage. And Hunga Manaaki (Māori Support Services) from the hospital. They said it would be over by about eleven. So she came away, woke up the children, and got everything organised at home, got packed, then I went back to the house to see Mana’s wife. She told her she was taking Mana home (to Komata). She agreed that he had said he wanted to be buried in Hauraki.

**Dressing the Tūpāpaku**

(His wife), “Cherry had bought Mana a shirt and tie and jacket to be dressed in. And I said ‘you’re not burying my brother like that! He wasn’t a shirt and tie person. He was a swannee and bush singlet person. Put him in what he’s used to’. And she said ‘shall I get him some jeans? ‘Yes, some jeans and socks and shoes’, and she was a wonderful knitter –‘and bring his jersey. T shirt and his Jersey’. Trussed up in a shirt and a bloody tie, he would have flipped in his grave. So the second time she brought them down.”

Here like in so many of the women’s stories, the non-Māori partners of the deceased did not argue or even seem to resent being instructed regarding what to do. Most often they even seemed grateful to have the guidance. Cherry knew the very close bond between Angela and Mana, and accepted it without being threatened.
Angela’s parents had been notified and they were on their way to Rotorua from Paeroa. Her mother was “inconsolable”. Mana was ready to be released. And it had gone around by word of mouth that Mana had passed away and the family from Whaka (Whakarewarewa) had arrived.

Angela’s mother wanted her son at home (in Hauraki) but she knew that he would have to go on the marae here at Whakarewarewa. Hiko Hohepa, (her father’s first cousin) was a PhD Doctorate on Māori lore, and one of the top kaumātua consultants in Rotorua. He was very influential.

“As Te Arawa move they move in a big group. They came up to the house. And we had not quite arrived and when we got there, the place was crowded with cars.”

Angela had already set up the house with mattresses, taken the photos and switched everything around (in between looking after the children). Her parents had been talking with Hiko and the family when they arrived with Mana. The mihimihis took place and the place was just crammed with people on the verandah of the wharenui and everywhere. They were told Te Pākira marae would be ready, and bring him in to Wāhiao (the wharenui, Te Pākira being the marae) at two o’clock.

“I said to Mum and Dad: ‘he’s not going to Whakarewarewa.’ Dad was quite horrified – ‘we have to! They’re all there’ I said ‘we’re not, he’s not going out to Whaka. If he goes out here, he has to stay here. And he didn’t want that. He wanted to go home. And he’s not staying’. Dad said ‘you can’t, all this whānau’ and Mum was crying. Mum wanted him home (in Komata), but she also knew that kawa and tikanga were very strong in Te Arawa, and she couldn’t do a thing about it. And I said to Dad, ‘he’s not staying, we’re going. And we’re going to go in about an hour.’ He said ‘oh no, how are you going to do that?’ I said ‘I don’t give a shit’.

Angela was and is indeed a wāhine toa (a warrior woman, a woman to be reckoned with). Angela was born in the middle of her whānau, yet most of her siblings look to her for important decisions. She was strong-willed, knowledgeable, wise and experienced in ways and relationships different to those of her siblings. She cared for her parents even though her siblings wanted that honour. She was also very well educated and continued to develop her education. Through effort and exposure, she had become more knowledgeable in te reo and tikanga Māori than her siblings.
Angela’s husband Gerry as a staunch Te Arawa man, tried to stop her. But she was resistant and defiant. She said:

“I’m fuckin well taking him, I’m taking him home. And there’s not a thing you can do about it’. And he said ‘the whānau!’ I said ‘I don’t give a rat’s arse!’ I had a fight with my husband...my father, and my mother and Cherry were inconsolable.”

All of Angela’s siblings were back in Hauraki. Angela rang her sister Mary and told her she was bringing their brother home. Her sisters were shocked and confused, as they were getting ready to come through (to Rotorua). Angela instructed them to prepare Te Pai O Hauraki instead. Her sister protested, but Angela over-ruled her protests.

“We’ll be there in two hours.’ And then I hung up the phone because I didn’t want to talk any more bullshit. They were in a spin because it was the first time a tangi had ever hit us. Directly. One of our own.’

Next, Angela borrowed a large van from one of Mana’s friends. This was while huge arguments were going on in another part of the house. Angela told his friends that she was going to pick up Mana and take him to the Hauraki:

“Before any other ope arrives’. All the ope from Te Arawa had left and gone to the marae. So the boss said ‘you can take my truck’. He goes out and strips it down, the wife turns up and puts everything in her car, and the friends were quite shocked, they were getting geared up to go to Whaka. Ninety percent of them were Pākehā, they were all truckies. Booze buddies from Kaingaroa, Murupāra, the trucking firms in Rotorua.”

Asked how she found the strength to stand against the wishes of her father and Te Arawa, Angela said:

“because it was my brother. And nobody loved him like I loved him. Nobody. You’d have to go back, to like when we’d go fishing, we’d go together. When we’d go diving, we’d go together. When we holiday’d, all the kids would go together. Everything was done together. So his wishes were paramount in my mind. And I was only young, about twenty eight, twenty nine. I had come into my Māoritanga at about twenty five, and I was deep into it. I was living on the marae.’

So Angela told the friends she needed to move Mana urgently. Her father was “doing the haka”, although usually a quiet man, and Gerry (her husband) was very resistant. But Angela just told them all they could go with her or not, but she was going, and taking the children. No-one could persuade her otherwise.
Mana’s friends picked him up, put him in the truck, Mana’s wife came and her boss drove. All of the whānau were in the back of the truck with Mana, and the friends decided they were coming. So there were about thirty odd cars all together because they just dropped everything and came. The group got into the Mamaku, to Fitzgerald Glade. Angela stopped the procession. She went into the cafeteria, rang the wharekai in Rotorua and said who it was, and they said, “oh, Mana yes we’re ready”. Angela asked for one of the kuia:

“At the time there was Auntie Flo. This was another one of Dad’s first cousins. I said ‘Auntie, it’s Angela here, aroha mai Darling but’...and she said ‘when are you ready?’ And I said ‘I’m not’. She goes ‘you’re not? What’s happened?’ And I said ‘I’m taking him home’. And she did a haka on the phone, I said ‘Aunty, I’m already in the Mamaku’s. If you can let Uncle Hiko and them know’. And we had the Owhata crowd, Pikiao, Whaka, and my own crowd at Rotorua at Tunohopu already knew. Pihopa Kingi and them, they all knew.”

Angela told them she would wait for an hour, then keep going’. They waited up there, and her Uncle Hiko was the first to arrive, furious. He told her she was wrong, and Angela told him it was too late:

“If I’d laid him there I wouldn’t have been able to take him home. I’m doing it this way’. So he said right, they couldn’t change my mind. So there was a huge contingent. That came back from Rotorua. They all came. Oh yes, they were angry, but they knew what I was like by then. Strong. And they knew.”

When they went on to the marae with Mana, Angela’s sisters were all on the mahau. It was late in the afternoon. Everyone else went on to the marae, but Angela couldn’t go and sit with him. She stood to the side by the pou. She took her shoes off but she couldn’t go in. She was in an agitated state of rage and grief, “beside herself” as it is sometimes said.

“It was a possessive thing, you know, ‘you didn’t love him as much as I loved him’. I didn’t want to give over ownership of him and I saw my sisters and Mum went up and the women were on the whariki, and I couldn’t sit beside him. When they opened him up or anything. In my mind, my sisters, ‘you were always fighting with him, you never loved him, you always called him arsehole’ and that, and it was giving him over.”

Anger was Angela’s predominant emotion. Anger was carrying her through. She described anger and adrenaline as huge tools which gave her the strength to be able to do what she needed to do. It was anger when she first saw him, anger that he had abandoned her. When they arrived at the marae with him,
“it was because they didn’t love him as much as I did, and because I had to share him when all I wanted to do was to keep him with me. I didn’t go and sit. My mother and sisters called me, my sisters, but I left.”

Before the mihimihis started Angela left and went back out to the family home in Komata). When there, she let go of her emotions. She swore and cursed, and howled at her brother, and cried for a long time. She didn’t go back to the marae at about nine pm. She did not sit with him when anyone was around, or until they were asleep. And then she would go in by him. Angela said she didn’t want people to kiss and hug her, she was too wild to be touched:

“I was beyond that. That was accepting that he was gone, and I didn’t want that. I had done my part of carrying out his wishes.”

Angela’s mother and sisters were confused by her behaviour. Because her bond with Mana was so strong, they couldn’t understand why she wouldn’t go in. When people realised that it was such a huge crowd, and they wouldn’t all get into the wharenui, they brought the whariki’s, the mattresses out. Some of her sisters sat with him all the time, and the other sisters went into the wharekai to help.

“Yes, it was unusual. Normally if he had an eldest son, he would sit on the Pae. Normally the tuakana of the sisters stayed with... (the tūpāpaku)... you know if there were one or two of us, but there were five of us. Marie stayed all the time with Mum and the sisters and all the Aunties. And I never ever sat, and they called me “the phantom that creeps in the night”. Once I got the kids to sleep up the front end by the door, I wouldn’t go back.”

Angela’s husband couldn’t call her to his side. No-one could approach her. She just wanted them to look after her children, and help in the kitchen. Then when everyone had settled down she went to play cards in the kitchen, and then came in about eleven, twelve at night. Her Mother was beside Mana on one side, and his wife and Mana’s children were all on both sides. But when Angela came in she went over to her mother’s side. She always knew when Angela was coming in, to have her time with Mana.

“And then I’d have my time. I sat an hour with him, quietly, talking to him, and then I would go. And then I wouldn’t go the next day, I’d go at night... Then the night before the nehu, I slept by him. It wasn’t until way after the poroporoaki and everyone was asleep, and I went up to him and I said my goodbyes then. Because I didn’t want to say goodbye in front of everybody, I couldn’t. And then they closed him the next day, and Mum and Gerry and them said come and say goodbye to your brother before we close him. And I backed right away. I was still grieving, but my part had
been done. I didn’t put a flower in to him. It was after he had been covered, and everyone was going back for the hākari, and I stayed back up there with him (at the urupā). And Cherry, his wife stayed.”

The whānau had to return to Rotorua to whakawātea (spiritually cleanse) his house that night. One way in which Angela shows her devotion to her brother now, is that she has never been diving since, something they always did together. His wife gave Angela his dive gear, which she keeps in a trunk under the house.

“It was the talk of the town for many years. It still comes up – “when Angela stole our brother”. Even now, twenty three years on. And Emile was the biggest one: ‘yeah...you talk tikanga and then you go against it’. It was my tikanga in my eyes at the time, there was emotions, there was anger, and there was grief driving you on when you’re so young. But you see tikanga and kawa were always the guiding faction for hapū and iwi. This is how it should be done. This is how we will do it. How you actually go about doing it, is totally up to the family”.

*Tikanga Māori regarding burial place:*
Rules and customary practices based in tikanga have evolved over hundreds of years and give expression to the fundamental principles, values and beliefs which shape Māori culture.

Under tikanga, the primary consideration to be taken into account when determining where a person should be buried is how best to restore or preserve that person’s connections to their tribal land, their ancestors and their surviving whānau. Returning the deceased to the land that nurtured them and cementing their ancestral ties is important not only for the deceased but also for the health and mana of the whānau and iwi (New Zealand Law Commission, 2013).

Often the deceased’s whakapapa (genealogy) will give rise to a number of competing claims for their body to be repatriated to different tribal areas, and in this instance, Angela’s brother Mana descended both from Te Arawa on his father’s side, and Ngāti Tamatērā on his mother’s side. As much as he belonged in Te Arawa and had a right to be there and feel comfortable, his heart went to Tamatērā, and he had expressed his wishes to Angela that he be brought back and buried at Te Komata, the urupā where his whānau and tūpuna were buried, and he had grown up very close to.
When there is a dispute about where the tūpāpaku should be buried, the tangihanga will usually provide a structured forum in which these sometimes robust debates can be resolved. The force and length of discussions often reflect the mana of the deceased and are an important way of honouring them in death. Those who are unfamiliar with the values and principles guiding these processes might be confused or distressed by the sometimes intense and forceful nature of the discussions (New Zealand Law Commission, 2013).

However in this instance, an assumption seems to have been made that as Mana was of Te Arawa whakapapa from his paternal line, was known, had lived and died in Rotorua, that the “machinery” went into motion to have his tangi in Rotorua. He was at first lying at home, ostensibly while the marae was being prepared. However Angela, in a state of conflict about her promise to her brother, made the decision to take his tūpāpaku in any way that she could, thus pre-empting the possibility of any Tono or discussion about where he should lie.

The reason Angela did not allow her brother to lie in Rotorua with that side of his whānau was that she had long ago promised him that she would honour his desire to be buried with his Ngāti Tamatērā tūpuna where he had grown up. She loved him absolutely and ignored any fear of offending her Te Arawa whānaunga. As much as she also loved and respected them, she felt more driven to honour her brother’s wishes. This did cause a huge “upset” of her Te Arawa relatives and their wishes and work towards honouring her brother. However there was sufficient aroha and respect for them to change their plans and meet with Angela and the unexpected, slightly unusual funeral cortege, and continue accompanying them with her brother’s tūpāpaku towards the Hauraki, and their mother’s marae.

Angela’s anger at her brother for “leaving” her by dying unexpectedly, while not sounding “rational”, was a very clear abandonment reaction which expressed the deep and long term love connection she had formed with her brother who had always looked after her and saved her from predicaments, be they small childish scrapes or huge life crises.

Feeling such feelings and having a sense of “ownership” through devotion, Angela knew her brother very well. His wife had thought she should provide his best formal
clothes for his burial. However Angela over-rode that suggestion and said that he should be buried in the casual clothes which would be more comfortable and compatible with his lifestyle.

Angela was a charismatic leader in her whānau. She was neither the eldest child, nor the eldest female. However in common with Huiarangi (case study to follow), she had the authority, cultural knowledge and respect within her whānau which meant that her siblings and even her parents acceded to her wishes (they were more fearful than she was of the repercussions). It is not known how her brother’s wife felt about being directed regarding decisions made about her husband after death. As a non-Māori she may have felt somewhat powerless in the situation, or she may also have been told by her deceased husband that the whānau took precedence when it came to death and bereavement.

Edge & Nikora (2010) described the feelings of a bereaved non-Māori husband of a Māori woman who had been shocked and hurt by the apparently overwhelming cultural process which had occurred when his wife died, leaving him feeling left-out and bewildered. These feelings have perhaps been felt by many bereaved non-Māori spouses of Māori deceased, because the cultural reality for Māori is that regardless of the deceased’s choices in life, he or she belongs to the whānau of origin when they die. In modern times, exceptions do occur where the non-Māori bereaved spouse’s wishes may take precedence, but there are many factors which influence this decision. As the adult child of a cross-cultural marriage myself I have several hypotheses, but in terms of research, this is an area only now beginning to be explored.

What did the Tangihanga contribute to Angela’s Grief Resolution?
The most important issue for Angela in ushering her brother from the moment she knew of his death, to the burial place he had stated that he wanted, was to carry out his wishes, regardless of the consequences to her, or the offence or anger she may have caused in doing this. It may be said that this was the greatest factor contributing her healing, because she was too agitated to participate in many of the other rituals which are traditionally part of a tangihanga.
Really it is difficult to address the question about aspects which were helpful or comforting during the tangi. Other than the very great task of carrying out his wishes, it is important to identify the unspoken gifts and attributes Angela herself had, which enabled her to achieve what she did, in a time of great turmoil and opposition.

Therefore although some of the features in the other case studies differ from those in Angela’s case study, the tangi was a “given”. When her brother died, there would be a tangihanga. She organised it, she ensured that her whānau carried through with the necessary arrangements. Angela had a lot of control in how and where the tangi went. She then stepped back from other people and did her own grieving, which she demonstrated at that time as anger and pain. The tangi “went well,” and she did go through her most cathartic grief at and around the tangihanga. After that, time, the creativity of her organisation of his headstone to show her devotion, the kura kohatu (unveiling) and ongoing processing of her grief slowly helped her heal.

**Reflexive considerations about this interview and Case Study:**

Angela was a much loved tuakana (senior female cousin) to me. When my mother died she had come with all of our Aunties to help organise the tangi at our family home, for which I owed her a great deal of gratitude and respect.

Angela had suffered a lot of losses in her whānau, so many close losses that we eventually had to discuss which one she would discuss for the case study. She was in a state of grief as she had lost her son quite recently. I had attended the tangi. As she missed her son so much she was spending all possible time at the family farm and our urupa, Puketotara. That was where we had our interview and discussion, at her family’s home. She said she would discuss anything but the loss of her son.

Angela virtually told me her life story in the five hours we talked. At the end of the korero she was emotionally spent. It was not until she received the transcript some time later that she expressed surprise at how much she had told me.

I felt the most profound sympathy and empathy for Angela. At the same time, parts of her story informed me about my own personal family life and other relatives who
had lived on the farm together as a large whanau, in separate houses but in constant contact.

At times my parents had driven us up to the urupa, past all the family houses except for that of our Auntie Neta, my grandmother’s older sister. She was a wonderful, loving kuia, very ngāwari, always ready to whip up some scones or rewena bread for her visitors – I loved going there but we did not go often enough.

Angela told me a story about my cousins’ perceptions of us driving through the farm (I was a child in the back seat). She said they said “look at her, who does she think she is?” I replied quite sadly “well do you know what I was saying?” “I was looking out the window wistfully and saying “are those my cousins?” I so wanted to meet them and they looked so much as if they belonged – to each other and to the farm. Unfortunately it was my Mother’s choice and life experiences which led her to be so isolative from her own cousins even though she had spent every one of her school holidays at Komata with all of them. But I was judged for being a passenger, and did not have the opportunity to meet my cousins until some years later, under my own impetus. I was so hungry for my whanau and did not know what to do about it.
CHAPTER EIGHT: HANA

Background

Whānau upbringing, Cultural values, and Cultural identification
Hana is of Te Aitanga a Hauiti descent. She was raised at Tolaga Bay, along with two other mokopuna, by her grandmother. Her parents lived twenty miles away, on a remote farming station. They visited Tolaga once a month to see Hana.

Hana’s great grandfather had been part of the last of the tohunga (expert in spiritual matters) line of their family. Hana’s grandmother was a Matakite (seer), and until the age of nine, Hana could see those who had passed over. When comments were made by other children to her parents that Gran was “spooky”, her father insisted that Hana be cleansed of the gift they shared. She described a ritual she underwent whereby two tohunga baptised her in the sea, on the arrival of the seventh wave. While they were doing this, her grandmother was on the sandhills calling a karanga. She was unhappy that Hana was to lose her gift.

The house Hana grew up in had no electricity for many years. Hana recounted that one whānau nga had bought an electric oven for their grandmother in 1951. But it sat out on the porch because there was no power supply to make it work. Many things were done in the old way. Having grown up in her own community, surrounded by whānau, speaking te reo, and living with her Kuia, Hana was immersed in events of the community such as tangihanga. They were natural to her.

Pākehā racism
Hana described Tolaga Bay as “rife with racism”. It took her some years of childhood to realise this. She remembers her Grandmother saying “Kaore au he nikanika” (“I’m not a nigger”).

Pākehā characterisations of Māori were often determined by prejudice. Māori were widely regarded as lazy. A common unfriendly term for a Māori was ‘Hori’ (from the Māori version of the name George). A Māori way of doing things was supposedly slapdash and unprofessional, and ‘Māori time’ meant unpunctuality. Māori in cities encountered even more unpleasant racial language such as ‘boonga’.
School Life
Hana attended the last “Native school” in the area, then was sent to Te Waipounamu Māori Girls’ College, an Anglican school. Subsequently she attended Teachers College and achieved a Dip Ed and Bachelor of teaching. During this time, at the age of twenty one, she married her husband, Wally, and espoused the Latter Day Saints religion.

When she was twenty six, the couple went to Australia. Hana worked with Indigenous Australians and realised that the racism in Australia, especially in rural areas, was even worse than that she had experienced growing up at home. She learned a valuable lesson when actively advocating for an indigenous man. In that instance, she “won”, but her intervention made the man’s subsequent interactions with the racist in question much more difficult. She vowed that she would always take the context into account rather than isolated actions.

Hana is highly educated with a demonstrated history of cultural commitment. She is a mother and a grandmother, and she and her husband are committed to their whānau.

A Specific Tangi: Hana’s Daughter Mel
From a traditional Māori perspective, the implications for lineage (whakapapa) arising from the death of children are noted by some contemporary commentators (McCreanor, Tipene-Leach & Abel, 2004). The flax bush (te pa harakeke) is a metaphor for the children who inherit part of the gene pools of the two parents.

Mel, Hana’s daughter, was the mother of five children in a loving marital relationship. She and her whānau lived, and she and her husband worked in Brisbane. Mel was fit, active, energetic and involved in her communities. Therefore news of the diagnosis of her illness was a shock:

“We didn’t know that Mel had cancer until it was quite late. Until she had it in the advanced stage. And so that was difficult, but the most overwhelming thing about Mel’s tangi was the fact that it’s really hard to lose a child, your child.”
Informal caregiving is of great importance to Māori. Caregiving roles are the same as those associated with maintaining whānau relationships and integrity. Caregiving is a common activity across all age groups and especially for women in the middle age range, and more Māori women tend to be caregivers than men (Collins & Willson, 2008).

The idealised whānau is the benchmark for family relationships and members’ obligations to each other. The more severe the disability or chronic illness, the more reliant a person is on these values functioning within their whānau. Possibilities for this occurring amongst whānau depend to a large extent on the strength of their identity (Collins & Willson, 2008).

As a healthy, functional whānau, they unanimously decided to nurse Mel at her own home (in Brisbane) This expedited the Hospice staff, who attended twice daily, brought all the necessary equipment, and kept the whānau medically informed. Thus the entire whānau were able to support Mel in her last days. Mel’s husband and her oldest sister were the chief nurses. There was a lot of work to be done, because people were visiting all the time.

**Conscious Preparation for the transition**

Mel was preparing for her spiritual transition. She rested in the afternoon and would be awake during the night, ensuring her husband knew all the wishes she had for their children, running the family, and sharing memories.

**Final Wishes**

Mel told her mother:

“take me home, I don’t want to be left in Australia. We only came to Australia to work. We didn’t come to die. I don’t want to be left here. I want to go home and Mum I want to go to your Marae, your urupā. I want to go back to Tolaga Bay.”

That was where Mel had lived and two of the children were born. Mel’s husband had other suggestions which he discussed with Hana. He suggested his own urupā in Dannevirke. But Hana declined this suggestion because the whānau expected he would eventually marry again. Hana convinced him that he would re-marry, and would possibly experience difficulties when visiting his brother in the urupā and his first wife was next door.
“Leave her (in Tolaga) where we know her and where we care about her...No, let her go, let her go to the place where her pito (umbilical cord) was cut, where all her tīpuna wāhine are.”

The family had time to think of every aspect of Mel’s leaving, including her dress for burial, which her cousin re-designed from her wedding dress. This may have represented purity, continued commitment to her husband, the commemoration of another momentous change. These are my hypotheses as the researcher, because I was not privy to the discussion. This also connected to her concern for her husband’s well-being, and Mel insisted they:

“Make sure he was emotionally ok, and that it was all right for him to find another wife when the time was right. She had discussed this with him as well.”

Hana and her husband asked him to remain faithful until after the unveiling before he began considering other women, as that would be regarded as closure. He apparently agreed as he was not ready.

In terms of Hana’s interactions with her son in law, Mel’s husband, there was quite a strong element of control over decisions which included expectations of his behaviour, ideas about the entire death ritual process, and where Mel would be buried. I considered the origins of this control, and concluded that they were manyfold. Whakapapa, having leadership qualities and roles, and the parental role expectations of the LDS (Mormon Church). It may have been that as part of the Church himself, Mel’s husband was answering to his own indoctrinated roles as a son in law – to bow to the wishes of his mother in law, although it is noted that he tried to make alternative suggestions. Stated most simply, I would say that Hana was the archetypical Matriarch. These are not questions I explored with Hana, so these remain hypotheses.

**Final Days**

When Mel was closer to passing away, she became more emaciated and her breathing was laboured. Hana expressed concern for the whānau, especially the children, because it was painful to watch. The children were struggling with the excruciating and prolonged pain their mother seemed to have to endure, and while they had been brought up to believe strongly in their religious faith, they did question the reason for their mother’s suffering.
“Towards the end they were saying ‘why can’t Heavenly Father take Mum? Why doesn’t he take her now?’”

Explaining the concept of death to children, and normalising the medical and symptomatic processes, can reduce fear, anxiety and other emotional responses about the loss of a loved one (Turner, 2006). Cultural and religious explanations often address themes of death and questions of an afterlife. These beliefs provide comfort for children (Cuddy-Casey et al, 1995; Granot, 2005).

“...The other devastating thing was to see the younger children (Mel’s children) at that stage eight and ten and to see that and to know the potential of the kids is still in front of them and she’s not here to celebrate that.

Mel then passed away, and Hana said that the whānau were well prepared.

“One of the things about cancer is that you do have time. And while the stages are excrutiatingly painful you do have time, if you’ve got whānau who can work together.”

_Trans-National Issues – Taking Mel Home_

Mel was brought back from the undertakers, and lay again at the house. The house, a rental, was being vacated as the whole whānau was accompanying Mel’s tūrōpu home to Tolaga Bay. This meant both physically and spiritually cleansing the house. They asked a kaumātua who lived on the Gold Coast to whakawātea the house.

Mel was then taken from the home to a chapel for a morning service, so friends could farewell Mel. From the chapel, to the airport, and a flight to Auckland, with twenty five whānau members flying back with Mel. The casket then had to be checked by an undertaker. They then arrived at the Auckland Airport Marae, known as Te Mānukanaka O Hoturoa. Then the male relatives brought the casket around to the front of the marae. They were welcomed on by Tainui, and the whānau were brought on by Mel’s New Zealand colleagues and other New Zealand whānau. One feature of the healing experience at the Auckland tangi was noted by Hana as being the healing of the beautiful music which was sung and played during this part of the tangi.

_Going to Hauraki_

From a night at the Auckland Marae, the cortege drove to Te Pai O Hauraki Marae in Paeroa, where Mel’s father’s side of the family, Tukukino were the chiefly line.
The whānau were accompanied to this Hui by Mel’s ex-colleagues who then left after proceedings.

“You had to stay the night because of tikanga. You should stay the night especially if you brought a tūpāpaku.”

**Leaving for Tolaga Bay**

Having stayed the night at Pai O Hauraki, and had further ceremonials, the ope continued on. Here Hana raised the fact that everything had been co-ordinated through emails, which had been a great convenience, and something relatively new. She said that the whānau was happy to finally arrive, finally bringing Mel back to Tolaga Bay. They buried her in the urupā known as Tātarahake, where only the women of their family go. The urupā overlooks the sea.

“It’s a lovely spot. And every time we go there we get healing from it...and one of the healing things was sitting up there and thinking – in arriving, it was a long and arduous journey but we did the right thing.”

**The Grief**

Hana said that while trying to recover from her loss, she was looked after very well by her own children, her own siblings, and her husband’s siblings, and still is. The whānau ask how they are coping and talk about their loss.

“It is one of the most painful things in life to experience the loss of a child. It is really. And since then I have become aware of all the people who have lost a child. Before that I didn’t take it in. I forgot that Hine (Hana’s sister in law) had lost a son. He was eighteen. I said to her the other day, “sorry, I didn’t fully realise your loss”.

Regarding Hana’s belated sorrow for her sister in law’s bereavement, Breen & O’Connor (2011) spoke of their participants who expressed the feeling that other people have difficulty imagining and meeting the support needs of the bereaved (unless they have had a similar experience).

**The Passing of Baby Iranui**

Following the burial of Mel in Tolaga, Mel’s daughter Mereana lost her baby, (Mel’s first mokopuna), just before full term. So this was more grief to cope with.

“The whānau brought the baby home (to Tolaga), named him Iranui (our tipuna name)...We buried him there. We had a little service for him at the chapel, we brought him in just as we had with Mereana’s mother, so she was recounting those steps and then we brought him straight back there to Tolaga.”
The whānau didn’t go to the marae. It was just a small group so they stayed in the house. Iranui lay one day in the house and he was buried the next day. On top of his grandmother (Mel). Hana had requested her daughter be buried deep, so Hana could be buried on top of her. But now Iranui was placed on his grandmother, and Hana when her time came, would be on the top level. The effect this had on Hana was very comforting:

“I thought, this is great, I have no fear of death, I just think oh man, this is my daughter lying here. And then I think, ok, I’m going to be lying here with you. Going to be there forever. So it (changed) the fear of death for me...it softened the fear of death.”

Another Whakawātea
When it was time to return to Brisbane, Hana had a feeling that the departure had been too hasty. She felt there was some unfinished business in the rented house in which Mel had died, even though they had spiritually “cleared” the house. So driving from the airport, Hana told them they were returning to the house. It was still empty. So Hana and the children went around and said goodbye. She reiterated to the mokopuna that their mother was back at Tolaga Bay, but that many good things had happened in this house. She guided them through saying goodbye to the house where their mother died, and let it go.

Hana’s Spirituality
Hana was raised with first very traditional Māori spiritual beliefs. Attending an Anglican school she was influenced by Christian beliefs, and subsequently adopted her husband’s faith of Mormonism (LDS). Hana was one example of many Māori, who found that old traditions and cultural beliefs can co-mingle with Christian ideologies (Salmond, 1976).

Though many Māori like Hana, have converted to one form or another of Christianity, many often still retain and pursue Māori cultural practices that to an outsider may look somewhat contradictory. This apparent contradiction is consistent with what Ritchie (1992) terms “both/and” logic; the Māori world and its cosmological beliefs sitting in a complimentary way with that of Christianity (Salmond, 1976). According to Rosenblatt (1997) the blending of cultural traditions with religion is not unusual, in fact, there are many instances where people seek guidance, comfort and understanding from both sources (Jacob, Nikora & Ritchie, 2011).
Beliefs about an Afterlife
For most Māori, death is not seen as an end, but rather, a transition to a new life with relatives, ancestors and friends who had passed before (Jacob et al, 2011). Hana described her own conciliation of her early beliefs of her Māoritanga, and her later acquired religious faith. She stressed the belief of life after death, and the coming together of whānau. Hana explained that especially in L.D.S., life after death is a strong principle. She believed it to be an entirely compatible principle:

“Yes it is very similar to our Māori beliefs. In Māori we say, “kua/ko whetūrangitia”, which is “she has gone to the stars”. To the heavens. And in the karakia they talk about various heavens. That the body goes through and it’s a purifying process. To get to the last one. And we have an understanding that there, people meet all of their tipuna.”

“The deceased spirits move through the veil and there’s a changing and purifying with each thing that they learn...it’s a compatible belief. For us, anyhow. I haven’t sat down to look at it in any depth, in terms of whether there are any conflicts. And I don’t want to I think because I’m very happy with the compatibilityof them both. I’m happy where I am with both. What I haven’t done is..espouse..the Māori version.”

Hana said she had a lot of faith in her church understanding, and had a lot of depth in her understanding of her Māoritanga. She loves them both, combines them and balances them together in her life.

“I don’t let one overcome the other or one put down the other. If someone goes against me on the LDS side of things, I would argue for that. If someone goes against me on the Māoritanga side of things, I will argue for that...Both are precepts that are in my everyday living. I don’t have any conflict. Oh I do have some kinds of (time) conflicts, sometimes I have a tangi and it’s a Sunday so I have to leave the tangi to go and run a women’s thing for church. So I say to them at the marae, oh well I’ve got to go to church now.”

What did the Tangihanga contribute to Hana’s Grief Resolution?
Hana had a strong hand in all of the proceedings from Mel’s illness, to her burial. Culturally, Hana knew that her daughter was to be buried amongst all her tūpuna whaea, in her home place, and she planned to be buried on top of her daughter.

Although not particularly mentioned, there was the exhaustion of the illness journey which the whole whānau had been through for months. Finally Mel’s death, which was simultaneous with packing up the house, and all the whānau bringing Mel
back, through four or five mourning ceremonies at least, four of them tangihanga at different marae.

The exhaustion of these ongoing ceremonies and grief meant that by their arrival at Tolaga Bay, their home and Mel’s final resting place, the feeling of relief, closure and support from the home people, then the subsequent burial of Mel’s still-born mokopuna in the same grave, also had its tragic beauty. Even as the baby was being buried, Hana was ensuring that the whānau gravediggers were leaving room for her to be buried on the higher level of the grave. She described a sense of peace, and a loss of fear of death, knowing that she would be buried there.

Finally, Hana’s deep spirituality and the belief system around that were her great healers. Naturally she still grieved, but she was able to find comfort in her religion and the loving whānau around her.

**Reflexive considerations about this interview and Case Study:**

Hana was a senior whanaunga by marriage (to an uncle in the sense of extended whānau, and therefore she was my Aunt). I had known of her for many years, and had met her several times. I would not have thought to ask her to participate in the research, for several reasons. Probably most importantly for me, was that to my great regret I did not know of Mel’s illness and passing. I felt very sad and “guilty” for not having known, and not having attended the tangi nor communicated with the whānau. I therefore would never have imposed on her to do me the great favour of talking to me about her experiences. I felt very whakamā. However Hana was also a very close Aunt to one of my supervisors, and she greatly facilitated our meeting again.

Although feeling the discomfort of the above feelings, I went to see Hana and after a preliminary conversation about my aroha and concerns, she was very relaxed and kind. She had decided to help me and had many stories to tell – I did not stop her even though I couldn’t use them all. I was aware that she had limited time as the whole family was going back to Australia and her time was precious. I felt that her doing this for me was part of her philosophy of kindness.
I didn’t know whether Hana, with all her strength and spirituality, would benefit from the telling of her grief, and she did not impart this to me. However I have since been told that she did find it helpful to speak of her grief, and this was very welcome news to me.

Other feelings I was having while talking with Hana, were great sympathy and compassion for my cousin Mel. I had not known her well, but when I had met her I found her warm, beautiful and charismatic. Since meeting Mel she had become a wife, mother and grandmother, and hearing Hana describe Mel’s participation in life, brought to me a feeling of great admiration for Mel.

Another factor which really moved me greatly was that in visiting Hana I also came into contact with Mel’s beautiful youngest children. I found it heartbreaking to interact, however briefly, with these children who had been through so much pain. With them, I acted according to the example set by Hana and I did not feel that I should display my own feelings to them, not having met me before, their being so young, and having been through such a prolonged grief process. I thought about whether this was a “colonised” or acculturated way of thinking about it, but still felt that it was a better decision to be warm, interested and feel aroha towards them.
CHAPTER NINE: HUIARANGI

Background

Whānau upbringing, Cultural values, and Cultural identification

Huiarangi’s parents both grew up on ancestral farms, so both knew “who they were” (in terms of whakapapa). They:

“...still had quite strong connections to their whānau. They had all their wider whānau around them, growing up. And the reason why they went to the city was to escape from their whānau for a little while. That’s where they met each other. It was that time when Māori whānau were sending their kids off and they had both gone down to Wellington. They met each other in the party scene where they all went, they met each other and fell in love. Then the plan was for them to go back.”

In the instance of Huiarangi’s whānau’s “urban drift”, her grandparents had been left by themselves by all the other siblings, so they sold the farm, which caused her father (who had always thought he would return), great anger and hurt. This brought about a major split in the whānau, resulting in Huiarangi and her siblings first growing up in their mother’s rohe, then moving to the city, and not seeing their whānau for several years of their childhood. However as Huiarangi was the potiki of eight children, by the time she was born, those members of the whānau who had been determined to be separated, had relented somewhat. She at least was able to benefit from there being a lot more contact with the whānau.

Huiarangi and her older sister were born in the city. However the whānau still attended events from both sides of the whānau, and it took Huiarangi a long time to work out the whakapapa. This was because there was a lot of attraction and intermarriage between the two whānau of her mother and father (of different tribal groups).

From childhood, Huiarangi’s constant exposure to the whānau took place because whānau would come and pick them up and take them to stay. When she was about eight, she would go with her sister. An auntie, uncle, or their grandparents would pick them up and they would go off to the farm. Unlike Pākehā children their sense of security was more spread over the whānau, and Huiarangi had no qualms nor separation anxiety about leaving her parents. In fact she was elated, she would jump into her grandparent’s car with barely a second glance.
“so I’d get picked up, about twelve kids in the car, get picked up and go back (home). So they did that every holidays. The “mokopuna run”.

Huiarangi therefore grew up as a very independent child. She would be gone all day and returned home at sunset. Her mother “had no idea” what she was doing. She would go fishing with her siblings. They didn’t worry about strangers in the park, because in her community, “everybody just knew everybody”.

Learning Te Reo
Huiarangi and her siblings didn’t grow up speaking te reo. Her father was one of the many of his generation who was punished at school for speaking the reo as a child, whereas her mother’s family only spoke te reo, and her mother’s first language was Māori.

Huiarangi spent a lot of time talking to her parents about te reo Māori because they were actively discouraged from speaking Māori as children. That was her father’s biggest regret. His whole life was in resentment about not learning Māori and then having to pay to learn Māori, to have to buy books to learn his own language.

“My parents didn’t speak Māori to us. Every now and then my mother, when the aunties and uncles came they would speak to each other (in English) and then all of a sudden they’d switch and start speaking Māori and they’d all cackle so I knew I’d been excluded out of jokes...So every now and then I’d say Mum, I want to learn Māori... ‘Cause there was a lot of Māori being used in the house. You’d get growled in Māori. So I could pick up the odd word, but I couldn’t understand the conversation if it was going a hundred miles an hour.”

However a political event was to change the life of Huiarangi and many other young Māori, who without it, their lives would have gone on an entirely different path. Māori-language immersion teaching began in the mid-1980s with kōhanga reo (pre-school), kura kaupapa (primary schools), tikanga reo rua (bilingual units), whare kura (secondary schools) and wānanga (tertiary institutes such as universities). Young Māori educated in these systems were known as ‘kōhanga kids’ (Taonui, 2013).

The revitalisation of the Māori language also found expression in Te Taura Whiri i te Reo (the Māori Language Commission, set up in 1987), a national network of Māori radio stations which started broadcasting in the 1980’s. Also Māori
Television (established in 2004). Te Panekiretanga was set up as an academy for advanced use of Māori language (Taonui 2013).

The revival of te reo Māori has sometimes created tensions between Māori who emphasise the use of their language and those who work primarily in other areas of Māori advancement and may not be able to speak or understand the language, or even Māori who are just living their lives. This tension has given rise to the perjorative labels ‘language fascists’ (Taonui, 2013) for those who are particularly uncompromising about the importance of the language. Those who promote the importance of te reo are performing a hugely important role in keeping our language alive. However those who are unable to speak the reo, are manifesting the political decision making and policies of previous times, and this can be an extremely painful position to be in.

Thus Huiarangi was extremely fortunate to be a child in the eighties, when the beginning of Kohanga Reo and bi-lingual units in schools were being trialled. Her mother wanted her to attend Queen Victoria Māori Girls College but she refused and was therefore enrolled in a bi-lingual unit at a school close to home.

As the unit was a pilot programme there was a strict entry criteria. They had to ensure that everyone was committed to doing well, and that the parents were committed to supporting the child. From high school at the bi-lingual unit, cultural engagement began in earnest. Noho marae, weaving, karanga, writing poetry and speeches. Her parents knew what Huiarangi was capable of, and they directed her to do those things at various events.

Huiarangi’s grandparents were very influential in her upbringing. Both were indoctrinated in the differentiations between roles for girls and boys, women and men.

“A girl would stay inside, clean the house, a boy would be outside, tinker around with the machinery, run around, play with the guns – I would prefer to do (that). I had quite a few scraps with my grandmother – I was always trying to push against the boundaries – I don’t want to sit inside and do the dishes, I don’t think it’s fair to be doing the cleaning up.”

Huiarangi had an intellectual and emotional resonance with her father. He had not had an intense formal education, but was intelligent and informed about politics and the world around him. He spoke to Huiarangi about these issues. They would have
a lot of arguments or debates, which ultimately stimulated her intellect. Although not formally educated, her father was intelligent and allowed Huiarangi to develop her own reasoning and intellect.

Huiarangi’s parents, particularly her father, gave her both freedom and the responsibility which came with that. She was allowed to drive the car around to her sports tournaments as long as she dropped them off and picked them up.

Learning about Tangihanga
Tangihanga has been an ongoing cultural ritual which has largely resisted the pressures of acculturation, and continues to be regular practice in Māori communities. The presence of children at tangihanga is normal, they are exposed to tūpāpakū (the deceased), and they are able to discuss death with their peer group and adults (Jacob, Nikora, & Ritchie, 2011).

From childhood, Huiarangi understood death at a certain level. She knew the general process of tangihanga, and the rituals. Some important people had passed prior to her birth, but she understood through her parents discussing those people and their tangihanga.

Children’s understanding of death varies from culture to culture (Rosenblatt, 1997). It has been suggested that children cannot develop a true understanding of death until they have a basic comprehension of the following concepts: These are “Universality”, meaning eventually every living thing is destined to die; “Irreversibility”, meaning once dead this cannot be changed; and “Non-functionality”, implying that the deceased person is no longer living and life is non-existent. The concept of “causality” involves understanding the possible causes and circumstances of how the death occurred (Jacob, Nikora & Ritchie, 2011).

Apart from the need to understand these conceptual ideas, Piaget (1960) and subsequent researchers (e.g. Wenestam & Wass, 1987) argued that children’s thoughts and reasoning develop gradually over time and as a function of age. Findings also showed that children can understand and comprehend death at a young age if they are exposed to it.

Huiarangi thereby described her understanding of death from a young age:
“I knew people died. Because they would be there and then not there. We would go and see them in the coffin. I remember being little and we were all there being lined up to go and kiss Nanny, go and kiss Koro. By the time I was old enough to remember it was automatic. We’d go and sit with them if we were close...I knew that it was going to be the last time that I would see that person. I knew that once the coffin was closed, I sort of knew the general process. Sit around, cry cry, put the lid on, speech speech, sing song, carry the box off, go in the hole.”

This description may sound facile, and in a positive sense it was exactly that. It was easy, natural, it went smoothly, guided by all of the roleplayers and mourners at the tangihanga. Children tend to accept the cultural beliefs they are raised with, including those about death (Fiorini & Mullen, 2006). As stated in Hana’s case study, for Māori, cultural beliefs co-mingle with Christian ideologies (Salmond, 1976).

As a child, like most of the other participants in this and other studies, Huiarangi enjoyed going to tangihanga because it was an opportunity to play with her cousins while her parents were engaged in the tangihanga. Death and tangihanga were both common experiences and a departure from everyday life routines. Because of this, they remembered a sense of excitement, novelty and anticipation, of being reunited with cousins and relatives similar to the participants of Jacob et al, (2011).

Then she reached a certain age, where she wondered what was really happening. She re-thought her roles:

“Maybe I should sit and listen, for a little while, as much as my attention could last. Sometimes you’d get sent to go and help in the kitchen, go and set the tables, I’d say ok, go and wash a couple of dishes...As a young kid, that’s pretty much all I did, play around, do the dishes, go set up the tables, stand and wait for the meat to get cut up, go and take it to the plates.”

Huiarangi was very used to that process with other people. Because her immediate maternal grandparents died before she was born. Her experience of their death was through her parents talking about the tangi. On her father’s side, her paternal grandfather died when she was about ten. So she had only had that couple of years going and seeing him.

The first tangihanga when Huiarangi sat by the tūpāpaku was that of her paternal Koroua. She sat with her father both to tautoko him, and also because she understood her relationship to her grandfather.
“My grandfather’s funeral – that was the first tangihanga that I remember actually sitting. Whereas the rest was just go and have a kiss, sit for two minutes. In fact I saw my Dad quite distraught. We’d been to a lot of funerals but I’d never seen my Dad like that. So it hit me a lot harder. I both sat with Dad to tautoko him, but also because he (the deceased) was my grandfather”.

As Huiarangi discussed, the cultural norm for Māori is to touch, kiss, view, and be in close proximity to a tūpāpaku both as a child, and an adult. Fear, distaste or discomfort are not modelled by adults, rather a loving and expressive behaviour are demonstrated towards the deceased, as also described in other literature (such as Jacob et al., 2011).

Attendance at tangihanga taught Huiarangi a lot about tikanga, and also Māori politics, because her grandparents were very involved with Māori politics in their home area. Huiarangi and her cousins would “hang around” trying to eavesdrop, before being noticed and sent off to go and do another job. Her grandfather was “staunch to the end”. He was not only involved with politics but he was also involved in the land (at home), in the community. Huiarangi believes that if her grandparents hadn’t sold the farm, her grandfather would have kept working, but he wouldn’t have had the chance to be involved in the political actions that he had.

By her teenage years, all Huiarangi’s siblings had left home. This meant becoming like an only child, but the one type of event which brought them all together was attending tangihanga. They went to a lot of tangi because they knew a lot of whānau. Huiarangi enjoyed going to tangihanga as a child because of contact with her cousins. As she grew older, she realised it would be interesting to be present in the ceremonial part, or help the ringawera.

“Yes, we went to a lot of tangi. Because we knew a lot of our extended family. On my mother’s side they died before I was born. My Nanny died when I was sixteen. But it wasn’t just our own grandparents, we knew all our grandparents’ cousins as well- so we were going to a lot.”

Huiarangi later attended University and continued achieving while also building a family of her own. As a University student, Huiarangi guiltily admitted that she became involved in her own life. She had three years of “being selfish”, having a boyfriend. She was so indoctrinated in her cultural duties, that being “selfish” was Huiarangi’s way of describing her decision at that time of her life to enjoy her new
love partnership, and not always fulfil cultural duties, reciprocities and obligations, particularly attending tangihanga. She began choosing whom she would visit, and which tangihanga she would attend (cf Nikora, 2007). She lived with tremendous guilt. As a graduate she started to re-engage with the whānau again and returned for virtually every tangi that was on. Her parents had bought her a car, and she and her partner would attend both his and her whānau’s tangihanga.

As Huiarangi matured, married and had children of her own, she became nurturing and protective of both her parents. She particularly worked at developing the relationship between her parents and her children (their mokopuna). Huiarangi and her husband established her parents in a flat close to their home. Her children were able to spend two years with them, before her mother died unexpectedly. Huiarangi was still coping with her grief for her mother, and they moved her father in with them.

A specific Tangi: losing both parents within a short period
Huiarangi was in a state of grief. Her father was absolutely devastated:

At Mum’s poroporoaki Dad said, ‘Mum, if I take too long, come and get me’. We all exclaimed ‘no Dad, you’ve got to give us a chance’. He was sick with grief.”... At her unveiling part of his speech was: ‘I’ve done my duty Mum, I’ve got you to heaven’.

Huiarangi and her husband moved her Dad in with them, he couldn’t live alone in the house. He was quite sensitive about things. When alive, her Mum wouldn’t talk about death, and now neither would her father “because of karanga aituā.” Karanga aituā is mentioned earlier in this thesis as the belief or fear that discussing death may bring it upon one.

Caring for the elderly is seen as an important Māori cultural value. Kuia and koroua are viewed as important cultural resources and sources of wisdom, cultural continuity and hope (Collins & Willson, 2008). Kepa, Reynolds and Walker (2005) argued that if a community can not care for its most vulnerable members then the community has lost the capacity and capability to care for itself.

Huiarangi’s father was diagnosed with a serious illness about four months after her mother died. He refused to discuss his own mortality and wishes, and Huiarangi
was desperate to discover what he wanted to avoid the difficulties the whānau had experienced with their mother.

In spite of his resistance, Huiarangi was his primary caregiver while he went in and out of the hospital for chemotherapy and any other treatment. She was obsessed with “looking after Dad and making his time meaningful emotionally.”

To be able to do this, she had the utmost cooperation from her husband in looking after their children. This is one feature described as assisting caregivers in maintaining positivity by Goodhead & McDonald (2007). Social support has been identified as protective against the strains of the caregiving role (Goodhead & McDonald, 2007).

Huiarangi was offered help by friends but didn’t allow them to assist her. She rather allowed her social ties to “slip” completely. Like many of Breen’s participants (Breen & O’Connor, 2007b) some relationships collapsed completely, including family relationships and long-term relationships with close friends. They reported that their priorities altered completely following the deaths of their loved ones—they were significantly less interested in maintaining a busy social calendar and instead wanted to spend more time with their families (Breen & O’Connor, 2007b). This was not unusual or an unhappy experience in Huiarangi’s case, because she did not want any other support than her husband’s, because for her it was a duty of love.

Tohu: Dreams
Huiarangi had dreamt of her mother’s death prior to the event of her dying. Then again, before her father became sick:

“I had a dream that Mum came. And she said ‘get ready to say goodbye’. This was before he had even been diagnosed. So I woke up and was lying there - I was a wreck...When Mum said get ready to say goodbye I thought it was my daughter...my husband is quite convinced I am matakite.”

The Process of Dad’s Illness
Huiarangi’s father collapsed, was hospitalised and diagnosed with leukaemia. He forced Huiarangi to keep his illness secret from his siblings, about which she quite rightly had trepidation. Indeed, when they found out, they focussed their anger on Huiarangi, who was really in a no-win situation. She was honouring her father’s
wishes but this caused her conflict with other whānau members who did not agree with her keeping her father’s illness a secret. Caregiving most commonly occurs in the wider context of the whānau (cf. Goodhead & McDonald, 2007). However in this instance, Huiarangi was the accepted caregiver of her father as he was already living with her and her family, she had been the predominant caregiver of both her parents before, and most importantly, she most wanted to look after him.

Huiarangi kept working in her employment although she was very stressed. She worked her life around supporting her father’s appointments and trying to be there for her whānau. Caregiving naturally affects the allocation of time and attention among family members, for example by reducing time for family social activities (Goodhead & McDonald, 2007) and this was certainly the case for Huiarangi.

Because of his cultural (in this case gender related) requirements, Huiarangi’s father was “labeled as a hostile patient”. Increasing attention has been paid to health disparities between majority and minority populations within health care systems (Geiger, 2003). Bias, discrimination and stereotyping at individual, institutional and health system levels have been identified as important factors requiring intervention (Smedley, Stith & Nelson, Eds., 2003).

Huiarangi’s father would not speak to a female Doctor about his physical condition. Huiarangi was attempting to translate the medical world to her father and his cultural needs to the medical staff. Her father was in pain:

“He went up and down all the time, but when his ups were never as high as the last ups. So I watched his steady decline.”

Whānau caregivers like Huiarangi tend to be the communicator with professional support and health service delivery people, which may place them in a gatekeeper role. The whānau caregivers in Nikora et al’s (2004) study complained that medical professionals acted as if they were invisible, or else treated them as a support person or friend, but not as an important source of information on the health and well-being of the recipient. This did initially happen with Huiarangi’s situation, but her relentless dedication and assertiveness ensured that the medical staff came to respect and listen to Huiarangi.
Caregivers of older people sometimes come into conflict with other family members if they express disappointment with their caregiving contribution. Caregivers commonly experience a loss of social contact with others, which is concerning given that social support has been identified as protective against the strains of the caregiving role (Goodhead & McDonald, 2007).

In spite of the demands of caregiving, literature showed that most caregivers provide care gladly and feel positively about the role. The quality of the prior relationship between caregiver and recipient influences how positively caregivers perceive their role. Research suggests the primary caregiver status usually reflecting a long-standing emotional commitment (Goodhead & McDonald, 2007). This was very true of Huiarangi’s relationship with her father.

Huiarangi seldom allowed other whānau to care for their father. As the primary caregiver, she had trouble trusting anybody else to look after him as she did. However on one occasion, she had to honour her husband in an obligation to his whānau, since he had been so helpful to her. However on her return to pick her father up from her sibling’s home, he had lost weight, become sick with a cold, and Huiarangi was furious and disappointed in her sibling, because she felt that this presentation of her father was really “the beginning of the end”.

One of the strongest senses which occurred to me throughout consideration of Huiarangi’s korero was the very great differences in feelings of care and responsibility towards her parents, between Huiarangi and her siblings.

Resentments can occur between siblings for various reasons and it is not unusual for envy to occur when a younger sibling has advantages an older sibling did not enjoy. Equally, the age gap between Huiarangi and her older siblings meant that the other siblings had developed their own whānau and lives, and lived within their own social circles in different geographical areas. Thus they may have felt more removed emotionally from their parents.

Whatever the case, Huiarangi did at different times express an anger and disappointment at her siblings’ apparent relative lack of empathy and care for their parents. She was furious at the fact that any absolutely necessary respite care provided by a sibling resulted in a drastic deterioration in her father’s condition.
during his final illness. This was partly because she was so completely attuned to his needs, nursing him, but also because she perceived a comparative lack of caring or willingness to sacrifice their own needs and wants to look after their father.

*Ohākī - final wishes / planned bequests*

Huiarangi was very pressured by the need to discover her father’s last wishes. She said to her father:

“now, the only reason I was able to cope with Mum’s was because you were there. So I need to have you tell me now... So that come the end, I knew what he wanted. If there were any fights, they were fights to be had while he was here. And that happened.”

Having lost her mother who would not communicate about her wishes, Huiarangi was determined not to go through the same difficulty of not knowing what he wanted. She wrote several drafts of his will according to his wishes. Huiarangi also wanted to make everything more comfortable and be inclusive of her siblings and their children.

“It was a lot of stress, but even at the time he died, I thought ‘I gave this my all’. Whereas I felt that I didn’t do everything with Mum, with Dad, I gave it my all. Even though I was sad and all that, my husband helped me, he said ‘you did everything possible’. That was part of my healing process.”

According to Ashwell et al. (2004), the roles and responsibilities associated with informal caregiving were similar to those practiced as whanaungatanga (family relations) for Māori. Therefore, caregiving was given to, and received by, any member of the whānau that needed or asked for it and was not reserved specifically for those with impairments or health conditions. This was perhaps the over-arching reason that caregiving responsibility was accepted amongst whānau. Whanaungatanga was underpinned by notions of aroha (love) and tiaki (care for, look after).

Also, a closer examination of the support for those suffering from severe grief may provide more information about whānau carers and how they attempt to prevent deterioration into long-term disability.

**A Specific Tangi: Dad passes away**

As her father neared death, Huiarangi found that all the stress and heartache which she had been through manifested themselves through relief. She was ready to let him go:
“It was kind of rude when he was dying because I was laughing, but for me it was kind of a stress release. I’d been having Dad’s funeral for seven months. So by the time he died, it was, ‘Ok Dad. Yep’.”

This reaction posing incongruity with the emotions of other whānau who had not been looking after her father, was only one thing which surprised them. They had known their father in one way, and he had opened up to Huiarangi in a way he had not with them:

“When he did die, my brother and sister were amazed (at the) stories about his life they didn’t know. I knew all the stories. At the funeral, I got them all to pick a story. And they were – ‘I didn’t know this!’”

Huiarangi’s siblings were surprised at how she had coped with the whole situation of caring for their Dad, and holding the whānau together. Her older siblings respected her thoughts, beliefs, and actions. Huiarangi was the pōtiki (last born) in her whānau. As such, she would not normally be so influential in the whānau’s decision making. She was knowledgeable and experienced in ways and relationships different to those of her siblings because perhaps of her being the last of her siblings to leave home (cf. Nikora, Masters-Awatere & Te Awekōtuku, 2012). She had cared for both of her parents, and they trusted her with insight into their needs and desires including their financial affairs and relationships with those of their own generation.

**Gender Issues**

In organising her Dad’s service, they had a whānau hui, and Huiarangi asked everybody to read or say something. There were four adult daughters, and they asked the minister to check if it would be all right. The Minister made an assumption and asked ‘which boy’s gonna speak?’ But Huiarangi was not put off by his expectation that only the males could speak. The whānau stated that they were all going to say something, or none of them. So they gained consent for the women to speak. They were supposed to speak in birth order. However Huiarangi did not end up being last.

Similarly, in her tribal area, another gender issue was that the pallbearers were always men. When their Mother died, they didn’t even think to ask, this was so culturally ingrained. Later they regretted not carrying their mother, and they wanted
to carry their father, even if it was only from the undertaker to the car. But in the end they were able to carry their father’s casket.

_Siblings realising Huiarangi’s Efforts_

Following all of Huiarangi’s efforts, her siblings finally realised her strong _mahi_ to care for their father and all of the whānau in fact. She found this healing, because she had brought them all in and “forced them through their denial” (of their father’s mortality). When they brought him home, they sang to him, all his favourites, they talked to him about all the photos they’d put up, a power-point show, a certain whānaunga was nominated to do a _haka_ for him. He had previously had those conversations when he was alive, so everyone was able to be part of it.

_Those who had been through the Journey with Huiarangi found Peace_

From her parents’ refusal to discuss issues regarding death, to be able to have that conversation was a healing process for everybody. By the time Huiarangi’s father died, the siblings had a quiet night together, they were happy and peaceful. Then when they took their father to the Marae, to share him, they were actually quite giddy. They were giggling and happy. They were not in a depressed state. They were still mindful of the others in mourning, but they were in a much better space.

“We were all ready to let him go. I had spent seven months saying goodbye to Dad daily.”

_Dad’s belief in the Afterlife_

“Dad did believe he was going to meet Mum. He didn’t really talk about heaven, he didn’t really believe in heaven – they were brought up staunch Catholics- I think that he didn’t believe that he was going to go to heaven. There were always so many contradictions.”

By contradictions Huiarangi was referring to the comfortable meld of ancient Māori belief systems and Christianity, in this case Roman Catholicism.

“Then, so that was what Dad believed, so when he was near the end, he was having conversations about, ‘I’m going to be with Mum’. I was ‘Ok Dad. We’ll get you into heaven as fast as possible..before Christmas’. Because that would have been their fortieth wedding anniversary. ‘I said isn’t that right brothers and sisters’ and they said ‘yeah’.

_The Healing Processes_

Huiarangi identified all those processes and conversations she had, as the most healing events. She attributed these to her current sense of calm. Her father told her at times that her mother would have been so proud of her. That also helped her
to heal, from the sense that she had not done enough for her mother. Despite the
demands of caregiving, Huiarangi like many caregivers had provided care gladly
and felt positively about her role. Consistent with some caregiving literature, the
quality of her prior relationship with her father influenced how positively she
perceived her role (cf. Goodhead & McDonald, 2007), and Huiarangi’s relationship
with her father had been very loving. Primary caregiver status usually reflects, as
in Huiarangi’s case, a long-standing emotional commitment (Goodhead &
McDonald, 2007).

Ensuring no Regrets were Repeated
As Huiarangi had already stated, her mother’s unwillingness to discuss after-death
wishes had resulted in a flurry of anxious activity in the whānau to try and determine
what little “gems” of information had been given over the years to any one of them,
and particularly their father who was still alive when they were undergoing this
situation. This left them with many regrets even though they were in a natural
situation which occurs when key people are unwilling to communicate. This is a
culturally common situation due at least in part, to Karanga Aituā, as already
discussed. Huiarangi reflected that as much as this lack of information has brought
her and the whānau so much grief with the post-death decision making about her
her mother, this conversely ensured that they would not be in the same situation
with their father:

“It’s only after, when you’ve been in such depth of sorrow and grieving
that you think, I wish I had, I wish I had. All those conversations I had
about Mum, I had them with Dad. So I suspect he was having those
conversations with the uncles too. That’s why we healed so much. Dad was
much loved in his own whānau, he was the oldest. My Uncle the Minister,
was the baby. So as soon as Dad was diagnosed, they rekindled their close
bonds. It tightened our bonds with our uncle as well.”

Informing the whānau: Electronically or by old-fashioned ways
When it was clear that her father was definitely terminally ill, Huiarangi notified all
her whānau on facebook, for all the cousins overseas and in Christchurch. One
cousin in Wellington for whom Huiarangi’s parents were like second parents, came
up and said her goodbyes. The local Aunties and uncles all knew he was going so
they organised preparing the marae. The closest uncle was also the Minister.
Huiarangi’s father’s brother. He was the Trustee on the Marae, so informing him
meant the marae knew what was going on. Another Auntie had all the contacts with
whānau. The ringawera, everything was in place. And due to all the missed opportunities at her mother’s tangi, her family had learnt a lot about what was happening, and who needed to know. Tangihanga are amongst many other things, institutions we learn through (Nikora, 2014: Personal communication, 5 May, 2014).

*Hura Kohatu: Dad’s Unveiling*

Huiarangi’s last battle with her whānau was over her father’s unveiling, which she organised by herself. The biggest point of conflict was the language on the headstone. Her father had made the decision about her mother’s headstone, to have the inscription “Your death has left a hole in my heart” however she managed to get him to modify the statement. This was on one half of the headstone, and her father when he joined her, was going to be written on the other half. Knowing about her parents’ experiences with Māori language and that her father had made many efforts to learn, Huiarangi wanted to write his inscription in Māori.

Because Huiarangi’s siblings could not speak fluent Māori, and they had not had those conversations with their father, that started a whole debate. He never spoke Māori to them, they had never heard him speak Māori. After much heated discussion, the headstone was written in both languages.

“No one was completely happy, but it was a compromise. And on the back we had the whakapapa.”

The whakapapa idea was to inform those in the future unsure of their belonging and connection to the deceased. It was also because most of her siblings had indicated that they wanted to be buried elsewhere. Having faced “head on”, all of the hard decisions with regard to her parents’ tangihanga, Huiarangi and one other sister are the only two who wish to be buried alongside their parents:

“I’ve always maintained, that wherever I am, home is always Mum and Dad. My husband wants to go by his parents. ‘That’s cool, I’ll meet you in heaven’. Who knows, as the years go by, I might change my mind but...that’s a conversation that will be had.”

*Expectations of Responsibility*

Huiarangi said she organised the food, the accommodation, the marae, everything. Then when things were over, her whānau left:

“Well they went back to their lives. They don’t put their lives on hold for whānau. If there’s an event, they’ll turn up. But in terms of dealing with
the grief of our parents, there’s been a lot of healing. Hugely facilitated by me. And if there’s any whānau healing, it will probably have to be by me.”

*Reflections on parenthood, and self after Loss*

Another feature of coping with the realities of her parents deaths, is that Huiarangi is determined to leave her children in a secure position upon her own death. To ensure there is no unforeseen problem, she has written a very clear Will which delineates all her wishes.

“They get everything. When they’re eighteen, their father or nominated guardian can look after that for them. Knowing that I’ve got those bases covered, I’ve got a sense of peace.”

*How has Huiarangi Changed?*

Huiarangi spoke of the spiritual seriousness which accompanies an adult child who has dealt with the real issues of the deaths of two parents. She acknowledged that she has changed a great deal, although she did not qualify in which ways she had been affected:

“I’d say that yes, I am a completely different person...I can not imagine not being touched. Probably my family finds I’ve changed, or they’ve changed the way they see me...(Yet) I’ve stayed true to my feelings at the core of it all. Maybe they hadn’t seen all the layers. In that what is stubbornness to them, is whānau to me.”

One of the strongest senses which occurred to me throughout consideration of Huiarangi’s kōrero was the very great differences in feelings of care and responsibility towards her parents, between Huiarangi and her siblings. I would incline towards attributing this difference to experiences the other siblings had of growing up with their parents.

The other siblings grew up in a home where their parents were both working hard, and raising a relatively large family all at the same time. They would have been more stressed, perhaps less able to share time and one-on-one discussions and experiences with the older children, not an abnormal environment for any large family.

Resentments can occur between siblings for various reasons and it is not unusual for envy to occur when a younger sibling has advantages or privileges an older sibling did not enjoy. Equally, the age gap between Huiarangi and her older siblings meant that the other siblings had developed their own whānau and lives, and lived
within their own social circles in different geographical areas. Thus they may have felt more removed emotionally from their parents. Whatever the case, Huiarangi did at different times express an anger and disappointment at her siblings’ apparent relative lack of empathy and care for their parents. She was furious at the fact that any absolutely necessary respite care provided by a sibling resulted in a drastic deterioration in her father’s condition during his final illness. This was partly because she was so completely attuned to his needs, nursing him, but also because she perceived a comparative lack of caring or willingness to sacrifice their own needs and wants to look after their father.

Māori whānau are more likely to encourage sibling care-taking (Ritchie, 1963), so there may have been more bonding between younger and older siblings. Conversely, Huiarangi was virtually brought up as an only child. She had more access to both parents, although she was closer to her father. There may have been more resources, and it is true that Huiarangi had the independence of being allowed to drive the family car from the age of fifteen, and all the responsibility and freedom that went with that.

Huiarangi felt a strong sense of responsibility for her parents and particularly her father, as she nursed him. She did everything possible to meet his needs, particularly emotionally, as well as looking after his condition and interaction with medical staff when necessary.

Most importantly from the whānau’s position, although they did not realise it at the time, she worked at “extracting” important (particularly post death) information from her father which no-one else had been able to receive. This was the more important because her mother had died previously and they had very little information about her wishes. Also, Huiarangi had a strong sense of the continuity of the whānau, her own little family and her siblings and other whanaunga. She actively worked at healing the emotional wounds and grief, and the general raruraru (conflict, problems) of the whānau. She was very much that special spirit in a whānau who takes upon themself huge responsibilities and onerous roles, to honour the parents and bring about peace, regardless of the reasons for a lack of it.
What did the Tangihanga contribute to Huiarangi’s Grief Resolution?

Although Huiarangi would of course miss her father’s physical presence, she was able to be fully comforted by the fact that she had done everything within her power to honour her father, to make him comfortable and feel loved. She brought her whānau together to help them grieve, and memorialised her parents in a way which ensured their presence on Earth, and the whānau they had engendered would be evident for many years to come. This feeling that she had both thought of and done everything, with help or without it, gave her a great sense of peace.

This active devotion shown by Huiarangi towards both of her parents, culminating in her ensuring that the Tangihanga of both was the greatest demonstration of love, grief, yet acceptance of the loss of their physical presence, was enacted. With regard to her father’s Tangihanga, every ritual, act, word spoken, every decision was made with their father’s wishes and nature at heart, giving Huiarangi the true feeling that she had honoured her father in the best way she was able. In Huiarangi’s kōrero, we have heard the ultimate manifestation of the healing power of Tangihanga.

Reflexive considerations about this interview and Case Study:

Huiarangi was a long term colleague and a friend whom I had seen only infrequently. There was a difference in ages and stages of life between us, with me being older, but we had acted in similar roles together in a couple of organisations. We had kind regards for each other, but had not been in contact for quite a long time. I had no knowledge that she had lost both her parents as I had been out of the social network to which we both related, and we had just re-connected. I felt very sorry that I had not been there to support her, even though by her own account she had self-isolated through all of her grief.

When we first discussed whether Huiarangi was willing to discuss her experiences for the research, she explained her rules of engagement to me. I was interested and admiring of the thoughtfulness of Huiarangi’s specifications. We discussed and clarified how things might go, and I confirmed that I respected and would comply with her wishes.
Once we had discussed these issues, Huiarangi’s participation was very committed. The amount of information she gave me was voluminous, and she demonstrated her own intellectual analysis to her very emotional and practical process. I could relate to some experiences she described. Some were unavailable to me because of my very different up-bringing and I admired and (nicely) envied her abilities and the aroha she demonstrated in a very real way, to her parents.
CHAPTER TEN: KĀRENA

In this chapter, Kārena talks about the age-related illness and death of her mother, and the subsequent return of her mother to their home area of Ngāti Porou, for her tangihanga and burial.

Background

Whānau upbringing, Cultural values, and Cultural identification

Kārena was in her early sixties at the time of interviews. Of Ngāti Porou heritage but born in Rotorua, Kārena was the last of twelve children. Unfortunately several children died in between the living. Kārena being “the baby” accompanied her mother everywhere. As such she was “guided and protected”, taught tikanga and learned how to “be” in the world. It was never forgotten that she was a Ngāti Porou girl but also made sure she knew how to behave within Te Arawa.

Kārena’s sisters made fun of her for always being “at her mother’s skirts”. She felt that as the potiki (last born) she was precious, but Kārena sees herself as having been like a child from the bush. She only had one friend (also Ngāti Porou) and was so shy, she didn’t “piri” to anyone, she always walked with her head down. Kārena still perceives herself as being exceptionally shy, although she has long been in a position of professionally caring for others, and being able to be strong and responsible.

Kārena said she didn’t remember being taught things like karanga (although she can do so). In thinking about how she learned her Māoritanga or Poroutanga, she believes her mother was always teaching her all along the way when she was growing up – by example or through stories and explanations about what was right and what was wrong in terms of tikanga.

At the time she was being tutored, nurtured and “moulded”. Kārena’s mother was ngāwari (soft, gentle), she always “tohutohu’d” Kārena, but always told Kārena if she made a mistake of any kind and explained why with a little story from her own experiences so Kārena could “whakamau” (grasp) the principles of the story. She would say “Kaua e pēnā, he hē tera” (don’t do that, that’s wrong). Her mother always spoke te reo. Kārena’s father, she had less time with, and his parenting style
was “to teach by example”. Dad died in the early 1960’s. He lies at Muruika, the 28th Māori Battalion cemetery at Ohinemutu.

To learn to live in the Pākehā world, Kārena was taught by her Auntie Tai, a daughter of Apirana Ngata, who was always around. Although she was Māori she taught Kārena “Pākehā”. Kārena said “I became bicultural through learning Pākehā” (the opposite of what many modern Māori experience). Kārena would stay at their place for days and learn about “cups and saucers and knives and forks”.

Kārena’s parents were “a closed unit”, operating as a hard working, self-contained whānau. That was “all they knew”. However they maintained all their Ngāti Porou kinship relationships within Rotorua, and they also returned to their home on a frequent basis to help keep the home fires burning (the principle of ahi kaa as described earlier), and to look after the urupā. After Kārena there were six nieces all whāngai’d into their whānau because of circumstances. Four of her brothers’ as a result of a marriage breakup and the others because of the death of their mother, Kārena’s sister.

Other contacts did not come into their lives until the Anglican church came into the area. Kārena’s mother had previously been Ringatū (a movement founded by Te Kooti Rikirangi during his imprisonment on the Chatham Islands, in 1867. Ringatū means "The Upraised Hand". The Ringatū movement still exists today, and although it is not great in number it is an officially recognised church). The Anglican missionaries influenced the area, including Kārena’s mother. In the long run they ended up having services at their family home.

The whānau had moved to Rotorua under Apirana Ngata’s Māori Land Development Scheme. They developed land into a farm at Tikitere. The farm was sold in 1964. Kārena was by then out of home and had two sons with her first husband. They separated in the early seventies and Kārena was looking after her sons. She had a relationship with another man who later died. Some time after this Kārena developed a relationship with her (now) husband.

*Cultural learning: The Karanga*

Being Ngāti Porou in Te Arawa - Kārena did not know her mother did the karanga but found that she would do it if no-one else was able to. She didn’t hear her mother
karanga until one time she went to a tangi in Rotorua. She was surprised to find that her mother’s karanga style was identifiable by a koroua who later made comment. In later years, Kārena’s mother and Auntie would explain things as they happened, and always reminded her that they were Ngāti Porou in Te Arawa. They told her many different stories as incidents or events arose, whereby things were done differently in different places.

Asked how she experienced her status as a woman born of Ngāti Porou albeit having lived her life in Te Arawa, she said that being her husband’s wife she felt both protected and reminded – he tells her from time to time “It’s not your ‘take’” (your issue to give an opinion on). He has also commented on the same when the daughter in law of his brother becomes vocal and opinionated about Te Arawa issues from her position within Ngāti Rangiwhewehi. He said “you have to remember you’re not tangata whenua here”. Kārena said that was why she is so careful in expressing herself, also because her Auntie had told her different stories related to inappropriate behaviour in Te Arawa kawa.

Education:
Kārena attended public schools in Rotorua. In spite of her crippling shyness, Kārena achieved academically and pursued her chosen career of Nursing, later specialising in the Mental Health field and then Mental Health for the Elderly (Māori).

Learning about Tangihanga
As a child Kārena was kept away from most tangi because her whānau was not from Te Arawa. However they had their own whānau tangi over time. Kārena’s sixteen year old tuakana (older sister) died of rheumatic fever. This sister was like a second mother to Kārena and her brother, looking after them, preparing them for school and protecting them.

Kārena’s sister became sick at school at Hukarere. She was taken to the hospital in a taxi, but she didn’t last long and died there. Kārena remembers her sister being brought home from the hospital. Her mother called her with a karanga to their whare. The other children were encouraged to sit by her and talk to her, touch her, touch her hair. She lay at home first and then they took her back to Tikitiki.
Kārena’s father organised things. There was a furniture shop in town which was also an undertakers. Their father travelled with their deceased sister to Tikitiki while the whānau travelled separately on an old bus.

At the tangi Kārena sat at her sister’s feet because she had no-where else to go (there was a lack of space). She did not know whether it was tikanga or not. She was going back and forth between the two whare (wharenui and whare kai), running errands. Later she was doing an errand and heard her father and an Uncle in the wharekai, arguing.

“(It) was about bringing my sister’s tūpāpaku inside to the wharenui because it was so cold for everyone. It would have been late in April, and very cold. This would have been a break in tradition, it was the early fifties, a time when tikanga was changing.”

Her father’s wishes were carried out, as far as Kārena knows. Just through discussing the situation with her older sister Manaaki in later years she has been able to put a full picture together.

When they returned to Rotorua the family had a service, and her mother carried out whakawātea (spiritually cleansed) the house with water. Kārena was wondering what she was doing at the time, but she sensed it was not an appropriate time to ask.

Another sister died a year later, in 1955. She had been a long term victim of domestic violence. Her husband through many blows to her head made her deaf and blind, and gave her brain damage. Kārena’s father was always telling her to leave him and come home but she said she loved her husband and wouldn’t leave.

She finally died from all the effects of the injuries. In those days, it was not so unusual that her sister’s husband was not implicated legally in any way for her death. Her nieces came and lived with her family.

Kārena remembers she and her mother were at Tamatekapua:

“It was many years ago and we were sitting at the door, the whare was very full. My mother was crying and I was wiping her tears”. My mother and Auntie would explain things as they happened, and always reminded me that we were Ngāti Porou in Te Arawa. They would tell me many different stories as incidents or events arose, whereby things were done differently in different places...one such incident was a tangi up North, where the process of whakanoa was done not with water, but with paraoa. “My cousin and I were looking for the water and a lady said “oh no we don’t use water, we use bread”’. She miri’d us all over with bread”.
A Specific Tangi: Kārena’s Mother

Contemplating the loss of her mother: Kārena’s mother had spent some time back living in Tikitiki but had become more frail, and had returned to Rotorua. Kārena feels she had time to prepare for the loss of her mother, with several “scares” before she actually died. She broke her hip in a fall and was placed in Te Whare Aroha (Community Trust Residential House) which they believed was culturally responsive to Māori and had a Minita. Manaaki and Kārena visited her and nursed her there every day, while also working.

One thing which upset Kārena and her sister, was that their mum was in a room with another elderly woman (Pākehā) who had also broken her hip, and she was taken for her hip operation first. They thought this was unfair and attributed the reasoning to favouritism (perhaps racism) of some kind. Kārena wrote to the local Member of Parliament. However the other lady died very soon after her operation and then they felt differently. Their Mum never did have the operation.

In 1993, Kārena’s mother was close to death. She had had several “turns” and Kārena had time to prepare herself for the loss of her mother. “We knew that she was unwell”. With each time Kārena’s mother appeared to be close to dying, Kārena and her husband Hemi had begun making enquiries with Whakahau (the Māori undertaker), and preparations for transport. “We wanted Mum to have a trouble free tangi”.

Final words/ Ohākī

Kārena’s mother appeared conscious although in pain but had some lucid moments before she died. She said to Kārena “Now you look after the home, I’m going away”. She became a bit irritable with things Kārena did for her such as wetting her mouth with a syringe of water, letting them know “stop mucking around with my mouth!” Kārena said:

“Oh the last night I was sleeping in a chair in the room and Mum had dropped off to sleep. Then the curtain brushed past my cheek and woke me up. I knew it was Mum’s goodbye to me, so I woke up the others in the room, and Mum passed away three quarters of an hour later. I thought that was profound.”
The beginning of the Tangi, travelling to Tikitiki

The night Kārena’s mother died, they moved her to a local marae, of which her sister Manaaki was the caretaker. After lying there for one night they prepared for the trip to Tikitiki.

On the way to Tikitiki, the whānau stopped and Kārena’s husband ended up having a kōrero to the whānau who had not been to the marae before. The marae did not have running water and cooking was done on a woodburning stove. He had to tell them the extra things they would have to help with and not take for granted. He did not want to give the kōrero because he was Te Arawa and he felt it was not his place, it was rather the job of Kārena’s older sister Manaaki’s husband Ken. But he ended up doing the kōrero.

On arrival at the wharenui at Tikitiki, Kārena’s Mother was placed in the usual place for their rohe (one third forward and to the right of the wharenui). The haukainga (those who lived at Tikitiki), had already set up the wharenui to a certain extent. Kārena and her whānau had brought their photos from home and there were already some of their family photos already in Te Rahui wharenui (Rongomaianiwaniwa). Kārena and her sisters and cousins stayed around their mother to keep her surrounded with aroha. Their nieces and nephews cooked, cleaned, and hosted everyone.

“Different ropu were coming from other tangi and locals who were whānaunga. The reo of Ngāti Porou was strong and their kupu were of my mother. Some of it hard case! You can create pictures in your head of the stories they told”.

“Most of the groups were local, but some came from Rotorua and Katikati, and there was also an ope from Ngāpuhi. (My mother) was lying on the marae, and “the Northerners came straight on, straight up to my mother”. A kuia said quite loudly “O ho ho!” (because of the difference in kawa). Kārena had never heard this before and she and those around her “had a silent giggle” at the kuia’s outburst. The honour of the Ngāpuhi visitors attending her mother’s tangi was because of Kārena’s father’s Ngāpuhi connections.”

Kārena agreed that she “felt responsible for everything at the tangi although the whānau were all playing their parts”. She needed to pause before she thought that in fact her tane Hemi had organised a lot of things behind the scenes. She said that if someone from her rohe had done it he would have stood back. However he did a lot of thoughtful things, such as moving the van which would carry her mother to
the urupā, from way over the road, to back up so the pall bearers would not have so far to go.

Kārena thinks that:

“he felt he owed it to my mother because Mum had taught him a lot about Ngāti Porou. They had gone for a trip around Ngāti Porou and she had told them a lot of history of all the significant places”.

This is a cultural practice described by Makereti (1986) whereby the mother in law of her daughter’s husband spends time with her son in law (if he is of a different area or iwi), telling him about relevant history, places and events which affect those living at the present time.

The influence of religion on Māori culture was experienced in the personal when one of her sisters who is a Jehovah’s Witness did not attend her mother’s tangi. Her understanding was that because it was on a marae and Jehovah people do not respect marae and carvings and culture, seeing it as paganism. Neither did their brother from Christchurch attend.

“Peculiar as it may be we went with the flow and gave our Kōkā (mother) a lovely dignified farewell with the support of our whānau and extended whānau who were there.”

*The Burial*

When both were living, Kārena’s father and mother had discussed where they were to go when they had passed away.

“(Dad) chose Muruika so he could ‘hear the Pākehā machine mowing’.” (Muruika is seen as the most prestigious place for the 28th Māori Battalion deceased, regardless of where they are from).

Kārena’s father had been buried in Rotorua many years previously. Kārena’s Mum had always told her children she wanted to go home when she died. Dad had said released her, saying:

“Hoki atu koe, takoto i waenganui i ā Te Kooti me Te Parakipere.” (You go, lie between Te Kooti and Te Parakipere – metaphorically invoking important ancestors of the East Coast).

Over time, Kārena and her husband had bought some burial plots in Rotorua. Kārena took her mother to look at the plots in case she wanted to stay in Rotorua. All the time she was with her mother, her mother didn’t say anything. Kārena took this to mean that she was not interested, and was firm in wanting to go home.
Ultimately, Kārena’s mother was laid to rest at Maraehara. Kārena said with a gentle smile: “She is hearing a Pākehā machine too.”

**The Unveiling**

“(My mother’s) memorial stone was unveiled a year later with many mokopuna and mokopuna tuarua present. We also unveiled memorials to three of our sisters lying at Pūahanui urupā in Tikitiki and then we travelled to Matahiōātetau Marae at Horoera for our hākari. This is a marae of our Huriwai tipuna on our father’s whakapapa. We wanted our whānau to know and see this marae and how our mother’s whenua interests almost connect with our Dad’s on that Eastern Cape.”

**Variables Exacerbating Pain in Grief**

Kārena had the experience of losing her beloved mother, which in itself was very painful as they had been so close. However the conditions of the loss were not exacerbated by any extraneous negative details. Perhaps one would have been the absence of a sister who was not able to attend due to her religious beliefs (Jehovah’s Witness), and although she mentioned this it did not appear to have made her grief experience more difficult.

**What did the Tangihanga contribute to Kārena’s Grief Resolution?**

Kārena feels that her mother was elderly, and she had time to prepare for the loss of her mother, with several “scares” before she actually died, and this helped her to cope a little better. She believes that she had carried out all daughterly duties while her mother was alive.

At all times now Kārena feels she has her mother with her, watching over her and there to communicate with. This brings her great comfort. She tangi’s from time to time when a memory is particularly poignant, but considers this normal.

The fact that Kārena and her sisters were present with her mother for days before her death, and were present with her whānau when she died. Tohu: Kārena felt her mother gently woke her when she was passing, and this was an affirmation.

Kārena was pleased that they had all discussed their mother’s wishes prior to her passing. Kārena knew her marae well and felt safe and supported during the tangi. She was fluent in te reo, knew her tikanga and whakapapa, and therefore understood what was happening. Her husband appropriately assisted with the entire tangi,
including preparing the Te Arawa ope for the different conditions of the rural marae. Due to all of the above factors, Kārena felt that her mother had a peaceful death, and a good tangi. She felt she had honoured her mother appropriately, and although she would miss her, her grief was uncomplicated and would abate with time.

Spiritually Kārena believed her mother was with her, watching over her and there to communicate with. This brought her great comfort. She would tangi from time to time when a memory is particularly poignant, but considered this normal.

Kārena knew her marae well and felt safe and supported during the tangi. She was fluent in te reo, knew her tikanga and whakapapa, and therefore understood what was happening. Her husband appropriately assisted with the entire tangi, including preparing the ope for the different conditions of the rural marae. Due to all of the above factors, Kārena felt that her mother had a peaceful death, and a good tangi. She felt she had honoured her mother appropriately, and although she would miss her, her grief was uncomplicated and would abate with time.

If as the conditions of life prescribe, those born must one day die, Kārena’s loss of her mother was in the optimum conditions a bereaved person could lose their loved one. Namely, she had enjoyed a loving relationship with her mother throughout life, the illness and subsequent death of her mother was in what some refer to as the “natural” turn of events – that children outlive their parents. Kārena had her sisters’ and her tane’s support throughout the process. She did manage to have conversations with her mother, albeit sometimes using a lot of intuition to stand for actual words, but felt comfortable with her interpretations about post death arrangements.

Other good things for Kārena’s mother’s tangihanga were that because her whānau in Rotorua had always returned to keep the home fires burning, there was much genuinely loving support at the marae, and things went well, auspiciously. Although grieving still, Kārena was able to feel assured that her mother had had a good life, a good death, a good tangihanga. She had been celebrated and mourned with real aroha, with no conflict, with emotional and actual physical preparation, and with trust. Kārena need have no regrets for all that had occurred, and showed a gentle, humble pride that she had helped usher her mother into the world beyond.
Reflexive considerations about this interview and Case Study:

Kārena was one of the first interviews I undertook. Kārena was senior to me but having known her for many years, I felt comfortable and more than that, warm. Kārena was her usual gracious self. I found it a comfortable process in spite of her being of a different generation, having been brought up with her Māoritanga and having te reo as a first language.

These factors might normally cause me some shyness. However when I came away and started transcribing, I realized that in our knowledge of each other, and having worked together in a Māori specialist service (thus having attended a number of events particularly tangihanga together with our group), there were some assumptions made between us.

Thus Kārena did not make explicit some intricacies of events because she believed I would know, and I made the mistake of not clarifying situations because I thought I understood her. It was when I was separating sections of Kārena’s personal history, I needed to work quite carefully to extract the information she gave me, and “name it” in the same way I had more explicit, practiced or “formal” interviews. I realized that apart from my own skill set needing care, a large part of this was because Kārena really was brought up with traditional Māori values, and Pākehā values were something she had to be taught by her Auntie.

This was an opposite process from my own learning. This made me reflect on her own kindness and humility in the time we had known each other, in that she had never allowed me to feel ignorant, she had respected my own process of learning and valued my own contribution to the work we used to do together. Conversely I had always felt safe in the knowledge that she would guide and support me if I had needed it. She “tohutohu’d” me as she noted her mother “piri’d and tohutohu’d” her. In past times we had gravitated together, she advised and shared gently, with quiet humour at times, and we had a mutual trust and respect.

When I brought Kārena a koha in recognition of her generosity in sharing her information in the interview process, I found she had begun baking me a Paraoa Rewena (“Māori” leavened bread), out of her own manaakitanga and sharing (which she always did when we did mirimiri). Really although our ages were not
so greatly different, she reminded me of my own Nanny, and tears prick my eyes in reminiscing about the mannered way in which both Kārena and my Nanny and many Māori women of her generation prepared and served kai, as a separate event, as something to pray before, be grateful for, to pause for reflection over.
CHAPTER ELEVEN: KATRINA

In this chapter and the next, the stories of two of the participants who are sisters, will be presented separately, as they were interviewed. As Katrina is younger than Mereana, and they differ in character, experience and interpretation, their stories are different and rich in different ways. Additionally, both speak of the deaths of their parents, several years apart.

Background

Whānau upbringing, Cultural values, and Cultural identification

Katrina’s father was Pākehā and her mother Māori (Ngāti Hako, Hauraki). Her mother was only sixteen when her parents were married.

“But I think Dad was her only partner up until they divorced.”

The marriage was not a happy one, but Katrina spoke of the fewer economical and social options women had:

“In those days, you were dependent. Your man was the provider, and you were dependent on him. And she was, for the greater part of her life. Until the marriage dissolved, and she went her own way. I think she lost her way... We saw their relationship. We saw our mother get a hiding. And I did see how our father treated our mother. So it wasn’t something that you forget.”

Cultural Intermarriage

Intermarriage between Māori and people of other ethnicities has been ongoing since the first vessels of exploration and trade encountered these isles in the 18th century (Harré, 1966). As discussed in other case studies (e.g., Huiarangi), this contact was further facilitated by Māori migration to urban centres (Durie, 2005) and, in the case of New Zealand’s military forces, Pākehā and Māori fought alongside each other (Henderson, Green & Cooke, 2008). This history did not assist Katrina and Mereana’s family situation at all however.

Both the families of Katrina’s parents disagreed with the marriage. Her father did not want his children to mix with Māori, so they did not get to know their Māori whānau, and his parents did not like their mother or her family, so they were also alienated from their father’s family.

“..Not knowing which side, how to make those connections so...we had bad, bad role models. But most of our modeling came from our parents, or we had the modeling from other friends families. We didn’t have those
relationships where you would go away and stay for the weekend. It just wasn’t the thing to do. We were quite a closed family.”

Although Katrina’s mother Maria had told her children very little about her childhood and life experiences, what Katrina knew, had been told and witnessed, was that her mother had experienced a very difficult life. In that sense she represented many of that lost generation of rural Māori women who became re-located or dislocated by the choices they made or were forced to make.

In Katrina’s mother’s case, she became pregnant as a teenager, and married the father in a most unpopular union for both her family and his. Thereby she became socially isolated, did not have support in learning parenting or home-making skills, and was physically abused by her husband for years. She was relatively uncommunicative with her children, and developed an alcohol dependency. Although no doubt deeply unhappy in the relationship, according to Katrina, when her husband left, she became “lost” in a sense, was transient and probably depressed. Her children all left home when they could, and made their own way.

This was a phenomenon which has been referred to as spiritual homelessness (Memmott, Long, Chambers, & Spring, 2003; cited in Groot, 2010). For indigenous peoples, spiritual homelessness can occur when they are separated from their ancestral land, family and kinship networks. Katrina’s mother had a tūrangawaewae, but her marriage to Katrina’s father meant that her whanaungatanga and connections were virtually severed (except for situations of death and bereavement), and therefore her children also lost that huge part of the identity to which they needed to be connected (cf. Nikora, Guerin, Rua & Te Awekōtuku, 2004).

**Cultural Identity**

Within whānau and communities, children and young people learn about the social norms and expectations, through observation and direct experience (Wihongi, 2013). Immersion in cultural experiences is the most effective way of becoming enculturated (Nikora et al., 2012).

As will be seen in the following two case studies, Mereana and Katrina were initially among those Māori who were unable to have access to cultural contexts so
they remained alienated from other Māori people and their communities (cf. Jahnke, 2002) until later in life.

As is the case with many children, Katrina did not realise there were significant differences between people. She didn’t begin to understand until her father explicitly forbade them to play with Māori children...they were very controlled and restricted. It was not until she reached intermediate school that she realised that she felt more comfortable with the other Māori students.

Another factor of her father’s enforced separatism was that there was:

“No Māoritanga. Nothing before we were ten or eleven. No way. I think school would have influenced that just a bit, but that was when our parents started to separate. We had more permission, more freedom to be more selective with our friends, and more involved in Māori...kapahaka and stuff like that. It wasn’t a common thing te reo as you know and...kapahaka wasn’t staunch in every school, but when I got to intermediate that’s when I got exposed to it. But as in-house stuff growing up, no”.

The enculturation of children whose parents are of a Māori/Pākehā intermarriage, has had moderate attention in academia. It has rightly been noted that the values, perceptions and processes of those who identify as being both Pākehā and Māori are shaped by two cultural identities which do not necessarily mix well (Moeke-Maxwell, 2003).

An investigation of protective factors which assist young Māori women in overcoming hardships and adversities in their lives, showed the importance of whānau support, which was believed important to the feelings of belonging and being grounded. Tangihanga was seen as an important way of providing access to broader whānau support networks (Merrit, 2003).

In a best case scenario, whānau/families who are truly bicultural fare best in terms of their cultural identities. However, a potential for conflict, tension and misunderstanding arises from an expectation of negotiating different and sometimes opposing values (Edge & Nikora, 2010). In Katrina’s case, her father was strongly against his children identifying as Māori in any way, and that was to their detriment. Katrina’s parents eventually separated, and in a way Katrina lost a lot of contact with both parents. Her mother lived in Ngaruawahia, she was working, she had a boyfriend there.
“There was a lot of alcohol and stuff there. But there was nothing constructive in her life... I probably just went off and did my own thing I guess. I always had a perception that (my sisters) were closer. Growing up then I might have been hurt but not now.”

Katrina and her father had always been close, but when he remarried,

“that kind of fell off the bench a little bit. Not because he went off with somebody else and “you don’t love me anymore”. It was that he treated his new wife (a Pākehā), lavished her, you know it’s always the case, do it better the second time. But compared my mother to her, what she could get, compared to what my mother got, it just infuriated me.”

School life
With her parents separating, Katrina was forced into a decision which would ultimately have a positive effect on her life. Although neither of her parents were of the Mormon faith, she chose to apply to go to the Church College of Latter Day Saints:

“So I went and applied. Well I took my mother with me. And the conditions were that if I didn’t get into Church College well I had to go and live with my father. That was very motivating. It was a harsh choice, made me move.”

Attending school and church at Church College was a shock for Katrina. It was very Americanised. She neither understood the culture of the school, nor the religion. However when she became acclimatised to the conditions, she had a very positive influence to achieve, and also had her first experiences of religion.

Resilience is a concept to explore how people can live rewarding lives despite adversity and sometimes rise above adverse life circumstances (Bonanno, 2005; Groot, 2010). Not a fixed attribute located within individuals, resilience involves social and relational processes which enable people to respond and adapt to adversity. It involves personal strength and contextual elements such as supportive others and life-chances, phenomena often labelled as protective factors, which are generally associated with the environment outside the individual. Protective factors shape the self over time, and can build up personal and relational resilience (cf. Nikora, 2007).

Katrina’s protective factor contributing to the development of her resilience, was that even as a child she asked to attend school at the Church of Jesus Christ Latter
Day Saints (LDS), a remarkably powerful and positive move which shaped her entire future in a positive way.

**Further education**

“Statistically, based on our background, we (Māori) are not meant to be high achievers. I went straight from school into Nursing. That was one of the teachings from College. You’ve got to get as much education as you can. I became academically more of an achiever following school. But the school itself was a motivator.”

This statement may have sounded to some like internalised racism. No doubt Katrina had experienced internalised racism when younger. But this statement made as an adult was more about the statistical analysis of the socio-economic and political status of Māori within New Zealand society which comes with tertiary education, and her own developed political insight.

**Learning Te Reo**

Speaking of information she learned later, Katrina spoke about her part of her iwi Ngāti Hako:

“Just the kaumātuas (spoke te reo). My aunties don’t speak the reo, neither do my cousins. There was no kura kaupapa and no kohanga. Colonisation was really strong in that area. We were brought up in families where there was one dominant culture. And in our family it was Pākehā.”

Katrina learned te reo at Wintec, years after school. “I really wanted to do it earlier”, and she did try, but only in small block courses. Te Hiwi (2007, in Levy, Nikora, Masters-Awatere, Rua & Waitoki, (Eds), 2008) found that those who experienced acculturation through their up-bringing consciously ensured that their own children did not have to experience the same loss, and would be prepared to participate in a range of cultural events. Te Hiwi (2007, in Levy et al) spoke of the need to heal the hurts experienced by each generation, post contact. This was very much the case with Katrina, who wanted to ensure her children were prepared for their own culture(s). By 2002 Katrina was married to a Samoan man and had children:

“my husband and I decided to do it because of our kids...going to kura. We wanted to be able to support them and talk to them – all that illusion! Because it doesn’t happen. They don’t want to speak to you in Māori – I’d say “look I’ll pay you!!”
The children were more advanced and they did not want to help their parents practice. They insisted on speaking English, although they were fluent Māori speakers.

“The reason back then for me doing it was it was the right time. But because at the time I was the primary bread-winner back then, I couldn’t follow on. It was a luxury... I couldn’t pursue it any further than that year. I really wanted to and I’m still keen to go back to it, but.”

As Katrina moved to adulthood, bringing up her own children, she insisted that they were brought up with Te Reo.

*Racism, lack of biculturalism in the majority culture*
Katrina had experienced racism when younger, but said:

“Now it’s cool to be Māori, although we won’t accept you. You can look Māori, and have the Sonny-Bill tattoo, but I really don’t know if you should marry my daughter”. I don’t feel angry about what it was like then. What I feel angry about is that society hasn’t moved on. Hasn’t shifted. They say they have, but they haven’t, I don’t think. I mean mainstream. The racism is still there.”

Even in the public health area in which Katrina works, where she has contributed cultural input with the support of one of her kaumātua, she has later been questioned as to the relevance of the contribution by senior members of the institution who considered indigeneity irrelevant and “time-wasting”. Like many other Māori in majority institutions, she has felt stereotyped, unsupported, socio-politically misunderstood. “I just thought we might’ve moved on from there”.

*Learning about Tangihanga:*
Young people acquire their knowledge and understanding around death according to the culture they are raised in (Young and Papadou, 1997). Katrina had no marae experiences to encorporate learning from because tangihanga she attended were years apart, and no-one was there to explain things to her. She was in confusion about her belief systems and the accompanying expressions in the time of bereavement. Thereby any failure to negotiate these aspects satisfactorily may have a significant impact upon her bereavement experiences, as can be experienced by those from bicultural whānau/families (Edge & Nikora, 2010).

“As a child, we went to Mum’s mother’s tangi, and that was sad, because my mother tried to jump into the grave. So it was quite traumatising for her. That’s what I fixated on. That’s what I remembered.
The loss of a loved one can be a traumatic and a stressful time for the bereaved and those close to them but this may be more so for younger people (Aumen, 2007). In this case it was not so much the loss of her grandmother, but seeing her mother attempting to jump into her own mother’s grave was frightening to her.

“I’ve had uncles, my mother’s brothers have died before her and I’ve been part of that.”

She was present but not active and did not comment on her experiences of those tangihanga.

“The last tangi that I went to that I was actively involved in, would have been my son’s Nan. And prior to that would have been my mother’s (many years ago).”

A positive racial-ethnic identity has been identified as significant for Māori adolescents as it allows them to repel negative stereotypes and accommodate other positive attributes into their identity (Webber, 2012), however Katrina and her sister sadly missed this balance to their development.

**A Specific Tangihanga: Katrina’s mother**

Katrina’s mother died suddenly when Katrina was about twenty years old. Her mother had experienced heart problems previously, but Katrina did not know this. So when she was told of her mother’s death, she was devastated.

When she described the situation Katrina did not describe a sense of shock, although she said she had a feeling of “great sadness”. But rather her description was suggestive of the detachment which can result from numbed feelings, or a desire to describe the situation more positively.

Katrina described her mother as transient, and said that they were not close. Katrina’s lifestyle was influenced by her mother’s and she did not really have a helpful analysis of her own relationship at that time. In addition her partner was very judgemental of her mother, so she felt defensive about keeping up the relationship. His mother was warm, nurturing and hospitable, so Katrina’s mother did not meet his expectations. He seems to have tried to discourage her from visiting her mother, successfully at times, which she regrets.

“When Mum died I was about twenty. She was very young when she died, it was very sad, very sad. When my mother died I was in Hamilton with
my partner. I was going to tech. My mother was all over the place and she was quite transient. She didn’t have a real fixed abode until she moved to Ngaruawahia”.

“My poor judgement. Just not making the right decisions with regard to going to see my Mum more often. I don’t feel guilty now. Probably then maybe, but I don’t know”.

Pre-existing Family Raruraru/Conflicts: Katrina had experienced a childhood of multiple problems (family violence, marital breakup of her parents). Conversely to Mereana, she bonded more with her father. Her father had left her mother some time before she died. As described by Mereana, their father did not attend their mother’s tangi. However Katrina’s addition to this scenario was that their father was manipulated into not being able to supporting his first children when their mother died, by his second wife.

Cross-cultural approaches to death practice: The deceased person (their mother) was Māori, Katrina and her sibling’s upbringing was Pākehā. Therefore although they were at their mother’s and their own Marae, they did not feel the safe embrace of the marae and the home people (their own relatives whom they did not know or hardly knew) so they did not have the feeling of safety or the ability to grieve openly. Katrina and her siblings did not have any control over what happened at their mother’s tangi. They had not really grasped their true identities as Māori. They didn’t understand the significance of the Marae, their roles or the importance of Māoritanga or tangihanga. They did not understand their status as whānau pani (close grieving family), and they had not by that time become cohesive as a whānau.

The meaning of the rituals and the words said were really lost to them. It was a bewildering experience, whereby the adult children tried to act in a culturally appropriate manner without knowing what it was or what it signified. The actual emotional experience of mourning was therefore not really assisted by the tangihanga. They had not been allowed or enabled to get to know their whānaunga (relatives) because of the unpopular decision her parents had made in being in a “cross-cultural” marriage.

Katrina lacked cultural knowledge of procedures. She followed their aunties and unlike Mereana, managed to get through the tangi without committing any
transgressions. She cried when her sister was told off and belittled for doing something wrong.

*Trauma detrimentally affecting memory:* Following the tangi, Katrina described a lack of detail in her memory of her mother’s tangi or subsequent related events. When her Katrina’s mother’s whānau came back to her house to takahi whare (tramp the house – to make it noa). She did not understand what they were doing and no one told her.

*Missed opportunities:* Looking back at her mother’s tangi Katrina now realises that there were many processes that they, as adult children, had not partaken in because they did not understand their culture (such as dressing their mother for her tangi, or having a say in the process).

*Negative aspects about Katrina’s Mother’s Tangihanga*

A lot closer to the raw emotion of the event, was this statement, echoing Mereana’s memories to some extent.

“All of things to do with Mum’s funeral, we didn’t have any control (any “say”) over. So we trusted (Mum’s) family to do it. They lived on the marae and lived and breathed it...we didn’t know what was right. We just experienced it. In the 90’s or when Mum died, we hadn’t really grasped our true Māori (identities). We didn’t understand where we were, our roles or the importance of Māoritanga, tangihanga. I didn’t even know what whānau pani was. So we were just going with the flow really. We weren’t as close as a family back then. We were quite displaced as a family, we were fragmented and didn’t have a good understanding of the processes around tangihanga, so we let Mum’s family take care of that side. There was no talking about who to do what, there wasn’t that leadership from inside the immediate family.”

With regard to their Mother’s death Katrina has amnesic episodes about what occurred then and afterwards. She believes as a group they returned to Ngaruawahia and “stomped” the house (takahi te whare to ensure it was noa), and she silently questioned what they were doing and why. Like Mereana she recognised many missed opportunities, mostly because at that time they were painfully ignorant of either their rights, or any cultural understanding:

“Like Dad didn’t come to the funeral either, and there was another dynamic going on with his second wife... we always wondered why Dad never came to the funeral. Was I hurt? Well yes and no, I just thought whatever. Because it was second marriage, why would you come. But I think she (Dad’s second wife) was still threatened by (our mother) to the
day. And she was threatened by us. Because we were the first. Yeah, very threatened by our influence over Dad. To have older children, same age as her, was quite...(challenging)."

Yet it seemed to me that the energy Katrina expended in explaining why her father didn’t come to their mother’s tangi, really demonstrated feelings of pain and hurt, which caused a dissonance with the way she had been taught to feel about events at the Mormon College she attended. Positivity and emotional strength were highly prized there, and comparing Katrina’s commentary with her older sister’s, there was an obvious denial of negative feelings in Katrina’s kōrero. Now, Katrina does visit her mother at the family cemetery, which she had not done previously.

“I go to the urupā, but I do take note that I’m not there all day.”

What did the Tangihanga contribute to Katrina’s Grief Resolution? (Mother’s Tangi)

Katrina had been at a religious school being influenced to incorporate the LDS faith, religion, and positive belief systems. Although much of the bereavement process in losing their mother seemed negative, Katrina did have a much more positive outlook on the memories of her mother’s tangihanga. She seemed to try to look upon her experiences with sadness but as much positivity as she could generate. Her language was moderated and forgiving.

Here I could not help but feel that Katrina’s efforts to think positively about negative events may have influenced the way she expressed things. She spoke an analysis which reflected her education and her growth through de-colonisation programmes which have been popular for Māori employed by Health providers. Making such statements as: “We had poor role models, so we didn’t know what to do” is a more intellectual statement perhaps influenced by her cross-cultural or early education studies.

As described above, there were many features of their mother’s Tangi which were not very helpful to Katrina’s grief. She did not have the analysis at the time, but in retrospect she was able to identify all the features missing the normal healing elements of a tangi. Katrina completely agreed with her sister Mereana when she
decided she needed to do a Kawe mate for their mother, blending in their more recent
grief for their father.

**A Specific Tangi: Katrina’s Father**

Years later, Katrina’s father was diagnosed with a progressive illness while in his second marriage. He had two daughters with his second wife, with whom Katrina and her siblings had a relationship at one stage. However as her father’s illness progressed there was increasing raruraru (conflict) between the two whānau, leading to estrangement. From Katrina’s point of view the worst part of the situation was that the second wife and adult children did not plan for their father’s health deterioration. She viewed her father’s decision to negotiate a separation as a self-sacrificing act, an act to save his second family from having to cope with his illness. Katrina viewed his second wife as having:

“added to his suffering, absolutely. By not doing what she should have done.”

Katrina was hurt for her father. She maintained she was

“not angry or bitter about this, but said “I probably wouldn’t have anything to do with her now...I struggle to have anything to do with his daughters. ‘Cause they just basically wiped their hands of him too”. That was the perception that we got...”

Here there was another denial of emotion and attempt to bring an element of lightness to the situation: she was not angry or bitter, but equally she never wanted to see those people again, indicating that she was indeed carrying anger and bitterness but was unable to acknowledge them.

Having “convinced” the second family of their father to allow them to take their father’s Tūpāpaku home to grieve over him, they set up a marae style grieving space at Katrina’s home.

**Mourning in other than Marae spaces**

“By...Dad’s funeral, we had learned a lot (about Māoritanga). We know who the matriarch and the patriarch were and we’d do what we were told. With Dad’s funeral, we had Neville (older brother), and we had Mereana (sister), whom we trusted. We knew that this and this was going to happen, we knew to organise the funeral director which I did, we knew that he was coming to our house, we knew to send somebody ahead to tidy up, set the
rumpus room up like a marae. So we knew all that. We had an expectation. And it was based on everybody’s life experience of tangihanga. We knew that so we handled Dad’s tangi a lot better than having to rely on other people to do it. So we were able to control it better than what we did....with Mum’s...The whole funeral. I allowed his second wife into my house, and that was it.”

Whereas the traditional marae provided a spiritual and therapeutic space to mourn in, in modern times, not all tangi are held at marae. This may be because the whānau is not comfortable on the marae, because the deceased is one partner of a bi-cultural relationship, or a number of other personal reasons. Domestic dwellings, educational institutions and funeral homes (Edge, 2010) have also been sites for death rituals and mourning. In Katrina’s father’s case, the children were not sure about their father’s true ancestry, and although they had long been of the belief that he was Pākehā, they were not so sure by his death (as told by Mereana).

*Healing factors in Dad’s tangi:*

“I think having Dad for the four days (of the tangi) was good. Because that time period that he had when he was in hospital and we didn’t know about it, I think it allowed us that time to heal. What we missed out on, so that really helped with the healing. So that was good.”

Here Katrina was referring to the fact that emotionally, it was very meaningful to her whānau to have her father with them, albeit as a tūpāpaku. They could still communicate with him and share their love with him, and have the rights to access with him that they had been denied when he was dying (and they had not been told).

“I haven’t been back to the urupā yet to see Dad. That’s what happens when you get buried in Timbuktu”.

Katrina’s father had been buried in a public cemetery in a township which he had previously known, but which was neither close to his first children nor his second children – this was a compromise of a mixture of churches, faiths and cultural beliefs about which the families could find no compromise. In a sense it was a compromise by which none of the factions who really mattered, had their preferences honoured.

*The Role of Faith / Spiritual Beliefs*

“I do believe there is an afterlife, but not that afterlife (described by the LDS faith). Mormons believe that there are three levels, and you strive to go to the top. I’ll be happy to have just one! I don’t think it’s as colourful as the faith says.”
The beliefs Katrina holds, however, are comforting in dealing with death, grief and loss. Katrina said that a lot of the tenets of Mormonism have been positive for her.

*Variables Exacerbating Pain in Grief:*
There were many psychological stressors with her father and his second family prior to his death. The most devastating event was arriving at the hospital with Mereana and not realising her father had already died. Katrina perceived a sense of not being important or relevant to their father’s death.

*What did the Tangihanga contribute to Katrina’s Grief Resolution? (Father’s Tangi)*
Being able to take their Dad home for a tangihanga following a period of alienation or control by others was very healing. Having a say, having control, being able to be close to their father having been blocked for so long.

Taking power over what happened: the cultural conflicts, system conflicts, family raruraru, between the first and second families. The tangi forced the conflicted parties to achieve some resolution, power shifting, and forgiveness amongst themselves.

By this second tangi in their close whanau, knowing tikanga allowed Katrina and the whānau to then adapt tikanga to their situation. They brought the balance of power back to their whānau. They also had a hui with their sisters from the second family, and were able to find forgiveness.

In spite of a very negative start in terms of not knowing their father had died, through using their knowledge and power to ensure the tangi was more even and fair to both the first and the second families of their father. Most importantly, having their father at home allowed the whanau to grieve as they wanted to, and achieve healing.

Having finally been through the entire tangi and funeral process with their father, Katrina and Mereana were both very conscious of a shadow process they were undergoing, that of re-grieving their mother, which they had never been able to do
since their mother’s tangi. This, and taking their mother (as well as their father) to their brother in Australia, was the ultimate healing act.

**Reflexive considerations about this interview and Case Study:**
Katrina was the sister of a cousin/friend of mine, Mereana. Both were distant whanaunga, and both were happy to participate. I had not asked Katrina to be part of the research but her tuakana Mereana recommended her taking part.

Katrina’s korero brought up some similar life experiences for me and I felt empathically sad in the re-telling. I explain much of my own thoughts about these issues in Mereana’s Case study’s “Reflexive considerations”. One issue which was very different for me was the fact that Katrina chose her own school and followed through on all of the steps she needed to take to become enrolled. That it was a religious school and she took on many of the spiritual lessons she learned there, resulted in her having a different life from Mereana. There were some other motivations in her decision-making, as described above. Regardless, I felt a great respect for her choices as a young girl, especially since these ended up becoming a formative part of her life decisions later in life.
CHAPTER TWELVE: MEREANA

Background

Whānau upbringing, Cultural values, and Cultural identification
Mereana is the fourth child and the eldest girl from her parents’ marriage. Her parents separated when she was a young teenager. Her father had been raised as Pākehā and her mother was Māori.

To provide some social context, intermarriage between Māori and non-Māori has occurred since first contact in the 18th century (Harré, 1966; Edge & Nikora, 2010). Although initially accepted by many of the first non-Māori, as the country attracted many others and “a society” was created, these intermarriages began to be frowned upon and to some extent this attitude continued in certain classes (in spite of many claims that New Zealand is a class-less society).

Where Māori and non-Māori formed love relationships they were at times isolated by both sides of their families. The children of such relationships or marriages were at times raised as non-Māori, or at times if there was not a marriage, they would at times be handed back to the Māori whānau to be raised, which in most cases occurred. As time progressed, intercultural contact and intermarriage were further facilitated by Māori migration to urban centres for employment and to try a new lifestyle, whereby the two peoples lived and work in close proximity (Durie, 2005; Edge & Nikora, 2010). A greater understanding and respect of each other occurred in the trenches of World War II in particular due to the fighting prowess and extraordinary courage of the Māori forces (Henderson, Green & Cooke, 2008; Edge & Nikora, 2010).

Unfortunately in some instances racism affected the way cross-cultural children were reared, particularly when the dominant parent was Pākehā, as it seemed Mereana’s father was. Mereana’s childhood cultural values were Pākehā – although her mother was Māori and she (Mereana) was clearly Māori in appearance. However she and her siblings were not allowed to acknowledge they were Māori – if asked, they had to state “European” on all forms. Mereana resented it as she was:

“identifiably Māori and also I was treated as a Māori, mainly from a negative perspective. She experienced overt racism although I didn’t always
know what it was, just that she was being judged and rejected in some way. The view was very much to grow us up as Pākehā. We were isolated from both maternal and paternal families. Both families didn’t approve of the marriage”.

Te Hiwi (2007 in Levy, Nikora, Masters-Awatere, Rua & Waitoki, (Eds), 2008), noted that one of her participants whose parents were of different ethnicities found that the inferiority of things Māori was reinforced in the childhood home, and other markers of cultural identity were withheld. This meant that her participant, like Mereana and Katrina originally found negotiation of the Māori world very difficult. Mereana’s father had been overtly racist in earlier years, and having met his mother once, it was clear to Mereana that she was racist. Her father became estranged from his mother, which Mereana attributed to the marriage occurring.

“So all of those things were part of the context. Dad wanting to stay away from being Māori, but marrying one. But also there is a claim in the family that Dad has Māori blood because he doesn’t know his father. His mother took that knowledge to the grave.”

Yet in later years, her father came to think of himself as being Māori. He just decided that there really wasn’t any place for this Spanish whakapapa that his mother had claimed. Dad’s father was just some sailor. Having said that, his dad paid an upkeep for dad for many many years. Because he was in an orphanage for several years so his mother came back for him when she got married.

Academic discussion on the subject of the experiences of the children of Māori-non Māori intermarriage has acknowledged that the mixture of cultural identities is often uncomfortable. While bicultural families are potentially culturally enriched, more often there is a potential for conflict, tension and misunderstanding (Moeke-Maxwell, 2003). In Mereana’s experience, her father attempted to erase Māoritanga and Māori identity from his childrens’ lives, and although eventually this was unsuccessful, this brought them discomfort, confusion and pain as children.

*Te Reo*

Given that Mereana and her siblings were not even allowed to acknowledge that they were Māori, and their mother did not speak Te Reo, at least in front of the children or in Mereana’s memory, none of them learned Te Reo at home.
School Life
However Mereana was fortunate to be at school at a time when Te Reo was a subject option at school. She joined up for the Māori language class, against her father’s wishes. She defied him, and recalls rebelling about just about everything. Mereana agreed that she and the others lived their father’s “theme” for as long as he had power over them. However she had begun rebelling around intermediate school when she could get away with it.

Interestingly for someone who as an adult had in later times most comfortably taken the role of ringawera, she stated that she had not learned to cook from her mother. She learnt cooking at school – impractical things. Subsequently she learned how to make basic things, rewena bread, on a couple of unemployment cooking courses. She learned more as she became more independent and a mother.

Being Māori, Looking Māori, and Feeling Māori
Mereana can not identify any particular time when she totally grasped her Māori identity. In spite of the pressure and racism from her father, she felt she had always been Māori. She was always proud of her mother. The relationship Mereana had with her Mum was intuitive. This was necessary because Mereana’s mother did not communicate personal things. She was an abused wife and internalised her pain.

Mereana’s kōrero mentioned that good parenting was not modelled. Mereana’s own young life was affected in her choices of partner and lifestyle, and she was not very happy. She went through the motions of parenting her children, supplying their basic needs, but she has memories of not being present, and now has gaps in her memory about periods in her life. This is also often a feature of the psychological effects of trauma. She suffers on-going guilt that she is so much more present for her youngest son, born under different conditions. She enjoys her son, which she was unable to do with her daughters.

Experiencing Tangihanga in Early Life
Mereana didn’t have any guidance or much exposure growing up, about Māori things, right up to being placed in the position of being whānau pani (the bereaved) for her mother. As a young mother herself, the first tangihanga meaningful to Mereana was at a time she was not assured of her Tikanga, was that of her mother. Until that event, she had only been to her maternal grandmother’s tangi, where she
and her siblings had to stay in the car all day, from which they would have no idea of what was really happening. They were taken out for lunch, then had to go back to the car. Her mother didn’t talk much, and gave them no information. It was not like loss and grief for her, she just knew they were at a funeral.

A Specific Tangi: Mereana’s Mother

The Circumstances of Mereana’s Mother’s Death

Mereana was not prepared for the death of her mother. Her mother’s death was quite sudden. One of the elements of Mereana’s guilt was that she had dropped her little daughter off with her mother so she could go to a club. Her mother expressed some physical discomfort but Mereana had not known what it meant, and still went out.

Mereana later realised that her mother was in the early stages of a heart attack. But she was unaware of how serious those signs were at the time:

“You know those light-on light-off moments you have in your life, that was one of those. It’s one of my eternal regrets is that because had I said ‘well maybe we do something about that?” I also didn’t know that she’d had a previous heart attack. She knew. My brother knew. But they protected everybody.”

An ambulance arrived at the club where Mereana was socialising. The ambulance attendant had to stop to attend to her mother and it was right over the road from where Mereana was. Terry and Terewai came over and told Mereana what was happening.

“I went across the road and Mum was dying. I did C.P.R. The attendant told me how to do it. I knew a little bit because at school it was standard to have done C.P.R. So I did that and it’s a lot harder than it looks. Quite physical. I didn’t do the breath, she had a mask on. I knew she was going. I just knew. But she was still there, still breathing, sort of. But I’d say she’d have gone by then.”

Mereana was both shocked at the death of her mother, and angry because there was only one ambulance attendant and he would not “bend the rules” to save her mother: This devastation she had in common with Toni (Case study 3) whose son also died because there was only one ambulance driver and therefore no-one to medically intervene while travelling to the hospital.

One thing which really meant a lot to Mereana was that friends can heal grief:
“Some of the guys had come out from the motorcycle club, and Kiwa, they were there – they gave me a hug, they were quiet, respectful. They were just outside the ambulance”.

The lack of information Mereana had was one factor which really made her grief and shock worse. She wishes it was anyone but her, because it was such a heavy burden to carry. She feels that this made her go “numb”. However she managed to raise the energy to notify everyone who needed to know:

“I rang everybody, my siblings. But I went to see my sister. At work. The look on my face, turning up at her work, which I never do. That time of night. Took her outside and told her and she was really, really upset. Then she had to tell her boss and I took her up to the hospital. I’d already gone up there. When we went up to the hospital, Mum was in the morgue. While she was being prepared we went back to tell people. And just went back up to the hospital. I can’t remember much more”.

Mereana also went to see her father to carry the news of her Mum’s (his ex-wife’s) death. When she was doing this she was very ambivalent. She perceived that her father was a little bit upset. But on seeing this she was full of rage.

“I thought ‘well you gave her a shit life!’ At the time I thought “bet you’re glad to be rid of her.” Inside I was thinking “you didn’t deserve her, you treated her like shit, and you’re probably glad to be shot of her...I didn’t feel the need to say it. Just thought it. And of course YOU should be the one dead, NOT HER! That goes without saying. Only the good die young, and I carried that for a long time.”

Mereana’s mother’s tangihanga was the first tangi meaningful to her. Being the eldest girl from her parents’ marriage, she felt responsible for everything. She had no idea how to run a tangi. But there was a kuia in the community who instructed her in preparing the house for their mother to lie there for two nights. There was also a really good community of friends to her and her partner. His family and all his people knew so they turned up with the scaffolding and they put up that up outside and provided gas cookers and other equipment. They experienced the aroha of others to her great surprise, because she had no expectations.

Dressing of the Tūpāpaku
Mereana was not aware that she had the right to dress her mother, or choose the clothes. The undertakers did. Subsequently she learnt how to do these things, but with her mother she lost a lot of healing opportunities. Then her mother was taken
to her marae, and Mereana experienced the marae as much more impersonal, because she did not know her relatives.

*Family Dynamics*
Mereana’s father did not attend the tangi or support his children in any way. Mereana believes that he was prevented from attending by his wife. They had nobody else to support them, just partners. Their aunts were really shy like their mother had been, but they did support them and told them how to behave.

“Mum died young and all the ages on the headstones were around age forty-three. It’s really sad”.

Here Mereana was referring to the comparatively low life expectancy of Māori compared to Pākehā. Health issues particularly in rural areas were not well monitored or treated, and cigarettes and alcohol were features of the lifestyle.

A person Mereana could really rely on for tikanga was Kiwa, her childrens’ father. Although he acted as ringawera (cook, in the background), he knew tikanga, and helped Mereana with this. They had a religious service every night, organised by the church. The family were not consulted. They let control go, and tried not to worry about things.

Mereana had no idea why many things were happening. Because that was her first tangi. She wondered why the photos were taken down at the house. Why there white sheets all over the place.

*Cultural Practices*

“The hardest thing was when people did waiata. Somebody would get up and do karakia or they’d do a kōrero with a waiata after. And Māori songs are particularly mournful. And if you aren’t going to cry, they will ease it out of you!” That was difficult ‘cause they made me cry. Listening to the lyrics, some of the words, the sounds, that’s really sad. I think I could cry. And then deciding whether to cry or not. It’s kind of pathetic. I was probably numb. Because I’d barely cried throughout Mum’s tangi. And even when she was being lowered, I probably only managed a few tears.”

Mereana hates to cry in front of other people. She was not socialised to cry at tangihanga or anywhere in public. She had grown up hard, and had very controlled emotions. She knew that:

“at a tangi the assumption is if somebody doesn’t cry, they’re cold. But part of it was not wanting to cry in front of a whole lot of strangers. The
songs were the most likely to make me cry, but what I did, with that tangi, is that I made my younger sisters go and do all those things.”

Mereana somehow knew the body had to be kept warm (by being accompanied) all the time and she was not sure where that (knowledge) came from. This was at the house, not on the Marae.

“I made my sisters sit with her, and I did all the cooking and that in the background. No one tried to kick me out...I was just too shy to be around too many people I didn’t know”.

Compromising Cultural Practices
As Mereana came to know the marae she realised there was drinking in the corner and card-playing in the other corner. She didn’t like the drinking and for them to be drinking every day and then food not to get cooked, to her was a huge insult to her mother:

“One of the worst things that happened at Mum’s tangi was that the ringawera were drinking and misjudged the time they should be preparing things. So the kai wasn’t ready, they had to dig it up and take it to the fish and chip shop in town to cook it. Some people were really hungry and some people went home instead of waiting.”

So the transgression, the food not being cooked, the shame of that, knowing people were hungry. All of these aspects added to Mereana’s discomfort.

“The next day, we were sitting there with the bills, and uncle presented the alcohol bill. I just refused. I said we’re not paying for that. And so he was a bit surprised, he just said well who’s going to pay for it? You have the celebration at the end. You don’t drink every day and then on the day of the tangi the food doesn’t get cooked because the ringawera were drunk. I was pretty angry. I just thought that it was really unfair that all these people went home hungry. It was an innate lack of respect.”

Mereana’s experience with her partner’s community who were mostly Māori bikers, made her more aware of what to expect when things were done correctly. They knew the local tikanga, and whether they were ringawera or up front. So when food was to be done, she had always had the expectation of things getting done well.

After the Burial: Transgressing through not knowing
Mereana didn’t have any guidance growing up, about Māori things right up to being placed in the position of being whānau pani for her mother. And she made mistakes.

“Being at the marae, you’re subject to a lot of different rules, ways, things that need to be done and sometimes things that just challenge your own
sorts of beliefs, like smoking in the kitchen, and alcohol, and I transgressed on the way back from the urupā to bury Mum:”

Mereana was heavily pregnant with Kura, Terewai was not yet one, Terewai needed a change. So she took her straight back to the wharenui, changed her and cleaned her up. Then she was just standing outside while the karanga was going on, this whole ope standing outside the gate and she just stood there.

“I thought’why are they waiting?’And the kuia on my side said ‘they’re waiting for you. You’re supposed to be over there. Apparently the kuia about to lead them in said ‘stupid girl’. My sister was crying. I felt a little bit whakamā but not too badly really, because I just didn’t know. I was a bit embarrassed about putting people out but as far as the transgression goes, I just didn’t know. My experience was that I had come and gone already. I had no experience of having gone away and done something that I had to be called back in.”

Since that time Mereana has learned that there are ways of making up for transgressions of tapu. She had given her daughter Terewai a quick breast feed as well she has been told that that is one beneficial thing which can lift tapu.

*Wairua experiences:

Mereana had a wairua experience at her mother’s tangi. She was sitting outside the kitchen in the dark, and was feeling upset about her relationship. She could hear an old koro doing a whaikōrero:

“It took a little while for it to come into my consciousness. I was sitting outside the wharekai. The whaikōrero was coming from a field that was to the side of the marae. It took a while for it to travel into my consciousness. When I got back to Ngāruawāhia I talked to a kuia. She said that’s one of your tūpuna telling you you need to go and learn to speak Māori!”

“It was a wairua experience but I don’t know that the meaning was as simple as that. But it didn’t all feel scary or anything, it was just a bit odd. And now, I think she was right. Because had I known what he was saying I would have known whatever message he was putting out. Does it really matter? Anyway now I speak Māori.”

Mereana didn’t think of wairua experiences as a gift necessarily. She believes things supernatural are probably quite frequent. She was quite innately accepting of wairua experiences. She found it quite comforting in a way. So she found the marae a good learning experience because she hadn’t understood before. Mereana kept going back to her mother’s (and therefore her) Marae after her mother’s death because she wanted to get to know her mother’s side. She went every few weeks. Enough to be known, accepted, and to be part of them.
Positive contributions to healing

Two events occurred to bring about positive changes in Mereana’s cultural identity. These were firstly the advice from the kuia that she learn te reo, because she has since become a fluent speaker, and secondly, the fact that her mother’s tangi made her want to regularly return to her marae, thus really connecting with her identity as Māori.

Trying to heal.

Mereana was hapū (pregnant), had a one year old, and a bad relationship (with her children’s father). She was completely confused about what to do. Her self esteem was reduced by the abuse she was experiencing, so she feels she didn’t really have an opportunity to grieve. In retrospect her grief was mixed with the negativity of the relationship. Mereana wished she had been able to wear an armband to notify that she was experiencing grief, and so she didn’t have to explain herself, just be able to be in her grief. Mereana doesn’t know how long she was in deep grief:

“I have no idea. The main remainders of the grief are the guilt...And I’ve resented developing a much better relationship with Dad, because he was way less deserving. I became ok with that, but it was unfair.”

Changes

Mereana had been in the habit of visiting her mother when she felt drawn to. So losing her mother meant there had been an available coping strategy she had suddenly lost. She was constantly reminded of the things her Mum would have enjoyed. She missed her mother because Mereana was the wanderer and she would always visit. Her mother loved Terewai (her eldest daughter) and she missed the developing relationship between kuia and moko. Mereana did consult a grief book. Topics were death notices and how people go into talking about their recently deceased people in past tense.

“All those little things like writing obituaries, nice little things about her, I did all that, and the unveiling, and all those kind of processes that I do think are vitally important to healing.”

When she attended her mother’s tangihanga, Mereana was hapū (pregnant), had a one year old, and a bad relationship (with her children’s father). She was confused about the kawa, her self esteem was reduced by the abuse she was experiencing, so she reported that she didn’t really have an opportunity to grieve. In retrospect her grief was mixed with the negativity of the relationship. Mereana wished she had
been able to wear an armband to notify that she was experiencing grief so she didn’t have to explain herself, just be able to be in her grief.

Mereana missed visiting her mother, which had been a coping strategy she had suddenly lost. She was constantly reminded of the things her Mum would have enjoyed. She missed her mother because Mereana was “the wanderer” and she would always visit. Her mother loved Terewai (her eldest daughter) and she missed the developing relationship between kuia and moko.

**What did the Tangihanga contribute to Mereana’s Grief Resolution (Mother’s Tangi)**

With a lack of cultural understanding the tangihana did not contribute to the resolution of Mereana’s grief. In fact, there were several factors exacerbating her pain in grief. The fact that Mereana was present and had to perform CPR (Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation) on her mother because there was only one ambulance paramedic, traumatised her a great deal. She has carried that memory ever since.

Pre-existing family raruraru: Mereana had a childhood of multiple (problems/conflict). Her parents had parted some time before her mother had died. Her father was kept from supporting his first children when their mother died, due to control by his second wife (this was the attribution made by the adult children).

The two families had cross-cultural approaches to death practice. Mereana’s mother was Māori, her children’s upbringing was Pākehā. In the second family, the wife was Pākehā and the daughters identified as Pākehā.

Mereana’s mother’s death was unexpected. Mereana’s mother had experienced heart problems previously, but Mereana did not know this.

Although they were at their mother’s and therefore their own Marae, they did not necessarily feel the “embrace” of the marae and the home people (their own relatives whom they did not know or hardly knew) so they did not have the feeling of safety or the ability to grieve openly.

Mereana and her siblings did not have any control over what happened at their mother’s tangi. She said that they had not really grasped their true identities as Māori. They didn’t understand the significance of the Marae, their roles or the
importance of Māoritanga or tangihanga. They did not understand their status as whānau pani (close grieving family).

The meaning of the rituals and the words said were really lost to them. It seems to have been a bewildering experience, whereby the adult children tried to act in a culturally appropriate manner without knowing what it was or what it signified. The actual emotional experience of mourning was therefore not really assisted by the tangihanga. They had not been allowed or enabled to get to know their whānaunga (relatives) because of the unpopular decision her parents had made in being in a “cross-cultural” marriage.

Mereana’s whānau lacked cohesion as a whānau. They were not nearly as close at the time of her mother’s death as they were subsequently to become.

Mereana lacked cultural knowledge of procedures. Following Mereana’s mother’s burial at the urupā (whānau burial ground), she returned to the wharenui with her baby to change her “nappy” and did not realise that there was a ceremony to return. The group waited for her to join them to be formally welcomed back, and she was criticised by a female relative. She felt embarrassed by her lack of knowledge and the criticism and carried this memory with her for many years. Later with greater knowledge, she was able to rationalise what she had done in terms of “committing a cultural transgression”.

Looking back at her mother’s tangi Mereana knows that there were many processes that they, as adult children, had not partaken in (such as dressing their mother for her tangi, or having a say in the process), because they did not understand their culture. Thus there were many features of their mother’s Tangi which were not very helpful to Mereana’s grief. She ended up doing research into generic grief practices such as reading a grief book and writing an obituary. Finally the whanau arranged for the unveiling of her mother’s headstone. Later Mereana still felt that she had not resolved her grief about her mother, and it was not until her father died and they had his tangi, that Mereana knew what she needed to do to heal herself and the whanau.
A Specific Tangi: Mereana’s Father
To contextualise Mereana’s (and Katrina’s) father’s death, it is important to place some markers in the family’s life. Her father had left her mother and the family, and had ultimately become involved with, and married a Pākehā woman and had two daughters with her. The difference with which he treated his second family, which was apparently respectfully, non-violently, hurt Mereana and her siblings on behalf of their mother. Mereana’s mother had been lost after the marriage breakup. She became transient, alcohol dependent, and never really recovered.

After some years, Mereana’s father was diagnosed with a degenerative condition, which progressively disabled him, and also may have some deleterious effects on his mental and psychological processes. He broke up with his second wife, and tried to maintain his own independence, however needed assistance as time went by. Mereana and her sister had become estranged from their (half) sisters as well.

“We got a letter from them a month and a half earlier, from a lawyer, saying that we had to stop talking to them. Have no contact with them. It was because I said ‘could you please go and get Dad’s photos’.

Mereana had helped arrange for their father’s assessment and treatment and he was hospitalised for these processes, supported by Mereana and her sister for weeks. Their father was to stay in her home, and Mereana cleared his flat, shut everything down, and stored his possessions.

Unfortunately while Mereana and her sister had committed their lifestyles to caring for their father, including learning to administer his medications, he perceived at one stage that he was being imprisoned, told his friends and other children that he needed to be rescued, and Mereana’s sister arrived home at lunchtime to give him his lunch, and he had gone. This was devastating and hurtful for them, as well as worrying until they worked out where he had gone. He had been picked up by his other daughters and was staying with friends. Mereana spoke about “splitting” (a term used for playing people off against each other), manipulations occurring, and
when she was trying to locate her father, being “stone-walled” as if their father needed protection from them.

Although her sister forgave him and offered respite care should he want a change, Mereana was deeply hurt and angered by the whole situation. So she allowed an estrangement to recur, while still being informed by the hospital as to her father’s health status. Her father had a degenerative condition, but this was a situation which could have carried on for years, and she had no fears for his mortality at that time. However she was called by a nurse in the hospital informing her that her father had been admitted, but was about to be discharged today. So she thought there was no panic, because he was in and out of hospital anyway with his condition. She then thought I must text him to acknowledge she hadn’t known he was in hospital. Then the hospital rang and said he wasn’t well. So she and Katrina got ready and Mereana became extremely panicky to get up to the hospital. When they arrived at the hospital her sister was sobbing – they had a bad premonition.

“We got up to the hospital and it was like Katrina, Dad’s daughters were in there, the Te Awamutu family were in there all having lunch in there...A couple of words were exchanged, then I sort of looked at him, and I said – ‘Has he gone?’ And they were like ‘yes’...and Katrina and I just lost the plot! We just absolutely went ‘What the fuck!!?’ I turned straight to my sisters and said ‘Why the fuck didn’t you tell us?’”

The sisters made excuses. A verbal altercation occurred and a nurse asked them to go to the whānau room. However the other family did not want to engage with them. Apparently;

“Dad had been gone for about two hours by then. The reason I didn’t realise he was gone, was a) he looked like he was sleeping (in retrospect a bit rigidly), and b) because they were all eating and having their lunch in the room. So I went back into the room, my sisters had gone and I just said to the friends ‘Could you fullas take your lunch outside?’ And they just quickly packed up and went.”

Eating a meal around a newly deceased person, let alone her father, was unthinkable for Mereana, a cultural transgression and a personal insult. The speed with which the other family’s friends took their lunch and left, may well be interpreted as a belated acknowledgement that this was not appropriate behaviour.

“So our trauma was dealing with this...Dad had been in hospital for eight days. Much longer than usual. And he actually got a hospital bug and died.
He didn’t even die of what he went in to hospital for...On top of getting incredibly hurt and angry that he’d died and none of us knew or were there. (But) he wasn’t alone when he died. Katrina got angry and said ‘why didn’t you tell me? You rang me! He said ‘I told you he was in a really bad way. What more do you need?’ It’s incredibly hard to know what to say to someone – you can’t really leave a message saying ‘your Dad’s just died”.

Bicultural whānau/families sometimes need to negotiate two sets of values, belief systems and accompanying expressions in their time of bereavement. Failure to negotiate these aspects satisfactorily may have a significant impact upon the bereavement experiences encountered by bicultural whānau/families (Moeke-Maxwell, 2003). This indeed was the case with Mereana’s family, by the time her father died. It was more the case because of the ongoing conflict which had occurred between the first family and the second family of Mereana’s father, and particularly in most recent times. To discover that their father had been gravely ill and had in fact died without their being notified was the ultimate wound they could have experienced.

Having had no control or input in the manner of her father’s death, Mereana was determined that she and her siblings were going to take a major part in, assert their tuakana (senior in the whakapapa) status, and assert their right to organise and negotiate their father’s tangi/funeral.

Immediately following death, the whānau must make two critical decisions that will influence the mobilization of community networks and resources as well as tangi proceedings. The whānau must decide on where the deceased will lie in state, and when and whether they will cremate or bury the deceased. They can do this in their home, the marae or other places such as churches, schools, sports clubs or at a funeral home. With whanaunga, friends, colleagues and related others usually preparing to share in the burden of grief, the decisions must be made as quickly as possible about where and when the tangi will be held (Nikora, Masters-Awatere & Te Awekōtuku, 2012).

One of the most aggravating and unhelpful features of this negotiation was the self-appointed representation of the other family by Greg, one of their friends. Mereana and her siblings did not recognise the authority or the mana of Greg, and found him an extreme irritant. They perceived he was “playing games”, stopping direct
contact between themselves and their siblings. They did their best to stop his behaviour, and were upset further by their own aunt’s apparent decision not to assist them.

“They wanted a church service, and this guy Greg thought that Lorraine his ex-wife had control over where he was going to go.”

Asserting dominance through primacy (being of the Tuakana line):

“And I said, no, she doesn’t, she’s separated. I’ll tell you who’s in control, that’s my oldest brother. If not him, it’s my next one, and the next one, or me. And I can tell you now, between Katrina and I, if we want to do something, we will just tell our brothers anyway. And they’ll listen’.”

Traditionally, first born women fill leadership roles particularly if the tuakana abandon or cannot meet their responsibility or if they demonstrate outstanding competence (Nikora, Masters-Awatere & Te Awekōtuku, 2012).

The whānau had ongoing difficulties with their junior siblings and the support group of their mother. They attempted to bring the tikanga of a hui, where everyone had their say, everyone listened, and decisions were made respectfully. Mereana realised that the process needed to be inclusive for their siblings. However she found it almost impossible to negotiate this successfully. Finally some decisions were made:

Dressing the Tūpāpaku

“And so Greg went off to get Dad some clothes...and Dad was going to come and stay with us at Katrina’s, then go to Te Awamutu for the service, then go to Thames to be buried. It was cool. Split the bill, all good. Then we went off to the morgue, the funeral home, my brother in law, because he worked at the hospital, got to follow Dad all the way to the morgue. The only part where we couldn’t be involved, so that was really cool.” (This was referring to the cultural ideal that the tūpāpaku should always be accompanied by family). I didn’t dress my Dad. My brothers, my brother in law, my nephew – he tried. He got to the door and then it was too much and he came back. My view on it now is that I think they would rather me dress them than strangers. That’s how I see it.”

Interfaith Tensions

The whānau did a lot of karakia. But there were several different faiths involved among the families and friends. Therefore there were not only two family tensions, two cultural tensions, but also religious tensions – they were Catholic, Mormon and “born again” Christian.
“They wanted the service in Te Awamutu. We thought that’s fine. So then we (my brothers) got Dad dressed, and had a bit of fun with him...but all of that for him was healing eh. So he got to take the piss out of Dad (make fun of - in a loving way).”

This process of the last physical interpersonal act being a duty, a comfort, an opportunity for humour with the deceased, is also shared in Ngāwari’s case study. It is an integral part of healing for those who take part.

*Tangi at the House*

With Māori moving to more urbanized settings, traditional practices are still enacted (Nikora, 2007), but increasingly urbanised whānau are carrying out some of these practices in the home or on urban trans-tribal marae (Metge, 1976; Groot, 2010). Although the traditional pattern for a tangihanga is the return of the deceased and the immediately bereaved to their marae, in modern times some choose instead to mourn their family member in their own private homes, followed by a public funeral. In this instance, Mereana’s family made her sister’s house the Marae for their father’s tangi:

“So Katrina took Dad back to Ngaruawahia. Aroha (our other sister) was already in Ngaruawahia and had prepared the house. They all slept downstairs with Dad...Then I turned up the next day (with the children) and it was all just full on. We had church services, the Mormon Community was amazing. The whole community again did what they did for my mother’s funeral. They turned up with food, they had a Mormon church service in the evening. Everybody... had a chance to grieve...”

*A Change of Heart*

Mereana began to have a bad feeling about the actual funeral (religious ceremony prior to burial) taking place in the second family’s church in Te Awamutu. There was no trust, she and her siblings had been labelled as “the bad people”, they were terribly hurt by what had happened, and they had been denied the right to be with their father at the end of his life. She decided:

“...I didn’t want to expose my brothers and sisters to a service in Te Awamutu. I was completely convinced that they would ‘re-write’ everything. And that the ill feeling was so strong that, we were all going to do it, but I just thought we didn’t need another pain on top of what we had already experienced. So I immediately set about trying to re-arrange that.”
A large emotional conflagration occurred whereby Mereana and her siblings refused to have the service in Te Awamutu, because they did not feel safe under the circumstances. Mereana said that if her younger siblings wanted to have the service there, they should come and make a tono to their tuakana. They agreed to this.

“So (the other family) were coming at about four o’clock. But anyway my sisters turned up, we were having service every night as well, lots of people. A lot of my time was spent outside except for when my friends came a lot of my friends came and so this ope turned up, it was an ope (a formal visiting group), and they’d actually dredged up a kuia”.

*Negotiating Intercultural Conflict*

The ope which arrived was comprised of almost all Pākehā. The situation was tense, and required good will on both sides. The following processes are considered key to inter-cultural conflict resolution: collaboration, compromise, and continued engagement with the “other” culture (Samovar, Porter & McDaniel, 2007). In addition, people with bicultural skills are often used to connect two different cultural groups (Yum, 1988). In this instance, Mereana’s sisters and their friends and family had thought to ask for the support of a kuia (A Māori female elder) to accompany them, something which really surprised Mereana and her siblings.

“Katrina – they’ve got a kuia!!!’ We were like, ‘wow!’ Amazing. I thought it was...stupid. It was like, trotting out culture now. ‘Cause the thing is, they don’t know what to do with it. It’s like the culture was to keep them safe. There was no background knowledge to it. They just knew that they needed it. And as it turns out it was like, I knew (the kuia). She didn’t know them, she just got involved”.

This situation of the Kuia accompanying the Pākehā side of the family was not unusual. Kuia are known for their generosity of spirit and will, if consulted, manaaki a family or a situation in all best intentions. Then when they arrive at the situation, they may realise that a situation is a lot more complicated than they had been aware.

Mereana’s husband did a mihimihi. He “did the pae” for every single occasion. Although helpful for the whānau, this was also painful because none of her brothers could whaikōrero, and David, her husband, was Pākehā and fluent in te reo and knowledgeable about tikanga.

“We are so bereft of our cultural practices that we can’t do that ourselves. My husband had to do it. My brothers want to learn. They really want to. My brother said we really need to sharpen up on that. And I said you know bro, even though we didn’t do the best in terms of visible Māori tikanga,
and we got a Pākehā to do it for us, just that saying, “Amorangi ki mua, nga hapai o ki muri”, so the chiefs in the front, and the ringawera at the back. The people who have the supplies. So you have the supply carriers for the rangatira. We did a really really good job of the food, of everything that needed to be done. So even though we didn’t have that the Pae stuff, we had a lot of the other. The thing that keeps the pae going.”

The kuia came in with the second wife, Lorraine, whom Mereana and her siblings held in very low regard.

“Hated her. And of course she walked into the room and just ignored everybody and walked straight over to Dad, some of her friends came in and looked at us like we were bits of shit. My sisters came in. But what Lorraine did was incredibly (in the end), moving. She just came in and was really quite grief-stricken. She was just in her own world. She was stroking him, kissing him, sobbing, crying. At first I thought ‘Oh fuck off’. I just didn’t have any sympathy for her ‘cause Dad was dead. Why now? But to see the depth of the pain, I thought...and my two sisters were really crying”.

Following this, the whānau went to provide refreshments. Unfortunately after this, Mereana’s siblings all went into hiding. They were too angry to cope with the discussion. However Mereana’s husband and sister in law stayed to support Mereana. In the process, David spoke to talk to this kuia. They discovered she was their son’s kaiako (teacher):

“You can’t just trot somebody out and not expect them to have a relationship with the Māori that they’re there to see. So that was really cool. And we cleared up some facts.”

However the other family were not able or willing to take part in the process. So literally the day before the funeral, they had still not been able to decide on a venue. They were rushing all night to compile the funeral service programme, and the obituary, but not having yet decided on the venue was extremely difficult.

**Mereana’s experience of the Tangi/Funeral**

Mereana said she did not feel she had a particularly pleasant experience of the funeral. She felt she was micro-managing tensions all the time, organising funeral plots and food and everything. She did a lot of it herself, delegated some things, but she felt there was a lot to manage and it became quite stressful.

**Costs for Tangi**

Another problem was financial pressure. Generating sufficient funds to pay for the burial plot was hard. Because the other family did not want him in their whānau
urupā, which would have been free. They then had to have this conversation with my younger sisters who with their partners all had incomes. They did not want to contribute anything if the funeral did not go the way they wanted. So they told their sisters:

“This is what it costs to bury Dad, you have to help’.”

After the tangi
Whereas the mourning environment was crowded with friends and relatives bringing their aroha, and the whānau pani, the bereaved, can cope in some ways with the energy of others. At the end of the formal grieving process, when there is more mental and spiritual space for the reality of grief, this can be a very heavy time for the bereaved. In Māori culture there is a mechanism by which it is correct for people close to the bereaved to continue staying or visiting the bereaved so they are not alone. However in some instances modern life does not allow for this comfort.

Letting the Tears Flow
As a woman who had needed to control her emotions because of her tough up-bringing, Mereana found it hard to cry. The one thing which allowed her to let her tears go was the presence of true, long term friends, especially those who had recently been through grief themselves.

“I just burst into tears...that contrasted with my Mum’s tangi now...I just thought twenty years ago I wouldn’t have cried. But I think what made me cry was knowing they were bringing their aroha. And that was incredibly touching. So the thing that stood out for me was I had all of my friends around.”

“One friend didn’t come to the tangi, which was odd. I said look I just told you my Dad died, and she was like, “Oh I hope you’re ok”.

This latter reaction in a Māori context may well be seen as an emotionally inadequate or even cold response to a friend’s loss. Remembering the response, it was seen as culturally strange, and Mereana’s view of that friend, as well meaning as she may have been, was changed.

Mereana’s brother missed out a lot on the aroha of friends due to so many changes of plans, and they did not arrive at the venue. He was very hurt by that. But he’s since realised what happened.
Feelings of Aroha bring the Spirit of Peace
Following the tangi, the family decided to make peace:

“So we talked about the four years ago, what happened. And my youngest sister just said in a nutshell, ‘All I know is that one day my parents were splitting up and my family that I thought I had was, we weren’t talking anymore. And I thought we don’t have a family anymore.’ So we each had a turn to say how it was for each of us. And it was just miscommunication.”

Mereana said to her siblings that they should have taken more responsibility as they were the eldest. The younger sisters were being manipulated by others. But the main thing was that they were a family and having lost trust in each other, that needed to be re-built.

Modern Technology Used for Tangi
Throughout the tangi, Mereana made efforts to keep the lines of communication open with her other brother in Cairns who couldn’t come over. They used skype, texting and telephone calls, thus keeping Mereana very busy:

“If I wasn’t cooking or being pani’d (receiving sympathy, compassion) or whatever, I had a lot on but I was aware that he was trying to be involved.”

Technology has indeed begun to be utilised in publicising and allowing public viewing of ceremonies, particularly those of well known persons (McRae, 2009). There was at first the view that this use of technology was an abomination, a transgression of tapu, and it was widely frowned upon. However within just a few years technology has been allowed closer and has become more acceptable to some in the context of death and bereavement.

The whānau showed Calvin their last service, and showed Dad to Calvin on video.

The other brothers thought that would be hard for Calvin to take. But he had asked.

“When I showed Calvin to Dad (on the ipad), he just put his head down. And I held it close to me. But what I said to my brothers was ‘the grief is public. We can’t choose when Dad is lying there. We are all seeing each others’ pain.’”

The Kawe Mate
Following the funeral, Mereana had a strong feeling to visit her brother. She told her husband she wanted to go to Cairns.

“I said to my husband ‘look. I just want to go to Cairns.’ I just got this feeling that Mum was saying to me ‘go to Cairns and look after my boy. I want you to go and awhi him’. And Katrina then said, ‘oh I’m coming’. So
we sat there online and booked her a ticket. We went to Cairns a week later.”

On telling their brother what had happened, he was resistant to making peace. However they led him to how their conclusion had been arrived at, and he understood.

*Mereana’s reactions to Stress and Grief*

Mereana was very fragile and deeply affected by the entire bereavement process. She could not eat, was oversleeping but still feeling fatigued. She realised that she was probably depressed. When she arrived back from seeing her brother, she went straight in to a pre-arranged wānanga. There she was talking to a leader who helped her to clarify what her visit to her brother was about.

“It was a kawe mate’. I didn’t know how to explain why I really needed to go, he said ‘that’s you taking your Dad to your brother.’ I thought, ‘actually, I wasn’t taking my Dad, I was taking my mother. I said my Mum’s been gone for over twenty years. And the urge for me was to take my mother over there’.

Mereana had never succeeded in recovering from her grief for her mother. In a way, it appears that the grief Mereana had been unable to healthily process when her mother died, was carried within her until her father’s death and tangihanga. She grieved for both parents at her father’s tangi, and was able to express, understand, and do things for her father, which were an enactment of what she would have wanted to do for her mother. At the time of her mother’s tangihanga she did not know her culture or language, she experienced spiritual events but was unable to contextualise them with the wairuatanga that she came later to understand in depth.

This explains why the tangihanga of her father motivated her to carry the spirit and remembrance of her mother over to her brother in Australia, to assist him and share the grief, thus healing each of them.

“And I’m good...a few weeks ago I really was quite down. And once I’d come back from Cairns, I felt really good ‘cause I’d done that. I said to Calvin ‘I don’t know whether I’m here to heal you or for you to heal me’. It wasn’t about feeling good about myself because I did it, it was for me, and Katrina.”

*Father’s Tangi: Factors Exacerbating Pain in Grief:*

Although her father had a degenerative illness, his death was unexpected, because he had a lot of hospital stays anyway. Mereana’s whānau were not notified of the
severity of his illness, or of his death. Therefore quite naturally, they perceived a
sense of not being important or relevant to their father’s death, by the second family
and friends. They walked in to see him (thinking he was still alive) and found a
group of people sitting around his body eating lunch.

There was long term raruraru (problems/conflict) between the two whānau not
communicating at time of death. There were instances still causing anger such as
their father being kept from supporting his first children when their mother died,
due to control by his second wife.

There were many cross-cultural approaches to death practice influencing what the
two families wanted. These were Māori-Pākehā, traditional Māori-religious Māori,
Religious Māori-Religious Māori.

There was a man Mereana’s whānau did not know, acting as a go-between. They
found him more of an annoyance and a barrier to proper communication with the
second family.

What did the Tangihanga contribute to Katrina’s Grief Resolution? (Father’s
Tangi)
The factors which helped Mereana and her whānau to heal, were the following:
Being able to have their Dad at home for some time and grieving after the above-
mentioned period of alienation or control by others. Having a say, having control,
and being able to be close to the loved one as opposed to being blocked felt very
restorative.

Taking power over what happened as the first family, the tuakana, they dealt with
the cultural conflicts, system conflicts, family raruraru between their own and the
second family. The tangi enlightened the bereaved in terms of decision-making,
resolution of some inner conflict, particularly in terms of their unhealed grief about
their mother.

The tangi forced the conflicted parties to achieve some resolution, power shifting,
and forgiveness amongst themselves. They adapted the tikanga to suit the whānau.
They knew what was happening this time.
Mereana realised throughout the tangihanga how much their Dad was loved. Aroha and respect were shown to both him and the whanau pani, both in attendance and expression. Additionally, Mereana was cared for by her friends.

Finally, being spiritually inspired to visit her brother to kawe mate – having a spiritually healing visit prompted by her mother’s spirit or memory: this healed her old hurts about her mother’s death, and also gave her peace about having buried her father.

**Reflexive considerations about this interview and Case Study:**

As the child of a cross-ethnic and to some extent cross-cultural relationship myself, I could relate to many experiences described by Mereana. I similarly felt the isolation of living in a predominantly pakeha lifestyle and culture, particularly in my earlier life. I knew my mother, maternal grandmother and grandfather were Māori. I spent time with close relatives who were Māori. However I had very few Māori peers who were cousins, schoolmates or friends. Somehow I attended overwhelmingly pakeha schools although they were all in the public school system. This must have been due to the geographical areas in which we lived, and at high school, the academic choices my parents made for me. My younger sisters and brother all attended a mixture of public and private schools, which on reflection changed their whole view on life and social expectations, and these were very different from my own.

My father’s family were all in Australia, so there was no domination of extended family from that side, although we did visit them in Australia from time to time. Looking back, I think that there was a socio-economic and “class” dominance in my childhood experiences. Equally, as a child I may not have distinguished the difference between my own maternal whānau and other people.

Unlike Mereana’s experience, my father did not seem to disapprove of or try to alienate my siblings or myself from our whānau. In fact, he was quite adopted by the whānau we were in contact with, and I think this was a very healing experience for him. He was intensely interested in history, and my maternal grandmother spoke to him a lot about our whakapapa and iwi histories. He had a wonderful
memory so was able to recount these stories to me when I was of an age when I found them relevant and interesting.

When I was talking to Mereana for this research, I was quite surprised that although I had known her for quite a long time, her Reo had only been developed as an adult. She had clearly put a lot of work into learning her language and culture, and I felt very admiring of her skill and comfort.
CHAPTER THIRTEEN : NGĀWARI

Ngāwari has both a Māori name and a Pākehā one, both of which she uses according to the environment. Relevant to both Ngāwari and a fellow participant (Toni), this is significant because it was a phenomenon which has occurred over the years in the recent era of uncomfortable shifting in relationships in the predominantly Pākehā world. It was not uncommon for Māori growing up since the forties and fifties, where it was easier to use a Pākehā name in Pākehā situations, as one’s Māori name was highly likely to be mispelled and mis-pronounced. The Māori name would usually be a whānau or tūpuna name which had an emotional and cultural meaning and to hear it mispronounced was very abrasive to the spirit. Ngāwari’s name was that of a highly esteemed tūpuna whaea (female ancestress) so it was very special to her, and she felt priviledged to be so named. In this case study, she will be referred to as Ngāwari (a pseudonym).

Background

Whānau upbringing, Cultural values, and Cultural identification

Ngāwari comes from:

“A big Māori family- one biological older brother and my parents whāngai’d nine other children from both sides of their family. This included nephews and sisters of my mum. They were transient, and weren’t all there at the same time. We were all on the marae from a very young age: at tangihanga, hui, unveilings, we were all cousins playing and having a wonderful time. Whānau was a big part, including extended whānau.”

Both of Ngāwari’s parents worked full time. Her father was a tradesman with his own business, and her Mother worked in an administrative position, later becoming a health professional. Therefore those who lived at home had to contribute to the running of the household. Ngāwari was “always a responsible child”. She would come home from school and do her chores: “washing, peeling the potatoes, I knew what I had to do.”

The whānau had tent holidays around the motu:

“we went down the East coast a lot, and Rotorua district lakes. We did lots of family stuff in the holidays. We were very outdoorsy. Dad was a diver, fisher, hunter. We had horses as well”. Ngāwari rode regularly – “every day or second day and all weekend”.

Roles on the Marae

Ngāwari’s family are shareholders of the land on which her father’s Marae stands. A tribe's tūrangawaewae is its land (Walker, 1999), meaning more than geographic situation is meant because love, pride, tradition and rights to carry out certain tribal duties are tied to land which has been passed down from the ancestors (Dansey, 1978). Tūrangawaewae is an emotional tie between Māori and land because the land is the place from whence they came (Rangihau & Romanos, 1985). Tūrangawaewae signifies the cultural reality that one belongs to a place, as opposed to the person owning the place (Kāwharu, 1996). This feeling of belonging is expressed later in this story when Ngāwari takes her father on to the marae.

Ngāwari believes that because she descends from this place, this is the reason her whānau’s roles involved true manaakitanga. “So that was why we were always in the kitchen”.

Jahnke (2002) explained the concepts of back, the kitchen (muri), and front, the paepae (mua) as relative positions designating areas of ritual within the context of marae (Out the front delineates the formal roles assigned to those who occupy these spaces (the Paepae), and who are often elders. Out the back designates the spaces for workers (the Ringawera, those who wait on the manuhiri) whose responsibilities include providing for guests (manaakitangata).

Arguably, marae are run and governed from the back. The back is the engine room of a marae. Typically people occupy more than one role on a marae. Specific roles are dependent on the presence and willingness of people to contribute. This is encapsulated in the following saying “ka tika ana ā muri, ka tika hoki ā mua”, (get the back right, and the front will be a success) (Jahnke, 2002). Within Māori society, learning to work out the back is part of the process of apprenticeship and an important part of manaakitanga (hospitality, reciprocal caring), which over a lifetime may see one’s role change and move from the back to the front of the marae (Jahnke, 2002). As described above, these roles are complementary, and each is as important as the other.

Ngāwari’s father went on to the pae. Not being a native speaker, he attended tribal wānanga for three years in order to be able to take up his place on the pae.
Ngāwari’s great grandmother, grandmother and mother were known as fabulous cooks. On her Tainui side, her great grandmother and grandmother were head cooks at their marae. So this was a gift, a tradition, and a role which came from both sides of Ngāwari’s whānau.

“Although my mother was Tainui, she was often a cook for various hui in Te Arawa. “My mother was a worker, and her food tasted good so...that’s really what it’s about I think...and she was reliable...”

Within the marae context, the mana of a tribal group is assessed not only by the way in which they welcome and honour their guests formally into the marae setting, but also by the way in which they create a home for guests and feed them (Pere, 1982). The concept of manaakitangata embodies principles of hospitality, of showing respect to visitors, and is related to the concept of mana (Pere, 1982). This was part of the reason that Ngāwari felt such pride, that although Tainui, her mother as the wife of her father, Te Arawa (Ngāti Whakaue), provided many beautiful meals and organised such good hospitality for her husband’s marae, for many years.

School
Ngāwari attended mixed gender, Pākehā oriented public schools. She said that when she was at the marae, she had a sense of pride and a sense of belonging. She perceived real differences between her home and school identities:

“you know, it’s really funny” – when I was at the marae, I had a sense of pride and a sense of belonging, but when I was at school... being Māori was not cool. You didn’t share that you had spent the weekend with all your cuzzies down at the tangi, nah! You didn’t go there – you’d try to think of something Pākehā, you’d make it up to fill in the gaps, you wouldn’t share that and yet it was the best bloody experience. That’s sad eh? I wouldn’t share that joy and that sense of love of my whānau and my marae and what it meant to me.”

“Even sharing with your cuzzies a common sleeping bed no, you wouldn’t share that with the Pākehā s, they might laugh at me. They might think “Ooh look at those natives”. Sad eh? Sad! And yet now my young boy my baby, when it’s time to do his morning news, he’ll talk about it all, he’ll take photos, awesome stuff.”

Ngāwari felt sad that she couldn’t share that joy and that sense of love of her whānau and her marae and what it meant to her. The pride and comfort she felt in being Māori was somehow repressed, and she learned not to share too much about that very major aspect of her life. It could well be said that this was a form of
internalised racism, even though the predominant feeling she had about being Māori was pride and positivity. Yet the dynamic could be compared with “closeting” in the gay community. In identifying this as being a “sad” state of affairs Ngāwari was pleased that her son had none of her own previous need to hide her real life from non-Māori. In fact the small community had not so long ago been extremely racist, and at least one writer only a few years older than Ngāwari, in this same area, would have stones thrown at her and be called names as she walked to school (Te Awekōtuku, 1994).

**Te Reo**

Durie, Black, Christensen, Durie, Fitzgerald, Taiapa, Tinirau & Apatu (1996) highlight a number of important conventional markers of Māori identity: self identification, ancestry, marae participation, involvement with extended family, access to ancestral land, contacts with Māori people, and ability in the Māori language.

Ngāwari had all of the above, apart from being able to speak in the reo. In spite of having been so frequently, and so comfortable on the marae, Ngāwari’s first language was English. She was present at most tribal tangihanga and enjoyed them because the role of children there was to share, play, and enjoy themselves. They knew what was safe, and what they should not do (what behaviours constituted a hara or transgression). As a teenager Ngāwari moved into the kitchen and the dining room at tangi and hui. It was a natural thing, a progression which she had aspired to.

**Experiencing Tangihanga in Early Life**

The ritual of tangihanga has been an ongoing cultural practice which has largely resisted the pressures of colonisation and remains deeply embedded within Māori communities. Children are present at tangi, are exposed to tūpāpaku (the deceased), and they talk to their siblings and cousins, and adults about death (Jacob, Nikora, & Ritchie, 2011).

Thus Ngāwari had attended tangihanga from an early age. She shared with Huiarangi the sense of happiness, acceptance, and being with her child relatives. As a child for Ngāwari, this meant:
“Oh yay, you don’t have to go to school, you can get with your cuzzies and cuddle and get in the bath together, you know it was a real fun happy time...Tangihanga were happy times. I knew there was a tūpāpaku (a deceased person), I understood about death, but did not feel the sadness, it was just the way it was... I had lost loved ones such as Grandmothers and that but I was always in the kitchen. Of course we had our time to spend with them but it was not the same (when a child).”

It wasn’t until she was a teenager that she moved into the kitchen and the dining room. It was a natural thing, a progression. She wanted

“To be with the adults, the teenagers, the people who were older than me. I just started in the dining room, waitressing, taking the dishes out, sweeping. I loved doing all that stuff. I loved being with the whānau, in the kitchen, lots of laughs, stuff to learn: whakapapa (genealogy), – “this is your cousin and this is how you are connected”. We always had the radio on, cleaning, dancing, doing our mahi, loving it. That feeling of whanaungatanga (family connectedness).”

Learning Variations of Tikanga

Ngāwari also attended tangi outside her own rohe such as Ngāti Porou or Tuhoe. She knew to follow the examples of their leader, and to always be respectful. Ngāwari said she had always been a good observer even when she was a child.

“When we were in the wharenui I knew the expectations of behaviour, what I could do and what not to do. It was just a natural thing I grew up with you know you just observe. We knew that when we went in to have a kai that our manuhiri went in first. Normally there was always a children’s table anyway. We knew that when all the adults were in there having a kai we could go and play bullrush in front of the wharenui”.

Adult life

Ngāwari was by the time of the interview, the mother of two sons, her eldest, Kauri from an earlier relationship, and after several years, Kawakawa was born to Ngāwari and her long term partner. As an adult, Ngāwari moved to her other tribal rohe (ascribed physical tribal area) of Tainui. There she experienced some struggles in being accepted, as she had grown up elsewhere. However she overcame these by speaking out on her own behalf, and being seen on a regular basis. At the time Ngāwari moved, she had begun studying at University. She achieved her Masters degree and went on into a tertiary teaching position.

Parallel events: Moving from one Iwi to another

Ngāwari said;

“I was embedded more in my Te Arawa side, but for the last eight years I’ve been more active in my Tainui side because of moving here (to
Waikato). I moved back with my partner and child to my papakainga opposite one of our special Maunga (mountains) into my Grandmother’s house which had been idle for some years, we renovated it”.

A Specific Tangi: Ngāwari’s father

Finding out
On the day her father died, Ngāwari was due to travel to a halfway point and meet him, and to hand over (young son) Kauri to stay with him for a few days. A cousin drove from another town some kilometres away, to find her and tell her.

Shock, grief and trauma
When Ngāwari’s cousin arrived at her door she knew intuitively that her news was serious:

“I just knew from her (my cousin’s) stance but I thought it was my big son for some reason – that there had been an accident but then she said ‘no it’s your Dad’. I couldn’t believe it and I began screaming and collapsed on the ground...I just lost it. I couldn’t handle it...it just hurt too much”.

Ngāwari was unprepared because she had lived in denial, never allowing herself to even consider losing her father, it was unbearable: ‘I just couldn’t go there’. Following her collapse and emotional outpouring, she had to ‘get myself together’. She was concerned for her son Kauri as well, who appeared frightened at seeing his mother so distressed. She ‘went into a robotic kind of organisational mode’, tried to contact her partner who was up North at his Auntie’s tangi, packed up gear for herself and her son. Her cousin drove them to Rotorua.

Ngāwari’s father had been living on the East Coast (part of their family land). Ngāwari found out that her father had died at their other home in Rotorua, where brother Jimmy had been living with his partner and their daughter. They were there, had checked on him and found he was having trouble breathing, so they called the ambulance. Jimmy called their mother and she went straight to meet them from work.

Ngāwari found these details tremendously comforting.

Unfortunately because there had been a lot of police intervention at the house previously, the police became involved in Ngāwari’s father’s death. They insisted on an autopsy to eliminate other possible causes of death because the doctors didn’t have a recent medical history. This was to Ngāwari an unbearable desecration.
Seeing her Deceased Father for the First Time

When Ngāwari arrived at the hospital her father was in “a glass room”. He had soiled himself in death and Ngāwari was devastated at the degradation of her father being left like this. She begged and cried to be able to cleanse him but they would not allow it.

“They had the door locked, there was no air conditioning in the room and he started to swell and by tomorrow he wouldn’t even look like himself.”

Statutory authorities such as police, pathologists, and coroners, can seriously impact on the grief of Māori whānau. The negative and inappropriate impacts of police behaviour at the death scene, the forced removal of the body for statutory purposes is probably the most invasive of the police practices reported (McCreanor, Tipene-Leach & Abel, 2004). Distress caused by the insensitivity of the autopsy process, and the prolonged and regimented nature of the coronial process, which can cause the extended wait periods before the bereaved can access their love ones (McCreanor et al, 2004).

The grief of the whānau pani is compounded by the inability to fulfil the cultural imperative of accompanying the tūpāpaku. Uncertainties about the timely return of the body in an acceptable condition, adds to whānau stress in their grief (McCreanor et al, 2004). Ngāwari held all these fears for the accessing of her father, and was devastated by the degrading state he was lying in until he was allowed to be released into the whānau’s hands.

To prevent her father from continuing to swell in the sealed glass room, Ngāwari had to make the difficult decision to rather consent to move him to the morgue to prevent this from happening.

Raruraru: Family Conflict

Another big worry for Ngāwari had been the ill-feeling resulting from the raruraru (conflict) in the whānau (extended family), and how this would manifest before and during the tangi. But this had fortunately all been sorted out before Ngāwari arrived. Her brother Jimmy had made some serious statements to the relatives about the behaviour he expected and that which would not be tolerated. Jimmy having been at the hospital from the outset, had let the feelings be known that he and Ngāwari would be in charge of their father’s Tangi.
“The family received the clear message that Jimmy and I were strong and united, and could not be divided”.

This was very healing for Ngāwari and Jimmy, who had experienced their own sibling conflict in the past. Ngāwari called another cousin from her Te Arawa side, Rebecca:

“My first phone call to Rebecca was...about 11 o’clock Sunday morning. The first thing she says to me is, ‘You need to have this next twelve hours for you to grieve for your father. Whatever you need to be done, you need to just give it to me over the whole tangi but please, this next twelve hours’. So my cousin was really in tune about that grieving and spending that time and I was able to do that although there were these things that I was worried about”.

The provision of support from social networks was cited as very important and helpful for informants of another study including helping with organizing funeral services and death notices for the newspaper (Breen & O’Connor, 2011).

The next consideration was flying over her nieces and nephews from Australia, using her father’s credit card to pay for this. As described by Nikora (2007), Māori kinship networks are becoming more scattered both in Aotearoa and abroad, particularly in Australia (Nikora, 2007). Urbanisation, employment, education, financial constraints, transport and distance make tangihanga increasingly hard to attend with the attendant potential results of shrinking networks (Nikora, 2007). Yet Ngāwari considered the attendance of her young relatives so important that she paid for them to fly over for her father’s tangi, out of the funds available to her.

Also out of these funds, Ngāwari bought “proper” mourning clothes for her brother. Other than this, her cousins did many of the organisational tasks, for which she was so grateful.

Prepared by the Tūpāpaku
Ngāwari and the family (including those from Australia) she chose to assist in preparing her father, spent several hours at the Funeral Directors, a grief ceremony in itself. They were not able to access her father until late in the afternoon (about 4pm).

Ngāwari made it well known to her children, nieces and nephews and partners, that Dad was theirs at the funeral directors. They took two hours to dress her father.
“We made him really slick; we talked, we laughed and then Mum came over after us to check to see that everything was ok; it was quite funny. And it was just us there. My Dad’s sister was waiting outside and I invited her to come in too. So we knew that that was our time, just our time. And we’d chuck off about - a standing joke in our family was my father’s nose; so there was all that stuff happening and we knew as soon as we landed at the marae that Dad would be the peoples’; and we knew the protocol, we know the process, what occurs and what doesn’t occur”.

They finally arrived (with her father in his casket) at the marae at about eight o’clock, but it was still light due to daylight saving (daylight being a more auspicious and appropriate condition). Ngāwari breathed a huge sigh of relief.

“The minute we were there, waiting to take my father in, that’s where I knew that it was my time. I’d done the right thing by my father. People were here who knew our values, our way of life, the things that we loved, the people we loved, that it was this little place that we could be who we are. And I was bringing my Dad on to this place. And that was the first moment that I consciously thought “I can grieve”. And I wailed and wailed, for a long time. And the whaikōrero, they waited. My father was home.”

“...The best feeling...we brought him home. This was our roots, our land, our whenua, all of these wonderful memories...we were back in our domain. I knew that things would be taken care of. It was beautiful. I hadn’t cried since I first heard the news of Dad’s death, so when we walked him into the marae - there were already a thousand people there – I had a big tangi (cry).”

What Ngāwari described here was the tremendous relief felt by those grounded in their own marae, where they belonged, where they had worked and taken part in many ceremonies. She would not feel alone, she was not fully responsible for the goings on from this point on. Her job was to mourn, to tangi, to lament and grieve, to receive the manuhiri, to stay by her father and those supporting them.

Ngāwari’s father was carried on by “the workers” (also his close kin and childhood friends) of the marae, as is their kawa (protocol). As her parents had separated, Ngāwari took the ceremonial role of walking in front of the casket, with one of her Dad’s sisters. (In spite of this publicly understood “statement”, Ngāwari did involve her mother in many behind the scenes decisions, “because she was married to him for many years!”)

Planning the Service
When they first arrived at the marae, the service hadn’t been planned. The decision was made for the church service to be at the marae. Ngāwari’s father had not been
“a churchy person”. He had been involved to some extent with the local church, had helped out where he could, and knew the people well. However Ngāwari knew that it would appropriate for him and it would be his wish to have his tangi at the marae.

Ngāwari and her brother made an agreement between themselves that no decisions would be made unless consultation had occurred between the two of them. As expected, there were subtle objections or disagreements. Only twice were their decisions questioned, but each time they maintained their strength together. They were key decision-makers more than anyone else involved. However the one other person they invited to influence their decisions was their mother. Although their parents had separated five or six years previously, her parents had been together for over forty years it was a natural thing that they included Ngāwari’s Mother.

Setting up the Marae
The decision making was not at a petty level, but matters:
  “Directly involved with Dad, the tūpāpaku, you know, and him when it came to the catering or setting up of the marae because Dad was greatly involved at his marae”.

Ngāwari’s father was a Trustee, he sat on the pae (the orators’ bench) although not a native speaker; he was still learning.
  “There were pivotal people at the marae like our Auntie, who had a great relationship with Dad so it was natural for her to step in as the caterer. One side of the family didn’t like it; they wanted to do it but I know my father loved her cooking and loved her and that wouldn’t be a problem so, straight away; and it wasn’t even a question raised to be honest”.
  “It was all good. The aunties that came in and set the marae up, and the cousins that came in with them to learn that stuff. Within my family, we do have roles that we do at the marae so people just naturally fell in; they knew what was expected and what to expect”.

Sharing roles to share the grief
Ngāwari’s cousin Rebecca helped them prepare a checklist of things to do and they worked through this. The list was prepared from their mutual experiences and expectations. Rebecca played a pivotal role in diverting requests and decision making on some levels in a way which Ngāwari trusted and was happy with. This included requests to be pallbearers, and sharing of other meaningful tasks (such as
choosing his suit, picking the flowers), so the younger cousins felt they were able to express their grief and respect to her father. Similarly:

“at the marae, sleeping with Dad, sitting next to Dad, doing stuff was a juggling act to make sure everyone got their time and I suppose for me it was important and it comes through this study, I suppose, to help them with their grief, you know. Everyone should be involved, so they can heal.”

This capacity to care about and think of others’ needs even as she was in a tremendous state of grief herself, was the epitome of the accomplished Māori woman – really it is the art of grieving as the primary mourner, the daughter of the deceased, to demonstrate such graciousness to all those around her.

**Following or challenging Tikanga (customary practice)**

In terms of tikanga:

“I just went with it. My Dad was, in one way, about change, and he often said for example at (other people’s) poroporoaki night, “It would be good to open it up to anybody”. But he did say, “when you’ve got (certain kaumātua) there, you know, they’re not going to change, they’re going to be strict. When they go on then maybe we can make a change then.”

Ngāwari didn’t want to challenge the status quo too much. Her energies were diverted but all the other responsibilities and the emotion. She was guided by her father’s previous advice about tikanga: “he was very much a traditionalist in lots of ways”.

**Placement of Tāonga**

“There was one issue before the service and it was about the korowai (traditional feathered cloak) on top of Dad. The korowai were made by Auntie Jean. Now when they put the korowai on Dad the top part where you tie was at the bottom because they put two...then I had another aunty come up who was very knowledgeable about korowai. She told me that it was wrong and that I should turn it around, and I actually didn’t know those intricacies of tikanga or the kawa so I went and just changed it’’.

There was a reaction to Ngāwari’s following that advice. Two of the other aunties made a negative comment but not to the extent that it was an admonition. Ngāwari just explained that this was the instruction she had been given. No-one changed it back, however it was explained to her that that placement was an indication that way, the korowai should be buried with her father. This of course was a matter of deep significance, because korowai are genuine treasures. They are hand woven with great skill, with particular feathers and meaningful patterns incorporated into
them, tend to be of relative age, and far fewer are now being woven Malcolm-Buchanan, Te Awekōtuku, & Nikora, (2010).

The burial of the korowai with her father did not subsequently occur, but it was an issue of concern. Ngāwari was not sure why the Auntyies did not make a bigger issue of the korowai. She thinks that her approach to Aunty Ellen and:

“Explaining to her why it was changed and my ignorance and my apologies. Perhaps they decided to allow a variance out of aroha for the circumstances. The kākahu (also cloak) belonged to the Matai whānau; our extended whānau. They were brought in by an uncle who did not protest about how they were placed”.

Ngāwari went on to explain that the Uncle who brought the cloak was supportive of the way the cloak had been placed. However she remained slightly in doubt (and slight apprehension) because she perceived the laying of the korowai to be an act covered by the laws of tapu, and she would not have touched the cloaks had she not had the responsibility of being the primary mourner. This apprehension would be common for a younger person who had been advised by an elder about making a mistake, because the desire would be to follow advice, show respect and to ensure things were tika (procedurally correct).

When conflicting advice is given by different elders, a younger person is placed in a very difficult position. This was evidenced by the fact that Ngāwari remained concerned at the time of our interview, and wished to convince herself that her choice at the time had been acceptable. This was extremely easy to relate to as I and many others have experienced the mortification of perhaps having “made a mistake”. For Ngāwari there was the issue of women (kuia) perhaps holding greater expertise in the placement and reasons for placement of korowai, yet the Uncle and whānau who owned and lent the korowai to cover her father’s casket, did not see the reason for the concern.

In terms of other traditional items around her father in his coffin, Ngāwari felt quite comfortable organising, arranging the photos and the flowers.

“The photos were moved many times, the photos at the top and I requested one (deceased) Auntie’s photo because she died about a year and a bit ago. I felt quite at home”.
One way in which Ngāwari went against instructions from her Auntie Ellen, was regarding the lights at night. Her father had not liked the lights on:

“He hated the lights on even when my Nanny died. Dad turned the lights off so we could go to sleep and I did that at night”. So she did not have to create ire, Ngāwari turned the lights off when Aunty Ellen had left for the evening.

Adapting to the weather
The days of the tangi were very hot. Due to the heat, the whānau decided to move her father out onto the mahau. The aunties came to her, and asked if she wanted to take Dad out? Ngāwari agreed gratefully, and they organised the move.

The ironic and funny side of what happened was that the heating in the wharenui is from a geothermal source, and is very complicated to turn on and off. The only one who could turn the heaters off in the marae was Ngāwari’s father. But her Dad was lying there.

The Service
For the service (Christian ceremony), cousin Rebecca asked the Minister of the local church, who was well known to Ngāwari’s father and the whānau through various events and tangi. However another Minister was a close friend of her Dad and when he came in it appeared he was a senior, as he took over the whole service in discussion with the other Minister.

“It was a lovely service”. We had a service programme with the songs in it”.

Cousin Rebecca had organised all to do with the songbooks as well. She went to the Māori funeral directors and they had a big database full of all booklets. They picked a lot of different items and songs out of each of the booklets, with the assistance of her uncles.

The Eulogy
“It wasn’t until late after the poroporoaki that the Minister came and said to us, “You fullas got to have some people to get up and do a eulogy”. And I said I would like to; that I’d have to discuss it with my brother to see if he would and he said, “Yes, I will”. But anyway he (suddenly changed his mind before the event) because he was just too emotional, and he couldn’t do it. He’s not a talker”.
Just a couple of minutes before the Eulogy was due, Ngāwari looked over at her brother and he made a non-verbal gesture signifying that he could not do it. So Ngāwari stood up and went and took his hand and he stood by her while she talked about their Dad. With little time to plan, Ngāwari spoke from the heart, and it flowed.

“I chose to talk to that void without him in our lives. Things that popped up...he was a kaimahi (a good worker) - he dived, he fished, he hunted and my fridge...was always full with wild pork, fish or mussels...My family would never starve with my father around...It wasn’t actually the getting of the stuff. It was the joy he...gained from doing it.”

Ngāwari had been studying about tangihanga and this assisted her in speaking with a broader perspective.

“My academic training...came in and I talked to how our tangi, how we do it well, Māori. You know we come here for three days and purge and we get rid of our grief and our mourning and then I translated what it meant for us as a whānau with Dad gone was, whatever issues come up, whatever discussions that needed to be had, I could go to my father and whether he understood half of it or not, I could still go and get it out, get it off my chest...He was always there for me”.

Ngāwari also spoke of the emotional and spiritual support she was experiencing though her Dad’s tangihanga:

“...And I spoke to the whanaungatanga, the sense of unity that was present at his tangi and with our family... It was my father that was actually the glue because he was the peacemaker. He was still...Te Arawa and arrogant in a lot of ways, but... also...the peacemaker; a peoples’ person. The catharsis, the whānaungatanga, the unity, all this stuff comes up in my research; so it was stuff that I could pull from so those are mine there so I could pull from them immediately with my eulogy. How much we loved him and how much we’re just going to miss him so much. He was a very significant person I’ve lost in my life”.

Some cousins subtly criticised Ngāwari’s kōrero, saying she sounded like a lecturer. Others present commented that:

“It was lovely that it was off-the-cuff; that I wasn’t reading it from a piece of paper; that it wasn’t practised, pre-prepared; that I spoke from the heart. It was lovely; even from the kaumātua, from my uncles, and these uncles they don’t give out many, or say nice things, or pat you on the back when you’re a woman. So that was nice. I had a cousin and one aunty and another lady that I didn’t really know said that they were so proud and so surprised; well one said proud and the other two said surprised and astonished that I spoke on the ātea”.
Here the compliments “surprised and astonished” may well have been a veiled expression of disapproval or perhaps envy. This is discussed below:

*Unwittingly Varying Tikanga (A Gender Issue)*

Ngāwari had spoken under the awnings on the verandah of the wharenui. But she speculated that the veiled criticism (or perhaps admiration?) had been due to the fact that:

“He Arawa are so staunch that our women don’t get up and speak and it wasn’t something that really entered my mind. For me it wasn’t about tikanga. I didn’t even think about it. It was about speaking to my father so that never (occurred to me). I never actually thought of that tikanga side and I suppose, I don’t know what the process is for (the minister) but there was a question mark between my name and my brother’s name speaking so there was always that possibility of me speaking. So whether he conversed with the paepae or not, I’m not sure...I’ve seen it being done where someone has stepped out of line and it doesn’t matter where they are, they shut them down, you know, told them to “close your mouth; sit down!”.

Subsequent advice was that as Ngāwari’s eulogy occurred in the framework of a church service, which was not governed by marae protocol and customary practice, it had been safe in terms of kawa (protocol), to do so.

In considering what she would have done if she had had more time to prepare the people and herself, Ngāwari said she would not have done differently.

“No because even the day before there was that possibility that it would be me, so no; never entered my mind. All that was of concern to me was making my father proud; speaking to him and about him”.

Ngāwari said she did not feel apprehensive in any way for acting in a manner which a few suggested was against tikanga.

“I don’t feel like I’ve transgressed...I feel all good and I think perhaps part of that would have been the fact that when I got up I went and grabbed my brother and pulled him over with me and we held hands as I talked. For me in my own mind, that comes from myself, was the fact that I had him. He was standing there with me so in my own mind, I wasn’t standing up there as a– keeping in mind of the tikanga, subconsciously, I don’t know, but perhaps it was OK because there was a man next to me”.

A whāngai of their whānau suggested that Ngāwari should have a script so they could put it down in the local paper. She said she felt very honoured to have been able to do that.
Ngāwari was most acknowledging of her cousin Rebecca who assisted her by arranging many things in consultation with her brother and herself. “Just having her there as the support person, having her there to do that sort of thing was just huge.” Also the idea of a list and other booklets to use as examples and for ideas was very helpful.

*Opportunities not taken at the Tangi*

Because of the stress and grief, whānau pani often become distracted from ways in which they could further honour their loved one. Also, there may be many other mourners from many walks of life and times from her father’s life, who had stories about her father which would have enriched the experience and rounded the perception those at the tangihanga had of Ngāwari’s father. She said in retrospect:

“I wish now that I had spoken to the Kaumātua about opening up that poroporoaki because there were so many people there that could’ve shared some wonderful stories about my father, wonderful. Pākehā, young, old women, workmates, mokopuna.. It wasn’t because I was afraid to that I didn’t want to; I had so many things going on in my head.”

*Expressing one’s wishes about wanting a variation from tikanga*

Ngāwari said in retrospect that she was sorry she didn’t challenge the rules:

“It’s not till after the fact that you think. But voice your opinion, voice what you would like. Don’t just take it for granted that it’s going to stay (unchangeable), because my Dad’s tangi is a great example that things change with me being up there and speaking so you know there is that room. I don’t know how they (Kaumātua, the “pae”) decide on how flexible they’re going to be, I’m not sure”.

One interesting feeling for Ngāwari was that although her duty as recently bereaved was to attend the next tangihanga which occurred, she felt avoidant. She didn’t want to re-experience the feelings of pain and loss. However Ngāwari experienced her father in spirit telling her “Come on bub, you’ve got to go” – so she went.

Ngāwari’s grief during and following her Dad’s Tangi was unbearably intense. She withdrew socially and could not cope with anything but mundane tasks. People were worried about her and rang her but she ignored the phone. “I didn’t choose to communicate – it wasn’t about them”.

As time went by she was more able to function and to increase her contact with the world again. “From November through to January my grief was huge.” She then
had to compartmentalise her grief in order to complete her Masters thesis. After handing the thesis in, she was more tearful than ever, having had to repress her emotions while finishing her work. However when she had handed in her thesis, her grief “exploded”. She cried endlessly. This deep grief continued for another three months, which means it was about nine months after Ngāwari’s father died.

Relationship Issues in the Whānau: Tribal and Interpersonal Loyalties
Ngāwari spoke at length about inter-tribal and interpersonal loyalties, and conversely, issues of conflict which affected her deeply in terms of her own feelings and behaviour, particularly when it came to her own family. Ngāwari wanted to speak with her mother about her grief, but because of her parents’ separation, she was unable to do so. This affected her ability to grieve freely. Loyalty to both parties created a double bind, or no-win situation, and the tension created a lot of anxiety for her.

Ngāwari expressed a lot of regrets about the way she handled the whole situation. She could not at the time separate her anger at the whole situation between the parties, and the death of her father resulted in a compounded grief in which she experienced a lot of guilt and regrets.

Hura kōhatu (The Unveiling)
Preparing for the unveiling was healing:

“It was beautiful: Mum and I and my brother; I did the headstone and all that sort of stuff, you know, organised all that through the funeral directors. It was good...I sobbed and sobbed and sobbed, but it was a good sobbing you know. One, because I miss my father, that year after his passing was...it was so hard and so sad, I always felt the sadness. I loved him, he was my father, but the sadness did not seem to be as predominant, as overwhelming, as it was in that first year, quite overwhelming – it was the first thing I’d think about when I woke up and the last thing I’d think about before I went to sleep. The sadness that he’s not with us physically...and now it’s not like that. I can wake up and it’s not the first thought.”

Throughout the first year Ngāwari would speak to her father – she’d tell him, “Come on, I’m waiting for you to come home” (for me, so I could see him). Then she fantasizes that she’d get a call from him to say, “oh yeah I’m back home...Though I knew (that it wouldn’t happen), because I buried Dad”.

“For me, my mother was “the machine”. My mother and my brother and I did the unveiling, but she was the centre of it and we’d just take our cue off
our mum. She does that very well and she does it for her children. The loss of our father has been hugely profound.”

One issue which complicated Ngāwari’s grief and healing, was the ongoing negative feelings expressed by her mother about her Dad. Her mother was in a totally different “space” about her ex-husband, and this negative perception held by her mother impinged upon the state of pure grief she and her other loved ones felt. Ngāwari felt this was inappropriate and insensitive to the situation.

A similar feature of the exacerbation of her grief was documented by Farnsworth and Allen (1996) and Riches and Dawson (1998), with the latter noting that broken relationships frequently prevented bereaved people from sharing grief with others who had been close to the deceased, albeit in those studies the bereaved were the separated parents of a deceased child. On reflection, she feels that “in an ideal world, a daughter should be able to speak to her mother about grief for her father”, but in this instance, she had to struggle to accept that this was not the case due to historical events.

Moving Forward
Since the death of her father, Ngāwari has made some major life decisions. One of them was to share a home with her mother on their family land (where Ngāwari had already been living). The ramifications of this decision involved compromise and a financial consideration regarding additions and alterations she will need to make to the home so it is a major commitment. Ngāwari was both excited about this development but also aware of the responsibility of being supportive of her remaining parent. Her mother had health considerations for which she sometimes needed assistance. This was a common decision recently deceased children make – having lost a parent brings to our consciousness that our parents are not immortal, and we don’t want to have regrets with the remaining parent that we have.

Ngāwari agreed after some negation that she was acting in accordance with her learned cultural values – she denied feeling responsible on a conscious level “it’s what we do, it’s how I was brought up”. Any other possibilities were to Ngāwari, unthinkable at her mother’s stage of life.
Ngāwari was also happy about the progression of her relationship with her brother Jimmy since the loss of their Dad. She felt her brother had “stepped up” to shared responsibilities, and was happy with the new peace in their relationship. She went to stay with her brother in the house where their Dad died (it was his home). This was the first time she had stayed there since his death, and “it was really good, we sat down, we didn’t overly talk (in depth) we were just sharing that space and it was Dad’s space.”

The relationship between her brother and her mother was different. He “tells it as it is”, and she (her mother) accepted his truths differently (because he is a male). The same discussion would have a very different outcome between mother and daughter.

At this stage, Ngāwari stated that she doubted her own mental health. When countered with an offered observation that she appears to have coped extremely well and made huge transformations and decisions in her life, Ngāwari wondered if the tremendous grief was still there and she was just operating “over the top” of the grief.

“You know what? The loss of my father, and he has been the one constant person in my life, the only constant person in my life, I remember as a child.” Ngāwari confirms that her mother was “there, but emotionally...”

Ngāwari felt more emotionally compatible with her father, more comforted and understood. At this point Ngāwari referred to her father’s latter years of depression. Ngāwari began weeping with the fear that her father died alone in a state of loneliness and despair:

“I hope he didn’t feel that way when he died! That he was alone you know, oh I hope he didn’t feel that way...I hope he didn’t think that nobody loved him”.

This and ongoing statements demonstrated the fact that Ngāwari felt responsible for her father’s emotions and well being. If he felt pain, she felt pain. This is quite a theme for Māori women, that they carry the responsibility for all their loved one’s health, safety, emotional well being.

Ngāwari also expressed guilt that she had “spent more time with Mum”, after her parents’ separation. This anxiety regarding her Dad’s feelings resulted in a
conversation about beliefs regarding the death experience. Ngāwari believes that the loved ones who have already passed into spirit come to greet, reunite, look after and guide the person who has just died. This reminder is calming and reassuring to her.

Grief As a Catalyst for Change
Ngāwari had been with her partner for seventeen years. They had a child together, Kauri, who was ten at the time of interview. Ngāwari also has another son, Kawakawa, who is twenty two and lives in Auckland. Following the death of her father, Ngāwari became contemplative of the transient nature of life, mortality issues, and the importance of living a happy life. She had an open discussion with her partner, and they decided to separate.

Beliefs about an Afterlife
“I don’t know whether Dad’s influence on me has been a growing up thing, the values and principles of his life, that I was raised with”. “He continues to have an influence on my life- but the immediate, with Dad being in the spirit world. Where is he? He’s here! But he’s in spirit. He’s not gone. I have visits from my Dad, I can close my eyes, and it’s like my father is standing right there in front of me. I can see every wrinkle and his big smile. And it’s so clear”.

Reflections on the Changing Experiences of Grief
Apart from first hearing about her father’s death, when she “completely “lost it”, but had to control herself because she could see her son was becoming very distressed, Ngāwari did not feel she had the time or the permission to grieve until they were standing at the gate of the marae.

Ngāwari believes that the tangihanga process was in itself, a great contributor to the healing process she was to go through.

“It was tangible, I knew. I knew, not from what anyone had told me but just what was right in me – this is our, this is our...place. This is where we can do what we do. And all these people here are here too. Intense grief.”

Another factor Ngāwari raised was the helpfulness of sharing grief with a woman friend from university. This friend had lost her mother within a similar period and they were able to talk to each other from their unique perspectives and processes.

“I felt isolated...I could be in conversation with close people about my Dad, and I would feel comforted – not for hours, I’d just do a little narrative...”
Ngāwari feels her father is very close to her at all times. When she closes her eyes at night she can see him and then she goes straight to sleep, comforted.

**Factors Exacerbating Ngāwari’s Pain in Grief**

Ngāwari’s father’s death was unexpected. She had to deal with that shock and trauma as well as the normal grief and loss.

As with most complex relationships Ngāwari’s whānau had a history of raruraru (problems/conflict) with each other. She was apprehensive about how this would affect the tangi but she was determined to stop anything unpleasant from happening.

What caused Ngāwari further traumatisation in coping with the death of her father was Medico-legal conflict, in that the Coroner would not release her father immediately. This brought about the pain of Ngāwari being unable to carry out one of the most basic cultural traditions, of being able to accompany and care for her father’s body.

**What did the Tangihanga contribute to Ngāwari’s Grief Resolution?**

While dressing her father with her family they were able to have a little bit of a laugh about his ideosyncrasies – laughing with him, not at him. This brought some levity to the deep grief. While dressing him they told each other stories, about and to the deceased, of their feelings and memories.

Ngāwari had a relative (a senior public servant) who was very knowledgable and offered to do a lot of the organisation (with consultation) of the tangihanga. The trust she had in this cousin allowed Ngāwari to concentrate on what was emotionally important rather than procedurally important.

The tangi brought Ngāwari closer to her brother, achieving some resolution, and forgiveness amongst themselves, which allowed them to work together in the face of the expected conflict.

The tangi reminded Ngāwari how lucky she was to know her whakapapa and relationships in Te Ao Māori, which gave her the ability to have a say, have a lot of control over the way things happened, and to understand what was happening, even though she did not speak the Reo. And she felt supported.
Ngāwari was able to realise throughout the tangihanga how much her father was loved – aroha and respect were shown to the deceased, both in attendance and expression. The tangi enlightened Ngāwari in terms of decision-making, resolution of an inner conflict (about her relationship).

Ngāwari was able to honour her father by speaking his Eulogy for her brother when he lost his nerve, and she really expressed herself well. She felt very happy representing him in such an honourable way. She felt he had a “good tangi”. Ngāwari knew that she had honoured her father in every way possible at the tangi. She had ensured all the offspring and relatives who loved him were able to attend. Finally, Ngāwari experienced the ongoing felt presence of her father, which brought her a lot of comfort.

Ngāwari stated that the tangihanga process was in itself, a great contributor to the healing process she went through. She had the feeling and belief in the complete appropriateness and “rightness” of the tangi at her family’s marae, with all their whanaunga around them. She felt able to grieve freely and that she was honouring her father in the way that he deserved. Ngāwari conveyed a sense of great satisfaction at the way her role and the roles of others, honoured her father’s memory, and thus the tangihanga was a very successful healing event, at one point of many in stages of “closure” in her grief.

**Reflexive considerations about this interview and Case Study:**

I had not really known Ngāwari well, but she was suggested by supervisors. Her father had just died and I had attended the tangihanga as part of the university group.

One example of a difficult moment for me in interviewing Ngāwari was when she talked about her after-school routine. She came home, no-one else there, both parents working. She did chores towards making dinner. I uttered an almost involuntary aroha “Ohhh”. She said “oh yes we were a working class family”. Analysing my behaviour immediately as a seemingly negative “prompt”. Afterwards I knew there were several levels of why I felt aroha towards Ngāwari for this but I knew my aroha sounded misplaced and even judgemental without explanation. I knew also that the levels and reasons for my aroha would have me stuttering and intruding on the flow of the korero so I didn’t try to explain.
My own girlhood reality was that my own upbringing would be called “middle class” in New Zealand. Common claims are that we do not have an “upper class” here. I would also often come home to an empty house and work through a list – “peel spuds, boil eggs, wash lettuce make salad. Bring in washing and fold” etc. And I sometimes used to feel annoyed because I was the eldest so these responsibilities fell on me, although my mother wasn’t working – she was just “out”.

Also I had heard sad stories from my mother about when she was a girl. Her father (my grandpa) was overseas with the Māori Battalion during WWII. My grandmother was working to support the family and my mother used to come home to an empty house which made her feel sad. Her older brother was supposed to be there looking after her, but he was either out, or used to terrorise her by jumping out from behind doors and yelling. My mother had tears in her eyes when she told me that. So on each of those levels I had an aroha response to Ngāwari’s story. It was not about the socio-economic situation as such, but the loneliness and responsibility aspect of being a “latch-key kid” as they say.

Later in the interview, about the Tangi process: Possibly because I had attended Ngāwari’s father’s tangi, but also because she was still in the early stages of her grief and so expressive, I felt a lot of empathy and compassion for her during our korero. There was a great deal of visualised detail in Ngāwari’s korero, no doubt because the passing of her father, and the entire event was still fresh in her mind. Ngāwari conveyed a sense of great satisfaction at the way her role and the roles of others, honoured her father’s memory, and thus the tangihanga seemed to be a very successful healing event.

When Ngāwari expressed doubt towards the end of her story, about the reality of her healing, and whether she had indeed supported her father in life and afterward, I was surprised, because she had been so convincing in her confidence. I felt an urge to reassure her with the many positive things she had told me. This could be seen as over-stepping my role as the researcher, although what I was doing was re-iterating what she had told me. However this did give me pause to consider the appropriateness of my reassurance. Was it natural, culturally prompted, or was it
the psychologist in me making an appearance? After consideration I decided that I would have been better to ask her why she doubted herself.
CHAPTER FOURTEEN: TONI

In this chapter, Toni reminisces about her much loved middle son, and his unexpected death one night when she believed him safe. She talks about her shock and trauma, and some of the difficulties of allowing his tangihanga to take place in his father’s tribal area, which was different from her own.

Like Ngāwari, Toni has two names, a Māori name and a Pākehā one. As described in Ngāwari’s case study, this was a phenomenon which has occurred over the years in the recent era of uncomfortable shifting in relationships in the predominantly Pākehā world. It was not uncommon for Māori growing up since the forties and fifties, where it was easier to use a Pākehā name in Pākehā situations, as one’s Māori name was highly likely to be mispelled and mis-pronounced. Toni’s real, Māori name was her deceased mother’s name so it was very special to her, and everyone who had known and loved her mother. In this thesis, she will be referred to as Toni (her Pākehā pseudonym).

Background

Whānau upbringing, Cultural values, and Cultural identification
Toni was born in 1957 in Hamilton. Her mother had been the eldest daughter born to her grandparents. She carries the surname of her father, and although she was not raised by him, she knows now is of Ngāti Tamati Rā and Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga descent. When her mother become pregnant as a young woman, Toni’s parents were dissuaded from staying together because of their ages. Therefore Toni did not know much about her paternal whakapapa until she was an adult. Her mother, Rima, was Tainui, Waikato, and that has been the whakapapa she knows and relates to.

Unfortunately when Toni was two years old, her mother died in a car accident. She was therefore raised by her grandmother, as a much loved little sister of her four aunts and five uncles, whom she refers to primarily as her brothers and sisters. This was a very common practice, for a child who had lost her mother to be automatically included into the whānau and cherished.

“my Mum’s brothers and sisters, their Dad died, and then my grandmother married his brother, three years later...so I was born from one brother, and they were born from the other. So all my life I was brought up with my
grandfather’s brothers kids. A huge family. And they were my Mum’s brothers and sisters”.

Toni’s predominant whakapapa was Waikato Tainui. She has a diverse whakapapa within Tainui waka, just from her mother’s side. (In later years she has also included her Tamatērā and Raukawa links from her father’s side).

When old enough to be called upon to identify her whakapapa, it was a bit confusing. She told her mother she was unclear about the whakapapa she should most identify with and didn’t like the answer she was given – that she was Ngāti Mahuta and Ngāti Hikairo and...

“but I said to her I don’t want to be everybody I just want to be a exclusive” and she laughed, and she said “well you’re not!” Toni said “well what am I going to say? I can’t be connected to everybody!”

Emotionally Toni said though that she has had a strong sense of belonging to Ngāti Hikairo (Kāwhia), because that is where she has many memories from her childhood and to which she knows her whakapapa well.

Toni grew up feeling loved:

“My grandmother would say to me “I feel guilty I feel bad...” and I said to her why Mum?” She said “I love you more than all the rest of my moko’s” – well I was the oldest moko, my Mum had died, what do you expect. My mum was the eldest girl. It affected all of them.”

Toni also grew up surrounded by cousins and whānau in an urban area, and she always felt very grounded and safe in terms of knowing who she was there, and that she was part of a large interconnected group.

Toni’s links had also been reinforced through physical links to the land, knowledge of genealogy, living close to extended family, the importance of her most connected marae (tribal meeting complex) and experiences of the Māori language. These characteristics were found to be important markers of a secure identity for Māori women which were most significant to the women in Huia Tomlins Jahnke’s (2002) study.

**Learning Te Reo**

The whole whānau spoke Te Reo at home when Toni was growing up. So te reo was her first language. On moving out into the world though, she said “we were
getting all colonised!” by the pressures of the surrounding world. The karakia she was taught were Christian, either in English or Te Reo RaNgātira.

Tikanga and Religion
Toni could not really remember “being taught” tikanga and roles in an active sense. Her situation was that of accompanying her family and being guided by her grandmother. In situations where she needed advice, Toni would always go first to her Mum/Nana. From a young age Toni went with her Mum (Nana) to Poukai at Tūrangawaewae.

“There was a big huge tent, we’d go and listen to all the speeches, and we’d go in and my Nana would give me some money and I would put my koha into a bowl... my koha – flash! (laughs). And go in and have a kai”.

As she grew older, Toni and her cousins and friends would volunteer first to help in the kitchen at Tūrangawaewae, then later to waitress. “You know, you’re only young, twelve...” They used to take their own aprons to increase their chances of being allowed to work. They thought it was “great fun – go and get the dishes, have a look around”.

As Jacob’s (2011) participants spoke of the expectations and responsibilities they felt as children, Toni also experienced this sense. At tangi, continual groups of visitors must be served food, which needs to be prepared, cooked and served, tables to be laid and dishes to be cleared and washed, a multitude of tasks. Children are encouraged to engage in whatever tasks they are able to manage (Jacob et al., 2011), thus learning the true meaning of manaakitanga.

Within Māori society, learning to work out the back is part of the process of apprenticeship and an important part of manaakitanga (reciprocal caring), which over a life-time will see one’s role change and move from the back to the front of the marae (Jahnke, 2002). These roles are complementary, and each is just as important as the other.

Toni’s whānau was based both in Māoritanga, most specifically the Kingitanga, and Toni was very familiar and comfortable with the many events associated with the Kingitanga – Poukai, celebratory events and tangihanga.
Alongside tikanga Māori, Toni’s upbringing was based on the lifestyle of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, (LDS). (This faith had been founded by Joseph Smith (Jr) in 1830, and was very successful in gaining Māori converts from the 1880's on. By 1901 there were nearly 4,000 Māori members in 79 branches of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.) What shaped Toni’s way of being in the world is that she lived in the realm of a major centre of worship for LDS, an affiliated social settlement and school were located in the outskirts of Hamilton, where Toni was raised.

School life
Toni attended Church College at Temple View, a religious (LDS) based school life, and her upbringing was as described above, a combination of tikanga Māori and the Mormon faith. Toni later, while involved in two long-term relationships, having children and running a family, followed several educational opportunities over the years and did as well as she could, but was in a social milieu which was not as supportive of her goals. In spite of this, Toni continued studying extramurally when she could, and attended wānanga related to her course of studies.

Learning to Karanga
Toni said she had never attended wānanga when she was younger, related to women’s roles. She said that she had not been taught to karanga. However she had attended many tangi in her life, and could speak and understand Te Reo. She said

“when I was about thirty, one of our mates died. And my grandmother said she was going to come to the tangi. So I said ‘come on then!’ (with a bit of an attitude). She came to the tangi and did the karanga, even though there was another grandmother there, and it was so moving, everybody just cried and cried and cried. And that’s what it’s supposed to do. One minute there was nothing and the next minute my nan was the queen of the karanga and everyone was coming over there for lessons!”

Toni’s Mum didn’t talk about the words as much as the outpouring of aroha and emotions, and where the karanga “comes from” within the caller. Toni said:

“I learned what it was all about from that one thing”.

Years later Toni was practicing the karanga with a friend. Then she did attend a three day wānanga about karanga.
Since losing her grandmother when Toni was an adult, she did not often feel the need for tikanga advice. However she is able to consult with a whānaunga she believes to be knowledgeable:

“I will go down Ngaruawahia and ask my cousin ‘cause she’s a know all! (Laughing) At least I think she is.”

After growing up in a very protective situation and attending a religious school, Toni socially met the father of her first child, Bono. Much later she became involved with her long term partner, Jimmy, and his lifestyle, which was a gang lifestyle (with its own “tikanga” and rules). She incorporated each of her belief systems in her lifestyle as much as they did not necessarily blend well. With Jimmy she had three children, including her only daughter who was a whāngai, taken at an early age to be raised by Jimmy’s parents, against her wishes.

Whāngai is a cultural institution for Māori (McRae & Nikora, 2006) which is similar to the western notion of adoption, without the legal contract or the concealment of the biological parents, in case quite to the contrary. Earlier in this thesis we noted that Hana was also a whāngai to her grandmother, and saw her parents monthly. Whāngai can be arranged for a number of reasons. The continuation of whakapapa or the maintenance of ahi kaa is critical criteria for understanding this institution. Children are often considered as whāngai for childless couples (Metge, 1976). Families who relocate may leave a child as whāngai for a relative to foster in the homeplace to retain ahi-kaa connections (Tomlins Jahnke, 2002), or mokopuna may be given to grandparents to be reared with the benefit of cultural knowledge, and also to keep company for the grandparents, who may otherwise become lonely and still have a lot to give.

However the whāngai situation which occurred with Toni’s only daughter being taken by her partner’s parents, was that she was only letting her daughter stay with her paternal grandparents for a holiday, then they refused to give her back. This caused Toni deep heartache for years. By the time of the interviews, however, Toni had worked towards a loving relationship with her daughter, and was the grandmother of four mokopuna. Toni and Jimmy had been separated and reunited several times, moving to different regions and finally settling, although not living
together, in the lower North Island (Jimmy’s tribal area, to which Toni was also connected by whakapapa but had not had much to do with).

**Learning about Tangihanga**

Toni attended many tangihanga as a child with her Mum (nanny). When she was about sixteen she began attending tangi with friends and felt completely comfortable with tikanga and her own place within ceremonies.

Toni can remember being a child at King Koroki’s tangi. Her mother was “running the shop” (traditionally a Ngāti Hikairo, Kāwhia role), at the event and at one stage held Toni up for an advantageous view of the Tangi, which of course was extremely crowded.

**A Specific Tangihanga: Son Jimmyboy**

As frequently occurs, Toni examined retrospectively in detail the events surrounding her son’s death. Jimmyboy was with his partner (mother of his 2 children), but he still frequently used to come home and spend time with the family, or sleep the night, partly because he had quite a tempestuous relationship, and also because he loved his Mum and liked being at home. At one stage he had met another woman and discussed leaving his relationship to be with the other woman. Toni had told him “you can’t! – Because of the kids” (her mokopuna).

The children had been prevented from staying with their grandmother (Toni) for about five years with visitation through Government child protective services because of Jimmy Boy’s behaviour, and this control had just been resolved recently. This controlled contact with her mokopuna was very traumatic for Toni. In retrospect Toni thought that she may have made her son “feel trapped” by strongly encouraging him to stay in the relationship. She feels that Jimboy was trying to please everybody and perhaps he felt low because he was pressured. Guilt is a common emotion for parents who have lost a child without warning, particularly when suicidal ideation or action may have been a factor (which in the end was probably not the case).

For some time research has indicated that the death of a child is one of the most tragic events that can befall a family. The death of a child is usually seen as
traumatic and tragic because a child is the last person in the family expected to die and thus it seems inappropriate, unnatural and unacceptable. Further the death of a child represents the loss of future dreams, relationships and experiences yet to be enjoyed and can affect families for the rest of their lives with a tenacity that is difficult to comprehend. (Biggs, 2002; Knapp, 1987; Nixon & Pearn, 1997; Sheldon, 1998; Clark & McCleanor, 2006).

**Matakite**
A couple of days before he died, Jimmy Boy had come to her with all his money - $2,000.00 dollars in a roll. A couple of times since, he had come to his mother for a loan of $20.00. Each time she tried to give it to him out of that money.

Toni feels that her son had had a premonition about being about to die. She acknowledged that she believed her son had the gift of matakite, in a quiet way, because he had told her of dreams in the past. In the Māori world, seers (matakite) are known for their ability to connect the everyday and ordinary with the sacred or other worldly. In the Māori world, matakite are held in awe for their capacity to connect the everyday and ordinary with the sacred or other worldly. (Makareti, 1986; Groot, 2010), Jimmyboy’s matakite ability was that of a young man, and it was personal, only known to those close to him (he did not advise others, as some do).

Jimmyboy had been an asthmatic since childhood but was self-managing as an adult. This particular night he was going to sleep the night at his Mum’s. He still had a friend with him. Toni told them she was going to bed, and “goodnight”. Jimmy boy told her he was going to drive his friend home, then be back. Toni went to sleep. Some hours later, she was up and getting ready to go to the tangi of a friend, about whom she had been previously notified. She was feeling restless. She put on her tangi clothes then took them off again for some unexplained reason, perhaps her own intuition that the day would not go as planned. She had assumed that Jimmy Boy had returned and gone to bed while she was asleep, but found he was not there.
Finding out about her son’s death – Shock

Then Toni heard a young man screaming and yelling at the top of his voice. It sounded there was something wrong with Jimmy Boy. Toni was in her long johns, in the house. She put her head out the window and could see the Police and somebody else. She went down and there were two police and one of Jimmy Boy’s mates there:

“he was hysterical. He was only a young boy, Jimmy Boy’s mate.” Toni “just couldn’t think what could be wrong with Jimmy Boy”

The boy, Rob Dog, had been with Jimmy Boy when it happened and he was ‘stressing out’ because he had to bring the message. He was with the police but he didn’t want the police to bring the message, he wanted to get it out personally, before they could speak.

“He had been warning me by yelling all the way down the driveway before they could get to the door. I thought: ‘what’s wrong with Rob Dog?’ I gasped and froze. I went all black and thought ‘no it can’t be!’”

She thought she must be hearing wrong so she approached closer. They explained that Jimmy Boy had had an asthma attack and they called the ambulance. But there had only been one ambulance attendant and he had to drive so no-one could give Jimmy Boy treatment in the ambulance. His friend was with him in the back but did not know what to do to help. Jimmy Boy had passed away in the ambulance.

Relevant to Toni’s son’s death, in Aotearoa hospitalisation data were used as a measure of asthma severity and found that Māori experience higher hospitalisation admission rates and higher rates of asthma morbidity (Garrett, Mulder, and Wong-Toi, 1989; Pattemore, Asher, Harrison & 1989; Shaw, Woodman & Crane, 1994).

Toni believed that Jimmy Boy had in some way gone to his friend’s place because he knew she would stop him from getting so sick. This raised the question then whether Toni thought that in some way Jimmy Boy wanted to die? She said it was not that he was suicidal but maybe he had a premonition, because why would he have given her his money? She thought that maybe he was tired from years of fighting his asthma, fighting for breath.
Toni said the police stood there telling her the details in a very expressionless way which she experienced as emotionally “cold”. This she found very painful, even now. Statutory authorities such as the police can seriously impact on the grief of Māori whānau, by the way they behave towards the bereaved (McCreanor, Tipene-Leach & Abel, 2004). What the police may believe is professionalism, may be perceived by the whānau pani as uncaring or lacking empathy. The people who impart information about the death of a loved one are important figures in an extreme trauma for the bereaved. This dynamic can be much worse for people such as Toni who had experienced many negative interactions with the police, usually in terms of their roles as crime-preventers or detectors, and her ex-partner and her sons being deemed to be offenders and particularly Māori offenders.

Upon collecting her thoughts, Toni realised that no one as yet had told Jimmy, her son’s father who lived at Ohau (on the Kapiti coast). When she rang him and told him that their son had died, he didn’t say anything, she could just hear him “gasp as if all the air had been sucked out of him”.

They then went to a relative’s house. A lot of friends had descended upon the house, then her Ataarangi (Māori language) class all came, everyone was crying, including Jimmyboy’s friends who were young men. Some people started cooking and Toni could only sit in a state of shock. This did help Toni because she knew they all loved her boy. Thus although she did not have her own whānau there, she had created a whānau or close family-like connections with another supportive group, her Ataarangi class. They came and took the role of supporting Toni in her time of need.

Toni went in to a state of avoidance. After the extreme shock and trauma about hearing her boy was deceased, she didn’t want to see him at the morgue (at Palmerston North Hospital). She stayed in a state of shock and avoidance all day. Everyone was saying “when are you going to go to the hospital, when are you going to see Jimmy Boy?” Finally she agreed. Her cousin was there taking care of everything. They went to the hospital.
Seeing her Deceased Son for the First Time

When they arrived at the hospital, Jimmy Boy was on “a slab”. However the hospital staff had “swaddled him like a baby”, with a sheet or rug. This gave her some comfort, that someone had carried out a caring act. That’s exactly how Toni felt about him, that he was her baby again. Then they had to wait all day for the coroner to arrive. He came late in the afternoon. Then the coroner let them take Jimmy Boy to the funeral home in Palmerston North. They remained at the funeral parlour waiting for them to prepare her son.

At this time, Jimmy’s aunt turned up. She asked – “what are you going to do dear?” Here there may have been an unstated assumption about Toni’s understanding and knowledge of tikanga. The status of women who have through social circumstances and love, become involved in gang culture, are sometimes assumed to be ignorant of their own Māori culture. However this was certainly not the case with Toni, as can be noted in the description of her upbringing.

Before the aunt arrived, Jimmy Snr who was caretaker of his marae, Tūkōrehe in Ohau, had instructed Toni to bring their son straight to the marae, which he was preparing for them. However the aunt said that she couldn’t. Toni said she had felt that there was going to be some difficulty and that things had been going too smoothly because Jimmy’s whanaunga had never let her forget that she was not from there (even though her whakapapa to Otaki was strong).

Toni had been to a couple of tangi at the marae of Tūkōrehe previously as it was her ex-partner Jimmy’s marae. But she had not consciously thought about how the tikanga would be different from the whānau pani’s perspective. Jimmy’s Aunt said “well how do they do things in Waikato? You do things how they do it in Kawhia and Waikato”.

At this stage Jimmy Boy became ready for release to his family. Jimmy (Senior) was waiting at the Marae for Toni to take him, and Jimmay’s Auntie was saying she couldn’t take him Toni felt a bit confused. Toni felt like it wasn’t so much tikanga, more that the Auntie just wanted to wield a bit of power.

However not to cause offence, this caused Toni to race home and make up mattresses for Jimmy Boy to lie at home first. She felt angry about it though
because she and Jimmy had already agreed how the situation should be organised.

Jimmy rang and asked how things were going. Toni told him that Jimmy Boy was ready and that his Aunt had given her other instructions, and she was unsure what to do. Jimmy instructed her to stay where she was. He packed his truck up and drove straight to the hospital. When the relatives saw him they stepped back and they picked up Jimmy Boy and took him straight to the Marae.

**Location of the Tangi**

Toni had privately thought that because she was not from that Marae or rohe that if she wanted to, she could take Jimmy Boy back to Waikato where she would be fully supported and not encounter any difficulties. However she made the decision out of aroha, that she would leave Jimmy Boy with his father because he would be lonely if and when she left. She didn’t want to take his son away from Jimmy. She had made the decision to take everyone else home to Waikato. That was her way of continuing to care for Jimmy’s feelings even though she would not be with him, a rather typical generosity of spirit frequently witnessed in Māori women for whom caring about others above themselves is an encouraged cultural attribute. She also felt that Jimmy Boy would want to stay there with his Dad. Toni said:

“it was all right, it wasn’t a big deal...but I could have taken him back home and Jimmy knew that. He came to me and said thank you for not taking my boy home (to Waikato)”.

Toni knew it was the right decision for everybody.

A huge ope (representative group) came from Waikato to Jimmy Boy’s tangi. Toni found this tremendously comforting, especially in the context of “being an outsider” in Otaki. She said her cousins were worse than she was in terms of grief. She said everyone was shocked because Jimmy Boy’s mauri (life force) was so vibrant – he was full of life and his eyes always shone. So many people came she could not help enjoying the evident demonstration of her own people showing such aroha for her whānau and her son.

Although greatly comforted by her own relatives and friends, Toni had felt alone, being outside her rohe (her own tribal area). “But as long as my boys were embraced by them (being Jimmy’s boys)”, she could tolerate the situation. Jimmy’s relatives had not honoured or acknowledged her own close whakapapa to them, but she said:
“I could handle it, I knew who I was and where I came from so it was ok. I know how it goes and I’ve got truckloads of family!”

Thus Toni’s strong felt sense of her own identity, her own home-place, her own whakapapa, and her plethora of whānau, gave her the generosity of spirit which allowed her to forgo taking her son back to her own area of Waikato. He was in his father’s urupā, surrounded by his paternal tūpuna. His father was the caretaker of the marae and the urupā, so Jimmy Boy would never be alone.

Toni recalled and named all of her friends and whānaunga as visually as if the tangi had been yesterday. Each person felt like a blessing. The whole marae was full. Her waikato whānau were housed in the kohanga, which was very comfortable.

But on the last night all of the children asked if they could sleep by Jimmy Boy. So room was made for all of them. Toni was thrilled that they loved their cousin so much, and knew that the young ones would normally be too shy to ask.

Thinking about her memories when beside her son in the wharenui, Toni strongly recalled wanting to maintain the “dignified” way she believed she should in grief, while at the same time being acutely aware that her moko were behaving in a disruptive way. She wanted to growl them and calm them down but they were out of her reach. When a break came in the formal part of the ceremonies, it is now a point of humour that she had a chance to hiss and frown and wave her finger around! She sent one of the moko out to his grandfather Jimmy because he was misbehaving, and

“he was crying because he didn’t want to go, he knew his grandpa would be meaner”.

Not being on One’s Own Marae

Apart from this experience, Toni also felt that being at Jimmy’s marae rather than her own, somehow held her back from being able to fully grieve. She had to hold herself together in some way. The sensitivity of her wairua had perhaps alerted her to the lack of complete safety...

“That’s what happens when you live and die (in Waikato) – you’ll always be Waikato Tainui and nothing else! It’s really comforting that you and everybody knows what’s going on, but when you’re out there on your own, you’re really alone”. “But as long as my boy’s all right and Jimmy’s all right.”
Toni attributed her perceived lack of acceptance to historical rururu (problems, arguments, fights) between Raukawa and Waikato Tainui. She said:

“It’s still going on! The left leg hates the right leg!”

By this Toni was referring to the fact that Waikato Tainui and Ngāti Raukawa were both actually from Tainui waka, and stem from the same whakapapa lines, in fact making “one body”.

The one special thing Toni asked for in terms of the tikanga of the tangi, was for her Kaiako from Ataarangi to say a Karakia for her boy. After a disagreement based on the observation that the kaiako was whānau pani himself from another loss, after discussion this was accepted and was a nice blessing which gave Toni some peace in her early grieving.

“Sometimes tikanga doesn’t feel right...”

Another interesting thing Toni recalls from the Tangi is that when people came around to awhi the whānau pani (the close bereaved family), she could not sit down and greet them. She knew the tikanga (the culturally correct, prescribed way of doing things), she had never done it before, but she felt moved to stand and greet each person who came through. Many people insisted that she didn’t rise, but she could not do as they asked. Asked why, she said:

“because they were coming to pay respects to me and my boy”. I don’t know if that was our tikanga to sit there...maybe it’s just developed that way. But it certainly felt right for me to get up you know we were all whānau pani”.

Particularly if people were old or had walking sticks, Toni said she was young, she could get up. Then she questioned herself about her motivation, and perhaps it was a colonised or acculturated response. Then she reverted to her original belief that it was an “aroha” (loving, caring, compassionate) response – caring and reciprocating aroha with her visitors.

Toni said the first day of the tangi “was a bit of a blur”. She acknowledges that she was still in a state of trauma and shock and she felt a bit of an automaton on that day.

**Being Insulted while Grieving**

One thing she does remember was that a cousin of Jimmy’s did his whaikōrero, and because she was not crying at the time, he said:
“his mother does not cry for him; it was a waste him dying”.

This uncalled for and incorrect statement was an example of the power of Māori men within a ritualised kōrero to criticise and offend Māori women, even in a circumstance such as mourning for a beloved son. Toni was not in a position to respond, neither ritualistically nor emotionally – she was shocked, mortified and offended. She unnecessarily explained:

“I’d been crying on and off the whole time – I was trying to be a bit private about it”.

She raged inside about this man’s complete lack of qualification to comment about her. She still experiences this memory with anger and bitterness. In protocol another kaikōrero could have defended Toni in their speech, or a kuia would have had the power to remonstrate on her behalf (in various ways for example, by singing to cut off the kōrero. In discussion Toni tried to hypothesise why the insulting speaker thought he could say this about her: Perhaps he believed he could insult her because he did not know she understood what he was saying (he thought or assumed she could not speak Māori). Toni said that no-one rebutted the statement, but she wasn’t surprised because of being out of her area. She felt judged and disrespected. She said “I cry on the inside as well”.

As was raised by a related Tangihanga wānanga participant about this treatment of a bereaved mother, there existed a cultural behaviour by which attending mourners who have known the deceased, to acknowledge their mana by making insulting statements.

The story is recorded about a high born kuia, Mihi Kotukutuku Stirling who had challenged Te Arawa protocol by speaking and when told to stop, she spoke her whakapapa which proved her ascendancy over the whakapapa of the man who ordered her to be quiet. She also performed a certain physical action which was used in older times, to remind men of the source of their birth. While causing great humiliation and anger, she could not be called wrong, but this was never forgotten. Mihi Stirling died at Raukokore in 1956. At her tangihanga, Te Arawa came in force led by Kepa Ehau; he acknowledged her status paradoxically by heaping insults on her grave in repayment for her famous exchange with Mita Taupopoki.
nearly 40 years before. She was buried on 17 November in Moutara cemetery at Raukokore (Ballara, 1996, updated 2013.)

Thus, while I understood the cultural mechanism of which the speaker at my wānanga was speaking, whereby the more insulting the statements, paradoxically, the greater the mana was which was attributed to the deceased. However, in Toni’s case, the insults were not to her son, they were to her. They felt to her like attacks which were unwarranted, and hurt her at a very low space in her energy, so they were all the greater to bear. This was even more the case because no-one defended her and she was not in a position to defend herself. Also she wanted to be in a pure grief position rather than have angry and defensive feelings and this verbal insult was a distraction from that.

Claiming the Rights of the “Primary Mourner”

The tikanga was what Toni knew and expected – there was a mix of Māoritanga and Christianity. A comfort to Toni was that there was a returned Mormon missionary, a cousin of Jimmy Boy’s, and so she asked if he could conduct the funeral ceremony. She didn’t consult anyone else, she felt:

“as the mother who brought Jimmy Boy into the world I had the right to make that decision, to have what I believed was best. No-one disagreed with that.”

The cousin was honoured to do it although he expressed tentativeness and humility.

Modern Day Manaakitanga (Alcohol)

On the last night there were many young cousins who wanted to “celebrate” (Jimmy Boy’s life) so they set up tables and had drinks outside of the wharekai. Toni was really not in the mood for such activity but in the interests of the younger ones she sat at a table for a while and had a drink, just to alleviate the sense of heaviness for the younger ones. As the researcher I raised the issue that I had noticed over the years that it was typical of her to care for others even in her darkest times. She said:

“you have to because that’s manaakitanga... that was the way I was raised”. (looking after one’s guests).

Another issue for discussion is the incorporation of alcohol into manaakitanga. When alcohol was introduced post contact, the Māori term for it was “te waipiro”
– literally, “foul, stinking water”. Unfortunately over time the use and abuse of alcohol has for Māori, as for many other indigenous peoples, become an instrument for entertainment, disinhibition and all too frequently, abuse. Sometimes alcohol is viewed as spiritually inconsistent with Tapu, and is therefore banned from some Marae. At this particular marae, alcohol was apparently permitted, and Toni’s modern-day concept of manaakitanga included alcohol.

Watching Over Jimmy Boy
Whenever Toni had to leave Jimmyboy’s side, she instructed one of the children to sit by their boy. But every time she stood up someone came straight in to offer to relieve her. She did eat on occasion and go to the wharepaku, but spent most of her time by JimmyBoy. She barely slept throughout the whole tangi. She was all the time thinking about her son, how things were going, and hoping there wouldn’t be any drama. She added:

“All the drama was going on in my own head. People telling everybody when to cry, when to stand up, when to sit down!”

Assumptions Made by Others
Toni felt annoyed and perceived that there was an implication that she was ignorant of how she should behave. She acknowledged that perhaps the koroua and kuia didn’t realise how based within her own tikanga her upbringing had been, because they saw her as having come from a gang culture. She felt annoyed at the time but later could laugh about it.

Asked how Jimmy (her ex partner) coped with his son’s tangi, Toni said

“he just took it on the chin old Jimmy, he doesn’t have (or communicate) a lot of emotions. He stayed mainly in the kitchen”
because that was his domain of both duty and comfort.

Laughter As Part of Grieving
One significant part of tangihanga is that amongst the most despairing grief, humour is allowed to be acknowledged in the most healthy way. Toni said

“some funny things happened at the tangi”.
One was when her eldest son Bono was given compassionate leave from prison.
“When Bono came in with his ball and chain”...Bono was attached at all times to a prison guard and “of course he went around the whole marae kissing and hugging everybody with the guard on the other end of his chain.”

Fortunately the guard was Māori and was very good-natured and kind throughout the process. “He was “aroha, lovely” to Toni and the whānau:

“All a young fulla but he knew his “stuff” (tikanga). When Bono arrived he went straight up to Jimmy Boy. He went (down on the mattress) to cuddle his brother and the guard had to (get down and) lean over the other side! (of the casket)” With the guard being “dragged around” while Bono awhi’d (hugged) everyone, my side were laughing – I don’t know what the other whānau thought...We were just happy his brother was there. We had to pay for the transport, pay for two guards, a huge separate kai for Bono and the guards, he wasn’t allowed to eat with us, that was sad”.

Toni felt that “eating with the other mourners is part of the grieving” (very much a cultural value, which is underpinned by whānaungatanga and the spiritual principles of tapu and noa), and she was sorry for her older son that he could not stay with the others. However she said she was just so happy to have him there that they made the most of the opportunity.

**Worrying about the Judgement of Others**

The other thing funny to Toni was that while he was waiting in prison Bono had written a long (heartfelt) letter to his brother – ten pages, which he was determined to read out. While the letter was extremely moving, Toni became concerned halfway through, the others would think the letter too long. She starting whispering to him to “stop, that was enough! But Bono kept reading his letter, until the end”. Toni did not note the apparent indulgent tolerance of Bono’s long letter, it was probably Toni’s anxiety that prompted her to try to shorten Bono’s heartfelt speech.

**Animals Know about Wairua**

At one stage Toni had to go home for some clothes. She remembered the family’s dog Grunt was there, and she decided that he had loved Jimmy Boy, and he should be brought to the tangi. When there, she tied him to the tow-bar of the car while formal proceedings were on. When she let him go, he ran around the outskirts of the marae, around and around. A lot of people laughed at Grunt’s frenzied running. Toni felt strongly that he was responding to Jimmy Boy’s wairua. She said the dog knew. For Toni:
“it was a tohu (a sign), and made me feel good, because it meant he could see something I couldn’t see”.

Jimmy Boy was there although he was in spirit. Anecdotally there are many tales about the loyalty and extra-sensory powers of dogs and other animals, particularly those close to the sick, dying and deceased.

*Other Kinds of Hearse*

When it was time to take Jimmy Boy to the urupā, it was decided to place him on his Dad’s old flat-bed truck. This was funny and ironic because Jimmy Boy had always been very disparaging about this truck, to the point where he “would not be seen... in it”. Toni’s mokopuna were all on the back also, (two were Jimmy Boys’ children, the others belonging to her other adult children), accompanying him.

*The Koha*

One issue regarding the entire protocols of tangi management, recording and administering the koha, was felt to be extremely difficult, in her state of mind. Jimmy asked her a number of times to come and deal with the koha, because she had always taken care of business. However she was thanking her Waikato whānau and friends and saying goodbye, and refused to be pulled away from this last comfort from home. Also she said to Jimmy:

> “Na...I want to say goodbye to my family – they’ve come a long way and they’ve got a long way to go.”

Seeing her people off took about three hours. When she finally arrived back to the kitchen, she instructed Jimmy to deal with the issue without her. She felt whakama about touching the koha, and angry that they had been so insistant in involving her.

The Marae people wanted her to help count and sign off the koha, and note who had given how much. But Toni felt strongly about not wanting to know who gave how much because aroha and the amount of koha accorded do not match up and she was just so pleased her friends and family had come, that was all she cared about.

Jimmy and Toni had already organised the koha (gift, donation to cover costs) to the Marae. Toni would not normally have had the large amount required, but she remembered she had the pile of money given to her by Jimmy Boy, just before he died. She showed Jimmy and explained how she came to have it. He was shocked.
So strangely, Jimmy Boy’s own money helped pay for the tangi. Toni still feels strongly that this was the most significant sign of Jimmy Boy’s gift of matakite (the second sight, a visionary) – he had told her long ago of premonitions and visions he had, and she believed him immediately.

*When Everyone Goes Home*

The other thing about seeing her people head off was that Toni felt abandoned. She wanted her “sissy” (cousin) Emma to stay with her at home for a little while. But her “sissy” had trouble at home so she had to understand and let her go. Toni knew she had to go home to a sad and quieter house, and she felt anxious about that.

Fortunately soon after she had begun settling into her house, her Ataarangi whānau all turned up with “heaps of kai” and kept her company for the evening. When the tangi was over there was a huge amount of kai left. Toni thought –

“oh no what have they been eating if there’s that much left?”

Within the marae context, the mana of a tribal group is assessed not only by the way in which they welcome and honour their guests formally into the marae setting, but also by the way in which they create a home for guests and feed them (Pere, 1982). The concept of manaakitangata embodies principles of hospitality, of showing respect to visitors, and is related to the concept of mana (Pere, 1982). It is not only about compassionate care, although it is in part comprised of this; it is also about observing the mana and dignity of the other (Ritchie, 1992). In doing so, all parties involved grow in mana, bringing about a sense of togetherness and security (Nikora, 2007; Groot, 2010).

However Toni found out that many of the manuhiri had brought kai to contribute. Toni and Jimmy were both told to take some home but she didn’t want any of it. Jimmy thought it would be a good idea for her to take it to her place and he would go there to eat it. Toni refused:

“I didn’t want to eat tangi kai for the next three months!”

After offering the kai to others, it was decided to offer it to Jimmy’s sister because she had many mouths to feed, and she accepted it happily.
Here is a good point to mention that while koha for such events has become money (in an envelope) as a sign of love and to help financially support the administration of the tangi, in the old times things were different. Each tribal area would bring delicacies for which they were known to have access, from the bush, the sea, creeks and so on. These were brought to feed the crowds of mourners.

Over time as urbanisation has occurred, the gifts have been more monetary, as an accepted practice. However where people are Work and Income (WINZ) beneficiaries, money is a scarce commodity. So many people brought the contents of their cupboards, and food parcels if they could secure them. Some might be able to slaughter a beast if they were from farmlands. Some would borrow the money for transport and car pool to get to the tangi. This was why Toni was so alarmed to find the amount of food left over after the tangi and expressed the fear that her manuhiri had not been fed sufficiently.

**Grieving after the Tangi**

Following Jimmy Boy’s Tangi, Toni spent much of her time at home. Asked if anyone had cared for her, she laughed wryly and poignantly said:

“You have to look after yourself!....No matter who is around you, you still feel the pain”.

Research has long indicated that the death of a child is one of the most tragic events that can befall a family. The death of a child is usually seen as traumatic and tragic because a child is the last person in the family expected to die and thus it seems inappropriate, unnatural and unacceptable (Clark & McCreanor, 2004).

Jimmy, her ex-partner and Jimmy Boy’s father, came straight away to the house, and spent more time with her. Asked what she perceived his reasons to be, she felt that Jimmy came primarily to share the grief as only two parents of a lost child can do.

Toni had not really developed close ties with many people in Otaki. One cousin came and offered to be always available if Toni wanted to visit. Knowing of Toni’s tendency towards self-containment, I asked if she would really avail herself of the opportunity to visit her cousin, and she admitted that she wouldn’t.
Toni acknowledged that people tried to offer comfort, but somehow she could tolerate only certain social contact:

“It was really just Jimmy and Toa and my girl (Lisa)”.

She felt these were the only people who could understand this particular loss in an unspoken way. The specialness of Jimmy Boy. Similarly Breen and O’Connor’s (2007b) informants talked about the process of learning to whom they can talk openly or freely about the grief and their deceased loved ones and to whom they could not. Consequently they were more likely to have smaller but more meaningful friendship networks following their bereavement (Breen and O’Connor, 2007b).

Asked if Jimmy (Senior) could comfort her, Toni indicated that in his own way he was trying to help her, but nothing would really help. However typically she tried to think positively about the fact that at least he was there, and she wanted to count her blessings. Toni was concerned about him and others. She had automatically taken the role of caring for Jimmy in his grief. She laughed ironically.

“Yeah...that’s just how it works. Yeah nuh, it’s just automatic”.

After the tangi, Toni shut herself away for several months. She said she was just “going through the motions”. Her friends would come to pick her up, and she would go although she didn’t feel like it. But she felt absent a lot of the time. Toni felt the grief “came in waves”. Her wairua (spirit), Jimmy Boy’s wairua, or her mind would pay tricks on her.

“Things like...the kitchen window, Jimboy would always walk past the window and he would lean back to see if I’m looking, because he would do things like pretending to walk down a staircase and that, he used to do goofy things like that (laughing)...oh hilarious! So I waited for him to walk past the window – and I’d think oh geowd. Maybe, it’s all just a dream”.

*What Helps in the Grieving Process?*

Toni felt that time was a major factor. Apart from this, Toni said her mokopuna (grandchildren) were a great comfort. Here Toni was referring particularly to Jimmy Boy’s two children, whom she feels look so much like her son that she is constantly reminded of him and believes they are part of Jimmy Boy. Their mother is Pākehā, but comes from a spectrum of society where Māori and Pākehā mingle, so she knew the protocol and was guided if necessary by others.
“Everything they (the “clones” of her son) say and do is just like him! All these funny little things – they’re just doing it naturally and you see it and you just love them and you think – that’s why you were made, to help me get over this! you can actually grab them and hold them and love them because now that he’s gone...you can do it with these ones. Still got the clones!” Toni laughed.

Toni has said this previously, that her moko were given to her as an act of love from Jimmy Boy, as if he knew he was going to leave early. Asked if Jimmy Boy was her most affectionate child, Toni said:

“I don’t know why it is, but you know when they said (at the tangi) that he was Mummy’s Boy, and we all laughed, it was true. He just loved to be at home, and that was all good. As long as Linda (his partner) was all right with it, she got used to it. At first she thought, “oh, what’s he doing, is there somebody there that he wants to be with, but there wasn’t. Once she realised what it was, it was all good. So he was allowed to come”.

Wairuatanga (Spirituality):
Other than withdrawing from social contact for several months, Toni said that the other thing which helped her was:

“I think I became more aware of my spirituality. I recognised the other life, the next life...and. All spirituality. It wasn’t just that we were Mormons and that but just the wairua. The wairua of it all. It became stronger and it felt like a bit more easy to accept...like, Oh! This is what it is. It happened not all at once, over time”.

Toni felt that it was true, like Hana in the story before her, that her Māoritanga and religion, as in many traditional societies, were able to blend culture and religion in ways which are not too inconsistent to still provide comfort, an understanding of death, and ideas of an afterlife from both perspectives (Rosenblatt, 1997; Salmond, 1976).

Thereby, instead of feeling Jimmy Boy was lost to her, she began to reframe her perception. She felt he could see her Mother before her, and her Grandmother and Grandfather, “cracking them all up” (referring to Jimmy Boy’s comedian ways).

How did Toni come by this revelation?

“Well...I just remembered him, how he was. I don’t think that anything should change, nothing really would’ve changed, it’s just that he’s not here in the physical form. I thought about the “essence” of Jimmy Boy still existing. And plus I used to hear my grandmother talking like that. So I just thought that that must be how it’s supposed to go”.
The “afterlife” was a system of beliefs Toni had already learned in theory, but had never needed to apply it previously, until she had really unbearable grief to contend with. Once she had come to a point of comprehension of this spiritual insight,

“after that, it wasn’t easy, but it was a lot more easy to bear. Because my grandmother said, “there’s another life – I’m happy to be dying because I’m going to a better place. I’ll see you there...so then I thought, that’s probably what Jimboy’s up to – it comforts the spirit”.

I asked Toni if she had believed her grandmother when she told her about what happens to spirit, she said that she had listened respectfully, but didn’t really know for herself. However it had already been instilled in her, to bring her comfort in her time of need. When Toni’s spirituality developed as part of her grieving process, she did not feel the need to attend formal church ceremonies:

“No, I felt all good...I didn’t really need to go anywhere”.

Grief “On Hold”

Asked what had hindered her healing, Toni referred to her youngest son Toa’s car accident. Toa incurred serious head (and body) injuries in this accident, and was in a coma:

“Yeah that kind of took my mind off things!” (This understated sense of black humour has long been one of Toni’s resiliences). “It was a bit of a worry because someone (a police officer) goes to me they’ve seen it before where one brother goes, ‘you know the younger brother tries to commit sideways’ (suicide) and like that might have been what happened to Toa”. Toni reflected that “in the scheme of things, we’d kind of forgotten about him (Toa). I was busy (grieving and trying to cope) so that made me settle down a bit. I got a shock when this happened to Toa”.

Then Toni said seriously “but no, we helped each other really”. She said that she had not really neglected Toa who was already a young man at the time, but that she had been a bit absent mentally while grieving, and Toa would have felt this.

Abstaining from Self-Medication

I asked Toni if she had engaged in any drug or alcohol use to assist her in coping, Toni said “No. I wasn’t into it. I was kind of looking after my wairua. I didn’t want anything” (although because of her subculture she was offered and encouraged to indulge by friends or relatives).
Substance misuse can be common in the social scene in which Toni had spent much of her adult life. Alcohol, drug, and solvent misuse often manifest as coping strategies for people which provide temporary relief from their circumstances and the difficulties of everyday life, and to numb feelings associated with painful life histories (Groot, 2010). I knew this because apart from the literature, I had previously spent quite a lot of time with Toni when our lives intersected.

When pressed to engage in this self-medication Toni would make excuses that she had a visitor, or had something on. She wanted nothing to do with it, because she felt it wasn’t right to do it. When I reflected back to Toni that she had perhaps forced herself to go through her grief “straight” (without drugs), she said she really felt like she was on “another planet” anyway. Toni here agreed that in facing her grief every day without artificial assistance – medication or other substances including alcohol, she gradually came to a state of resolution or acceptance.

“It was just like it felt like the right thing to do – it was something to do with the spirit of it...it felt like everything was guiding my spirit and I just went along with it. Oh this must be the right thing...”

_Grief Processing_

Toni said that her ex-partner Jimmy would come to her place, and the two would talk endlessly about their son, how the Tangi went, how everybody was, how good it was to see the whānau, all the children. Together, they “processed” everything. In addition to Jimmy (Senior), Toni also shared a lot with Jimmy Boy’s friends, all young men. They told her stories about Jimmy Boy, what they had been up to. He was well loved and she was touched at how emotional they became.

With the whānau having been up and down from Waikato to Otaki, even now some people have not known that Jimmy Boy had died. Toa had just run into someone who had not known but said:

“Oh you’re Jimmy Boy’s brother” “Yeah my brother’s gone Bro.”

So they were still receiving condolences and feedback some years later.

_Losing Jimmy Boy changed Toni’s life_

“Totally different. There’s a big hole, and it can never be filled. It can never be filled up by anybody else.”
Fortunately Jimmy Boy had fathered two children as a young man prior to his death, and Toni was able to gain great comfort from their likeness both physical and in their emotions and behaviour. Having her moko’s around her, and their sense of humour is so familiar because they remind her of Jimmy Boy, She feels they really make her laugh because they “really are clones”.

On top of this feeling of comfort from her mokopuna, Toni felt a strong sense of responsibility to care and lead her whānau on. She felt they had to help each other, and can’t just dwell on grief. She came to the point where she could remember and cherish the positive things about Jimmy-Boy, and all the funny things he did.

All in all, Toni reflected on Jimmy Boy’s tangihanga. She had an overall sense of satisfaction and healing from it, and the negative events which happened faded away and became less hurtful or irritating. She released them. She also felt she had matured a great deal, and now could empathise more with others.

Although Toni had grown up in Hamilton and was surrounded by whānau and friends, she was emotionally drawn to return to where her mokopuna and Jimmy lived, close to where her eldest son was imprisoned, and Jimmy Boy was buried. She has since made the decision to return to Otaki.

Aspects or events which were distressing over and above the grief

The way the police passed on the news: the feeling of hurt which arose over the perceived coldness of the Police when they came to inform Toni of Jimmy Boy’s death, remained in Toni’s memory for years. This was only slightly ameliorated by her son’s distraught friend accompanying them to tell her about Jimmy Boy. Really this was a very profound act on the friend’s part, he was only a young man, but he was able to foresee the situation as it would unfold, and insisted on accompanying the police to tell Toni personally.

Not being on Her Own Marae: Allowing Jimmy Boy to stay on his father’s marae and be buried in his father’s urupa meant giving up some luxuries which in retrospect would have enabled Toni to grieve more freely at the actual Tangi. Had she held the Tangi at one of her own marae, she would have known and been known by all at the tangi, and thus would have been able to relax more in the knowledge
that she knew people, the kawa, people cared for her, and things would not be strange or unforeseen in any way.

In addition the misunderstanding which occurred with Jimmy’s Auntie about having to go home and make up the beds there first, before being welcomed on to the Marae, would not have occurred and she would have been saved a lot of stress.

Another upsetting event which occurred during the Tangi was that the kaikōrero who made the judgemental statement about her would not have gone unchallenged at her own marae. Her mana would have been upheld vigorously.

The feeling of abandonment Toni experienced when her closest whānau and friends had to leave, would not have occurred, because her friends would have been able to come and go as their own stressors dictated, and they would probably not have gone as an ope, but would have been able to organise ongoing support for Toni throughout the Tangi. Thompson and Range (1992–1993) reported that people who were bereaved suddenly more easily recall unhelpful than helpful responses from others. This may have been similar to the older concept of state-dependent learning – when depressed (or grieving), people are more likely to focus on negatives such as the insensitivities of others, which hurt them when they expect to be treated with emotional care.

Finally, the fact that Toni allowed Jimmy Boy to be buried in Otaki, with his Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga family (also her relatives although she did not know that side nearly as well) meant that on her return to Waikato she always felt torn. Ultimately she ended up returning to Otaki to ease her heart.

**What did the Tangihanga contribute to Toni’s Grief Resolution?**

“Heaps! Now I know why they do it. Now I know why they do it! It’s strictly with regards to your spirit. Yeah I reckon that’s what it’s all about. Awhi-ing your wairua. And so that you won’t feel too lost out there - you’ve gotta be you know, blingin’ grows you up straight away! No more dozing around anymore mate! Aware! Makes you aware of everybody that had to take the time...yeah. Now I know why they do it. Now I know why they sit and cry...and cry your heart out so that (you can’t cry any more).”

Talking about the apakura, Toni said:
“it just comes out of you. I remember when my grandmother’s sister was sick and I went to the hospital to see my cousin, we were crying just like that – I couldn’t get over it ‘cause we were only seventeen – it was just coming out of us like that – you know sometimes you want to cry and you just can’t – (then others) you have no control and it just comes”.

The tangihanga was huge for Toni. Her son had been acknowledged by everybody. Everyone had a part to play, they shared her grief, and re-affirmed the sense of whānaungatanga (belonging, support, aroha).

One of the first important things which happened was that a young friend of Jimmy Boy’s, knowing the way the police tended to communicate to his sub-culture, attempted to soften the news: Toni felt that her son’s friend accompanying the police and attempting to beat them, to pre-announce the news, to deliver the news in a better way, did help. This was especially considering her perception of the coldness of the police’s delivery of the news.

The next thing was that friends surrounded Toni. From the moment she found out, the news went out to her friends and Ataarangi class and they surrounded her with their aroha, and brought the normality of company, cooking kai (prior to seeing him, even though Toni couldn’t eat).

Toni’s friends empowered Toni to go at her own pace. Although not fully understanding, they respectfully allowed her the time to find the strength to go and see her son in the morgue even though they were getting anxious and wondering why she didn’t go straight up. She needed to absorb the reality of his death. Friends tried to bring comfort in every way to Toni while she tried to rise out of her shock and face the next step of going to see her son.

The next thing Toni realised was the kindness of unknown hospital staff in wrapping her boy in a nice rug – this had a very moving effect on Toni, the experienced aroha of hospital staff, which allowed her to move into a “mother nurturing baby” internal mode which gave her comfort.

With the support she had and the feeling that the hospital would take care of her son in preparation of her son’s tupapapaku, she was psychologically able to relinquish Jimmy Boy to hospital processes, to let him go for the time it would take.
Next, Toni knew that with her husband being caretaker of his marae, the “machinery” of preparation for the tangi would be underway and she did not have to worry too much about the entire organisation of the tangi. (This was apart from one instance of perceived negativity which will be described in the next section.)

One great comforter was the arrival of Toni’s Waikato cousins and dear friends: the arrival of her friends and whānaunga from Waikato– the brothers and the sisterhood – all those who knew everything about her, what they had all been through together or individually, over all the years. Those who had known Jimmy Boy since birth. The feeling that her true supports had arrived and she could “relax” in a sense, in her grief.

Like the informants in another study of bereaved parents, Rosenblatt (2000), Toni also commented positively on the number of people attending the funeral, the kind comments about her son that were said at the funeral, and regular contact from the friends of the deceased. Having others remember the deceased was also considered supportive by bereaved parents in Rosenblatt’s (2000) study.

An overwhelming memory was the love and respect shown to her son by others, both in attendance and expression. Toni was touched by the tears of Jimmy-Boy’s friends and cousins, especially the young men who had been socialised to be very “staunch” and not show their emotions. Also the fact that they were all wanting to sit and lie close to Jimmy Boy in his casket meant a lot to Toni.

Understanding tikanga and te reo: even though this was not Toni’s Marae, she was very familiar with Marae protocol, she could understand what was being said, she knew her role, she knew her whakapapa, and so did not have to cope with the anxiety of this being a new situation for her.

Having her mokopuna around her: this was both a comfort and a responsibility for Toni. She could not become completely lost in her grief because she felt the responsibility of ensuring the mokopuna behaved, as their mother’s may not know how to do within the wharenui setting. At the same time, as she said, some of them were part of Jimmy Boy, and they were all part of the whānau she had created, with a lot of shared love, trust and affection. In addition, having all her children...
with her, her now adult daughter back from Australia, her other son on compassionate leave from prison, were things which meant a great deal to Toni.

Even though she was more friends with Jimmy Boy’s father, just knowing Jimmy was at the tangi, taking care of other things, sharing the same pain, taking responsibility for how the tangi was going, really helped her.

Laughter as part of grieving was good. There were, as often occurs, some humorous events at the tangi, the most notable being the arrival of Toni’s eldest son at the tangi, handcuffs attaching him to a guard who’s comfort he was not particularly concerned about as he went around hugging people and then lying down beside his brother with the guard on the other side of his brother. Fortunately the young guard was very comfortable culturally and took it all in good humour, as did the entire group in the wharenui. Laughter amidst grief is a common relief mechanism and is culturally quite acceptable. This brings about a moment of lighter heartedness before the reality of loss sets in again. Another moment of humour was when Bono read his ten page letter to his brother and Toni tried to cut him off because she thought he was talking too long. Some people laughed at this effort to control proceedings because Bono unhurriedly continued on.

Another event was when the family dog was let off his lead for a bit of exercise and ran madly around the Marae again and again. Some people found this funny, but Toni and the family saw something different in the dog’s behaviour.

_Tohu_

Toni saw Grunt’s frenzied running in the environs of the Marae as a sign that Grunt was acknowledging Jimmy Boy’s death. He had never behaved in that way previously and she believed he could see something no-one else could see (for example that Jimmy Boy’s wairua was presiding over the marae).

Another sign Toni believed was strange in that it seemed prophetic, was that Jimmy Boy had given her the money which ultimately paid for his own Tangi, and resisted breaking up the amount. This in a way indicated to Toni that Jimmy Boy foresaw his death, and in a way the apparent fatalism of that situation was somehow comforting.
After the Tangi

Talking, debriefing, with those close: Toni and Jimmy (her ex-partner, the father of her deceased son) had many discussions about their son, their grief, the tangi process, as only they could as the parents of a lost son.

The importance of an after-death belief system: traditional, religious, personal: Toni’s belief system had been modeled by her grandmother (mother) and was based on both the LDS church’s teachings and tikanga Māori which worked together to affirm a belief in the ongoing spirit. Thus Toni strongly believed that she would meet her son again and that he was with all of their loved ones passed away previously. After the initial agony of grief, Toni began to experience comfort from this belief and she was able to imagine her son continuing to make people laugh, his grandparents and other relatives, in the after-life or spirit life.

Reviewing Moments of discomfort - Changing and questioning tikanga:

One feeling of discomfort for Toni was related to her personal impulses clashing with Tikanga Māori. Specifically, when the manuhiri came from long distances, and particularly when they were old or disabled, as whānau pani sitting next to her son (the tūpāpaku), Toni knew she was supposed to stay seated, and let the people bend to her. However she felt moved to stand and greet them, even though she knew it was not according to tikanga. This left her in a state of cognitive dissonance - questioning which was really right, for her and the situation. This kind of event tends to linger in the consciousness because of the ingrained nature of tikanga and how it is absorbed throughout childhood and the learning years. A lot of rationalisation tends to occur to counter the negative thoughts and concerns which may be experienced after countering what one knows as tikanga.

Hura kōhatu: (Unveiling) After a year of grief, processing, Tony and her friends did fundraising events – hiring halls and holding “pay as you go entries”. As a beneficiary there were few other ways to raise money other than garage sales, which she also did. She also planted seedlings and raised them into saleable plants – all very enterprising methods!

The unveiling was a lot smaller than the tangi. It seemed more for the friends and cousins of Jimmy Boy. The house was full of young people and children and a few
aunties and cousins, all his cousins from Waikato came, some even travelling through the night.

Toni and her whānau were ready to go through this process which she reported as extremely healing: a relief, a weight lifted, a closure achieved. This did not mean she was over the grieving process completely, but the most agonising, unbearable feelings had gone. She felt a sense of closure, and was re-framing her relationship with her son in the spiritual dimension. She was feeling much healed, the sadness had been lifted off her, she was greatly relieved. She felt that the part of deep grieving was over..there was nothing sad or (painful) about it. She felt that she was making the statement:

“This is my boy here. We planted him here because this is his family – if you want to come and see him, this is where he is”.

Reflexive considerations about this interview and Case Study:

As stated earlier in the thesis, Toni is a much loved cousin whom I have known for years, and spent quite a lot of time with. We had both moved and lost contact, and while we were out of contact her middle son died. I had no idea, and felt very sad for not having been there for her.

Talking about her loss was a real de-briefing for Toni and we both grieved. I felt as we were talking that I was able to “take part” in her grieving and share her experience. This was a re-bonding through the missed period of our lives – the tears and in some parts the laughter we shared seemed to bridge the gap in our experience. I had also lost my mother in the “apart years” and this was a significant loss which changed me irreparably and allowed me in some way to try to have some insight into the great loss she had experienced, bearing in mind that the loss of a child is so unexpected and in many cases more difficult to cope with.

I found in writing up the interview and others reading the case study that I had included something I knew from previous personal contact with Toni and that may have been a boundary I should not have crossed. Yet that would not have been real. One particular point about which I was asked was about Toni’s abstinence from drugs and alcohol as potential coping strategies. As I did not specifically ask any other participants, this appeared unusual. The reason for my asking was my
previous knowledge of Toni’s peer group and use of these coping strategies so I was initially surprised and impressed with her decision to cope in a purely spiritual and behavioural way with her grief. She consciously looked after her wairua which I thought was impressive, especially with her friends and whanau offering her these perceived comforts.

My own experience of losing my mother was that of appearing to cope during the day when I returned to work, but at times increasing my alcohol consumption, which really was unhelpful to the depression I experienced. That had been my biggest loss to date, and I did not feel I could share that with anyone who really understood at the time.

Toni’s embeddedness in her own wider whanau, her cultural understanding and her reo were attributes, gifts, things she was able to take for granted. I admired and while not envying her, wished I could have experienced myself growing up. I was so glad that her Tainui whanau had arrived in numbers and they had brought her a feeling of support and comfort. A problem I have always experienced in having missed a loss in one of my loved ones lives is guilt – that useless but troublesome emotion. I “should have known”, I “should have been there” – I “should start reading the death notices every day” – something I had not usually done.

One aspect of having known Toni’s deceased son (also my cousin) was that Toni and I were able to share aspects of JimmyBoy’s character – his humour, his loving nature, the fact that he was so attached to his mother and was teased for it. I feel that our relationship also allowed sufficient trust for Toni to explore with me whether JimmyBoy’s death was related to any stress, a premonition, or other factors. These were painful possibilities for Toni and I just respected her wondering as her intuition and spiritual knowing was more informed than mine with regard to her son.

Reiteration and looking forward:

In the previous seven chapters, the stories of each of the eight women participating have been presented as case studies. I have noted the themes which emerged from the case studies. In some cases the areas of investigation or interest produced very similar experiences, in others there was an extreme diversity. In the next chapter I
will discuss the essential findings of the entire study, in the framework of previous and current literature on the subject of death, death ritual, and grief.
CHAPTER FIFTEEN: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In this chapter I will be re-stating the original aims of the thesis, delineating the major findings in my research, and elaborating on why they are meaningful. I will also identify the significant contributions, describing how they add to the field of tangihanga knowledge. I will then state the limitations of the method I used and discuss potential areas for future research.

The initial stated aim of this thesis was indicated by the title: *I Muri i Te Ārai: Ko Ngā Mōrehu Ka Toe: Healing Processes Inherent in Tangihanga for Wāhine Māori.*

This title refers to the transition made from the physical to the spiritual realm “behind the veil”, made by loved ones through death. The title describes those bereaved who remain behind as the “survivors who are left”, and particularly Māori women who grieved through the cultural death practice of the tangihanga.

The Aims, re-stated were to:

- describe processes of grief and healing through the cultural process of tangihanga.
- identify key themes in accounts of the grief and healing processes.
- particularly examine cultural and culturally defined gender contributors to recovery.
- describe the impact of the experience of grief on the life participants lead subsequently.
- identify any further findings which may have impacted on the above processes.

In the interviews, most of the participants for this research shared to a greater or lesser degree some of the Māori cultural understandings around the purpose of tangihanga as described in Chapter Four: the kawa (protocols), the behaviours and the reasons behind them. Not all of the rituals were necessarily carried out with or by every participant. However as has been mentioned previously, the symbolism of the traditional rituals or protocols remained.
As an example, Katrina and Mereana had their father’s tangi at Katrina’s home as opposed to a marae, as their father had not identified as Maori (although they had their suspicions otherwise, they had no confirming whakapapa information). They enacted their own tangihanga rituals and were happy with them. The most important thing was that they again had access to their father, to spend time with, and grieve over him. This was the opposite to what occurred with their mother’s tangihanga was indeed held at her home marae. Katrina and Mereana had not been raised in a manner which would allow them to relax and experience their mother’s tangihanga as an opportunity to fully grieve. They did not know their maternal whanaunga very well, they had not attended tangihanga previously to the extent where they knew tikanga, and they did not at that time understand te reo. They both therefore found their Mother’s tangi quite stressful and while they were grieving, it was not an experience which particularly assisted them in experiencing their grief.

**Importance of a strong sense of Cultural Identity:**

Attending tangihanga from childhood allows one to know and be known by whanaunga and increases the warmth and comfort one is able to feel around them. Each of the participants who grew up attending tangihanga reported experiencing that sense of belonging and ease of being in the tangihanga context. Thus Angela, Hana, Huia Ringi, Karen, Ngawari, and Toni all felt comfortable at tangihanga from childhood, as opposed to the experiences of Katrina and Mereana. Thus each of the first six participants confirmed that the tangihanga was the most common cultural event within which Māori identity could be nurtured, particularly whakapapa connection (Sinclair, 1990).

It is important that the tangihanga is understood by the bereaved so their grief is not exacerbated by confusion and whakama. The optimum conditions for mourning through tangihanga come from having experienced the rituals and emotions of tangihanga as part of growing up, having seen death as a child, and realising that death and dying are part of living. A strong sense of cultural pride also helps young Māori as it allows them to repel negative stereotypes and accommodate other positive attributes into their identity so they can function better in the world (Te Hiwi 2007).
Cultural comfort and pride establishes for those Māori women who have experienced tangihanga throughout their lives, to have in adulthood a positive attitude, a sense of duty and reciprocity for other tangihanga which occurred in their lives. These women also develop their roles through the guidance of role models or through their own initiative and these would continue or develop as their skills develop, demonstrating how foundational the institution of tangihanga is for Māori (Wihongi, 2013). This also supports the statement that the tangihanga and its rituals are an enculturated pattern that is learned through repeat engagements beginning in childhood (Jacob, Nikora & Ritchie, 2011). The confidence with which those of my adult participants who had grown up attending tangihanga were able to move across cultures, was attested to in the six case studies mentioned first in the previous paragraph, both in the descriptions of their younger years, and as mature women.

Fortunately for their holistic well-being, Katrina and Mereana both managed to “catch – up” with their cultural understanding and their reo as they grew older. They did so as do many urbanised contemporary Māori who have experienced a lack of traditional Māori death practice during their up-bringing. If positive experiences of cultural pride do not occur in childhood, feelings of alienation, discomfort and ignorance can impact on the way young people learn about and take part in customary practices, and how they feel in cultural environments (Ware & Walsh-Tapiata, 2010), including tangihanga (Jacob, 2011). In this contemporary world dominated by the descendants of settlers and their culture, opportunities to experience and learn about the Maori world demand time away from our everyday urbanised lives which are affected by the demands of education, employment, recreation, and social relationships.

Those who are fortunate enough, like Huiarangi, to have been advantaged by recent “resistance entities” such as Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa, have been privileged in their Maoritanga. However those in Huiarangi’s situation are in some areas the minority, with many having to struggle with the episodic cultural occasions that present. Those of our whaea Karena and Hana’s generation have never had to go through this kind of re-education, although they did have to learn age related tasks in their culture as they matured.
Some Māori women have grieved at tangihanga with little cultural knowledge, including a couple of the participants. Subsequent losses, the accumulation of death experiences, and other cultural exposure can enable disaffected whānau to be more assured of adapting tikanga to their situation. For those such as the participant sisters Mereana and Katrina, their difficult grieving for their mother, and subsequent learning opportunities enabled them as bereaved to more healthily process the old loss and the current loss together. Where there has arisen a better understanding, the bereaved are more able to express, understand, and do things for themselves and the deceased, which were an enactment of what they would have wanted for those who had passed earlier. In the face of their father’s death, Mereana and Katrina were conscious that they were also re-grieving their Mother. They successfully held a tangihanga for their father, and some time following the funeral and interment of their father, they conducted a kawe mate of both parents.

Caregiving: Preparation for Grief:

As was demonstrated by the case studies of Huiarangi, Hana, and to some extent Kārena, exhaustion and grief from caring for a loved one before death can lead to preparation for acceptance of death and processing of grief. Being present during the end of life period with other close whānau can be very important and very helpful to the bereaved, in that there is a feeling that they have accompanied and ushered the person to the place where they are no longer needed, and can do no more. They have shown their love and devotion to the very end of the loved one’s life. This is comforting for both the dying person and for the bereaved.

Caregiving for immediate whānau is an ingrained value in Māori culture (Collins & Willson, 2008). Where the deceased is elderly, as were Kārena’s mother and Huiarangi’s father, the bereaved have had time to prepare for the loss of the person due to illness and/or “false alarms” before the actual death, coping with bereavement can be a little easier. This enables the bereaved to ensure that all appropriate duties were carried out while the deceased was alive.

As we read in the case studies of Hana and Huiarangi, for those who have been caregivers for an aged or terminally ill whanaunga, there is a great deal of stress and emotional turmoil (Nikora, Karapu, Hickey, & Te Awekotuku, 2004). Caregivers experience grief along the illness trajectory as they accommodate
changes, loss and adjustment to illness. Exhaustion, fatigue and stress were experienced by those of my participants who had been caregiving and also in grief (Lee, 2009). At the same time the caregivers Hana and Huia rangi felt the comfort of having done everything possible to ease their loved one’s path to death, and also have been placed to receive and enact important information about any final wishes the deceased may have communicated (Nikora, Masters-Awatere & Te Awekōtuku, 2012).

The quality of care experienced prior to death is seen to support the wairua (spirit) of the dying person to release worldly concerns and make a peaceful transition. Part of this is taking care of “unfinished business”, and passing on taonga, post-death instructions, and cultural knowledge. Traditional or religious death rituals can be part of this process, for example encouraging the spirit of the person to leave for their spiritual home (Moeke-Maxwell, Nikora & Te Awekōtuku, in press). The firm belief of the caregivers that this has occurred, also assists them to achieve a greater sense of peace, even through their grief.

As was explicitly described by Ngāwari and Angela, and was implicit in the stories of the other participants, post death, preparation of the body, choosing the clothing for the deceased, and dressing the tūpāpaku (body of the deceased) are the last physical interpersonal acts done with and for the deceased. It is simultaneously a duty, a comfort, an intimate act, an opportunity for humour with the deceased and between the bereaved. It is an integral part of healing for those who take part.

**How does the tangihanga serve Māori women?**

Tangihanga is a vehicle by which Māori women are “held” in their grief. Behind the scenes, the woman as the primary mourner has had a lot of choice and control over the decision making which has occurred to reach the point whereby the grieving ropu has arrived at the marae. Who decides on who is the primary mourner can be a complicated process. As Ngāwari’s parents had separated later in life, she became the primary mourner and took that position with profound commitment. It could be said that Angela was in some sense the primary mourner for her brother by virtue of her love and sense of possession of him, although his wife and mother were present. However she was not in an emotional position to act out her role as such, even though she re-arranged the Tangi.
The women in my study were ideally surrounded, protected, encouraged, guided, included in processes, and supported to express their grief. They were part of the moving sense of humanity around them, and yet they could feel separate in the sense of the depth of feeling they have for the loved one who has died. They spent their time beside the tūpāpaku, stroking, adjusting things, talking to their loved one. They invited the mourners to look at, touch the loved one, shared their feelings, they hugged and kissed and were covered with the love and empathy of the manuhiri.

Participants were supported by other close female whānau, and others were always willing to take care of the tūpāpaku when they needed a reprieve. On return, the women would smoothly re-assert their presence and return to the rhythms of tangi. It must be noted however that there are exceptions to the support of primary mourners, and a poignant example is that of gay bereaved, whose position may be ignored by heterosexual ignorance, insensitivity or discrimination.

**Emotional Resilience and Life Experience**

One other factor which presented itself in analysis seemed to be the emotional repertoire of the bereaved participant. One might have had resilience or a particular hardness, another may have felt particular anger or abandonment in loss like Angela. Others had spiritual beliefs which they used to calm themselves such as Hana, Huiarangi, Karena, Katrina, and Toni. Or each may have had all factors at different stages in their coping with their bereavement.

Specifically, Angela demonstrated the strength to stand against turmoil and opposition. She showed leadership within her own whānau. She was familiar with her whakapapa, understood tikanga and te reo, and knew her whanaunga on both sides. Angela had gained previous respect from both sides of her whanau. She took control of the tangihanga circumstances, and was able to express cathartic grief, albeit away from the Marae.

Hana was a very strong mature and experienced woman. She cultivated a positive view of life and was a woman of faith. She had a belief system which said her daughter was in paradise, her daughter was being looked after by her loved ones in
spirit, that she was going to meet her daughter in spirit when she passed so that the separation was not forever, and she will be buried over her daughter.

Kārena was a very serene, mature and knowledgeable woman, a woman who had lived life. She knew she had done everything she could for her mother; she believed in tohu and received one. She had a strong belief system by which she believed her mother would be met and looked after in spirit, and that she would meet with her mother again.

Katrina, at the time of her Mothers’ tangi was able to quietly fit in with her wider whānau as best she could. She did not always know what to do or not to do. By her Fathers’ tangihanga she had become a lot stronger and able to express her feelings including anger; She had the ability to work with her siblings to negotiate with the other family.

Mereana, at the time of her Mothers’ tangi, did what she knew, and tried to fit in with her own whānau. She was strong enough to challenge the marae committee for alcohol on the bill. By her Fathers’ tangi she had become a lot stronger and able to express her feelings including anger. She had the ability and confidence to work with and direct her siblings to negotiate with the other family.

Ngāwari had the strength to stand against any turmoil and opposition which may occur. She knew her whakapapa and her whanaunga on both sides, and understood tikanga and some reo. She had grown up attending tangihanga, and had gained previous respect. She had control and knowledge, felt that she was in the right place and belonged there. Finally, she had the loyalty of a cousin who assisted her greatly in the organisation of the tangi.

Toni was very familiar with tangihanga, having grown up attending them. She had a strong familiarity with her maternal whakapapa, understood tikanga and te reo. She knew her whanaunga on both sides and was a strong woman who had dealt with many hardships.

This emotional repertoire was balanced by mechanisms by which Māori women generally tend to be helped and supported in their grief, described below.
Tangihanga: a Controlled Catharsis

Māori bereaved are not stifled by the need to maintain propriety. They will likely be emotionally distraught, and most emotions are acceptable (Nikora & Te Awekōtuku, 2013). They may grieve quietly or cathartically. In one of my participants’ accounts, Toni was deeply hurt by a verbal criticism during the whaikorero of one of the manuhiri, that she was not visibly crying. However this type of behaviour, criticism of the whānau pani, is unusual.

Within the wide range of socially acceptable grieving behaviour, another deviation from normal kawa or guidelines of protocol may be accepted and even supported. This acceptance is because of others’ respect for the tapu of death or “death power” believed to surround a person by virtue of their proximity to the deceased and in deep grief. The behaviour of Angela in going against everyone else when she took her brother to Hauraki instead of leaving him in Rotorua could be seen as the power of the tapu of death, a condition which excuses behaviour which may be seen as strange, unusual or normally unacceptable. Or alternatively it could be the mana of her relationship with the deceased, which resulted in others following her lead.

However the women grieved, they did so repeatedly over the days and nights of the tangihanga, and in particular at the physical finality of the burial. At the same time, tangihanga rituals recognise the need for spaces between the intense, cathartic emotions which are expressed. These occur between the visiting ope, and are also orchestrated while the proceedings go on, by the kuia who subtly time events. From the karanga, to the apakura, the waiata tangi, the movement to the hākari, and so on, in rhythmic cycles, poetically and aptly described by Nikora and Awekōtuku (2013, p.170) as a series of “waves of memory made heavy with grief (which) crash down on the mourners”. Thereby the whānau pani would mourn, grieve heavily, become “spent” for a time, and be ready for the next “wave” of manuhiri, bringing renewed grief. This is why the grief is a prolonged, guided, supported catharsis. Although excruciatingly painful, it allows for the expression of anguish in a gently controlled and supportive situation.

The things that others say, do, or don’t do can further layer hurt and pain upon the bereaved. For Katrina and Mereana, the fact that the kai was not cooked properly
because the cooks were inebriated was a very shameful situation which they took to be an insult to their mother.

Sometimes unintentional or even intentional hurtful behaviour happened such as to Toni at the tangi of her son by a kaikorero criticising her for not crying at that very moment. Other events such as the wrong waiata, sung at the wrong time, or a speaker failing to say something that mourners feel should be said, or not said, or someone not being seen. Even in grief, and relatedness, a mourner may be hurt by actions or inactions, like not mentioning a loved one who had died within the last few months, or a friend or whanaunga not attending a tangi when we thought they would. These aspects of tangi are often felt more as “a thumping tidal wave beyond the patterned and expected tidal surges” (Nikora, personal communication, July 2014).

**Healing through Tangihanga:**

The tangihanga is understood to be a time of emotional release and renewal. The rituals encourage a release of the emotional tension of grief, and to communicate feelings with the tūpāpaku, either negatively or positively. As was so eloquently described by Ngāwari, taking the beloved deceased on to the marae was a moment of relief following all other organisation which needed to take place, best assisted by a knowledgeable and protective whanaunga, such as Ngāwari’s cousin.

The feeling of finally arriving at the marae was described as “rightness”, “safety”, “home”, the time belonging to the bereaved. People who knew the values of the deceased and the bereaved, the “roots”, the whenua, all of the memories, all contributed to the grieving process. It brought great comfort to know that things would be taken care of by whānau, while the bereaved were able to mourn, tangi, lament and grieve, receive the manuhiri, to stay by the deceased and those supporting them.

For the whānau of those deceased who have died overseas, such as Hana’s daughter Mel, bringing them home involves travelling from that country back to Aotearoa. Then going from one significant marae to another with the tūpāpaku until the home
place is reached. The exhaustion of ongoing ceremonies and grief can bring a feeling of relief and some closure, with the support from the home people.

Those bereaved who are in the position of having the tangihanga held at a marae which is not their own may face difficulties in adjusting to things done differently to the manner with which they are accustomed, or in accessing their usual support systems, such as happened to Toni whose beloved middle son died in Otaki, when Toni’s roots were in Tainui. However these difficulties can be overcome with the support of the other party whose marae it is (e.g. Jimmy Senior, the father of Jimmy Boy), and of course Toni’s own whanau and friends who arrived en masse to attend the tangihanga. The presence of outside support is profoundly significant, and healing.

Influence of the Bereaved

Influence of the bereaved than that of Angela, taking her brother from Te Arawa to Ngati Tamaterā. This ended acceptably after a lot of discussion and capitulation by others concerned. In other cases, where there has been much genuinely loving support at the marae, and things go well, auspiciously, with no serious negative events, the bereaved will be assured. Although grieving still, the bereaved are able to feel assured that their loved one has had a good life, a good death, a good tangihanga, a good “send off” as Huia, Kārena and Ngāwari all said about their loved ones. The deceased has been celebrated and mourned with real aroha, with no conflict, with emotional and actual physical preparation, and with trust.

People being people, sometimes interpersonal issues and different loyalties bring about conflict. Whānau conflict occurred prior to Huia’s, Katrina and Mereana’s loved one’s tangihanga. For those who through whānau conflict have not had close enough contact with their loved one, asserting their right to organise and negotiate their loved one’s tangi/funeral after bereavement can bring great healing, as it did for the sister participants. Relationships which had been fragmented prior to the bereavement can prevent bereaved people from sharing grief with others who had been close to the deceased, or alternatively it can bring those people together.
Katrina and Mereana and their siblings were prepared to negotiate their way through conflict but interference by others seemed to cause more problems. When there has been conflict in a whānau it is important for the members in conflict to attempt to demonstrate a united front, particularly where there are other oppositions in force. This was done by Ngāwari and her brother who had experienced difficulties in communication for a long time. They made a pact to stand together against any hostile whānau and they managed to prevent a lot of argument and others’ agendas imposing on their grief. Forgiveness can occur through bereavement if there is communication between estranged parties, in the name of the loved one whose bereavement they share. Ngāwari and her brother did feel closer after their father’s tangi.

Regardless of whether the conflict can be resolved, tangihanga are situated in a sacred space, and what all who attend have in common is the desire to acknowledge and grieve for the deceased person. With intercultural relationships, what can sometimes occur is that very different views and understandings of the primacy, legitimacy and rights of the bereaved are held simultaneously. A lack of understanding of the tono process, particularly by non-Māori, can lead to offence which carries on through years of litigation. Those who litigate through the courts can feel that they have “won”, only to find the power of Pākehā law does not necessarily prevail over traditional Māori lore (Tomas, 2008). Angela’s case study was not exactly a tono. There were some features of a tono but Angela acted before a formal tono took place. This however is not so unusual in Te Ao Māori.

**Honouring the Deceased**

As is reported by most of the participants, following the wishes of the deceased, regardless of the consequences, brings a sense of satisfaction and “rightness” to the bereaved. The women each believed that the tangihanga needed to reflect the personal values of the deceased, as known by the bereaved. Also in honouring the deceased in every manner possible, every ritual, act, word spoken, each decision possible, made with the deceased’s wishes and nature at heart, provides the bereaved with a feeling of satisfaction that they have done everything they could. Caring about and arranging for overseas whānau to have the opportunity to travel...
home for the tangihanga could be part of this. Ngāwari paid through her father’s account for her cousins to return from Australia for the tangihanga.

At the tangihanga, when Māori tell the deceased person how they feel, the people grieve, openly weeping. There is a very conscious goodbye to the dead person, it is very honest. The dead are told publicly of a person's aroha (love) for them and sometimes their anger if this is the case. The tūpāpaku may be rebuked if it is thought that she or he has done wrong (Dansey, 1975:177, 180-181; Te Wiata, 1987: 16-19). When Angela returned to the family land where she and her brother had grown up, she yelled and screamed at him for leaving her. This was quite an extreme form of expressing anger, abandonment and grief to her brother, which was however not at the tangi.

Thus the communication between the living and the deceased would continue in acknowledgement of the ongoing presence and closeness of the spirit. This feeling was reported by each of the participants as part of the process of transferring their communication from the physical to the spiritual. Toni talked about her reminiscences of her son’s tricks, making her laugh by pretending to walk downstairs as he passed the kitchen window. Kārena had little chuckles about her mother’s non-verbal ways of telling her what she wanted. Angela honoured her shared love with her brother of diving, by never scuba-diving again, because that was a literal bond by which he demonstrated that he “had her back” (watched to be sure not to allow her to come to harm in any way). When the wharenui became a bit hot during the tangihanga of Ngāwari’s father, she had to find humour in the fact that no-one else knew how to turn the heaters off because Ngāwari’s father was the one who always used to perform that function.

**After the Tangihanga**

Cultural practice allows for mourning beyond the beginning and end of tangihanga. Post- tangihanga memorialising events such as kawe mate and hura kohatu have their roots in secondary burial, and are also important parts of the healing process. They offer an opportunity to “re-grieve” and memorialise in a less intense way, to achieve a sense of closure of time although not closure of the grief. These events honour again and mark the passing of the loved one, with a physical
memorialisation which has cost effort, sometimes sacrifice, and creativity, to demonstrate that they will never be forgotten.

Mereana felt moved to instigate the kawe mate that she and Katrina carried out in visiting their brother in Australia and all three benefited from this act of devotion. Toni and Huiarangi spoke of the great satisfaction they experienced from arranging their loved ones’ hura kohatu, memorialising the love that they felt for their deceased. The honouring of the deceased soothes the bereaved. The ongoing love and loss they feel is expressed in their devotion, and in arranging the hura kohatu they are also able to re-enact their grief, their willingness to devote time and effort to the physical care of the headstone and grave of their loved one. This ritual often takes place in the whānau urupā of the bereaved which means they are surrounded by their tupuna. There is a moving forward and transition of the status of people relative to each other. This process is also about making new ways of moving forward with the deceased still an active part of their lives. There is also the question of ‘when’ a person transitions to the state of ‘tupuna’…it is through these processes that this status is achieved.

**Spiritual beliefs**

Spiritual beliefs and feelings tend to bring great comfort to the bereaved. Feeling the deceased in spirit is watching over the bereaved and is there to communicate with, and feeling that there has been a spiritual sign or tohu which is read as a message from the deceased are taken as an affirmation that things are as they should be and they are still there in spirit. Kārena was woken by her mother at the moment she was to pass away. Katrina heard an old koroua speaking te reo in an empty paddock next to the Marae. Toni was given money by her son, which would pay for his tangihanga. The family dog ran around the outskirts of the marae in a way which made Toni and the whānau feel that the dog knew he was farewelling JimmyBoy.

Most of the participants reported being able to feel their loved one close to them at all times, or at special times alone. Although many Māori whānau including those of my participants, have long since converted to one form or another of Christianity, many often still retain and pursue Māori cultural practices which to an outsider may look somewhat inconsistent, but cause no such problem for the bereaved. This was
most clearly described by Hana, who was both a Senior member of her Church, and was raised until a certain age, with deep traditional Māori beliefs.

For some bereaved, planning the place of their own future burial close to the deceased, brings a sense of comfort and “promise” from the living to the deceased, that they will be reunited in time. Like Hana, some bereaved plan to be buried in the same grave, and ensure that the deceased is buried deeply, with a marker for their own burial when the time comes. Knowing that a space has been made in the grave, in preparation for later burial above the loved one, gave Hana bring a sense of peace, and a loss of fear of death.

In Chapter Thirteen, I have described examples from the participants stories which match general principles and frequently occurring events which Māori women experience as part of whānau pani in tangihanga. The final chapter, Fourteen, I present an original Maori-specific tangihanga grief model.
CHAPTER SIXTEEN: CONCLUSION

In this final chapter I include a discussion about the generalities and principles of grief, healing and tangihanga. I will present an original, Māori–specific grief model which represents events which are simultaneously occurring to heal the grieving, in this case of my participants, but also Māori women in general.

**What is outstanding about Tangihanga as a Grief and Healing Ritual?**

The physical acts in the tangihanga process reflect coinciding processes. The physical is a manifestation of the spiritual. Our Māori elders and tūpuna have been ingenious and practical in establishing these rituals. Every aspect of tangihanga has a practical manifestation of a spiritual law. When manuhiri arrive at the gate of a marae in grief, we bring our tūpuna, we honour the dead, those who are in spirit, and those alive, there to call us on.

Tangihanga is now, as much as ever, a ritual of great significance to Māori people. This is not just because of the value of tangihanga in guiding and assisting people through our greatest grief. Grief and honouring the dead is the purpose of the tangihanga, but as many have said and written, there are so many more events and factors involved. When we stand outside the marae waiting to be called on, we focus on entering a spiritual space which separates us from ordinary life. We know in the reciprocal karanga that we are to walk towards a whānau who has lost a loved one, we are going to enter a space of tapu. Be aware. Move carefully, watch for others older, more physically challenged than you.

When we enter the wharenui, perceived as a living ancestor, we are surrounded by carved representations of tūpuna, and pictures of those who have passed on. The tūpāpaku lies before all, adorned and surrounded by loved ones.

The apakura, the voice of spirit, gently and naturally vibrates in some of the kuia – magnetically drawing the grief from the heart and tears from our eyes. It continues until it is time...the overt emotion has soothed for a while, the women are seated, and the men begin the whaikorero. So it continues. The wisdom of the tūpuna in bringing together such a symphony of pauses, times to wail and cry, times to hug and hongi and move, and times to be still. To speak to, and about, the life of the
deceased, to instruct them to go and where to go, and who they will meet there. To provide the “relish”, the kīnaki of the speech, an appropriate waiata tangi which will honour the deceased by its gravity and depth.

When we weep on each other, the manuhiri and the whānau pani, our roimata and hupe join as physical messages of love. The whaikorero refer to and thus call upon tūpuna, who join the people and who may be a common ancestor. The atua, the wharenui, the marae ātea, the sacred ground on which all are gathered, are honoured. Speaking from the sacred to the personal, and back to the sacred, all are spiritually embraced. The koha, representing aroha, is given to the tangata whenua as a contribution towards the costs associated with the event. The waiata tangi are sung to support the kaikorero, to show whom they spoke for and that they have that mandate.

When this process has occurred and people stand to hongi, the pressing of noses represents the sharing of life-breath – the mauri or life-force is exchanged, a powerful trust from the most tapu part of the body, the head. When the manuhiri are called to kai, they may first ceremoniously wash because they have been in a tapu space. Then the kai they are generously offered is blessed, eaten with gratitude, which nurtures both physically and spiritually. Cooked kai (along with prayer and washing) also functions to remove the tapu of the death rituals. These are some of the seen and unseen functions of our tūpuna’s rituals passed down to us.

Now, tangihanga is also noted for the important function it has in drawing us together. A form of union and reunion, back from our geographical dispersion to our people and our places, to share aroha – love, compassion, sympathy. To weep, speak, sing, hongi, memorialise, laugh, sleep, talk to each other, see new babies grow to children, children to adults, adults to elders. Te kanohi kitea – the seen face, our face is seen, and we see others. In certain faces, through genetic trickery, we see the visage of someone we know is gone. Tears come to our eyes at the familiarity and the memories. We see a loved one reproduced in a mokopuna and see that mokopuna become uncannily more and more like that loved one. At almost every tangi, we hear versions of the following statement “How lovely to see
everyone again, what a shame it has to be on a sad occasion”. The tangihanga more than any other kind of event, ensures that we are drawn together.

Following the entirety of the ceremonial processes, the service (whatever form that may take), the interment of the deceased, the mourners go back to the wharenui for final prayers, then to the wharekai for the final hakari. Then the home people clean up the marae, and manuhiri say their goodbyes and make their way home. This is where the exhausted whānau pani, including our women, are left to slowly pick up their lives, and cope with their grief in their own ways. Sometimes this is with ongoing support, and sometimes not, either because no-one is available to support the bereaved woman consistently, or because the grieving woman wishes to be alone or only with her whanau in her grief. This period of protective seclusion, reflection and healing is likely to last for a differential period from weeks to months, or even years.

**Conceptual Model: Te Aniwaniwa**

I have created a model which is symbolic of the over-arching principles and processes of the tangihanga. Te Aniwaniwa means “the rainbow”. For us, as it is for many other cultures, the rainbow is a positive sign, not simply because it is beautiful or promises a change of conditions, but that it is a tohu, a guiding sign of protection over what is troubling the person who sees it. In Māori culture, rain on a tangihanga is seen as a rightful indication of the significance of the loss of the deceased. The “sky is crying” - dark clouds and rain parallel the painful feelings of grief held by the bereaved, and the rainbow offers hope, even if in grief, it is hard for the bereaved to perceive the possibility of a brighter, happier time.

I have devised a visual conception of the overall principles of the tangihanga. In the diagram (Fig I) can be seen at the base, Papatuanuku, Earth Mother; the whenua to which we belong. The power of being on our own whenua with its memories, history, feelings, ancient spirit, is a dimension of primal sensing. Land, whenua, shares the same word as the placenta – whenua, which is secretly buried in a special place after birth. It is the place to which we return, and to which the physical remains of the loved one will be interred. In the centre of the diagram, is the representation of the bereaved woman. She is physical (tinana), she is intellectual and emotional (hinengaro), and she is spiritual (wairua). In the case of grief, the
hinengaro and the wairua are the most aware of pain. However the tinana also carries and expresses the emotional grief.

In the first (inner) semi-circle is the feeling and the expression of grief. Grief surrounds the woman. She feels mamae (pain, hurt), her roimata (tears) and hupe (mucus) fall without control. The next circle is the surrounding whānau pani, also grieving but very caring and protective, providing aroha (love, compassion), manaaki (support, help), awhi (physical comfort, hugs). They help direct the grieving manuhiri, who have also come to provide these expressions of caring.

In the next semi-circle is the ritual, the protocols of the tangihanga, which run smoothly from lifelong repetition. Karanga (ritualistic calls to and from the kuia), apakura, (the wailing, quivering vocal expression of grief, which elicits and maintains emotion). Whaikorero, the speeches acknowledging the wharenui (the house of ancestors), the marae atea (the tapu space outside the wharenui), the manuhiri (visitors to share in the grief), the deceased and the whānau pani (the grieving close family). The speeches of the manuhiri which are carried out according to the protocol of the area. The waiata tangi (appropriate songs or more traditionally dirges). The place of the wharekai and the ringawera (“hot hands”, the cooks) those who work in the kitchen and those who wait on the manuhiri. The ūrupā, the resting place where the deceased is lain amongst whanau who have gone before. The rituals at the ūrupā, a particularly poignant and painful time, the physical separation final.

In the penultimate semi-circle, the tūpuna who have gone before, who have been called forth and are presiding over the mokopuna below. They are there both to watch over the process and to usher the deceased forth to their next realm. Finally, the atua is/are represented surrounding the temporal and spiritual world.

On the next page is a diagrammatic illustration of the Tangihanga grief and process model (Figure 1) I have just described.
FIGURE I: TE ANIWANIWA – Tangihanga grief and process model

Nga Kupu

Apakura: Ritual vocalisation
Atua: God, Gods, Goddesses
Hinengaro: Intellect
Hupe: Mucus
Karanga: Ritual call
Mamae: Hurt, pain
Manaaki: Help, support, serve
Manuhiri: Guests, visitors
Marae: Physical ceremonial place
Pae Arahí: Ceremonial Guide

Papakainga: Ancestral land
Papatuanuku: Earth Mother
Tangitangi: Crying
Urupa: Ancestral Burial place
Waiata Tangi: Funeral dirge
Wairua: The spirit, of the spirit
Whaikorero: Ritual speech
Wharekai: Dining complex
Wharenui: Ancestral Meeting House
Whenua: The land
The next section addresses the ongoing process of grief and healing which is not included in the Aniwaniwa model.

**Post-Tangihanga Grief and Healing**

At the end of the tangihanga process, the whānau pani, including Māori women, are usually emotionally spent and physically exhausted. The moderated catharsis, all of the support, awhi, tautoko, all of the esteem and love shown them and the deceased, being taken care of, having established cultural processes to guide the entire procedure, all are very helpful to the bereaved, as described by the participants in this study. While the tangihanga is a process for assisting the bereaved in their immediate and most anguished period of shock and grief, the period after the tangihanga is still usually an extended reflective period of mourning. In acknowledgement of this, bereaved Māori women are not expected to carry out cultural duties (such as the karanga), for an extended period (approximately a year).

The bereaved attend other tangihanga of which they are aware, which presents further opportunity to release emotion and a further sharing of grief. With urbanisation, employment, childcare of children and mokopuna, and many other stressors taking the time and energy of the recently bereaved, this is not always possible as it once was. From my participants we learned that sometimes that is a painful duty, and now and then the bereaved may feel like avoiding the sharing of more grief as people avoid any pain. When they do attend the tangihanga of others they are both honouring the principle of reciprocity and sharing and releasing their own grief with others in a similar situation. Having experienced deep grief, the women are able to fully empathise, perhaps with a new appreciation of the pain of grief for others.

Reflection on memories of the deceased may first bring tears, and talking with others who miss the deceased can bring about a valuable “de-briefing” effect, both in discussing the tangihanga, and any other features the bereaved need to go over so they can release trauma, share nice moments, express dissatisfaction or satisfaction with the way things went: all of these are helpful. As life picks up again, memories can bring a smile, even as the grief continues. The mind can play “tricks”, whereby it seems the deceased is still about. The belief in spirit and any
tohu or signs which give assurance to the bereaved that their loved one is watching over them or visiting them in spirit, can be very comforting.

Working towards the memorialisation of the deceased takes time, thought, effort, and usually money. Some whānau have to hold fundraising events to pay for a headstone, and also arrange for a kai hākari following the ceremony. Notifying whānau of an unveiling is also important of course. All of these plans are part of a devotional act towards the honouring of the deceased, are helpful with the grief, and allow for time to put into the memorialising act thought, creativity and caring.

Once the hura kohatu has taken place, there may be some sense of relief and a type of closure. This is not closure in terms of no longer grieving, but perhaps a lessening of anguish, and a move towards incorporating their grief into their lives, to be gentled and matured with time. Similarly kawe mate is sharing the memory of the deceased in a loving way, and ensuring that the presence, the achievements, the meaningful things brought by that individual, are remembered, and integrated into future life.

As time goes by, acceptance of the physical loss is intertwined with integrating the spiritual presence of the deceased loved one into the lives of their loved ones. Birthdays and anniversaries are times set aside for consciously remembering the deceased, visiting them, tidying up the gravesite or related tasks. Those bereaved who are living away may light a candle, place a photo in a position of prominence, talk to the person. These are all acts of personal expression. Some may be modern but the heart’s meaning and the comfort taken from them are personal. This is simultaneous with a transformative process whereby the deceased becomes a revered tupuna watching from the walls of the wharenui, or from above us.

*How might this model be helpful to others?*

Sometimes it is very helpful to visualise or conceptualise a confused emotional process as a set of stages, a comprehensive picture of all the processes and things which are going on all around us. What is helpful in this model is that it visually awhi’s (embraces) the person. It surrounds them with every aspect of what is being offered them. It embraces the bereaved when they feel alone and bereft. It reminds them of all the elements which are all working together, physically, emotionally,
spiritually nurturing them and ensuring that grief may be expressed and healing begins.

*Where and when might it be applied?*

This model could be applied in telling children the wholeness by which the tangihanga process looks after the bereaved. While as children they may just see the fun side of playing with cousins and learning about death through observation and participation, time could be taken to explain the other aspects of tangihanga in a positive and preparative way.

*How might it be used professionally?*

The model could be used as a teaching framework for groups, as a beginning process for discussion about tangihanga, grief and healing.

*How might it be used therapeutically?*

The model could be used to debrief the newly bereaved, to act as prompts for things which occurred and did not occur, as an encouragement of hope, as an holistic model of Māori grief processes and healing. It could be used in grief support work as a reminder of all aspects of the moving process, as a prompt for things which the woman wants to discuss, and as a comforting reminder of the circle of life.

**Other Significant Contributions**

This thesis offers many insights of a cultural institution. Familiar and regularly practiced, contributed, facilitated by, and attended by many Māori, tangihanga will evoke personal insights which echo and explicate events and feelings which have been experienced for unimaginable time. By sharing the many responsibilities, learnings, hurts and honours, the women in this study shared intimate stories of grief experiences from different perspectives.

This thesis is contextualised in modern times, while the bereaved women are undergoing grief through enduring death ritual processes, and report the moving phases of their grief, what helps them, sometimes what hurts them, and ultimately how they find healing. Throughout the thesis, I have described the myriad roles and responsibilities of Māori women in life, sickness and old age, and in grief. Care of
the whānau means children, grandchildren, partners, parents, grandparents and other whānau of special relationships or simply in need. Māori women are required to, and usually do, sometimes to their own exhaustion and burnout, show resilience in the face of adversity and pain.

For Māori who have either attended few tangihanga or have attended but felt bewildered and anxious about their expected roles, who have unwittingly made errors, omissions or feel they have caused offence, this thesis may bring clarification, explication, and possible expunging of the guilt which can accompany these feelings. It may give permission for the trepidatious to cast aside their shame about the ignorance which has been forced upon them by generational choices. They may feel encouraged to ask what to do, how to do things they are unsure of in terms of kawa and tikanga.

This study will also be helpful for those who know little or nothing about the intricacies of tangihanga, non-Māori or those in the international field of Thanatology. The thesis will provide another insight from the valuable contribution of the entire Tangihanga Project described in Chapter Five.

Each of the eight case studies documents the many historical, economic, cultural and interpersonal issues which have impacted Māori in recent (post-contact) times. These can be viewed in the greater context of earlier cultural norms and known rationale around tangihanga ritual, and also the great adaptability of Māori to modern conditions while remaining faithful to the spiritual and practical principles of the institution of tangihanga. I viewed it as important to inform and document the effectiveness tangihanga provide as a grief resolution process.

An additional goal was to determine the most important elements of tangihanga as perceived by the participants, and perhaps to provide a basis for discourse with health professionals whose diagnostic methods and tools would potentially quantify, abnormalise or pathologise grief. The possibility of this stems from the very different values and beliefs Māori and Pākehā have traditionally had concerning death, as demonstrated by the differing experiences surrounding tangihanga and the European style of Pākehā funeral (Hera, 1996).
Although the Māori processes have been described earlier in the description of the tangihanga, this has not been in a comparative analysis with Pākehā process. Where historically political goals were once assimilation of the Māori, even within my lifetime, time has shown that this was a vain goal. This is largely because of the deliberate maintenance of our culture and reo by the dedicated ones who sought to ensure our knowledge and power were shared and taught. The view Pākehā held of Māori culture emphasised the past and a few occasional activities such as tangihanga. This view has been intuitively rejected by most Māori, for whom culture is a matter of present experience, a living and lived in reality either for themselves or for others well known to them (Metge, 1976, 46).

Tangi practices in fact appear to have been influencing Pākehā in their grieving rituals and the planning of funerals. The extent of this influence may be quite profound: it may be subtle and some of it may have quietly permeated Pākehā attitudes and expectations, largely unacknowledged, but it could be quite extensive (Agee, 2010). The modern trend is noted to have been positively influenced by Māori death practices, as well as the growing recognition of consumer rights (Hera, 1995). While it has been hypothesised that the difference between Māori and Pākehā death practices has diminished because Māori were influenced by the dominating laws, religion and ways of the Pākehā, more importantly the gap is also narrowing in the other direction as some Pākehā stand against professional advice, asserting the death rituals that feel right for them and make death the personal experience they need.

**Limitations and Areas for Future Research**

Limitations of the method were firstly, the omission of any participants who had experienced spousal or partner bereavement. This was a consequence of the non-selective recruitment method I used, which was based on acquaintance, friendship, whanaungatanga (being related by whakapapa), snowballing, and in a couple of instances, recommendations of others’ willingness by my supervisors. These women all had bereavement experiences with a loved one, but the relationships were with a brother, mother, father, daughter and son rather than a partner. To have rectified the absence of the spousal bereavement experience in the thesis would have been to deliberately construct an otherwise organic process. The subject of
spousal or partner bereavement is therefore an area of interest for future research, particularly for Māori women. It would be interesting to find out about the major issues of spousal bereavement and how they both differ and reflect similarities to the experiences of the women in this thesis.

Secondly, in focussing on the bereavement and grief around the tangihanga, I did not actively ask about the post-tangihanga protocols including the hura kohatu (the ceremony around unveiling of the headstone) and kawe mate (a later memorialising of the deceased). I did record these and discuss where they had occurred. One of the reasons these events were not discussed in my research was that for several of the participants, the bereavement had only occurred recently, and these particular events had not yet occurred. Post-tangihanga memorialising rituals are very important in themselves. They mark a position in the continuum of grief and healing, an honouring and loving act which acknowledges the dedication of the living bereaved in their on-going relationship with the deceased. Future research on the roles of these post-tangihanga rituals in the role of grief resolution would be most interesting.

Thirdly, it should be noted that any research interviews are reflective of participants’ views at one point in time – providing an emotional and analytical “snapshot” which may or may not change with time. This is not necessarily a limitation, but rather a consideration. Particularly for those who were close to the time of their bereavement, there would be a rawness and sensitivity present which the passage of time and events would lessen, such as further memorialisation, and healing of the emotional or psychological pain of bereavement. A follow up for retrospective views further along the healing journey would be very interesting, as would a longitudinal study of the bereavement and grief resolution process for Māori women.

I note that I have not intended to nor would I recommend, a pan-tribal study of tangihanga experiences of bereaved Māori women, however a similar study by researchers from different areas could greatly enrich the picture this study has begun to present.
Finally, a more focused study on the effects of cultural understanding on healing through tangihanga is an ongoing issue of interest, at least to me, and the many other Māori of mixed heritage who did not experience the benefits of exposure to tangihanga while growing up. Cultural diversity within whānau (Moeke-Maxwell, 2005) can introduce tension to a number of processes regarding end of life issues (Moeke-Maxwell, Nikora & Te Awekotuku, in press). In my experience this is not only the case between whanau in the extended sense, but within the Western sense of “nuclear” families, according to the cultural learning and politicisation of individual family members.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have explored bereavement and grief through the analysis of the lived experiences of eight Māori women of various tribal groups, geographical places of upbringing, and varying familiarity with their own culture and language. The narratives provided by the women participating in this thesis provided strong evidence to support existing literature that the tangihanga is a specific and effective forum for the expression and sharing of grief. It is a place for the honouring and farewelling of the deceased, and ensuring that those in the position of whānau pani are supported, protected and nurtured by those around them, with many people carrying out practical and spiritual roles to make the entire process run well.

The tangihanga is still arguably the most important Māori ceremonial occasion. At the tangihanga is enacted most elements of Māori custom reflecting beliefs which exist today, the strength of which has enabled it to survive the many oppositional pressures of the majority culture. The tangihanga continues with some adaptations, but with the same purpose and spirit as ever (Dansey, 1975; Nikora, & Te Awekōtuku, 2013). Being involved in tangihanga is a valuable process which serves many purposes. It is a time to set aside regular activities and spend time focussing on an open expression of loss and grief as a shared experience (Aumen, 2007; Sinclair, 1990).

Although all of the participants grieved through the tangihanga ritual, they demonstrated that grief is not a uniformly felt, demonstrated or memorialised emotion (cf. Breen et al, 2007a). I contextualised the influences affecting each participant, and documented relevant historical, economic, cultural and
interpersonal issues impacting Māori in recent times. In doing so, the adaptability of Māori to modern conditions can be seen in terms of continued consistency in the spiritual and practical principles of the institution of tangihanga.

Consequently, this thesis offers many facets of a cultural institution. Familiar and regularly practiced, contributed, facilitated by, and attended by many Māori, there will be personal insights which echo and explicate events and feelings which have been experienced for unimaginable time. By sharing the many considerations, responsibilities, learnings, hurts and honours, the women in this study shared their experiences, shared themselves and their grief. I was honoured by their insights and their trust. I shared in their experiences and felt a familiarity in hearing their stories.

This last chapter returns to the key research question raised at the beginning of the thesis, in the context of previous literature on death ritual, bereavement and grief, and explores the implications for how people within the wider society might extend our understanding of the ways in which tangihanga supports grief and bereavement. It is hoped that more complete comprehension can help those operating in the world with a lack of understanding of tangihanga, develop a greater tolerance, appreciation and where appropriate, participation in tangihanga practice. I see it as important to inform and challenge some of the attitudes of the majority culture, particularly those with power such as non-Māori scholars, policy makers, employers and health professionals.

Just as some Pākehā funerals have begun to adopt some Māori traditions, the Western grief and loss literature has moved into modernity – recognising “continuing bonds” as Māori have always done and continue to do. The richness of our tangihanga rituals while ancient, yet have survived for centuries quite intact, and their extreme logic and multi-level layers of consciousness and healing as seen in the Aniwaniwa model (Fig I) show Maori to have long been a deeply spiritual, psychologically and socially intelligent people.
References


Buck, Sir Peter (1982) “*The Coming of the Māori*”, Wellington Māori Purposes Fund Board Whitcoulls Limited


Coney, S. (1993). *Standing in the Sunshine: a history of New Zealand women since they won the vote*. Auckland [u.a.] Viking


3 (June 1997), pp. 469-470

urban accident and emergency department NZ Med J; 101:359-61

review of the evidence and a consideration of causes. In: Smedley, B.D.,
racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare. Institute of Medicine.
Washington, D.C: The National Academies Press

Gergen, K. J. (1973). Social psychology as history. Journal of Personality and


Gewertz, D. & Errington, F. (2002). Margaret Mead and the death of Alexis
Gewertz Shepard. Amherst Mag., Spring www.annualreviews.org • The
Beginnings and Ends of Life 335

California Press.


Giordano, J. & Pearce, J. K. (Eds.), Ethnicity and family therapy (2nd ed.) New
York: Guilford Press.

New York: Longman.

analysis of the culture of biomedicine: disclosure and consequences for
treatment in the practice of oncology. In Health and Health Care in
Developing Countries: Sociological Perspectives, ed. P. Conrad, E.B.

Goodhead, A, & McDonald J. (2007). Informal Caregivers Literature Review: A
report prepared for the National Health Committee Health Services
Research Centre, Victoria University of Wellington.

understanding concealment and silence around cancer in Tuscany, Italy.
Soc. Sci. Med. 44:1433–52

Elevated rates of prolonged grief disorder in African Americans. Death
Studies, 32.

Grafanaki, S. (1996). How research can change the researcher: The need for
sensitivity, flexibility and ethical boundaries in conducting qualitative
research in counselling/ psychotherapy. British Journal of Guidance and
Counselling, 24(3), 329.


Mahuika, A. "Leadership: Inherited and Achieved" in King, M (ed) Te Ao Hurihuri (1975)86.


New Zealand Funeral Director 1964 ‘How many funeral businesses are profitable?’ September, 26 (2): 24.


Porter, F., and Macdonald, C. (eds) 1996 ‘*My hand will write what my heart dictates*: the unsettled lives of women in nineteenth-century New Zealand
as revealed to sisters, family and friends, Auckland: Auckland University Press/ Bridget Williams Books.


Stroebe, M.S., Stroebe, M., & Hanson, R. O., (1993); *Handbook of Bereavement: Theory, Research and Intervention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press


Te Rangi Hiroa (Sir Peter Buck, 1982) “The Coming of the Māori”, Wellington Māori Purposes Fund Board, Whitcoulls Limited

Te Rangikaihēke (1854). Māori Manuscripts in George Grey Māori Manuscript Series, Special Collections, Auckland: Auckland Public Library.


Thorson, J.A. Qualitative Thanatology *Mortality, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1996 University of Nebraska at Omaha, USA*


APPENDIX I GLOSSARY

He Whakamarama - Points to note

1) The definitions given here for these frequently used words indicate only their full range and depths of meaning. Readers seeking further clarification should consult a Māori language dictionary (Smith, 2001), such as Williams (1985).

2) Māori nouns do not take "s" in the plural; that is, they are collective nouns. A word such as iwi, therefore, could imply one or several iwi depending on context (Smith, 2001).

3) Many verbs or universals may also be used as nouns; thus whakapapa can refer to either a genealogical line of descent or else to the process of establishing one's links to a particular ancestor in that genealogical line (Smith, 2001).

Nga kupu - The words

Ahi kā ancestral flame, continuous land occupation
Aoteaoroa: original Māori name for New Zealand “Land of the long white cloud”
apakura lament, song of grief
aroha: affectionate regard, compassion, love
Atua/ataua God, gods
Atua wāhine Women gods
awa river
haku exhumation
haka ritual “dance”
hākari feasting
hapū kinship group / Sub tribal group
harakeke native flax
harirū shaking of hands
Hawaiiki an ancestral homeland of the Māori people
Hine-ahu-one first human life
Hine-nui-te-pō Guardian of the Underworld
Hinengaro Mind
hōngi ritual greeting, pressing of noses and foreheads
hōu new
hui gathering, meeting
hupe mucus
hura kōhatu unveiling of the headstone
iwi tribe, tribal
iwi kainga: a kinship community on tribal lands
kai food
kaimoana sea-food
kai karanga female who issues a call of welcome
kai kōrero orator
kākahu  cloak
kanohi-ki-te-kanohi  face-to-face
kapa haka  Māori performance, cultural group
karakia  invocations, prayers, chant
karanga  ritualistic call
karanga aituā  inviting misfortune or even death itself
kaumātua  elders of both genders
Kaupapa  ideologies, ways of being, rationale, subject, woven foundation
Kaupapa Māori  Māori-centred approach
Kawa  Protocols and customs of the marae
kawe mate  ceremonial visit following the burial or cremation of the deceased
kirimate  immediately bereaved, grieving relatives
koha  gifts
Kōhanga Reo  Māori pre-school
koiwi  bones, related
korohke  elderly male
Koroneihana  Coronation, large gathering of followers of the Kingitanga movement
koroua  male elder
korowai  traditional, commemorative cloak
kuia  female elder
Kotahitanga  Unity and solidarity
Kuia  Female Elder
Kura Kaupapa  Māori immersion primary schools
Mahau  Verandah of the meeting house
Mana  Status, prestige, authority
manaaki tangata  caring for people
mana whenua  territorial rights
Manakaranga  Hospitality, reciprocity
marae  communal meeting complex
Manuhiri  Visitors or visiting group
Māori  indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand
Māoritanga  Māori cultural, practices and beliefs
marae atea  the open space immediately in front of the meeting house
mātauranga  education, knowledge, wisdom, understanding
mate  sickness, death
mate wāhine  menstruation
maunga  mountain
mauri  life principle, special character
Mere  A short flat weapon of stone, normally greenstone
mihimihi  a system of formal greetings
mokopuna  grandchild
mua  front
muri  back
Nehu  Burial or cremation
Ngā  Plural
noa  free from
tapu
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ope</td>
<td>special group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paepae</td>
<td>seating designated for speakers during formal occasions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pākehā</td>
<td>New Zealander of European descent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pakeke</td>
<td>adult, elders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papatuanuku</td>
<td>Mother Earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patu</td>
<td>hand-held weapon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pepeha</td>
<td>Tribal or proverbial sayings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pito</td>
<td>Umbilical cord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poroporoaki</td>
<td>Farewells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pou</td>
<td>post–literal and figurative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pou āwhina</td>
<td>research supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poukai</td>
<td>Kingitanga movement gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pōwhiri</td>
<td>Welcoming ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangatahi</td>
<td>Young generation or people, youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangatira</td>
<td>Māori leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangatiratanga</td>
<td>leadership, chiefly values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raruraru</td>
<td>conflict, problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raupatu</td>
<td>Confiscated land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reo</td>
<td>voice, language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ringawera</td>
<td>the cooks at a tangi or hui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>roimata</td>
<td>tears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruru</td>
<td>Morepork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiaha</td>
<td>A long weapon of hard wood with one end carved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tainui</td>
<td>A confederation of independent tribes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>takahi whare</td>
<td>ritual cleansing of the deceased’s house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamaiti whāngai</td>
<td>Child or individual not raised by their biological parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tangi</td>
<td>to grieve and mourn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tangihanga</td>
<td>time set aside to grieve and mourn, rites for the dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tāonga</td>
<td>treasures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tāonga</td>
<td>prized possession, treasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tangata whenua</td>
<td>people of the land, hosts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tangi/tangihanga</td>
<td>wail, mourn, tangihanga time set aside to grieve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapu</td>
<td>Prohibited, restricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tapu tapu</td>
<td>untouched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>te Ao Māori</td>
<td>the Māori World, Māori society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te reo Māori</td>
<td>The Māori language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te Kohanga Reo</td>
<td>Māori language emersion pre-schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te Rerenga Wairua</td>
<td>The leaping place of spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tika</td>
<td>correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tikanga</td>
<td>customary practice, customs, traditions, conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tikanga Māori</td>
<td>Māori customs and practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tinana</td>
<td>body (live)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tipuna / Tūpuna</td>
<td>Ancestors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiiti</td>
<td>Muttonbird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tohi</td>
<td>dedication rite like a baptism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tohu</td>
<td>sign (spiritual signifier)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tohunga</td>
<td>ritual expert, priest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tono</td>
<td>a proposal/challenge, approach for a desired outcome eg to take a tūpāpaku to another marae which claims affiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuku iho</td>
<td>passed down (from ancestors)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
tuku wairua  sending on the spirit
tūpāpaku  deceased person, corpse
tūpuna/tipuna  elders or ancestors
tūrangawaewae :  genealogical rights to belong to a place
uhunga  traditional term for mourning party
Urupā  Burial ground
waiata  song, dirge
waiata tangi  lament, song of mourning
Wairua  the spirit, spiritual realm
Wairuatanga  Spirituality
waka:  canoe, or original whakapapa descent line
wānanga  forum to discuss and develop knowledge
whaikōrero  oratory
whakaaro  thought, opinion, understanding
whakamoemiti  thanksgiving
whakanoa  to make situations noa, enactment of noa
whakapapa  Genealogy
whakatau  welcome – slightly less formal
whakataukī  proverb/saying
whānau  Family, including extended family
Whānau toto  Biological family
Whānaungatanga  Relationship through shared connectedness; Love and commitment
Whāngai  Māori customary practice of raising children, either temporarily or permanently
APPENDIX II: RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET

Title: I Muri i Te Ārai: Ko Ngā Mōrehu Ka Toe: Healing Processes Inherent in Tangihanga.

PhD topic: This project aims:
- to investigate all possible relevant aspects of grief, particularly aspects of tangihanga which provide opportunities for healing from grief
- to investigate social structures and support, ritual, spiritual beliefs and practices as described by those experiencing the grief.
- to investigate conversely, aspects of modern life or even tradition, which may hinder the healing process.

Background and significance of the topic:
This topic is seen as a valuable area for exploration because there are few substantive contemporary works on the subject of tangihanga experiences and processes.

It is important to inform and challenge some of the attitudes of the majority culture and to document that Tangihanga provide an extremely effective grief resolution process.

In addition the goal is to determine what are the most important perceived elements of Tangihanga to participants, and finally to provide a basis for discourse with Health Professionals who quantify, abnormalise and pathologise grief.

Declaration to Participants:
Individuals will not be identified in any publication or dissemination of the research findings without their consent. All information collected during recorded conversation, meetings or interviews will initially be viewed by the researcher and her supervisor(s), and will be submitted to the Tangihanga Research Programme.

If you take part in this study you will be interviewed individually. You will have the right to refuse to answer any particular question and also to withdraw from the study at any time prior to submission of the research.

As a participant you have the right to ask any further questions about the study which occur to you during your participation.

You will be given a copy of your transcribed interview prior to the final interview, and also will have access to a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded.

Contacts:
If you have any questions or concerns, I am available on Ph: 027/8682665 or Email: psc2260@waikato.ac.nz If you require further information, please contact my primary Supervisor, Professor Ngāhuia Te Awekōtuku Ph: 07/8585023 or Email: Awekōtuku@waikato.ac.nz

Kia ora
Keriata Paterson     July, 2010
APPENDIX III: RESEARCH INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Introduction / Mihi / Karakia if desired

- Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research.
- Acknowledgement of loss, particularly if recent.

Cultural Background / Experience of Tangihanga

- How would you describe the cultural values within which you grew up?
- Were attending and being part of tangihanga natural for you? (Did you know your roles and expectations if any?)
- Who would you look to for guidance? Who would guide you in what to do?
- Did you have any particular roles when you were younger, in tangihanga? (eg in the kitchen, other)
- Were you taught any specialist tasks on the marae as you grew older?
- What was your understanding and experience of death and loss?

Particular experience of tangihanga: Loss of a loved one

- Focusing now on a particular person close to you who has passed away:
- What was your relationship to this person?
- What were the circumstances which lead to their/his/her passing? (ie: was it accidental or unexpected, through old age or long illness).
- Were there any medical care events which caused you distress?
- Were there any employment events or pressures which caused you stress or distress?
- Were you and others “prepared” for this loss? (eg. by the duration or severity of the illness; by the exhaustion of looking after the person; by
seeing any suffering the person went through; by wishes expressed by the person etc.

- If you understood that this person was unwell and may pass away, how did this affect your coping when the person (he/she) did pass away? (psychological preparation/ preparatory grief / acceptance, discussions with the person or significant others).

- What kind of roles did this person have with regard to you, your whānau, hapū, iwi?

- What did their passing mean to yourself or others with regard to roles?

The Tangihanga:

- Tell me about your experiences of the tangihanga of this person

- Were there any particular things which were helpful or comforting to you during the tangi (spiritually, emotionally, other)?

- Were there any events which upset you or caused you more distress than you were already under? (eg: other people’s behaviour, events you or others interpreted as tohu of some kind?)

- Did you feel as though others looked after you, or did you feel responsible for events or people? How did this facilitate or hinder your ability to grieve?

- Could you tell me about your gradual recovery from grief, and life in the following period – what you did differently, how you coped?

- Looking back, how much of a place did the tangihanga take in terms of your grieving for that person and what they represented to you?

- How did your life change because of their loss to you? (To the whānau, community)
• Looking back, do you feel overall you were able to grieve for your loved one in a “healthy” way?

• Is there anything you would rather have done or happened differently?
APPENDIX IV: EXAMPLE EXCERPT REFLEXIVE JOURNAL

Autoethnography: “an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 733).

Example Journal Page
– Monday I drove over to Komata to our urupā Puketotara. We had just been at the unveiling of my cousin Angela’s son Jack. I saw immediately that Angela (who else) had placed a single agapanthus on all the graves near her son’s. I thanked her for thus honouring our tupuna whaea Granny Keriata, her potiki at her feet, my nanny Naki, her tane, Matia, my mother, Ataneta lying next to her brother Bill, who constantly broke her heart until she became hard.

I laid agapanthi from my garden on her whanau especially Jack. I placed a pot I had brought for mum which I had long ago planted with succulents and more recently, placed one of her fine china Japanese figurines which looked like she was in a scale garden (ie bonzai). Mum loved the oriental. The succulents had lasted well through many expressions of Tawhirimatea so I believe it will last on Puketotara. I came away very sober and receptive. The next day, processing emotions. I have excessive emotions. Mum always told me to grow a thicker skin. Although intelligent, I never did have the emotional intelligence to know how to do that – perhaps a good thing.

That evening I sent a further text to Huiarangi to begin our connection process, and she texted back that it was Mereana’s Dad’s tangi. I threw on some of my myriad cool black tops, black pants and drove to Waihi wondering where St. Josephs’ was. I did what I always do. Stopped local walkers – the two ladies said oh that’s the Catholic church and gave me precise directions. I was as ever, early. I waited in the car fiddling with my phone. The whanau and hearse (family van) arrived and Moana arrived in her limo – we hugged and kissed and she said – “oh good can you do the karanga for my Dad when he’s being carried out?” Immediately anxious, but out of aroha, reciprocation, I agreed to.
Later our older consort of Maori psychologists arrived. From Auckland, Massey, Waikato. A young team from somewhere I couldn’t determine arrived in uniform. Lisa Cherrington – whom I loved but had not seen for years, came. She and I were the “kai karanga” for the Corrections Psych Services up and down the country. Just young women – crazy. We stuck to each other in all stressful young woman situations. Since then she has written a novel, had two children, worked in various positions. You know what I’d done.

In a Catholic church, with Catholic and Mormon close relatives, much tikanga Maori was sneaked into the service including Mereana’s husbands’ extended mihi to whanau, My karanga as he is carried out, a haka as he emerged from the inner sanctum to the “pae”.

There was extreme confusion, some anger and feeling their own kawa to be “trodden on”. The Minister gave me what I interpreted as a disapproving look when I saw him again at the cemetery. However there were also some “charmed non-Maori” – open, receptive and warm.

Some came and kissed me and it was said: "I was all right until that karanga begun and then that was it!.” I found that interesting on several levels – what made you hold back before that? But I felt glad that the karanga had elicited the flow of emotions, as it should.

While driving back I think about my own death, issues raised by other psychologists.
I have three confirmed participants who volunteered to be part of the research at the tangi, two of whom I had not solicited. Snowball at last!!