

he points raised in the accompanying articles about the rearing of our Maori children make for some hard deductions.

If the reader accepts only partly what the writer is saying, future generations of Maori children are being affected by the loss of a vibrant culture.

That's not to say other native races, including Europeans, have not gone through the same trauma. It's just that at a time when New Zealand is trying on a new identity as an independent nation in the South Pacific, it would be appropriate to find out what the real basis of our identity is.

No society's culture survives but through its young. That is the reason for kohanga reo, as pointed out in another article in this issue.... Maatua Whangai is also a current response to looking after our youth and the future they represent for the Maori culture.

For what is the point of marae and meeting houses if our youth spend more time in borstals and prisons.

What is the use of fine oratory if there is no one to speak out on behalf of the youth in the courts.

What is the function of haka if our youth are dancing to someone else's tune.

And what use is traditional spiritual concepts if alcohol and drugs and self become the god.

a real test of endurance. They submitted to the first ritual incisions of ta moko-tattoo, which symbolised young warriorship.

Responsibility for the raising and instruction of boys extended beyond parents. It was also tribal. Boys were virtually sacrosanct from birth. They were reared with deep affection and responsibility. Tribal survival was dependent on them; they were its future defence and leadership. Neglect or brutality towards boys was unknown. So too, was spiritual violence: they grew up **men**, without the demoralising experience of parental or social repression. They also grew up to be men of sensitivity — as classic Maori art and culture so clearly reveals.

Art was primarily wood carving, which decorated assembly and storage houses, war and fishing canoes, and massive paa gateways. A highly stylised art, whakairo rakau was taught to boys by tohunga or priestly experts who also instructed boys in the decoration of tools, weapons and domestic utensils such as wooden food bowls, gourds and pounders. Working with fine greenstone chisels, apprentices learned the rituals and karakia of carving along with its tribal styles. Allied to carving was the art of kowhaiwhai — rafter painting, and its remarkable achievement in creative design, that was also a characteristic of taaniko; an art of subtle colour and imagination.

Hunting and fishing were primary activities taught boys by fathers, as was horticulture in its various forms. Taken on expedition from early childhood, boys were instructed in forest lore and ritual as well as in the making of bird spears and snares. Aboard canoes, they learned line fishing, trolling and (ashore) net making. They were also educated in conservation of natural resources and the sanctity of nature was impressed on them. It was the comradeship of hunting and the sea that bound father to son; while it was the taught concept of natural unity that bound boys to family and tribe.

A complex system of religious belief and practice entered early into the consciousness of boyhood — gods, ancestors and powerful spiritual forces greatly influenced life and experience. As did such concepts as tapu and mana. Awareness of family and tribal history grew with marae experience and genealogical knowledge. Then there was myth and legend — a mysterious and fascinating world of dynamic gods and heroes, of saurian

Maori Boy

Alan Taylor



Traditionally, to die like a man in battle was the ambition of every young warrior or toa. From birth boys were under dedication to the god Tu Matauenga, and were conditioned to warfare: to fight, to kill, to defend tribe and territory.

Trained in the use of a wide range of weapons, boys were instructed in warfare by tribal arero whero or experienced and highly skilled warriors; men who reflected, in courage and confidence, both the virtues and strengths of classic Maori society. Additional to training in weaponry, boys were taught field strategy and tactics, and the arts of the whare tapere — a house of learning in which useful games were played that developed quickness of eye, hand and mind.

Equally important activities for boys were such semi-military exercises as sea and river swimming, climbing, canoe racing and surf-riding under supervision of experts who also gave instruction in wrestling, jumping and distance racing. As a result of intense physical activity, boys were strong, healthy and mentally alert. They were also extremely fierce, independent in spirit and determined in character. At the age of twelve or so, they underwent