INTERCULTURAL DANCE: Exploring a Finnish migrant connection with Indigenous cultures through dance.

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KEY WORDS

Autoethnography, artistic practice, place identity, contemporary dance, cultural framework, choreographic processes, performance space.
ABSTRACT

This research is a dance-based, autoethnographic study which explores my connection with place as a Savolainen woman born on Kalkadoon country; an Australian-born Finn. Edward Relph states 'the more profoundly inside a place the person feels, the stronger will be his or her identity with that place' (1976, 49). I am interested in how a sense of “place identity” has informed my choreographic practice. Autoethnography is important because it places the research within a lived experience: my insider account of a lived experience within the White Australia Policy through my lens as a first generation Australian-born Finn. It also speaks to the space in-between for those, like me, who feel they do not fit into mainstream identity but look like they do.

By exploring my lived experience through dance autoethnography, new understandings of my place identity within a cultural, social and political context have emerged. Ellis and Flaherty state ‘subjectivity is situated such that the voices in our heads and the feelings in our bodies are linked to political, cultural, and historical contexts’ (1992, 4). In order to begin my rehearsal process, I wanted a cultural framework which related to connection with land to guide the research. My investigations led me to the Maori examples of “Tikanga Maori” (Tikanga are the customs and traditions), in particular the “Pepeha” (Introduction) and allowed me to challenge my choreographic practice through this cultural framework.
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STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

The work contained in the thesis has not been previously submitted for an award at this or any higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature ____________________________
Date __________________________
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Chapter One – Place identity and choreography

1.1 Background to the study

1.1.1 Australian-born Finn

Figure 1: Australian-born Finn

*Exploring Finnish connections with Indigenous cultures through dance...*

This research is a dance-based, autoethnographic study, which explores my connection with place as a Savolainen woman born on Kalkadoon country and how this sense of place identity is informing my choreographic practice...

I am a Savolainen woman on my father’s side and a Uusimaan woman on my mother’s side. Juva, the location of my father’s family home, is located in the province of Eastern Finland and is part of the Southern Savonia region. Vihti was home for my mother and is in the region of Uusimaa, located in southern Finland on the shore of the Gulf of Finland. I was born on Kalkadoon country, in the mining town called Mt. Isa in Queensland, Australia. My sense of place identity or displacement is the driving force for this research study. I have always been acutely aware that I do not fit a set mould. However, if you look at me, I tick all the boxes for a
comfortable fit within the white Australia policy into which I was born. As a woman with white skin, blonde hair and hazel eyes, my life has been and is a privileged one.

Keen to be accepted in Australia, I witnessed my parents and members of our community live through the struggles that come with leaving home and country and take on the expectations of assimilation within the new country in the 1960’s. Paul Carter writes ‘physical arrival in another country is only one among many arrivals’ (2004, 3). From my experience the psychological arrival takes a long time to process and in some cases, is never completed. As Docker and Fischer state ‘these immigrants from continental Europe were labelled ‘new Australians’ and were officially welcomed on the basis that they would assimilate’ (Docker, J & Fischer G 2000, 26). As a first generation Australian-born Finn, I position myself as a person born away from my ancestral home through no choice of my own with the good intentions of my parents. I, along with others, am experiencing this perspective in contemporary Australia. My interpretive paradigm is that of a first generation Australian with traditional training in western theatre dance. I find a connection with Nakata’s statement ‘as an interested ‘knower’, I am asking to understand how I come to understand’ (Nakata, M 2007, 216).

Factors that contribute to the position of “other” as a first generation child of migrants is English are not the first language and there are different understandings of the world from that of the mainstream. The differences from that of the mainstream culture may be shared with Indigenous Australians. However, outward appearances of the first generation children of migrants may grant them a position of privilege, especially if they do not reveal their
differences. If this occurs, a position of falsehood or denial of cultural identity can develop throughout childhood and adulthood. Those who embrace their cultural identity and stand with others who identify as “other”, can be placed in a space of in-between-ness. This in-between space at the cultural interface can be both a privileged one and an unsettling one.

In 1963, I grew up in a traditional Finnish home environment located in North West Queensland. Olavi Koivukangas, Director of the Institute of Migration, Turku, Finland writes that:

> The postwar Finns to Australia were generally skilled craftsmen and construction work was the common trade. The Finns settled mainly in Sydney, Melbourne and other capital cities, however remote mining town of Mt. Isa in Queensland was also a stronghold of Finnish settlement. (2007, 239)

The introduction of formal education was also the formalisation of my learning of the English language. My twin and I would often communicate in our native language between ourselves while we were in class. Whilst this continued to ensure the Finnish culture and language would continue with the new generation, it also slowed the assimilation process for me. Mt Isa was a town filled with many cultural groups who openly shared their culture with each other. It was understood and accepted by non English speaking communities that culture was valued, maintained and respected.

Being Finnish represented being different and this position of difference created many wonderful relationships with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Our common ground was that we had our individual cultural language, food, ways of understanding the world and expressions of that understanding. Friendships with Aboriginal, Greek, Torres Strait Island, Yugoslav, Italian and Finnish children flourished. However, this position of difference did not
help cultivate friendships with children from dominant Australian culture. Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes:

To describe colonization as a ‘shared culture’ for those who have been colonized and for those who have colonized. This means, for example, that colonized peoples share a language of colonisation, share knowledge about their colonizers, and, in terms of a political project, share the same struggle for decolonization. It also means that colonizers, too, share a language and knowledge of colonization. (1999, 45)

This shared language and knowledge can be enveloped, within the Australian experience of assimilation. “Assimilation” was the official goal for continental European immigrants as well. ‘They, too, were to absorb Australian culture as their own, though the methods for achieving this were to be less drastic than for Aboriginal families and communities’ (Docker, J & Fischer, J 2000, 26). The multicultural label within Australia tends to encourage and assume that cultures can and will blend. Joy Elley found that although second generation Turkish immigrants often speak of a dual identity, they still perceive themselves as ‘Turkish with a difference’ (Akclik 1993, 55). Elley states, ‘I see myself as Australian-Turkish: the identity of second-generation Turkish migrants in Australia’ (Akclik 1993, 55).

My awareness of space and place relationship with land began very early with the awareness that what happened in my home and community did not match with what happened outside my home and community. My childhood influences frame my view of the world with particular reference to relationships with people and place. Ian Forward writes that the ‘the perpetuation of some form of Finnish culture in Australia will depend on the degree to which the English-speaking offspring of aging Finnish immigrants develop an interest in their heritage’ (2003, p
284). As a first generation born in Australia, my connection to my cultural heritage is strong and passionate, something I have shared with my children.

1.1.2 Australian Contemporary Dance within a cultural/intercultural context

Australia, as the world’s smallest continent and largest island, is characterised by diversity (Stock, C & Dyson, J, 2006, p 1). Stock and Dyson go on to say that ‘our people are as diverse as the landscape. Similarly our dance, apart from the strong Indigenous presence, began as a migrant culture’ (Stock, C & Dyson J, 2006, p 2). However, this strong Indigenous dance has also developed into Contemporary Indigenous dance as we know it today. It began in 1989 with the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre becoming a fully professional company (Johnson, C, Y 2003, 345). Johnson goes on to say ‘its artistic director, Raymond Blanco, promoted teamwork in choreography and innovative collaborations with mainstream non-Indigenous artists’ (2003, 345). Bangarra Dance Theatre under the artistic direction of Carole Johnson then became and still remains a mainstream contemporary Indigenous dance identity. ‘It’s founding and current Artistic Director ‘Stephen Page sparked national interest in 1992 with Praying mantis dreaming, a ballet about an Aboriginal woman caught between the Aboriginal and European worlds’ (Johnson 2003, 345).

An Australian intercultural voice in contemporary dance from a migrant perspective began at this time also. Johnson writes, ‘The pioneer of professional intercultural dance in Australia is Kai
Tai Chan, a Chinese Malaysian who came here to study architecture and was introduced to dance-theatre by Margaret Barr’ (2003, 345). Johnson goes on to state ‘he founded the One Extra Company in Sydney in 1976 and remained its artistic director until 1992. Searching for Australian identity that includes difference and multiple views of cultural experience was a central concern in his choreography’ (2003, 345). On the other side of the country, Marrugeku Theatre company’s Burning Daylight ‘have been exploring the complex ways in which Asians and Aborigines have borrowed, copied, transposed and reinvented each other’s traditions, languages and worlds’ (Stephenson 2007, 165).

‘Independent Indigenous choreographers like Frances Rings, Bernadette Walong and Jason Pitt are making their mark on the national scene’ (Stock & Dyson 2006, 6). More recently Vicki Van Hout, Albert David, Dalisa Pigram, Rita Pryce and Tammi Gissell are retelling traditional Indigenous stories within a contemporary dance context. Tony Yap, like Kai Tai Chan, is another Chinese Malay Australian. ‘Unlike Stephen Page and Kai Tai Chan, Tony Yap situates his work in a context that is metaphysical rather than socio-political’ (Stock 2008, 8). Stock goes on to say ‘in contrast, the newest company to emerge on the intercultural Australian stage is Polytoxic, whose work reflects a Pacific rather than Asian inflection. The company was founded in 2000 by Lisa Fa’alafi and Efeso Fa’anana (both of Samoan descent)’ (2008, 9).

The before-mentioned choreographers create work from their personal sense of place identity to this country, Australia, either as First Nation peoples with their deep spiritual connection with the land or as migrants, sharing the journey of migration. As Stephenson states,
‘collaboration across difference and shared senses of displacement are also found in some of the most interesting encounters between Indigenous and Asian Artists (Stephenson 2007, 165). The intersection of contemporary dance with cultural knowledge is a complex and deeply layered process. The outcome in performance may offer a new or different social, cultural or political viewpoint for the audience. Through the medium of contemporary dance, artists are creating work that questions Australian identity while honouring cultural knowledge.

1.1.3 My choreographic voice within a cultural/intercultural context

In my own professional choreographic work, intercultural understanding and community awareness have featured for eighteen years. Paul Carter writes ‘the impulse to identify poiesis, or ‘making’, with place-making is no doubt a widespread migrant tendency. As figures in whom distant, usually dissimilar places are joined, migrants are walking metaphors’. Carter goes on to say ‘it showed the value to a creative culture of the migrant sensibility’ (2004, 4). Even though I was not born in Finland, I grew up in a traditional Finnish home environment in terms of food, language and the Finnish understanding of the world. My sense of place and identity as an Australian has always been uncertain. Perhaps the close friendship with an Aboriginal female from Gundanji country from my childhood to the present day has given me a window into understanding an Indigenous perspective which, sitting alongside my Finnish heritage and cultural understanding, gives me a perspective that is different from the Australian norm. This has given me an inter-cultural perspective to bring to my dance making. With this particular
perspective, I look for ways to explore how dancers can discover and experience other ways of making live performance.

Figure 2: Past projects

This perspective was prevalent in four examples of my choreographic work which span across the art form sectors. They are:

1995  *Language Rhythms – Chapter One*  Professional Company sector
2000  *Do you see me!*  Youth Arts sector
2005  *Movement in Landscape*  Community Arts sector
2010  *TUKI*  Tertiary Education sector

Each example had a four part process which included research, process, product and feedback.

Integral to my choreographic process is community consultation, ownership and feedback. The community groups involved in the four examples given, dependent upon the theme of the
work, were ethnic groups, teenagers, people who live with a disability and dancers from diverse cultural backgrounds within the tertiary education sector.

Figure 3: Aspects of past projects

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<td>Tertiary Dancers</td>
<td>Rehearsal Community Feedback</td>
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The relationship between the choreographer and the individual and their community is an important factor to consider. For instance Peta Stephenson describes the critical difference between public and private knowledge. ‘Some knowledge is sacred and not to be shared with ‘outsiders’, and certainly not to be painted for public viewing ‘(2007, p179). Stephenson goes on to say that ‘the issues of representation and of who is authorised to speak for or about whom remain highly charged and contested. Such vexed questions are especially pertinent when the person or community being represented is Indigenous’ (2007, 172).
For the last eighteen years, my choreographic process has been a collaborative one with the participants whether in the professional, community or education sectors. Rather than enter a rehearsal with dance movement prepared, I encourage the participants to be part of the movement vocabulary exploration. Once I feel and see what I am looking for, then I can begin folding and shaping the choreography. In the 2003 Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia, Erin Brannigan and Amanda Card write:

Through this type of exchange dancers help to create the images or the movement language that provide the substance of the work. However, their contribution is circumscribed by the functional, stylistic and ideological preferences of the choreographer. (2003, 130)

This is a similar process that I use within my own work.

1.1.4 Culture of migration

As a choreographer of Finnish cultural heritage, my interest in cultural identity for myself and others is foremost when creating new work. Dawn Bennett states ‘the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), which has played a key international role in cultural development, defined culture as something that is ‘not limited to a particular set of activities connected with heritage and arts, but encompasses all those activities which define the identity of a particular human society or group’ (2007, 134). Bennett goes on to say that ‘in a move away from the more usual definitions of category or product, Helsinki’s City of Culture Foundation defined culture in terms of process: *Culture is the space or degree of material and spiritual development achieved over time with all its phenomena’* (2007, 134).
By exploring identity from an intercultural viewpoint, I ask questions of myself, the dancers and the audience. Martin Nakata writes ‘to connect with common understandings I use the term *Cultural Interface* but this is not restricted to cultural specificities’ (2007, 198). He goes on to say:

> The Cultural Interface is constituted by points of intersecting trajectories. It is a multi-layered and multi-dimensional space of dynamic relations constituted by the intersections of time, place, distance, different systems of thought, competing and contesting discourses within and between different knowledge traditions, and different systems of social, economic and political organisations. (2007, 199)

Similarities can be found in the migrant experience. This shared experience brings people together from diverse cultural backgrounds, recognising the reasons for displacement may be vastly different. As an Indigenous woman, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999, 12) writes, ‘we had to work out ways of knowing; we had to predict, to learn and reflect’.
For the past eighteen years, my choreographic process has been a collaborative one with participants in the professional, community, cultural or education sectors. Integral to my choreographic process is community consultation, ownership and feedback. This sense of community in my choreographic process has been a way of developing identity as a choreographer and capturing identity in preparation for performance and in performance. I wanted to dig deeper and explore my sense of place identity or displacement with the land of
my birth. Employing autoethnographic and practice-led methodology was an obvious pathway of investigation.

2.2 History of the study

The performance work _DIRT_ is the outcome after many choreographic explorations about identity in previous works and sees a shift in both my creative process and choreographic style in performance. The place and space to perform the work _DIRT_ became an important consideration. Instead of choosing a literal, tangible place like Finland Park on Finland Rd on the Sunshine Coast (an iconic place for Finnish migrants to gather for community events), I chose a space where place is represented. The theatre allows me as an artist to have more aesthetic control. Purposefully fractured scenes were used to reflect the two worlds I live in as a Finnish woman born on Kalkadoon country.

The practice-led enquiry within this research was carried out over 1.5 years with two different groups of dancers in two different dance works and one film work. The first work _TUKI_ was created with and performed by eighteen first year QUT Creative Industries Dance students in June 2010 and was part of _Essentially Dance 2010_. The second work _DIRT_ was created with and performed by four (two casts of two dancers) QUT Creative Industries dance graduates in 2011 and was part of _Essentially Dance 2011_. The film work was created in 2010 and was part of both performances, however incorporated in different ways.
In my research there are several questions which have remained constant and have provided context for my investigations.

*How has my childhood growing up with Aboriginal and migrant communities in the Queensland desert in the 1960’s contributed to my professional practice as a choreographer?*

*How can connection to land from an Indigenous perspective inform and support the creative process toward dance making and performance?*

*Can this choreographic perspective contribute to intercultural understanding and community awareness in the Australian context?*

### 2.3 Artistic Practice as research

I have implemented autoethnographic and practice-led methodologies; studio-based enquiry, participant observation, reflective practice and contextual findings to explore and challenge my choreographic process. In practice-led research, Haseman states:

> Within the qualitative tradition, there are well established strategies and methods designed to investigate and understand...these are practice-based research strategies and include: the reflective practitioner (embracing reflection-in action and reflection on-action); participant research; participatory research; collaborative inquiry and action research. (Haseman 2006, 2)

‘The move to performance has been accompanied by a shift in the meaning of ethnography and ethnographic writing’ says Norman Denzin (2003, 14). Denzin goes on to say ‘In each of these forms the writer-as-performer is self-consciously present, morally and politically self-aware’. In keeping with artistic practice as research, Mafé (2004) states, ‘In its simplest forms, artistic practice as research is that which is initiated in practice, where questions, problems, challenges are identified and formed by the needs of the practice and practitioners’.
2.3.1 Autoethnography in performance

I had the opportunity to attend two performance events in 2010 where autoethnography was used as the research method. The first was at The Loft, Creative Industries with a performance entitled *Mind Games* by Jo Loth on the 20th May, 2010. This performance was a mischievous cabaret about mental health. Performer and researcher, Loth based the work on personal experiences and on the experiences of women she had interviewed (Program notes, 2010). The second was at the Brisbane Powerhouse which also involved autoethnographic research, incorporating connection with land or place storytelling. *The Bougainville Photoplay Project*, by Paul Dwyer & David Williams on the 27th August, 2010, offered an intimate performance that highlights the moral and ethical commitments binding Australians and the people of Bougainville (PNG) in the wake of a brutal civil war (Program notes, 2010).

Both these performances were rich contextual findings for me. This was when I realised that this method of research was pivotal for my study. Ellis and Bochner state that ‘autoethnography is an autobiographical genre that connects the personal to the cultural, social, and political” (2006, 434). They go on to say that autoethnography ‘was designed to be unruly, dangerous, vulnerable, rebellious’ (2006, 433). Within the developments of autoethnography Barleet and Ellis recognise the function of practice-led research. ‘In practice-led research, composers and performers are uncovering the ways in which their personal lives and cultural experiences intertwine in the creation and interpretation of musical work’ says Barleet, Brydie-Leigh & Ellis, Carolyn (2009, 7).
Autoethnography is important because it places the research within a lived experience—my insider account of a lived experience within the Australian assimilation immigration policy through my lens as a first generation Australian-born Finn. It also speaks to the space in-between for those, like me, who feel we do not fit into mainstream identity but look like we do.

2.3.2 Designing a framework for Dance Autoethnography and Artistic Practice as research

In dance autoethnography the artist is aware of their practice as a result of the autobiographical component involved. The artist is working with the body as the vehicle for story telling/information sharing from an insider perspective. Similarly, in artistic practice, the reflexive nature of the choreographic process by way of creating, viewing and analysing the work with the view to replan can also be strongly positioned as research by way of reflective practice. Margaret Archer states, ‘Reflexivity is exercised through people holding internal conversations. The key feature of reflexive inner dialogue is silently to pose questions to ourselves and to answer them, to speculate to ourselves, any aspect of our environment and, above all, about the relationship between them’ (2007, 63). She goes on to say, ‘in other words, internal conversation is not ‘idle’; one of its most important causal powers is reflexively to conceive and to conduct courses of action by which we navigate our way through the social world’ (2007, 64). By manipulating the choreographic elements of space, time and energy in dance, a choreographer goes through similar processes of analysis and reframing as do academic scholars in the search for new knowledge and ways of understanding.
2.3.3 Dance Autoethnography and Artistic Practice as a research strategy

As a dance autoethnographer, my insider perspective within a specific time and place in Australian history is a lived experience. To share this lived experience by way of dance, I have chosen to choreograph my story with other dancers. To capture cultural sensitivity in performance, investigation was necessary into each dancer’s own identity with their place of birth. As a choreographer, my artistic practice is in a dance studio in keeping with safe dance practice for the dancers. This space becomes the place where new understandings can be realised. In this study, the studio became the place for movement material making, structuring of the work and understandings toward spatial design, performance intention and performers’ intention. The outcome of the research findings were then presented in a performance venue within a western theatre setting.

2.4 Aspects of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action guiding the practice

Reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action can be found among a broad range of professional contexts, including the arts. It is the practice of thinking in action and then critically analysing the process in order to reframe a problem to once again go through another process so the best possible outcomes are produced. With reflection-in-action Schön states, ‘the workaday life of the professional depends on the tacit knowing-in-action’ (1983, p 49). Furthermore, the professional ‘tries to make sense of it, he also reflects on the understandings which have been
implicit in his action, understandings which he surfaces, criticizes, restructures, and embodies in further action’ (Schön 1983, 50).

Reflection-on-action is when a professional or practitioner becomes aware of their frames and can make changes to put into practice new understandings. In this context Schön states, ‘when a practitioner becomes aware of his frames, he also becomes aware of the possibility of alternative ways of framing the reality of his practice’ (1983, 310). As a choreographer, problem solving in the creative process is within tacit frames. By using frame analysis, I have become aware of a variety of frames I habitually use.

For the two practice-led dance works within this study I was able to reflect-in-action during the choreographic process of the first work TUKI and reflect-on-action after the performance season. By reframing my choreographic process for and during DIRT, I was able to come to new understandings about my practice and place identity.

2.5 Aspects of Indigenous Standpoint Theory

In considering Indigenous cultural understandings, I have become aware of Martin Nakata’s contended Indigenous Standpoint theory. Its application to my particular Indigenous heritage supports a viewpoint I am familiar with as an Australian-born Finn. Nakata states, ‘Standpoint theory in my mind is a method of inquiry, a process for making intelligible “the corpus of
objectified knowledge about us” as it emerges and organises understanding of our lived realities. I see this as theorising knowledge from a particular and interested position’ (2007, 215).

He goes on to say that the ‘cultural interface is constituted by points of intersecting trajectories. It is a multi-layered and multi-dimensional space of dynamic relations constituted by the intersections of time, place, distance, different systems of thought, competing and contesting discourses within and between different knowledge traditions, and different systems of social, economic and political organisation’ (2007, 199). Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2009, 45) adds ‘that colonized peoples share a language of colonisation, share knowledge about their colonizers, and, in terms of a political project, share the same struggle for decolonization’. These understandings offer me insight into deepening my creative process.
2.6 Aspects of place identity supporting the practice

Figure 5: Place

PLACE IDENTITY: *philosophical framework of the study*

“We are of the land, and the land is of us. We are ‘tangata whenua’ people of the land” (Teina Moetara 2010).

“We know the trees, the land and the dancing is came from the land, song and ceremony is came from the land” (Wandjuk Marika 1995).

“The more profoundly inside a place the person feels, the stranger will be his or her identity with that place” (Edward Relph 1976).

‘To be inside a place is to belong to it and to identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are the stronger is this identity with the place’ (Relph 1976, 49). Bachelard also comments that ‘all really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home’ (1969, 4).

I connect with Wandjuk Marika when he says 'the common truth that we share is the Land', with Relph when he suggests that the more profoundly inside a place a person feels, the stronger will be his or her identity with that place and with Moetara when he speaks of the challenge to translate a framework across multiple understanding and background. As a choreographer I look for processes that embrace identity when creating work. As I am
interested in intercultural understanding and social awareness, place identity presents a challenging and important context in which to create and present work to an audience.

My previous work has not considered these relational aspects of place and identity and has lacked the grounding that they provide within the work. Relph states ‘to be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: to be human is to have and to know your place. It is a profound and complex aspect of man’s experience of the world’ (1976, 1).

2.7 Cultural and Artistic Contexts

2.7.1 Frances Rings

In 2009, as Head of Contemporary Dance at the New Zealand School of Dance, I had the opportunity to commission Frances Rings to remount an excerpt of her work X300 for the Graduation Season. I had previously viewed the live work as part of the Bangarra Dance Theatre season True Stories in Brisbane on 7th June, 2007. According to Australia Dancing (2011), Rings is a descendant of the Kokatha tribe and also has German heritage. Rings has performed with Bangarra as a principal dancer for 12 years and worked with prominent Australian choreographers such as Meryl Tankard, Leigh Warren and Legs on the Wall. As a choreographer, Rings created her first work for Bangarra in 2002 (AgIdeas, 2011). Other commission include Western Australian Ballet and the Sydney Festival (Australia Dancing, 2011)
and is now the Associate Choreographer with Bangarra Dance Theatre. Rings started the work *X300* within a community site. She states in her research phase ‘I like going to the area. The area where it was is very close to my mother’s land and I have family that live out there, that were removed from the community closest to the site’. Rings states further:

> There was lots of research, be it reports from the McCleland Royal Commission into the atomic testing, testimonials, excerpts from radio interviews. I even got hold of a composer who worked at ABC National and had a lot of interviews with the surveyor from the area and from some of the British head scientists involved. (Dance Train magazine, 2007)

Rings goes on to say that ‘it was fascinating to listen to some of the stories coming out of their mouths. Just getting a sense of that time as well: the mid 1950s and ‘60s and the Menzies Government and what Australia was like then’ (Dance Train magazine, 2007). The performance production of *X300* was performed in a western theatre setting and has toured throughout Australia at major performing arts venues. ‘*X300*, which was the codename for the nuclear test site at Maralinga, is a series of chapters focusing on different aspects of the event’ says Selma Nadarajah. She goes on to say that ‘Rings not only explores the traumatic effects on the people but also places the event in time featuring frenzied dancers jiving to rock and roll, and using real news footage reporting the bombings’ (Nadarajah 2007, The Australian Stage).

This work connected with me deeply due to the story telling of an experience within a place and time in Australian history. The medium of contemporary dance within a specific cultural viewpoint was a vehicle for social awareness for me. The opportunity to be part of remounting an excerpt of the work, with non-Indigenous dancers, was an insightful experience for all concerned. The meaning of place within the work was paramount in understanding the
movement vocabulary. Experiencing this process was familiar to me and it reaffirmed my belief and practice in research with community and place.

2.7.2 Teina Moetara

As Head of Contemporary Dance at the New Zealand School of Dance, I had the pleasure of working alongside Teina Moetara within cultural practice studies for the students. Teina Moetara was born in Manutuke, Turanganui-a-Kiwa and was bred in the world of ‘Maori’ performing arts (Toi Whakaari, 2011). Moetara was a performer and core composer with the internationally recognized Waihirere Maori Club for 20 years (Toi Whakaari, 2011). His directorship experience includes Manawa Pou, Pakiwaitara and The Trial of the Cannibal Dog for NZ International Arts Festival. Most recently Moetara was writer and dramaturg for Wellington arts company Eko in their latest production Crossing Lines (Tangata Whenua.com, 2011).

In Crossing Lines, Moetara worked with more than 400 people from within the Maori, Somali and artistic communities of South Wellington (Tangata Whenua.com, 2011). In Moetara’s research about Maori and Somalian cultures, he says ‘they found some common values and traditions, such as special roles for elders and the use of whakapapa, with young Somalis able to recite their genealogy back 30 generations’ (Tangata Whenua.com, 2011). Moetara goes on further to explain:
In a normal Maori process, of receiving somebody, we know them, we learn them. The process is a two way thing, and so we know how to adjust as well. So the result of (the way refugees are ‘processed’ into Aotearoa) is that migrants get the raw end of the stick, but it disempowers all of us.
(TangataWhenua.com, 2011)

Even though I did not see the performance of Crossing Lines, I had the opportunity to see prior works by Moetara in 2008 and 2009. We had discussions at length in this time about cultural frameworks within contemporary arts practice. These discussions along with witnessing his process with dancers and actors have given me insight into another way to create work.

2.7.3 Gretel Taylor

I came across Gretel Taylor’s work during my research into site specific dance practice. Her paper entitled *Perceiving and Expressing Place: Site-Specific Performance by a White Sheila* gave me an insight into her experience as a white Australian female dance artist working with a group of Gunditjmara dancers from south-western Victoria in 2003. Taylor says, ‘she decided to see if her own dance practice could help overcome a shallow sense of belonging’ (Taylor, G 2007 RMIT Local-Global journal vol 3, pg 135)). Her PhD thesis entitled *Locating: Place and the Moving Body* goes deeper and engages in a multi-sensory listening to the country that aspires towards (white Australian) location-that elusive and longed-for ‘belonging’ (Taylor, G 2009, Abstract p1). Her practice explores the relationship between body and place through improvisation. Her exegesis is autoethnographic in orientation with her research being of interest to me, as I recognise similar issues of fitting in to a specific culture.
2.7.4 Karen Barbour

I saw Karen Barbour perform at the Contemporary Ethnographic Across the Disciplines conference at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand in November, 2010. In her book entitled “Dancing across the Page: Narrative and Embodied Ways of Knowing”, Barbour positions herself as a Pakeha (New Zealander of predominantly European heritage) and a woman of her era. She goes on to say that ‘reflexivity as an academic and my ongoing dance practice causes me to pause and take notice when I am confronted with curious questions about my tattoos and dreadlocks. While my tattoos and dreadlocks may cause anxiety for others unable to ‘read’ me easily, both are embodied manifestations of my own reclamation of personal and cultural identity and my attempt to affirm my feminist, political subjectivity’ (Barbour 2011, 22). Barbour speaks of identity as something others try to read via embodied manifestations. This implies that in the case of physical attributes, misinterpretation can be read in many ways. This misinterpretation of identity is where I locate my dislocation.

2.8 Data collection methods

Participant consent was confirmed before any data was collated and all data collection used within the final thesis has been approved by the participants. Movement vocabulary building was developed from tasks, improvisation and video recording was used as a tool for referencing by the dancers and analysis by the researcher. I have kept a personal choreographic journal
throughout the rehearsal process, designed an audience questionnaire, conducted an unstructured interview and utilised participant/non participant observation. Also, participant journals were used throughout the process.

2.9 Ethical considerations

Three ethical applications were approved for the study. Ethics Approval No. 1000000283.

Ethics application 1: Involved travelling to Manutuke, New Zealand to experience a Marae Noho with Toi Whakaari (New Zealand National Drama School) in April 2010. The data collation included a participant/non-participant observation and an unstructured interview with Teina Moetara.

Ethics application 2: Involved creating a work, TUKI with first year dance students from Creative Industries, Dance Program in semester one, 2010. The data collation included dancers journals completed throughout the rehearsal process, researchers personal choreographic journal and questionnaire for dancers.

Ethics application 3: Involved creating a work, DIRT with graduate dancers from Creative Industries, Dance program in semester one, 2011. The data collation included researcher’s personal choreographic journal and questionnaire for the audience.
Chapter Three – Research Influences

3.1 Marae Noho: Manutuke, New Zealand

The beginning of my research journey took me to Manutuke, New Zealand in April, 2010. I joined one hundred and seventy three people, both staff and students from Toi Whakaari (NZ National Drama School) for the ten hour journey in buses from Wellington to Manutuke for four days of Te Reo Maori and cultural immersion. The data collection method was to participate and observe a Marae Noho (stay - sacred open meeting area) and interview Teina Moetara.
Moetara and his whanau (family) warmly welcomed everyone and at 8pm that evening I experienced my first Pepeha. The Pepeha is the Maori way you introduce yourself to others. This introduction tells the story of how each individual arrived here. But before we journey back in time we should anchor ourselves to this whenua (land/placenta). Some spoke of ancestors, land connections, family and their passion. After each person spoke, a waiata (song) was sung together. Many cultures were present and spoke to their heritage. All were asked to be attentive and present while each person spoke.

The process of taking time to honour and value each person’s heritage was a new experience for me. I believe this component influenced the work TUKI which I was making at the time. The next three days continued to bring awareness to place and identity. Skills development workshops in Mau Rakau (training using weaponry, foot and body movements), Kowhaiwhai (Maori design, patterning, and pedagogy behind art works) and Harakeke (preparation and working with flax, the pedagogy behind making baskets) were the focus sessions. I spent most of my time participating and observing the Mau Rakau and found the movement language very detailed. We learnt there were thirty six movements in the face and thirty six types of eyes. Nature’s language translated in human language; for example: birds and trees. ‘Speak to the trees and speak to the wind’ were directions given about movement delivery. ‘Empty your vessels and clear your storage houses’ were phrases used often in preparation for new movement teaching. Further direction included:
To see is to know
To listen is to understand
To speak is to seek
To think is to envision. (2010, Tei Nohotima, workshop leader)

These concepts directly influenced the way I approached movement development in both Tuki and DIRT. For example, asking the dancers to be influenced by their own place identity and memories of place. To see, to listen, to speak and to think were useful within discussions in the process of movement development. My experience in each workshop was always the importance of connection with the land and how this could be reflected through the movement, art work or weaving. I was also influenced by how voice was used rather than music to compliment the movement and have explored this within DIRT.

The unstructured interview with Moetara happened over the four days we were in Manutuke. In answer to the following question: How have you developed the framework of community understanding that you share with your students at Toi Whakaari? Teina replied:

The framework has always been in the world. It has been in existence, practiced and applied by our ancestors, and is rigorous and dynamic enough to withstand massive change up unto this point in our existence. However, this thinking can only continue to survive if it is opened up to people regardless of ethnicity and background. The biggest challenge is to translate this framework across multiple understanding and difference. The beauty about the framework is that intrinsically it is designed to do that. We call it Tikanga. (Moetara, 2010)

My time in Manutuke has deeply stayed with me and opened up a new way of thinking about my relationship with the land, the intention of movement material and where my artistic voice is within those two places. The Pepeha in particular is a strong tool to get to know people very quickly and is something I had not thought about before in relation to myself and place. My
four days at Manutuke was an amazing experience which definitely influenced the next two
dance works I went on to create.

3.2 CEAD: Contemporary Ethnography Across the Disciplines Conference: Hamilton, NZ

The first Contemporary Ethnography Across the Disciplines Conference Hui (to gather), was
held at the University of Waikato 16 – 19th November, 2010. Delegates from many countries
represented a vast cross-section of fields and disciplines. As an emerging dance
autoethnographer, this conference gave me the opportunity to experience a snap shot of what
kinds of research is happening in the field of ethnography, in particular, how dance practice
contributes to ethnographic research and how dance practice is a method of ethnographic
research. Eight dance practitioners were presenting papers, including myself, at the conference.
Three presenters and their work had an impact on me: Norman Denzin, keynote speaker and
co-author of *Handbook of Qualitative Research*; Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith, another
keynote speaker and author of *Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*
and; Anne Maree Sefulu, a Samoan scholar presenting her masters work *Children of the
Migrant Dreamers*.

The work of Sefulu was very reassuring for me, as someone who is also experiencing and
noticing the experiences of migration within the new country in recent times. Even though my
research is in dance autoethnography, the theories and methodologies Sefulu used are
recognising the different points of view; one from her Samoan perspective and the other from her western perspective. This suggested a shared experience and was relevant to me.
Chapter Four – Creative work *DIRT*

4.1 Introduction

As a human being interested in intercultural understanding and social awareness, place identity presents a challenging and important context in which to create and present work to an audience. In my personal and professional life, I feel I occupy a space between Indigenous and mainstream Australia. The research methodologies allowed me to explore and challenge my choreographic process. The research findings embedded within the creative work led to an enhanced understanding of culture and place identity for: me as a choreographer; the dancers in the creative process and; the audiences’ perceptions of the performative outcome. I hope further understandings will contribute to intercultural and community awareness in the Australian context through contemporary dance practice and performance. Evidence and findings from my investigations support how dance autoethnography does contribute to the ethnographic field as a method of research. This chapter consists of a sequential order of events in regard to the dance work entries about the process taken from my personal choreographic journal.
4.2 *DIRT*: the beginning

‘The heart of the Kalkadoon is the Mt. Isa region where today the Kalkadoon people, despite the dislocation of the war and internment in reserves, hold strong links to their country and are, slowly but surely rebuilding their culture, economy and connections to their country’ (Kurityityin, B 2010). Kalkadoon county is in the desert area of Queensland. Mt. Isa is a mining town. In the 1960’s it was flourishing with communities who had migrated from around the globe. As a child we would visit the ocean by driving all day to Townsville on the coast.

I knew at the beginning of making this work and in the research that it was going to be about two very different kinds of places within my lived experience; my insider account within the Australian Assimilation Immigration Policy. How I was going to get there was still a mystery. I also knew that I wanted images of ice melting as a metaphor for Finnish people migrating to Australia and experimented with different ways of capturing this on film. The inclusion of the dance film in the foyer was important as it connected *TU ki* with *DIRT*. It also gave the viewer additional context before seeing the work. The film was made in 2010 with the purpose for inclusion in both works. It symbolised the “I” in both works and the costume related to the live performer in *DIRT*. This reinforced that particular dancer as the focus of the work; a shared autobiography.

With reference and respect to Indigenous cultures, I begin the work by walking forward with an offering to the audience. The offering is a glass container of red dirt; a piece of this land that we
share. I speak in my three languages; movement, Finnish and English, acknowledging the traditional owners of the land where the work is being presented.

4.3 DIRT: the use of theatrical space

I chose the theatre as it allowed me to consider the issues of place and space and their importance in the theatrical work. It was important for me to travel between two worlds right from the beginning of the work; the stage is one world and the audience is the other. I used the edge of the stage to represent space in-between. It is also the space in-between for the audience and the performer. Here I sat for a short moment and dialogued with the audience.

My name is Tiina Alinen and I was born on Kalkadoon country. That’s Mt. Isa way. (Alinen 10.05.11 Journal)

Referencing cultural protocol from the Noho Marae experience, I introduced myself, made myself known. I went on to explain a little about myself and where I grew up. Positioned on the edge of the stage and sitting, I looked at the audience and said:

Everything outside my home is so not Finnish. (Alinen 10.05.11 Journal)

I moved on down the stairs, into the auditorium and continued my story,

Where my people come from, in the winter, the sun comes up at 9.00am and goes down by 3pm. (Alinen 10.05.11 Journal)

I had travelled between two worlds in a short period of time. The audience was not familiar with performers entering their space in a formal western theatre. This was not meant to make anyone feel uneasy, more to realise that boundaries have been crossed; there is something
different happening here. Throughout the work, the use of the space was an important component. Two worlds were interpreted in many different ways with “the place in the middle” coming more into play as the piece develops.

4.4 DIRT: how the Pepeha was used to structure the work

The Pepeha is characterised by three circles. The wider circle could represent your ancestors, mountain or river. The middle circle, a step closer to yourself, could represent your family, friends and community. The inner circle is more personal and could represent your passions. The Pepeha experience at Manutuke was my first “Aha” moment. This was the first of three “Aha” moments for me. These moments were pivotal points of crystallisation of information on my journey.

It was clear to me that the Pepeha would be a way to build movement material through tasking. For example, the movement material for the middle circle came from each dancers first experience with water; a connection to their river which was then manipulated by myself as choreographer and used in an abstract form to communicate through unusual movement language.

I introduced the idea of a water memory... to embody this... a way to create unusual movement... I loved the movement... identity was very original and attached to memory. (Alinen 12.03.11 Journal)
I wanted to develop movement material that was not based in a codified technique, had a connection with land and initially came from the dancers. I look for ways to bring out movement material from the dancers I work with. While rehearsing in the Woodward theatre, I became aware that the Pepeha could also be the structure of the work;

Having the space in the Woodward Theatre for creative development is so important... am playing with a bag of dirt hanging from the ceiling... when I put myself in the space with the bag, I realised that this was my inner circle. (A linen 01.04.11 Journal)

This was my second “Aha” moment; the realisation that the three circles are the structure of the work. Now I could explore how the movement material we had developed will fit into that structure. It seemed so obvious but until then, I had not seen it.

The third “Aha” moment; the realisation that the performance venue will represent the two worlds I exist in with the space in-between being the edge of the stage. This was the place I presented an offering, the place I sat and shared my story with both sides. With these two realisations, it became clear to me that the Pepeha structure was working and everything seemed to fall into place. I have reframed the creative process for DIRT through my practice and adapted the concept of Pepeha as a vehicle for movement material making, structuring of the work, spatial design, performance intention and performers’ intention.
4.5 DIRT: structure of the work (directly influenced by a Pepeha)

The work is structured into four sections. They are section 1 Welcome; section 2 Wider Circle; section 3 Middle Circle; section 4 Inner Circle. I will refer to the two performers as Performer No. 1 and Performer No. 2. Performer No. 1 represented me with reference to all three circles and Performer No. 2 represented my ancestors.
4.5.1 Welcome

The Pepeha is the way you introduce yourself to others in Maori. The dance film in the foyer was the beginning of my introduction, the beginning of the Pepeha between the audience and me. The sound of two breaths in and one breath out represented my two cultures been taken in and one person trying to understand and live this out. The music of Sibelius signifies respect for the old country, the country of my ancestors. The eyes looking to the side in the dance film give the feeling that something else is there, something else is taking my attention. Performer No. 1 was filmed so that both sides of the costume are revealed individually. This costume was designed for one dancer/person with two sides to her sense of self; one side is a long jacket and the other side is a top and pants (see Appendix 2: Visual images of DIRT b) Wider Circle, page 57). Once the audience was seated and the piece began, I opened with the offering to the audience (see Appendix 2: Visual images of DIRT a) Welcome, page 56) and a personal introduction (as described in 4.3 DIRT: the use of theatrical space, page 34).

4.5.2 Wider Circle: your ancestors, mountain, river...

In the first solo Performer No. 1 represented the people of the land by using all the space. The image on the back cyclorama showed a land which is white and covered with snow; the land of my ancestors. Performer No. 1 began as though with the land then emerged forward from the land toward to centre of the stage. The DIRT Film showed a cluster of ice melting into red dirt
across the cyclorama in a panoramic format. This is an analogy of Finnish migration to Australia. The contrast between the two is striking; two different cultures and two world views trying to come together. The ice was small in size, which symbolised the isolation of the experience. Once again, the two breaths in and one breath out was utilised to connect with the DIRT film, presented in the foyer, and to reiterate the humanness of the experience. Performer No. 1, in the next solo, used the space in a different way. Only half of the space was available to her, with a lighting design that showed a boundary (downstage to upstage), highlighting two worlds. Some of the spoken text in this section stated, ‘two world views; two sets of expectations’. In the next solo, Performer No. 2 revealed that my ancients are still with me in Kalkadoon country and the use of a traditional Finnish piece of music by Varttina supports this. Performer No. 2 was wearing a jacket with a feathered collar and pants (see Appendix 2: Visual images of DIRT b) Wider Circle, page 58). She started dancing in the other half of the stage space, separated by lighting.

After this the dancers were together for the only time in the wider circle to represent walking together in the new country. Then parting ways, one continued to search near the audience and the other travelled away from the audience and connected to the land on the back image. Performer No. 2 represented the ancestors who are one with the land. As she continued her solo, she travelled through the barrier of light because she had the wisdom to know that there are no barriers. Moetara states, ‘we are the land and the land is of us. We are ‘tangata whenua’ people of the land and you can feel the land wherever you are’ (2010).
4.5.3 Middle Circle: your family, friends, community...

The memories of my childhood were revealed in this section using two screens with personal photographs (see Appendix 2: Visual images of DIRT c) Middle Circle, page 60). Spoken text included ‘nothing like a Finnish sauna in the Queensland desert’ (Alinen, 2011). The inclusion of the iconic Australian song Land Down Under is used to represent a sense of belonging to the mainstream culture. The abrupt ending between the song and the beginning of the migrant assimilation policy section was intentional. This represented how you can be jolted back into your own reality, to understand your place. The spoken text included, ‘Under assimilation policy, new arrivals were expected to learn English, adopt existing cultural norms and become indistinguishable from the Australian-born population as rapidly as possible’ which is taken from a report to the Commonwealth Government (Review of Settlement Services: Chapter One: Policy Context, p 23).

The costumes in this section represent two generations: Performer No. 2, being that of my parents who were born in the country of their ancestors and; Performer No. 1, being that of my generation, who are born away from the land of their ancestors. The use of sunglasses was to show uniformity and the act of seeing through a particular lens, the assimilation lens (see Appendix 2: Visual images of DIRT c) Middle Circle, page 62-63).
The lighting change into a small box supported the notion of assimilation, being boxed in. When music was introduced, the movement was robotic to compliment this image. The end of this section had the dancers on the floor with the intention of not losing sight of the end goal, of fitting in. In this case it was theatrically used as looking out into the audience, the other world.

4.5.4 Inner Circle: your passions...

In this section the lighting design was an important consideration, as the centre light captured the space in-between. The spoken text included, ‘the place in-between; where I am silent and listen with my eyes’ (Ailinen, 2011). The lowered dirt bag symbolised the land and the movement interplay with it asked, how do we/I connect with the land/place? I used text to support the exploration of the space in-between: ‘having courage; valuing the other’ (Ailinen, 2011). By using a small circular light and a swinging bag, the dancers were in an intimate and sometimes confronting space (see Appendix 2: Visual images of DIRT d) Inner Circle, page 64). I chose the large stage space to contrast against the isolation of an individual performer. This was representing the isolation of my experience of not fitting in. Performer No. 2 represented the ancestors who are there to support and guide. She then left the space watching Performer No. 1, the first generation Australian-born Finn, all the time. The audience was left with the image of a sole dancer, listening to the land (the dirt bag) which was circling her, giving a sense of never ending.
Chapter Five – Research findings

In my research there were several questions which remained constant and provided context for my investigations.

How has my childhood growing up with Aboriginal and migrant communities in the Queensland desert in the 1960’s contributed to my professional practice as choreographer?

How can connection to land from an Indigenous perspective inform and support the creative process toward dance making and performance?

Can this choreographic perspective contribute to intercultural understanding and community awareness in the Australian context?

In response to these questions, there are findings that are personal and others that can relate to a broader population. Within these new understandings there will be parallels between me and others who have experienced in between-ness. The realisation that my isolation as a child from the dominant white culture prevented me from investing fully in relationships has given me a very different understanding of myself within a cultural, social and political context. The opportunity to explore a small part of another culture (Maori) has instilled in me a deeper understanding and appreciation of Indigenous protocols and knowledge.

The practice-led methodologies, studio-based enquiry, participant observation and reflective practice, have challenged my choreographic process. The reflections and analytical processes I have utilised throughout my research have revealed to me how the tools I have been instinctively using for many years as a choreographer are in fact similar to those used in other fields such as business organisations, highlighting the transferability of dance skills to the broader workplace.
Growing up with Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and migrant communities was a lifestyle filled with an inclusive community approach. The differences in our cultural identities was stunningly rich and my learned ability to recognise and value each culture has, I believe journeyed with me into my adult personal and professional life. This research has cemented for me how my culturally rich and diverse childhood has directly contributed to the discovery of my choreographic voice.

As a choreographer who actively values my traditional culture, I look for believability when watching a performance. By this I mean the ability to hold the integrity of the work while simultaneously standing in one’s own identity giving the performance grounded authenticity. Throughout this research, I witnessed transformations in the dancers I was working with which were directly attributed to the processes I undertook to embed a culturally influenced framework – the Pepeha, in the choreographic process. I discovered I had intuitively worked this way all of my professional life with one important component missing. The missing component was ‘how’ rather than ‘what’. I had embodied the idea of difference and others in the process. The act of acknowledging and recognising difference right from the start of the process resulted in a cultural grounding with greater integrity than I had previously experienced.

In this research, each dancer investigated their connection to the place of their birth, questioned ‘how’ they identified with that place via the wider, middle and inner circle concepts through movement exploration and discussion. Through this process, the unravelling of place
identity opened up new understandings of self and also revealed the integral connection with land for people of culture. The traditional concept of Pepeha was offering a way for contemporary western dancers to explore a deeper understanding of self which became imbedded within their dancing and performance. Transformations in the dancers included a more integrated use of breath, heightened dynamic range and grounded authenticity in performance.

From a choreographic practice point of view, I found Tikanga Maori, in particular the concept of the Pepeha, to be a useful tool for movement and performance making. By rethinking the use of theatrical space, my intention was that the audience could experience a sense of place identity that may be different to their own. Furthermore, by reframing the second rehearsal process, I was able to explore new ways of creating a performance work. For instance, I had never explored the stage space as the starting point for structuring a work. To challenge this process further, in the future I would like to explore how the Pepeha could be utilised in a work that was not based on place identity.

New understandings from an ethnographic point of view confirm that a dance autoethnographic process and performance outcome, offering one account of an insider lived experience can be viewed as representational of one part of Australian social and cultural history. Through the audience surveys for the work DIRT, data was collated in response to three questions. They are:
Question 1: Would you consider this work to be intercultural?

Question 2: Did this work give you a better understanding or make you ask questions about other cultures, other than your own?

Question 3: Did this work make you more aware of your identity and place in your community in Australia?

From the surveys, the data results show that 83.1% felt the work, DIRT, is considered intercultural and 71.6% believe it did give them a better understanding or made them ask questions about other cultures, other than their own. This is encouraging, as some of the audience have become aware of the “other”. This confirms for me that this choreographic perspective can contribute to intercultural understanding and community awareness in the Australian context. For the third question, a smaller gap was identified: 57% agreed that the work did make them more aware of their own identity and place in their community, with 42% who disagreed. In further studies, it would be interesting to find out why they disagreed by way of focus groups.

Connections between the theoretical and creative research have opened up for me as a choreographer and researcher, the relationship dance can and does play with what I would like to describe as, a moving information book of knowledge – the embodied book. Both types of research require similar frameworks in which to explore and collate data, however, the materials and outcome of the findings can be vastly different. Different skills are utilised in reading an embodied book to those used in reading a text-based book. ‘Reading’ the embodied book, which has cultural concepts embedded within it, requires cultural tacit knowing in order to connect with these concepts.
For me, contemporary western dance often has little interest in historical or cultural contexts. I now understand through my research that contemporary dance can and does communicate understanding and awareness in these contexts if the ‘how’ approach is connected with traditional concepts. Furthermore, the process of choreographing for me now, with an effective framework for embedding cultural understanding will allow me to continue celebrating cultural differences in my dancers and work. This in turn may allow audiences to learn from and grow awareness through the performance experience.

The White Australia and Immigration Policy is part of our current living history and its perceived power over peoples of different races other than that of English heritage has indeed affected us as a nation in many different ways. As an Australian-born Finn I felt privileged but yet voiceless due to my difference (Populate or Perish, Chapter One: Policy Context, National Commission of Audit, Report to the Commonwealth Government, p13: Under assimilation policy, new arrivals were expected to learn English, adopt existing cultural norms and become indistinguishable from the Australian-born population as rapidly as possible). My contribution to our national identity conversation in this research project was to find a vehicle to experience connection with place in my professional choreographic practice and present findings within a contemporary dance performance using my embodied cultural voice.
In closing, Edward Relph’s *Place & Placelessness* rings true; having embedded myself in the conceptual process of a Pepeha, I was able to be ‘more profoundly inside a place and now feel stronger with my identity with this place’ (1976, 49). As a non-First Nation Australian, my understandings and value of connection with place has given me renewed respect for the cultural custodians of this land, the land of my birth and the cultural custodians of Suomi (Finland), the land of my heritage.
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### Appendix 1: *DIRT* a) Creative Artists

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Cast</th>
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<tr>
<td>Performance Making and Choreography</td>
<td>Tiina Alinen</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cast and Co-creatives (DIRT):</td>
<td>Anja Ali-Haapala</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; cast</td>
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<td>Emmy Steiner</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; cast</td>
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<td>Nicola Stavar</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; cast</td>
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<td>Bonny Yarrington</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; cast</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cast and Co-creative (Foyer Film):</td>
<td>Anja Ali-Haapala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lighting Design:</td>
<td>Ben Hughes</td>
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<td>Costume Design:</td>
<td>Kari</td>
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<td>Hannah Gartside</td>
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<td>Music:</td>
<td>Varttina</td>
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<td>Gotan Project</td>
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<td>Men at Work</td>
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<td>Textual Advisor:</td>
<td>Jo Loth</td>
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<td>Film Camera Work (Foyer Film):</td>
<td>Romesh De Silva</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tiina Alinen</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Film Editing (Foyer Film):</td>
<td>Romesh De Silva</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tiina Alinen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film Editing (DIRT Film):</td>
<td>Chloe Speller</td>
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<td>Photographs:</td>
<td>Choreographer’s family</td>
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<td>Performance photographers:</td>
<td>Daniel Cooper</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laura Steiner</td>
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</table>
Appendix 1: *DIRT*  b) Structure of work

**Welcome**

- Foyer Film in interval
- Snow image on back cyclorama with dance on the cyclorama
- Tiina speaks in three languages
- Tiina walks off stage so audience can follow where she is sitting
- Finland land solo
- Music fades out
- Narration by Tiina from audience seat

**Wider Circle**

- Kalkadoon country land visual footage fades in
- Migrant solo
- Kalkadoon land solo
- Two dancers together
- Kalkadoon and solo continues and ends
- Image and dancer fade
- Narration by Tiina from audience

**Middle Circle**

- Two white panels are place and dancer is ready in place
- Two projectors project photographic images while dancer moves in stationary position
• Narration by Tiina from audience

• Dancers with stage crew disassemble the two white panels and put glasses on

• Narration by Tiina while two dancers dance

• Music and two dancers

• Fade out on dancers but music keeps going

**Inner Circle**

• Centre light emerges

• Rope comes down from ceiling with bag of dirt attached

• Three groups of light established with middle one quite different

• Narration by Tiina from audience

• Sound of a creaking door

• Dancers begin with bag swinging forward and backward

• Bag swinging side to side

• Bag swinging circular

• Piece ends with solo dancer with hand under bag and light cuts out

**Curtain Call**
Appendix 1: *DIRT*  c) Text

**Wider Circle**

Choices... Deny your cultural heritage...

Feels like something dies inside you...

Embrace this identity & find yourself in the middle...

It was and still is weird... Living 2 realities at the same time... Twice the work...

2 world views... 2 languages... 2 sets of expectations...

**Middle Circle**

Growing up without grandparents... who I never met...

Opportunities in the new country...

Our friends were Christina Lepouris, Elko Slebos, Franco Scarpeli and I was Tiina Hamalainen

English was not our first language...

I remember our neighbours use to call me gumma gunnean..

To this day, I still don’t know what that means...

It was said with such affection...

Nothing like a Finnish sauna in the Queensland desert...

The fun we kids had behind that sauna

Populate or Perish

Chapter One: Policy Context

National Commission of Audit, Report to the Commonwealth Gov...

P13

Under assimilation policy, new arrivals were expected to learn English, adopt existing cultural norms and become indistinguishable from the Australian-born population as rapidly as possible.
Become indistinguishable from the Australian-born population

How can I become indistinguishable?

**Inner Circle**

The space in-between...

Where I am silent and listen with my eyes...

Place

What are the barriers...

What are the connections...

Having courage...

Being open...

Valuing ‘the other’

So I continue to listen with my eyes...
Appendix 1: DIRT  d) Audience survey data: DIRT

Performance dates: 07.06.11 – 11.06.11
Venue: QUT Gardens Theatre

Q1. Would you consider this work to be intercultural? Please circle one answer.
   YES 83.1%
   NO 16.9%
   The majority of the audience who did the survey consider the work to be intercultural.

Q2. Did this work give you a better understanding or make you ask questions about other cultures, other than your own? Please circle one answer.
   YES 71.6%
   NO 28.4%
   The majority of the audience who did the survey believe this work gave them a better understanding or made them ask questions about other cultures, other than their own.

Q3. Did this work make you more aware of your identity and place in your community in Australia?
   Please circle one answer.
   YES 57.5%
   NO 42.5%
   A much smaller gap was identified in this response.

Audience survey percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>07.06.11</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>08.06.11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>08.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>09.06.11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>10.06.11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Saturday 11.06.11 8 09.3%

TOTAL 86

Audience attendance for the Essentially Dance 2011 season: 1054

8.16% of the audience filled out the survey.
Appendix 2: Visual images of *DIRT*

a) Welcome

Photographer: Laura Steiner and Dancer: Anja Ali-Haapala
Appendix 2: Visual images of *DIRT*

a) Welcome

Photographer: Daniel Cooper and Dancer: Tiina Alinen
Appendix 2: Visual images of *DIRT*

b) Wider Circle

Photographer: Daniel Cooper and Dancer: Anja Ali-Haapala
Appendix 2: Visual images of *DIRT*

b) Wider Circle

Photographer: Daniel Cooper and Dancer: Emmy Steiner
Appendix 2: Visual images of *DIRT*

b) Wider Circle

Photographer: Daniel Cooper and Dancer: Anja Ali-Haapala
Appendix 2: Visual images of *DIRT*

c) Middle Circle

Photographer: Daniel Cooper and Dancer: Anja Ali-Haapala
Appendix 2: Visual images of *DIRT*

c) Middle Circle

Photographer: Daniel Cooper and Dancer: Anja Ali-Haapala
Appendix 2: Visual images of *DIRT*

c) Middle Circle

Photographer: Daniel Cooper and Dancers: Emmy Steiner and Anja Ali-Haapala
Appendix 2: Visual images of *DIRT*

c) Middle Circle

Photographer: Daniel Cooper and Dancers: Anja Ali-Haapala and Emmy Steiner
Appendix 2: Visual images of *DIRT*

d) Inner Circle

Photographer: Daniel Cooper and Dancers: Emmy Steiner and Anja Ali-Haapala