THE SPACE BETWEEN

Negotiating Culture, Place, and Identity in the Pacific

Edited by A Marata Tamaira

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Preface

A Marata Tamaira

Tūngia te ururua, kia tupakoriauto te tupe o te harakeke.
Clear away the undergrowth so that the new flax shoots can emerge.

The space between is a prevalent metaphor in the Pacific, including within its scope indigenous concepts such as vā (in Samoan and Tongan culture) and wā (in Māori and Hawaiian culture). It has been referred to as an intermediary site—a liminal zone marked not only by tension and transformation but also by confluences and connections.

In contemplating the space between, I cannot help but consider my own location in that nebulous realm. I am the product of a bicultural union: On my father’s side, my genealogy is rooted in the central North Island tribe of Ngāti Tūwharetoa, and on my mother’s, my ancestry extends to the cities of Bath and Bristol in England. During the early 1970s when I was growing up, the ethnic divide between Māori and Pākehā was still clearly evident. Prejudice existed on both sides and, more often than not, the offspring of Māori-Pākehā unions bore the brunt of those strained relations. The pejorative term half-caste—on par with the terms mulatto and métis—was used to describe those of mixed descent. The label implied a certain inadequacy or deficit as far as our identities was concerned, and connoted a cultural limbo. The stigma of being labeled half-caste muddled peoples’ ability to self-identify and precipitated for many, including myself, a sense of cultural dysphoria. Although from a phenotypic standpoint I looked undeniably Māori, I was nevertheless raised Pākehā. As a result I felt alienated in both cultures. The space between is uncomfortable. The space between is deeply personal. It is also transformative.

In the last several years, I have grown to accept my in-between status. I have even found it to be in many ways liberating; I have the advantage of moving between cultures, although that requires constant negotiation on my part.

The Space Between: Negotiating Culture, Place, and Identity in the Pacific constitutes an eclectic blend of theoretical, personal, and artistic expressions, produced by graduate students within and outside of the Pacific. Subsumed under five broad and overlapping headings, the works in this collection are interdisciplinary in nature—drawing from academic fields such as history, art, art history, and Pacific studies—and offer insight into how the space between reflects Pacific realities, past and present. In “Working the Space Between,” Graeme Whimp surveys ten Pacific Island artists living in New Zealand and offers the concept of interstitiability as a theoretical tool for analyzing the dynamic space in
which those artists exist and work. Complementing Whimp’s broad overview, Bernida
Webb-Binder’s article focuses specifically on Lily Laita’s exploration of Pacific identity
and the vá (space between) in her painting Va i Ta Taeao Lalata E Aunoa Ma Gagana.

In “Locating Identity,” Katherine Higgins and artist Andy Leleisi’uao contribute a
collaborative piece in which they introduce the concept of Kamoan, a term coined by
Leleisi’uao to describe New Zealand–born Samoans. Their article considers the
application of the term in conjunction with the artist’s 2007 exhibition Lost Kamoans, and
discusses the challenges and opportunities Kamoans encounter as they negotiate between
the two cultures of New Zealand and Sāmoa. Makanani Parker’s reflection piece brings
into sharp focus the author’s estrangement from her Hawaiian language and culture, and
the life-changing journey that reconnected her with her indigenous identity. Tafea
Polamalu’s poetry reveals his feeling of being “lodged between worlds” as an American–
born Sāmoan and the effect this has had on his sense of identity and belonging. Polamalu
switches from poetic prose to the painted medium to represent his Sāmoan ancestral
connections.

In “Cultural Confluences,” Jennifer Ashton transports us back in time to 1840s
Hokianga and offers a compelling analysis of cross-cultural encounters between Māori
and European settlers during that transformative period in New Zealand’s history. Scott
William Mackay focuses on the merging of politics and poetry in the works of two
celebrated indigenous poet-activists from Australia and New Zealand: Oodgeroo
Noonuccal and Hone Tuwhare. The section “Relations of Association” is devoted to the
work of young Chamorro scholars including James Perez Viernes, Craig Santos Perez,
Kisha Borja-Kicho’cho’, Angela T Hoppe-Cruz, and Michael Lujan Bevacqua. Together,
the authors provide a critical perspective on Guam’s complicated and problematic
relationship with the United States—particularly with regard to US colonialism and
militarization in the island—and reflect the powerful sense of cultural pride they feel in
being Chamorro. The final section, “Between Ocean and Land,” begins with B Pualani
Lincoln Maielua’s article, in which she explores one of the most fundamental elements of
representation: the power to name. The author critiques the use of the European term
Pacific and exhorts the inhabitants of the region to use their own indigenous names; she
offers the Native Hawaiian term Moana as one of many alternatives. The poets in this
section—Pelika Bertelmann, Julia Wieting, and Lufi A Luteru—acknowledge the power of
the land and ocean, pride in their cultural identity and, in the case of Luteru, a student’s
farewell to a beloved teacher. Luteru also provides us with a painting revealing her
connection to her Hawaiian ancestors. Early on, I decided to include a feature artist as part
of this collection. Roxanne Chasle’s work draws attention to Hawai’i, situated as it is
between wholesale tourism, military activity, and development, and attempts by
centrized parties, in particular Native Hawaiians, to conserve and maintain the
archipelago’s environmental and cultural treasures and indigenous way of life.

The central goal of this project was to provide a forum for graduate students to
explore a common theme and to have their ideas disseminated to a wider audience. In the
CPIS Occasional Paper titled Indigenous Encounters: Reflections on Relations between People in
the Pacific, editor Katerina Teaiwa pointed out the need for nurturing “a critical mass of
younger writers, artists, and scholars in and of the [Pacific] region” (2008, 5). As the first
all-student collection in the Occasional Papers series, I believe this publication is a
significant step forward in building the critical mass Teaiwa called for, by clearing—as the
whakatāuki (proverb) above suggests—a space for new shoots to emerge.

This publication would not have been possible without the many individuals who so
generously contributed their time and assistance. First, I am indebted to CPIS Director
Vilsoni Hereniko for entrusting me—a first-time editor—with the task of bringing
together this remarkable collection of student works. My gratitude also extends to Jan
Rensel, the managing editor of The Contemporary Pacific, for her consultation regarding the
copyediting of the contributions. A very warm kia ora koutou to the five reviewers who
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Carl F K Pao for help with the layout of the interior art, Stacey Leong Mills for her brilliant
work in designing the publication’s cover, and Jan Mills at Hagadone Printing Company
for facilitating the printing of this work. Finally, a heartfelt mahalo nui loa to the
contributors of The Space Between for their patience and commitment as the publication
slowly but surely took shape. It is my hope that each of you will continue to grow as
scholars and artists, making valuable contributions in your chosen fields of research and
practice, and that as you grow you will in turn provide nourishment and support to those
tender shoots that are yet to emerge. This space is for you.
One Among Many, by Roxanne Chasle
Screenprint, 2007, 30 cm x 25 cm
ARTIST STATEMENT

Roxanne Chasle

I was born and raised on the island of Maui, and I am currently pursuing a Master of Fine Arts degree at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. While being grounded in the lifestyle and culture of Hawai‘i, I enjoy traveling—indeed, many of my experiences abroad have inspired much of my work. I seek out ways to blur the categorizations of art and push beyond borders, and I am always eager to explore new media and modes of communication. My work has been featured in a number of exhibitions, including the Annual Honolulu Printmakers Exhibition held in Honolulu, Hawai‘i; Everyone We Know, a sketchbook show that toured the United States; and Still Impressed! an exhibition held in Wanganui, New Zealand.

My work is informed by the dialectic between society and nature. It is a response to current events in the state of Hawai‘i, and concentrates on how tourism, the US military, and urban development affect the land and its people. I believe that while development may be inevitable in Hawai‘i, there can be an exchange between society and nature, such that we can remain modern while preserving our natural treasures. Having grown up in the islands, I am keenly aware of the significance of location and the way local problems are representative of larger global issues. I am also influenced by the idea that art constitutes a visual record of history. My work confronts the paradoxical nature of the world we live in, addressing a sense of loss, but also hope for change. I have always been inspired by the natural environment, and art making is a way for me to keep in touch with the beauty of the world, and also enables me to express the deep sense of humility and respect I feel for the environment.
WORKING THE VĀ

WORKING IN THE SPACE BETWEEN: PACIFIC ARTISTS IN AOTEAROA / NEW ZEALAND

Graeme Whimp

PACIFIC IDENTITY THROUGH SPACE AND TIME IN LILY LAITA’S VA'I TA

Bernida Webb-Binder
Untitled, by Roxanne Chasle
Screenprint, 2007, 51 cm x 41 cm
In 1991, cultural theorist Paul Gilroy warned that the Black political project in Britain was threatened by two conflicting perspectives—essentialism and pluralism—each of which sought to remedy the weaknesses of the other, yet nonetheless failed to engage directly with each other (1993, 120–145). On the one hand he criticized the ethnic absolutism of essentialism, while on the other he accused the pluralist perspective—which simultaneously emphasizes the particular and the complex—of reducing Blackness to an open signifier, whose signified is fragmented to meaninglessness. Gilroy found each perspective equally productive of an insidious cultural “insiderism” (1993, 122–124). In this, he was drawing on, and to some extent critiquing, the work of Stuart Hall, summarized in his 1988 article “New Ethnicities” (1996). Hall identified a counter argument that focused on difference rather than essential characteristics, thereby signaling the “end of the essential black subject” (1996, 444). More recently, Nicholas Thomas contrasted the essentialism inherent in official exhibitions such as the 1980s cultural renaissance milestone Te Māori—which focused on traditional New Zealand Māori art and culture—with the pluralism of Te Moemoea no Iotefa, an art exhibition that highlighted the wider Polynesian migrant experience in the contemporary period (1996a, 297–298). Art historian Peter Brun has extended the argument to two exhibitions of Māori art held in the 1990s—Taikaka and Choice!—in relation to neoliberalism, official biculturalism, and postcolonialism in Aotearoa/New Zealand (2004, 215–242).

In this essay, I survey the work of several visual artists of Pacific Island origin who have been practicing in Aotearoa/New Zealand for the last two decades, and I explore the extent to which they have been influenced by essentialist and pluralist impulses. I also attempt to locate the particular cultural space in which these artists have been able to establish their expressive identities.
Fatu Feu’u

Fatu Feu’u, the first of the artists surveyed here to be recognized as a Pacific Islander/New Zealand artist, had already been painting in Apia, Sāmoa, before emigrating to New Zealand at the age of twenty (Mallon and Pereira 1997, 14–16). While Feu’u maintains close and regular links with his birth village of Poutasi on the island of Upolu (Mallon 2002, 126), and is emphatic about his personal adherence to the fa’aSāmoa (Samoan way) (Feu’u 1995, 62, 67), his practice, references, and iconography suggest something much more complex than the simple reproduction of Samoan culture. While Feu’u has referred to culture as a backbone, he has also argued that it is one that “can be recreated and shaped to the demands of our society” (1995, 67).

Certainly there is more than a hint of re-creation and shaping in his iconography, which is often described as pan-Polynesian (Mallon 2002, 125; Stacey 1987–88, 48; Thomas 1996b, 322)—featuring as it does a blend of sculptural forms referencing Rapa Nui and the Caroline Islands (Vercoe 2002, 192), and images that are inspired by pre-Columbian art (Griffin 1992, 85). Further, in describing his artistic journey, Feu’u has acknowledged that his discovery of Oceanic form was by way of Picasso, and achieved only at the urging of Pākehā artists Tony Fomison and Philip Clairmont (Panoho 1990, 22).1

The full complexity of both Feu’u’s resources and concerns is evidenced in such paintings as Nuanua Malama (1988), which has been referred to as a “kind of national narrative for New Zealand’s Polynesians” (Thomas 1995, 327) due to its explicit geographical references to Auckland, a city that boasts the largest population of Polynesians in the world. Conversely, in his mixed media work Tulai’i Tamasese (2000), Feu’u uses text that specifically references the Samoan Mau Movement and the events of Black Saturday, counterposed with an equally explicit reference to American artist Jasper Johns.2

I do not want to suggest for a moment that such borrowing and innovation is alien to Samoan or Pacific cultures. Rather, I want to highlight the productive tension between the Feu’u who returns regularly to his village for inspiration and spiritual and sensual enrichment (Mallon 2002, 126), and Feu’u the New Zealand–based artist, who grapples with the complexities of that location and the challenge of creating art that can be understood by those who live in New Zealand. Significantly, at the heart of Feu’u’s aspirations lies the desire to
“modernise Polynesian/Pacific art/Samoan art because I believe if it’s not done then the artform will die” (Panoho 1990, 22).

ANI O’NEILL

Ani O’Neill—who is of Cook Islands and papa’a (European) descent—celebrates and draws inspiration from her Rarotongan heritage while at the same time acknowledging her urban Polynesian status (Stevenson 1996, 65–66). Art historian Karen Stevenson has perceived artists such as O’Neill as discriminately selecting from elements of their heritage in order to establish their place in contemporary art practice, and O’Neill herself as catapulting into the contemporary art world from the springboard of her culture (1999, 67).

Art historian Susan Cochrane regarded O’Neill’s transference of “traditional” Pacific crafts into the contemporary gallery as an opportunity to re-view the old through the perspective of the new (2001, 123). Echoing Cochrane’s sentiments, curator Karla Bo Johnson has added that by drawing on the “skills of traditional Rarotongan craft” to produce her crocheted pieces and elevating them on contemporary gallery walls, O’Neill “bridges the gap between her two cultures and the boundaries between fine art and craft” (2001, 25).

JOHN IOANE

John (Ioane) Ioane has traced his personal and artistic development through a number of stages, including his surprise at discovering he was full Samoan (not part-palagi [European]) (Cochrane 2001, 117); the conceit he felt as he began to reconnect with his Samoan culture and, conversely, his rejection of “ethnic-looking stuff” (Panoho 1990, 35; Mallon and Pereira 1997, 36–38); and, finally, acceptance of his Samoan origins as a platform and a springboard rather than a source of confinement (Mallon 2002, 98). In relation to his art practice, Ioane has emphasized that his interest is in the material he uses, rather than its association with Samoan culture. In his 1991 work—Peni/Sila—Ioane laminated stripped and dyed tapa to hardboard; to add texture, he painted and drew on the material, while retaining some of the softness of the textile (Feu’u 1995, 66). As Ioane has commented, “The good thing about my use of it [the material] is I process it and you don’t recognise it is tapa cloth” (Panoho 1990, 34). His response to the idea
that it is a synthesis of the traditional and modern that lies at the heart of contemporary Pacific art practice is similarly ambivalent, moving from embrace of the concept in 1990 to rejection of it as sickeningly overused in 1997 (Feu’u 1995, 66; Mallon and Pereira 1997, 39).

In terms of his installation work, such as Fale Sa (1999), Ioane has increasingly focused on the creation of space as something more than a physical manifestation, referring instead to “a space within” where magic can take place: “For me Magic transcends human fiction: culture, language, religion, gender issues, science etc . . . even spirituality as we know it. . . . The performance part of my installation is part of the equation to the whole, trying to create a space for magic to occur” (Vercoe 2002, 205–206).

**LILY LAITA**

Lily Laita, who is of Samoan, Māori, and Pākehā descent, has been described by Caroline Vercoe as choosing to encode her works with Pacific motifs less explicitly (2002, 203). Her claim that “being of Samoan descent is part of who I am, it is not the only part” (Mallon 2002, 123) is echoed in her view that her use of Samoan text is often more of a distraction than a clue because it is a minor element of the painting (Panoho 1990, 26). However, she has also described the text she uses as a tool and as part of her integral methodology, “part of the form, the space, or the line; sometimes it’s used in terms of layering to create space” (Pereira 2003, 55). Space, and the Samoan concept of vā—the connecting space— is a recurring theme in Laita’s work, as revealed in her 1997 and 2000 pieces, respectively: Ta i va and Va i ta; the latter work signaled the creation of a third space (Vercoe 2002, 204–205).

The metaphorical nature of that third space is alluded to in Stevenson’s description of Laita’s creative process as “a means of moving between different worlds, between the contradictory realities of being” (1998, 71). That movement between worlds and realities is exemplified in her 1989 painting Pari’aka: “It’s in three parts. On the left is my father, my father’s grandfather, Aitui Ta’avao [a member of the Mau movement] and the Mau. That represents the Samoan side. On the right is Te Whiti and Tohu, the houses. I’m in the middle, with my arms out. I’m touching both worlds” (Mallon and Pereira 1997, 55).
Whimp • Working in the Space Between

JOHN PULE

John Pule’s body of work—particularly those paintings that draw on Niuean hiapo (barkcloth)—are frequently but deceptively associated with “tradition.” In fact, the barkcloth tradition on which the work draws is itself a creation dating back no further than the 1880s (Neich and Pendergrast 1997, 69–70). Indeed, Pule, while asserting that his iconography is his personal creation, has acknowledged the significance of drawing on hiapo as a means by which to “recreate the knowledge lost in migration” (Cochrane 2001, 119; Stevenson 1996, 65). While Pule embraces some aspects of palagi culture, he also admits to the sudden impulse “to throw it all away and turn back towards your own culture, go into it, get what you want from it, bring it back, embellish it, add more to it” (Panoho 1990, 28; emphasis added). However, whether accessing the palagi or the Niuean culture, Pule ultimately feels that he does not really belong in either: “Intellectually and emotionally I relate to both New Zealand and Niue but I don’t feel too comfortable in either. I feel an outsider and am often treated like one in Eurocentric New Zealand and called a ‘goagoa fia palagi’ in Niue, which means ‘a dumb wannabe whiteman.’ I slip between acceptable stereotypes in both places because traditional categories cannot organize my identity. I am nearly everybody’s ‘other’” (Vivieaere 2001).

In a sensitive essay centered on Pule’s 1991 work *Mamakava*, Lisa Taouma ascribed the distinctiveness of his work not to hiapo, but to the fact that it reflects his personal psycho-geography, “poised in the space between the tangible and the transient” (1999, 4–5). In direct reference to Homi K Bhabha’s notion of space (1994), and perhaps locating exactly the space between that Pule occupies, Taouma has also suggested that works like *Mamakava* articulate a third space, “where the elements of a displaced homeland are unreachable and only disjointed parts have been recreated in a new urban landscape” (1999, 13).

MICHEL TUFFERY

Although Wellington-born Michel Tuffery’s origins are Rarotongan, Samoan, Tahitian, and Aotearoa/New Zealand palagi ancestry, he most strongly identifies with the Samoan; he feels, however, that he has acquired his Samoan identity, rather than inherited it. As he has stated, “If you’re born here [Aotearoa/New Zealand], you’ve got no identity” (Stevenson 1996, 67).
Although in the early years Tuffery viewed his fa’aSāmoa roots with shame and hatred, his attitude began to change on his first visit to Sāmoa. Of that experience, he has related different responses. In 1990, Tuffery recalled, “When I went to the islands I had all these obstacles I came up against—Fa’a Samoa” (Mallon and Pereira 1997, 116; Panoho 1990, 31). Seven years later when he spoke of his experience, he relayed positive memories. His acquisition of an artistic identity appears equally indirect, arriving at a Polynesian orientation by way of an exploration of German Expressionism (Walker 1994, 65).

As a third-generation Pacific Islander living in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Tuffery has acknowledged his task of having to come to grips with the creation of a new culture in a new place (Mallon and Pereira 1997, 116), and has pointed to the different attitudes of those Pacific Islanders who were born in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and those who were born in the home island: “I’d like to think that we could actually have more opportunity to show how we’ve changed as people and evolved . . . like urban Pacific Islanders. You know there’s some of us who do live in cities but we’ve adapted in a different way and taken on different attitudes and then you’ve got the ones who were born in the Islands and they’ve got their own attitudes. . . . Sometimes they actually clash” (Vercoe 2002, 199). In attempting to capture Tuffery’s sense of the links between the two communities, art critic Tim Walker has described his art as “a navigation through and between the oceans of each culture and society, discovering as he does, that it’s all one ocean” (1994, 66).

**ANDY LELEISI’UAO**

Andy Leleisi’uao has developed his own distinctive visual vernacular to examine and criticize the experiences of the Samoan community in Aotearoa/New Zealand—a community in which he firmly locates himself (Mallon 2001, 73; Vercoe 2002, 202; Mallon 2002, 127). Rejecting stereotypic labels of the Pacific and outsiders’ perspectives of the region and its peoples, Leleisi’uao embraces being a New Zealand–born Samoan with the right of access to both cultures (Brownson 1998, 40, 77).

As evidenced in his paintings that reference domestic violence, Leleisi’uao feels an equal right to criticize his own culture through his art, which is “in contrast to the politicized art practices of many Maori, who focus on the
imposition of one culture upon another” (Stevenson 2004, 31). Like Tuffery, Leleisi’uao has clearly spelled out from his point of view the exact nature of the identity, community, and location produced by his particular combination of heritage and birthplace: “The fundamental understanding we harbor together is that we were not born in Samoa. It is this dislocation and displacement that separates us from Samoan born artists and New Zealand born papalagi artists. We differ in context and content, in that we use our Samoan heritage as a source of inspiration to negotiate out identity, culture and art” (Leleisi’uao 2000).

NIKI HASTINGS-MCFALL

There is a significant conflict between notions of hybridity and a rather more complex expression of identity in Niki Hastings-McFall’s self-representation. She has acknowledged that she has often felt fraudulent about being described as a Pacific artist because of how others view her afakasi (mixed Samoan and palagi) appearance (Pereira 2002, 43). In the catalogue for the 1997 exhibition Past Pacific, she referred to herself as “one of the ever-increasing multicultural breed of New Zealanders evolving in the late twentieth century Pacific [with a] personal interest in exploring the concepts of ethnic hybridity” (Cochrane 2001, 119, 123).

Other art commentators have also used the term *hybridity* to characterize Hastings-McFall’s work, viewing her manipulation of, say, the lei as an acknowledgment of both her Polynesian ancestry and her location in Auckland. Equally, her jewelry is seen as going beyond Pacific stereotypes in an amalgamation of “the results of one culture impacting upon another,” and her *Urban curves* series as linking Pacific navigational techniques and Auckland street signs (Chiu 2004, 15; Cochrane 2001, 123; Johnson 2001, 27). Hastings-McFall has commented on the nature of the cultural space in which she locates herself: “It’s a really free way to be, it’s a really positive side of being in the liminal space, being in-between, where you’re not one and not the other and you’re never going to belong anywhere ever, fully, properly. But at the same time the positive side is that you can take that and take that, and mix them up and do something else, that’s the really good thing” (Pereira 2002, 43).
**Graham Fletcher**

Along with John Ioane, Graham Fletcher employs and substantially erases culturally significant tapa with his own motifs in an aesthetic he has described as “efface and replace” (Johnson 2001, 27). Only the texture of the tapa remains as a witness to the erasure. Noting that much of Fletcher’s work deals with cultural boundaries and margins, curator and art commentator Sean Mallon has perceptively linked the difficulty and uncertainty involved in handling mistints (mixed paints) in Fletcher’s *Mistint* series (1998) with “the uncertainties of moving between and negotiating cultural boundaries” (Mallon 2001, 74).

Fletcher’s preoccupation with complex space is further evidenced in his *Quarantine* series (2000). The paintings in the series depicted various kinds of viruses as seen under a microscope—metaphorically exposing his audience to the kinds of European diseases that negatively affected Pacific peoples during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In an unpublished artist’s statement in July 2001, Fletcher outlined the rationale behind his art practice: “As a strategy, camouflage enables me to be misleading, evasive and ambivalent while at the same time declaring my full awareness as a Samoan artist that my work is embedded within a cultural context” (Vercoe 2002, 196).

**Jim Vivieaere**

More than any other artist considered in this article, Jim Vivieaere has simultaneously embraced and distanced himself from his Pacific Island identity. Born of Cook Islander heritage, and having lived the early part of his life in places such as the Hawke’s Bay, Dunedin, and the Coromandel, Vivieaere’s first contact with Polynesians came after a casual encounter with a French Polynesian family in Australia. However, Vivieaere said it was not until he met fellow artist Fatu Feu’u that he began posturing in an “Islander” identity (Mallon and Pereira 1997, 131). Vivieaere’s ambivalent relationship with Polynesia—something that is inherent in his individual works as well as his exhibitions—and the extent to which he feels that Pacific identity is as much imposed as inherited, is indicated in his statement: “My involvement as an artist in New Zealand is very much dependant on the politics of being Polynesian. It’s not so much about the identity polemic of, who am I? But rather validating the role of the Pacific Islander who enters an institutionalised energy field with little else spare the name part of his
or her Island whereabouts, and/or the pigmentation of his or her skin” (Vivieaere 2001).

Vivieaere’s rejection of Polynesian essentialism has been underscored by his view of Pacific imagery as something to be used freely by all artists, not just those of Pacific Island origin, and his admission that Cook Islands traditional art was no more special to him than any other visual source (Panoho 1990, 24–25; Thomas 1996b, 324–325). At the same time, as curator of the 1994 exhibition *Bottled Ocean: Contemporary Polynesian Artists*, Vivieaere envisaged a community of Aotearoa/New Zealand–based Polynesian artists who were able to use the gallery venue to express concerns over their blurred identities; seek creativity rather than constraint in their cultural origins; and achieve unity through the tidal pull of an ocean (the Pacific) that provides an originating provenance rather than a present location (Vivieaere 1994, 5).

**THE SPACE BETWEEN FOR PACIFIC ISLANDER ARTISTS IN AOTEAROA / NEW ZEALAND**

In considering the question of imposed identity, it is worth considering Māori art historian Rangihiroa Panoho’s 1990 interview with Niuean artist Sale Jessop, in particular a section that was discussed in some detail by Nicholas Thomas (see Thomas 1996a, 304–308). A critical point in the interview came when Jessop paused to answer one of Panoho’s questions: “I think each and every one of us are trying to find a personal and individual language that . . .” (Panoho 1990, 37). Before Jessop could formulate the word he was looking for, Panoho interpolated, “expresses your identity,” in response to which Jessop picked up the interviewer’s cue and went on to reference his Niuean origins (1990, 37). From this brief but illuminating instance between Panoho and Jessop, it is perhaps not unfair to conclude that the implicit essentialism of the moment lay more in the mouth of the interviewer rather than the artist. It also indicates the pervasiveness of a desire to ascribe to Pacific artists a particular kind of cultural identity.

Taking as a benchmark the argument that “there can, therefore, be no simple ‘return’ or ‘recovery’ of the ancestral past which is not re-experienced through the categories of the present” (Hall 1996, 448), it is possible to conclude that the symptoms of essentialism discussed by Hall, Gilroy, Brunt, and Thomas are largely absent. This absence appears to be confirmed by the artists discussed in
this article—all of whom embrace contemporary technologies and identities while eschewing simple cultural reproduction (Hall 1996, 449).

Feu’u’s re-creation and shaping, O’Neill’s springboard and catapulting, Ioane’s platform and springboarding, Laita’s alternative encoding, Pule’s re-creation (not rediscovery) of lost knowledge, Tuffery’s creation of a new culture in a new place, Leleisi’uao’s negotiation, Hasting-McFall’s liminal space, Fletcher’s camouflage, Vivieaere’s creativity over constraint, and even Jessop’s personal and individual language—all speak of a rejection of simple reproduction and an embracing of contemporary technologies and identities (Hall 1996, 448). At the same time, all of the artists acknowledge a commonality that is exemplified by the flow of the Pacific Ocean, to which they remain connected in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and is consolidated by their shared experience and negotiation of the consequences of birth or domicile there (Stevenson 2000, 28). Re-creation figures more strongly than the rediscovery or restoration of essentialism, and the fragmentation inherent in pluralism is mitigated by a recognition of the creative possibilities of difference as well as the reality of inhabiting a collective “Otherness.” That situation is perhaps encapsulated in Mallon’s description of the pieces in Fletcher’s *Stigma* series (1999): “Every flower is unique, but also part of an often stereotyped and homogenized whole” (Mallon 2001, 74).

On the one hand there is, as art historian Jonathan Mané-Wheoki has pointed out, the imposed identity of “the dislocated Pacific ‘other’ in New Zealand” (here we might recall Pule’s self-description as being “everybody’s ‘other’”), with its consequent emphasis on artificial community (Mané-Wheoki 1995, 16). On the other hand, there is the individuation inherent not only in a society under the influence of market fundamentalism, but also in most artistic practice, with a consequent emphasis on difference. While conflicting in nature, the outcome of their dual operation can be seen in the diverse but ultimately cohesive identifications, as reflected in this brief survey of Pacific Island artists.

The circumstances of Pacific Island artists living in Aotearoa/New Zealand are deeply complex. While they retain ties with their home islands, their place in the “new” land is tenuous given Pākehā aspirations for a postcolonial reality, and the continued struggle of Māori against internal colonization. The situation is further complicated by the more recent migration to Aotearoa/New Zealand of people from Southeast Asia and China.
That Aotearoa/New Zealand society is heavily conditioned by the Treaty of Waitangi and the bicultural relationship between Māori and Pākehā means that Pacific Islanders—and by extension Pacific Island artists—are excluded from official biculturalism. Although they are contained under an unofficial policy of multiculturalism, Islander artists are dissociated by a number of factors including education, class, and artistic expression from their own migrant communities, which are themselves wedged uncomfortably between the bicultural partners and the later migrant communities. As Cochrane stated: “Polynesian artists are now creating their own cultural space in New Zealand” (2001, 114).

The variety of references to such a space—for example, the gap between cultures, a space within, a third space (as in Homi Bhabha), the space to which things are brought back, a different context, the liminal space—in turn gives rise to a variety of parallel characterizations: interface, limen, vā. None of these expressions, however, seem to me to be truly representative of these Pacific Island identities and the space they inhabit—not interface, because it is far from a single connecting surface; not liminal, because it is not a space for crossing, meeting, exchanging; and not even vā, because it is not so much a separation that connects as a space isolated from the other competing but inaccessible communities, one in which artistic identity can be developed and maintained, the space to which Pule brings things back.

The concept I have found most useful in trying to imagine the space between that Pacific Island artists inhabit is interstitiality. Developed in the 1920s by Frederic Thrasher, a sociologist from the Chicago School of Sociology, the idea of interstitiality has since been expanded by French sociolinguist Louis-Jean Calvet, and explored by Homi K Bhabha in the context of postcolonial cultural formations (see Thrasher 1963 [1927]; Calvet 1994; Bhabha 1994). Initially, Thrasher devised the term to describe the spaces in which gangs emerged, the interstices of “the more settled, more stable, and better organized portions of the city” (1963, 20), “borderlands and boundary lines between residential and manufacturing or business areas, between immigrant or racial colonies” (1963, 22). Calvet later transferred the concept from the geographical to the social, seeing the interstitial as a place of cultural passage, transition, and as a space in which to claim identity in a variety of forms (Calvet 1994, 28–29). Bhabha, in turn, extended interstitiality to “the articulation of cultural differences” (1994, 1). Bhabha continued: “These ‘in-between’ spaces provide the terrain for elaborating
strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself” (1994, 1–2).

I argue that it is precisely this interstitial cultural space that has provided the necessary habitat for the pursuit and celebration of shared creative difference and diversity to the contemporary cohort of artists of Pacific Island origin in Aotearoa/New Zealand. While we have seen frequent reference to a range of combinatorial strategies in the work of the artists considered herein—including balance, blending, duality, synthesis, fusion, creolization, and hybridity—these features often seem to be imposed by outside commentators rather than a systematic consideration of the actual practice of the artists themselves. The circumstances I have just outlined, taken with the evidence of my survey of a number of well-known Pacific Island artists, suggests that an examination of the cultural location in which they see themselves living and working may be a more productive avenue of investigation.

Notes
1. The term Pākehā refers to New Zealanders of European settler descent.
2. In Apia on Saturday 29 December 1929, New Zealand police opened fire on a peaceful Mau demonstration, killing Tupua Tamasese Lealofi III and eight other Samoan leaders.

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Whimp • Working in the Space Between

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Abstract
Using critiques of essentialism and pluralism as a backdrop, in this essay I survey the works of eleven Pacific Island visual artists, and consider the cultural space they occupy in pursuing their creative practice in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Although a variety of concepts have been deployed by commentators and the artists themselves to describe that space—such as balance, blending, duality, synthesis, fusion, hybridity, liminality, interface, creolization, and vā—I advocate the use of sociologist Fredric Thrasher’s concept of interstitionality to better


Taouma, Lisa

Thomas, Nicholas

Thrasher, Frederic M

Vivieaere, Jim

Walker, Tim
Whimp • Working in the Space Between

understand the nature of the cultural and productive space occupied by these artists.

KEYWORDS: Pacific, Polynesia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, artists, visual arts, migration, interstitality
I used to paint on black, so that things emerged from out of the dark, figures from the past.

Lily Laita quoted in Speaking in Colour: Conversations with Artists of Pacific Island Heritage

Created in 2000, Lily Laita’s painting Va i Ta Taeao Lalata E Aunoa Ma Gagana remains a timeless illustration of the vibrancy of Pacific Islander identity through space and time (figure 1). In this large-scale polyptych, Laita maps the infinite possibilities relating to Pacific identity through the medium of visual storytelling, an integral component of her artistic practice. Specifically, Va i Ta is a narrative exploration of the ways in which the temporal and spatial nuances of the vā (space between) have shaped Pacific identity from its island origins to the Pacific Islander diaspora in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In the painting, Laita touches on five themes: how notions of space and time are related to her artistic practice; how continuous narrative can be suggested without a reliance on sequential order; how mythology plays a role in continuing sociocultural rituals; how land is an enduring symbol of identity; and how art conveys the different facets of identity as connected to multiple geographical spheres. Accordingly, Laita’s Va i Ta represents and embodies “the space between”—that is, the space between where Pacific identity is negotiated and expressed in an Aotearoa/New Zealand context.

STORYTELLING IN THE VĀ

In her role as visual artist, Laita uses storytelling, an indigenous mode of communication that features in Aotearoa/New Zealand and across the Pacific to inform her work. In Va i Ta, a dynamically gestural painting, the artist organizes compositional space through the play of color, light, and shadow on canvas. In the painting, Laita captures the performance of Pacific identity as it exists in the vā, creating a kinetic and tactile space by layering oil and shellac, achieving stunning multidimensional effects. As she explained: “Working with oils and
working on white, you talk about depth more than surface and especially working in transparent thin glaze. By doing that it creates more depth, it’s illusion, the sense of that and within that I can create more stories” (Laita 2001).
The vā constitutes a realm where personal and cultural stories of identity through space and time are imparted. Acclaimed Samoan writer Albert Wendt has stated that the vā represents a space in which identity can be mapped: “We each have preferred maps, learned maps—what we believe our cultures, our nations, ourselves were and are. Our maps may be our neighbour’s fictions, we read one another through what we believe, through the mirrors of who and what we are. Those maps and fictions are all in the spiral which composes the story of us in the ever-moving present, in the Va, the space between all things which defines and makes us a part of the unity that is all” (quoted in Va’ai 1999, 46).

Laita is keenly aware of the storied aspect of the vā and actively seeks to link her creative practice to this concept: “In terms of the way that I paint, I think about every color, every form as being a layer and within those layers, they’re all telling different stories and sometimes they relate, sometimes they don’t. Your life experiences and your family’s life experiences, and all the stories that you know and when you’re sharing them you’re bringing them into the space” (Laita 2001). As a result, the illusion of space in her paintings is also dense in narrative meaning: “It’s a way of creating space in a pictorial sense. . . . Within that context of painting on something flat . . . the illusion of space is created by everything that you put down or don’t put down, everything is in reference to one another” (Laita 2001).

Here, Laita alludes to the all-encompassing nature of the vā as described by Wendt: “Va is the space between, the betweenness, not empty space, not space that separates, but space that relates, that holds separate entities and things together in the Unity-that-is-All, the space that is context, giving meaning to things. The meanings change as the relationships and the contexts change. . . . A well-known Samoan expression is ‘Ia teu le va’—cherish, nurse, care for the va, the relationships. This is crucial in communal cultures that value group unity more than individualism, that perceive the individual person, or creature, or things in terms of group, in terms of va, relationships” (1999, 402).

The vā is best understood when it is perceived holistically, since it encompasses multiple times and places. That is, all aspects of temporality are present within a single designated space—suggesting the second major theme addressed in Laita’s painting: that personal or collective narratives of identity do not rely on sequential ordering. Here, time and space are lived rather than merely recorded or chronicled. Indeed, Sina Va’ai described the shape of this time-space
continuum in which the vá is located as a “spiral . . . moving back through the past to the visions of an imagined and hoped for future which encircle us in the now of the present” (1999, 57). She continued: “The spaces in-between, the vá, operates not only at a physical and relational level but also metaphorically to describe post-colonial situations where Pacific island peoples, especially creative writers who work within the realm of the imagination, find themselves negotiating spaces between and across different cultural worlds, redefining and repositioning themselves in the process” (Va’ai 1999, 47). It is my contention that such a view can be extended to include contemporary Pacific artists as well.

In order to perceive the all-encompassing nature of the vá as expressed by Laita, it is necessary to conceptualize the relationship between identity and society. I suggest that Laita’s Va i Ta offers the opportunity to reconceive space, not just as a “container of things” but also as an important indicator of cultural relationships that may be communicated through art (McLuhan 1968, 6).

**Va i Ta Taeao Lalata E Aunoa Ma Gagana**

Memory and the recollection of myth constitute the third theme in Laita’s visual rendering of the spatial and temporal aspects of Pacific identity as it exists in the vá. In Va i Ta Laita uses memory and myth as narrative devices to explore the mythic connection between identity and ancestral memories as imparted through rituals such as the ‘ava (kava) ceremony.

The separate panels are meant to be displayed together and may be interpreted as depictions of events that encompass both “before” and “after” the existence of time and language. In the painting, Laita repeats the four different title phrases six times across the top of each panel: “Va i Ta,” “Taeao Lalata,” “E Aunoa,” and “Ma Gagana.” Through her innovative use of repeating text, Laita challenges the notion of time and space as a linear march forward. The words lay the foundation for the composition of the painting: “[There are] two separate works, but [they can be seen as] one work, before and after. The words have separate meanings [but] together they mean something else” (Laita 2001). In repeating these phrases, Laita creates a rhythmic visual “chant” that invites viewers into the liminal space of the painting.
The repetition of segments of the title phrase in the respective panels also serves as a boundary marker heralding the liminal space and time inherent in the painting: “With the repetition of the words, it’s like a header, a sense of continuity, not just with the words, but there is like a horizon line, the idea of being above and below land, conscious and unconscious. . . . Within the first two images, it’s talking about the beginning of the world in a sense” (Laita 2001). Laita explained, “With this line, with these words being repeated, [it’s a] combination of legends and oral traditions, but I’m not making a distinction between the two, I’m combining things. . . . It’s lots of ideas in one space but the idea of a creation myth, that’s what it feels like when I’m making them” (2001).

Laita has created a physical and metaphorical space in her painting to articulate the wider-reaching implications of the va concept. She explained that it was Samoan artist Momoe Malietoa von Reiche who initially introduced her to the phrase “Va i ta taeao lalata e aunoa ma gagana”: “She [von Reiche] said that ‘Va i Ta’ is the space in between, it’s a context for when spirits [aitu] are running around and everything is going on, it’s the space between dark and light. . . . ‘Taeao lalata’ is like the new morning, early morning—not dawn—it’s just early morning, new day . . . I put these together; I hadn’t thought to put them together but if I read it all together it means several things. Va i Ta Taeao Lalata E Aunoa Ma Gagana can be seen as the space before the new day or the new light is without language, without sound . . . it can be read as the space before the light, before Christianity, the space before time or language, it’s silent, there’s no known language, it’s the space where anything can happen” (Laita 2001).

In this potent space, the painting represents multiple ways that creation myths, land, tattooing, language, and the ‘ava ceremony influence Pacific identity. It also draws on indigenous Māori motifs to further illuminate the connections among people, land, and identity. In this way, Laita moves strategically to foreground not only the dynamic nature of identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand in general, but also her own particular Māori (Ngāti Raukawa), Samoan, and Pākehā ancestry (Tautai nd). Multiple geographies, histories, and identities converge in the space and time that is Va i Ta. Laita has drawn on a range of epistemologies to compose the layered meaning of the painting. The viewer must filter through these multiple realms in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the work in its entirety. Laita’s artistic technique creates a space that shimmers and deepens as the various symbols emerge from the painting: “I was playing around with scale but it wasn’t about
foreground, background, it was more about telling another story that relates to what’s happening. And I’d usually do it in shellac, I’d make imagery with shellac that’s not clear. It’s also because it’s transparent, it’s not quite real, it’s hovering between those spaces of what’s happening in that work, but because of the nature of shellac, it’s shiny, so if you’re standing in a certain light, it jumps out, even though there’s no sense of form about it” (Laita 2001). Laita’s technique of building up multiple layers of paint is a physical expression of the ideas explored in her work: “[T]here’s no tense in the work, it’s about space. . . . To use this term ‘Va i Ta’ . . . I think about it is the space between dark and light, the space between that void” (2001). The layers of paint form a physical representation of the space between, and connote a metaphorical space between ideas and creative intention. Using this foundational metaphor, Laita configures Pacific identity.

One element flows to the next in the space of Laita’s painting. In panel one, the composition focuses on a figure with bowed head, covered with a transparent green woven mat. The symbolism is palpable: it is a ceremonial display of shame. This meditative figure holds a sharp weapon and is posed to the left of an upside-down ‘ava bowl. Directly above the ceremonial figure, in the upper left corner, four small, almost transparent figures (a child, a woman, and two men) stand in front of a fale (house). “They’re very small. . . . In terms of creation mythology for Samoa . . . we come from the sun [and these figures refer to that]” (Laita 2001). The figures are also representative of the four genealogical titles established by Nāfanua, the Samoan warrior goddess, which are expressed through Samoan tattoos: “For me, that’s the sense of four familial lines, the four titles. None of these figures represent any one thing but there is a female figure that goes across [the text] that has a male tattoo, male pe’a, the idea being that it relates to the idea of the tattoo coming to Samoa from Fiji [by way of women]” (Laita 2001).

In referencing Samoan mythical origins, the figure of Nāfanua, and the ancient practice of Samoan tattooing, Laita’s work underscores how oral knowledge remains a significant reference point for negotiating Pacific Island identity. Importantly, in her painting Laita has created a space in which ancient myths exist side by side with rituals that continue to be observed today, such as the ‘ava ceremony. In her rendering of the upside-down ‘ava bowl Laita refers to the time before ‘ava existed: “That’s why the ‘ava bowl is upside down, this is before time, before anything. I’m playing around with mythology” (Laita 2001).
The artist’s interest in engaging mythological tropes is revealed in the intersecting lines of myth and identity of Māori, Pākehā, and the Pacific diaspora in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In doing so, she explores not only the primary definition of vā as the space between, but also the vā as a metaphor for the web of relationships that exist between these diverse groups in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

A tomb features prominently in all the panels, bisecting the space between their upper and lower sections, and pointing to land as a significant factor related to identity. Laita asserted, “Underneath this line is the reference to tombs, talking about land and star mounds and relation to the land” (2001). Placing the tomb in all four panels creates continuity that is consequently disrupted because the perspective is slightly different in each, almost as if we are viewing it from alternative angles. For example, in the third panel, Laita places two frangipani flowers diagonally in the lower half of the painting. Looking through the layers of paint, we can see that the flowers mark the top and bottom of the tomb. We are viewing the tomb on its side. In the final panel, the tiny child and three adult figures from panel one have increased in size: “[The four figures that refer to the sun myth in panel one] are now huge, it’s just their feet, so there is this sense of being underground, being in a different space” (Laita 2001).

Significantly, the “different space” Laita refers to here is Pulotu, the Samoan underworld. The toes of the figures are hanging off the edge of the last panel, reinforcing the immensity of the space in question.

Also in the final panel, the green mat that symbolized shame in panel one also takes a new form—that of an ‘ava bowl, in which a seated figure wearing a headdress holds a coconut. Laita explained, “The ‘ava bowl has become the context. It all relates to ‘ava. . . . Because it’s a precursor for so many things, coming together, when you drink it you spill a little bit to go back to the land, it’s like a toast, and you drink it, it’s sort of sharing commonality” (Laita 2001). Laita links the mat with the ‘ava ceremony because both are examples of the reciprocal exchanges that cement relationships in fa’a Sāmoa (Samoan way).

The repeated appearance of figures between the second and third panels completes the meaning of the painting. In panel two, a Māori figure crouched in a canoe sleeps beneath the tomb holding a taiaha (long, wooden weapon). Laita envisioned the presence of this symbolic figure as representing “landmarks of the dead. . . . It’s like a waiting, of course this is before time, a chronological sense of time” (Laita 2001). In her painting, Laita creates a space in which Māori and Samoan legends form the foundation for the composition. In this way, Va i Ta
The Space Between

constitutes a visual representation of Laita’s own existence in the va as an individual with both Māori and Samoan genealogical ties.

THE NEXT SPACE

Lily Laita’s Va i Ta illustrates how myth, memory, and narrative through space and time constitute formative features in contemporary Pacific Islander identity. Moreover, through her painting, Laita has created a forum in which to consider how ancestry and identity are linked to land, and how they are articulated in Māori and Samoan contexts in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In addition, Laita’s painting is a commentary on the nature of space in art, as well as on the intersection of the artist’s own diverse Māori, Samoan, and Pākehā ancestry: “The physical context is the ground or support [canvas] I’m working on but it’s the illusion of space within in the idea ‘Va i Ta’ where I can bring ideas, and images, and motifs. . . . There’s overlapping and creating other meanings of the story. . . . ‘Va i Ta’ is the process and the context, but at the same time, I’m also part of that process” (Laita 2001). Laita’s words highlight the importance of individual narrative and personal and collective understandings about identity. Va i Ta is a narrative about the space in which Pacific identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand is formulated and connected to the indigenous people of the place. Indeed, the open-ended nature of Va i Ta reflects in a powerful way the complexity of Pacific Islander experience in adopted lands. As Laita explained, the space between is ever evolving: “‘Va i Ta’ is a representation of space and of some things that go together but it’s not ever complete” (Laita 2001; emphasis added). Lily Laita’s Va i Ta Taeao Lalata E Aunoa Ma Gagana has broad implications for identity in the Pacific and underscores the increasing space between which Pacific identities are created.

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Notes
1. “Va i Ta” was the title of Laita’s solo exhibition in 2000. Here, I focus on the title painting of that exhibition and abbreviate it as Va i Ta after the first reference. According to Laita, Va i Ta Taeao Lalata E Aunoa Ma Gagana literally means “the space without language” (Laita 2001).
2. See Webb 2001. In the thesis, I also examine Laita’s 1989 Pari’aka triptych, in which she superimposes her body on the Taranaki landscape, her outstretched arms embracing her Māori (Ngāti Raukawa), Samoan, and Pākehā heritages. Laita also acknowledges her mixed cultural heritage by including words in the respective languages. Additionally, the multilingual text links the 1881 invasion of the Māori settlement at Parihaka by government troops with the Mau movement in Sāmoa during the 1920s. In this article, I interpret Va i Ta Taeao Lalata E Aunoa Ma Gagana through the Samoan concept of vā, as expressed in the title of the painting and the foregrounding of the vā in its composition and intention. In her exploration of the vā, Laita references not only Samoan but also Māori history, motifs, and beliefs. In doing so, Laita’s art is embedded in the complex network of shared relationships among Māori, Pākehā (Europeans), and Pacific Islanders in the geographical space of Aotearoa/New Zealand. In addition, I use Pacific art and Pacific Islands art as descriptive terms, with the awareness that they cannot totally encompass the nuances of Laita’s work or the complexity of its cultural context.
3. Laita explained that the star mounds were part of the chiefly sport of pigeon hunting. The birds were released from these mounds, so called because of the distinctive shape in which they were built. They are not to be confused with the royal mounds of Tonga.

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Abstract
This essay considers Lily Laita’s exploration of Pacific identity through space and time in her large-scale, four-part painting *Va i Ta Taeao Lalata E Aunoa Ma Gagana*, created in 2000. *Va i Ta* constitutes a visual representation of Pacific identity and how it relates to notions of the vā (space between). The Samoan concept of vā evokes an ever-shifting and productive paradigm that eschews linear or static understandings of space and time. Indeed, the vā represents a dynamic moment that contains the present, past, and future. This “in-between” space bursts with potential and creativity. In *Va i Ta Taeao Lalata E Aunoa Ma Gagana*, Laita follows the creative impulse to work in a space without time or tense. The result is a timeless painting that illustrates Pacific identity as it is linked to the space-time continuum of the vā.

**KEYWORDS:** Lily Laita, space (vā), time, identity, narrative, Aotearoa/New Zealand, contemporary Pacific art
LOCATING IDENTITY

KAMOAN MINE
Katherine Higgins and Andy Leleisiʻuao

KAʻIKE E HOʻOMAOPOPO AI
Makanani Parker

DIASPORIC DREAM
VOYAGE
SILVER SPOON
Tafea Polamalu
Persistence, Rope, Stockings, Rocks, by Roxanne Chasle
Installation, 2007, 45 cm x 20 cm

“Lost Kamoans” drew from symbols and narratives relating to Leleisi’uao’s earlier works to focus on the “conflicts inherent in being a New Zealand–born Samoan” (Leleisi’uao, 2007). As Ron Brownson—the senior curator of Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki—stated, the artworks address “issues about education, ethnicity, the Christian Church and social relationships between people which attempt to transform you into someone you’re not. So, Andy’s art is really a visual primer for the social experience of Samoans” (pers comm, Nov 2008).

“Lost Kamoans” did not succumb to the clichés often associated with Pacific Island art, such as paradisiacal scenes of island beauty and representations of traditional motifs. Leleisi’uao’s portraits of New Zealand–born Samoan males are confrontational and emotional narratives about “the problems associated with trying to be a spiritual person without necessarily being religious, of being culturally aware without having to be politically correct, the ties to the church...
through our parents and the necessity of respecting their beliefs without giving into the often onerous burdens associated with these or having to live up to ideas of individualistic success without losing the ethos of a group-orientated culture” (Leleisi’uao 2007). In a powerful way, the works represent the experience of Leleisi’uao and his generation living in the space between two cultures.

To distinguish between the unique circumstances of New Zealand–born Samoans from those of Island-born Samoans, Leleisi’uao coined the term Kamoan—a hybridization of the terms Kiwi and Samoan. Kamoans—Samoans born and raised in Aotearoa/New Zealand—are the focus of this article. The exhibition “Lost Kamoans” is only one point of reference among many for exploring this ongoing negotiation of identity.

Leleisi’uao was confronted with the task of negotiating his identity when his parents and other Samoans like them left Sāmoa for opportunities in New Zealand. Their journey from home island to an adopted homeland challenged and changed them. Adjusting to a place, language, and lifestyle foreign to their own upbringing, Island-born Samoans found refuge through fa’a Sāmoa (the Samoan way of life), religion, and connections with their loved ones back home. It has not been a trouble-free transition, and many issues faced by migrants like Leleisi’uao’s parents continue today. Racism as well as language and cultural differences are just a few of the obstacles Samoan migrants have had to overcome in their efforts to create a place for themselves in Aotearoa/New Zealand. New Zealand–born Samoans have been faced with their own challenges. They are confronted by a reality markedly different to that of their cousins in Sāmoa, and of their Kiwi peers (that is, those born and bred in New Zealand, Māori and Pākehā [Europeans] included). For all intents and purposes, they exist in the space between. Although this dual identity requires constant negotiation, Kamoans have been creating their own space for their voices to be heard. In Leleisi’uao’s case, he articulates his thoughts and experiences through his art.

The term Kamoan is not applicable to all New Zealand–born Samoans. While we acknowledge the histories and struggles of Island-born Samoans as they have adjusted to life in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and the importance of fa’a Sāmoa, it is our intention to support the notion that Kamoans—those who do not feel any particular affiliation to Kiwi culture and who recognize the vast difference between themselves and their relatives and friends in Sāmoa—constitute a distinct type of Samoan that should be recognized. Traversing unfamiliar cultural landscapes, Kamoans must overcome the confusion, cultural anxieties,
and complexity of their unique identity. We seek to position this identity as a source of strength, and examine issues that surround a generation that inherited responsibilities and expectations placed on them by Island-born Samoans whose cultural, monetary, and religious needs are, at times, unrealistic. These responsibilities include the long-held tradition of fa’a Sāmoa, which some Kamoans have been left to negotiate without the infrastructure and support their Island-born parents were raised with.

Alienation from their cultural roots and from their Kiwi peers, along with uncertainty over their identity, often leaves Kamoans with emotional and psychological burdens that hamper them from realizing their full potential. Despite the fraught space they are forced to navigate—indeed, because of it—Kamoans constitute critical role models for guiding the next generation. These responsibilities can be daunting, but recognizing them will instill a level of confidence for Kamoans to understand their important role in society. In this article, we raise issues relating to migration, life experience, and social awareness in the hopes of creating a base for Kamoans to empower themselves, and foster positive relationships and opportunities.

LAND OF STINGING MILK

To understand Kamoan identity, we must begin with the migration of Samoans to New Zealand. During the post–World War Two labor shortage, New Zealand needed unskilled workers for factories and development projects (Auckland Star 1976, 19; Fairbairn-Dunlop and Makisis 2003), and Samoans were the largest group of Pacific Islanders to answer this call.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, many Samoan families sent young adults to work in New Zealand, the “land of milk and honey.” They were welcomed to work in factories and other low-waged industries where skills such as facility in English or familiarity with machinery were not prerequisites. The wages these young men and women earned helped support their ‘āiga (family) in Sāmoa. Those who migrated often maintained an image of New Zealand as the land of opportunity, sending home remittances and encouraging others to follow them. However, the reality of acclimating to a foreign place and culture was not so simple. Samoans were confronted with racial discrimination, employers reneging on promised jobs, culture shock, and language barriers while trying to fit into a
New Zealand way of life. The pace and lifestyle of their adopted country was vastly different from the rooted matai (chiefly title) system and communal villages of Sāmoa.

It was the harsh reality of monotonous and unsatisfying work routines compounded with the emotional distress of separation from ‘āiga that drew Samoan migrants to the familiarities of church. Church extended past being a place for religious observance to become a refuge in a society that often did not understand them. It created and supported a network for Samoans to identify and empathize with one another’s experiences, to speak in their own language, and to maintain their culture. Church provided a mixture of social and religious comforts that included sports, singing, stage performances, and other type of social gatherings.

These networks became increasingly important, especially as New Zealand’s economic downturn began in 1973 and Pacific peoples were portrayed as scapegoats for “a state-manipulated migrant problem” (Anae 2004). After more than a decade of having been casual about enforcing visa regulations to ensure the flow of cheap labor from the Pacific Islands, in the 1970s the New Zealand government began to tighten its immigration laws. During this traumatic era, those who overstayed their visas were arrested and often deported, even Samoans from Western Sāmoa who had been considered New Zealand citizens when their country was a colony. The arrests often occurred at work sites or, more alarmingly, at homes before dawn with the aid of police dogs—thus giving rise to the infamous term Dawn Raids.

During those years, the low cost of housing and employment opportunities propelled families further out of the cities and into more suburban areas in what has come to be known as the Brown Flight. In Auckland, many moved from inner-city neighborhoods such as Grey Lynn and Ponsonby to areas further south such as Otara and Mangere. These suburbs became the Pacific world that informed Leleisi’uao and his generation.

NEW ISLANDERS

In South Auckland, as in other working-class areas where Pacific migrants had settled, a brown alter-indigenous awareness emerged. “Although their parents had mainly resisted assimilation, clinging to their own church and social groups,
these children were undeniably New Zealanders, by birth, education and association. They knew no other home” (Lay 1996, 13). Well-known columnist and journalist Tapu Misa—who is herself a New Zealand–born Samoan—has also commented on the enormous pressure that was placed on her generation by their families: “‘We come for the education,’ my father kept reminding us, and as we grew up we were never in any doubt of our parents’ enormous expectations of us. Their drive for us to succeed was as great as the pressure we felt to do so. As Samoans our achievements belong not just to us, but to our parents, our church, our community and our people” (1987, 40).

It was under these circumstances that Leleisi’uao’s generation emerged. At home they were raised Samoan, but at school they were taught in English. For many, this dual identity and dual reality began on their first day of school. Samoan parents’ esteem for Western education and a better standard of living for their families took precedence over the menial employment opportunities they filled. Parents wanted more for their children and encouraged them in school because education was viewed as the key to success in the palagi (white/European) society that was now their home. However, the embracing of a Western education often meant subconsciously forsaking Samoan language and fa’a Sāmoa. The interactions and communication necessary to learn and understand fa’a Sāmoa were difficult when parents worked multiple jobs, shift work, and extended hours just to make ends meet. The lack of quality family time left many Kamoans to navigate their own way through adolescence. Leleisi’uao’s generation sought comfort where they could find it, for example in television, radio, and music. As Kamoans engaged with American and British pop culture—which they merged with their Samoan heritage and their New Zealand experience—they were simultaneously drawn into the artificial world of Western consumerism.

School accentuated the assimilation of Kamoans into Kiwi culture. Although many of their friends were of Pacific heritage, Kamoans mixed with Māori, Asian, and palagi friends. The educational and social aspects of school were very different from those at home and church, which furthered the development of their dual identity. School introduced them to new social circles and activities, which in turn widened their horizons, skills, and dreams.

Although Kamoans were drawn to the Western consumerism they had been exposed to through television, radio, and music, they nevertheless retained a
sense of loyalty to the ‘āiga. However, over time, their dual allegiances to the collective as well as their individual aspirations became problematic, especially when Kamoans began working and earning money. Samoan customary expectations of giving time and money often created resentment toward their parents, fa’a Sāmoa, and the Church. Kamoans did not want to be saddled with the same financial pressures their parents experienced in trying to keep up with gift-giving obligations such as fa’alavelave (important occasions such as births, weddings, or funerals) and making church contributions. Indeed, for many Kamoans, Samoan monetary and customary obligations to the larger group seemed ironic, considering the pressing needs that existed within their own nuclear families. However, although they strived to achieve independence from these and other obligations, they were constantly reminded of their parents’ sacrifice and expectations. The failure of many Kamoans to understand their parents’ commitment to church and extended family, along with the linguistic and cultural misunderstandings they encountered with their Samoan culture, caused considerable angst among Kamoans. During those years, many were left to paint—both figuratively and literally—a self-portrait from borrowed cultures. In this way, Kamoans were trying to compose an image of what their parents expected them to be, what society assumed them to be, and what they wanted to be.

Naked Bridges

Despite the challenges, Kamoans have been negotiating and claiming an identity of their own. The success of Kamoans as musicians, writers, artists, actors, athletes, and scholars provides salient evidence of the many opportunities that have been made available through the New Zealand–born experience. These men and women are carving out a space as Kamoans, generating an alter-indigenous awareness of what it means to exist in two cultures. This awareness counters the simplistic assumption that New Zealand–born and Island-born Samoans are inherently the same.

Leleisi‘uao epitomizes the experiences of those who, like him, felt alienated from their Samoan culture while growing up. Although Leleisi‘uao knew he was Samoan, he did not have much contact with the Sāmoa about which his parents reminisced. Through his art, he tells the story of finding strength in his identity
as a Kamoan to encourage and empower others, such as his children and future generations, to be proud of who they are. In the following sections, we attempt to get to the heart of the wider Kamoan story by exploring the layers of meaning in selected artworks by Leleisi’ua, and through a series of candid e-mail correspondences between the two authors.

Leleisi’ua’s 1995 work *Dual Realities* (figure 2) indicates a critical step in the artist’s own sense of empowerment after realizing that he did not need to choose between his Samoan or Kiwi cultures, but could instead strike a balance between the two—indeed, a Kamoan balance. In the piece, two heads represent the dueling personalities of an individual. Imprisoned in a pit until they are able to work together in harmony, the personalities reveal the conflict between head and heart, and the struggle of trying to negotiate and learn from two cultures.

![Figure 2: Duel Realities, by Andy Leleisi’ua. Ink and crayon on paper, 1995, 60 cm x 40 cm. Private collection.](image)
Katherine Higgins: What prompted you to focus on identity? Is this recurring theme a reflection of what you see in your family, friends, and community?

Andy Leleisi‘ua: It acts as my anchor when I need reaffirmation. I find I am constantly alert of surroundings and know when I am in synch with life around me. With this in mind, when my intuition warns me to use identity as a muse, I am ready.

KH: Who is included in your definition of Kamoan?

AL: Anyone. For me it’s the naked bridge, a truce between space and cultures. Originally, it encompassed New Zealand-born Samoans and those born in Samoa but raised in New Zealand, and now it also transcends mindsets, religion, spirituality, sexuality, ignorance, etc, and it will continue to evolve.

KH: Is Kamoan your own way of dealing with your identity?

AL: The two Testaments [Old and New] didn’t help and I crashed as a Presbyterian. Puberty entered and left without warning. Island-born Samoans made me smile and wince. Kiwi culture couldn’t go away and identity was a frustrated cloud. “My” New Zealand was never mine and “My” Samoa never existed. South Auckland is my home. Kamoan was, for me, the growth of wings.

KH: Do you think that Island-born parents and grandparents understand the Kamoan struggle with identity?

AL: Today’s Island-born parents are not much different from when my parents arrived, and their children will suffer similar identity issues as my generation. The more we address these issues in unison, the more confidence we create for our children.

*Niu Zila* lies on the floor, inviting viewers to step over it to look down on coconut shells painted and arranged to look like the New Zealand flag (figure 3a). In this mixed media piece, the stars of the Southern Cross located on the right hand side are transformed into frangipanis painted on the coconuts. They can also be interpreted as floating across the ocean waves, displaced from their native soil. Each coconut shell simultaneously represents a transplanted fale (home) and the
culture Samoans brought to New Zealand. The bottom right “fale” presents an anomaly; from it, two pairs of legs protrude (figure 3b). Purposefully arranged in a sexually provocative pose, the white and brown legs make a powerful statement about race and integration with a certain level of ambiguity. *Niu Zila* contemplates New Zealand’s evolving identity and the influence of Pacific people on that identity and vice versa.

KH: What do you say to other Samoans or members of the community who disagree with your terminology and views, those who think that “Samoan” is enough?

AL: The Universe kisses in different ways. Judas kissed Jesus, Rodin gave us *The Kiss*, Captain Kirk kissed Lieutenant Uhura, Tullio Lombardo’s tender sculpture of *Guidarello Guidarelli* has been kissed by more than 5 million women in search of love, Sleeping Beauty awakens with a kiss. Prince wrote *Kiss* and there’s the Kiss of Life. Tell those Samoans to come kiss me.

KH: Is there understanding between Island-born and New Zealand-born Samoans? How can they support one another?

AL: I think there is mutual respect and more acceptance of each other these days. Both can be quite arrogant and critical of one another. This saddens me as our Samoan-ness is our unique bridge.
The story behind *Pisepleta Village on the Ufological Island of Sāmoa* begins with the launching of seven canoes (reminiscent of those that traveled to Sāmoa) loaded with Samoans escaping a civil war on the island of Upolu (figure 4). A cyclone has carried them to an abandoned island furnished with robot servants and spaceships. With the help of the robots, the displaced Samoans learn to use the island’s technology. Spaceships are used to pick up mementos to learn more of other Pacific cultures such as the *moai* (stone heads) of Rapa Nui. Pick-up trucks transport the letters S, A, M, O, A while delivery trucks marked with hearts, coconuts, and small islands indicate the local trades of Pispleta Village.

Leleisi‘uao’s whimsical fantasyland is a place where children climb over, hug, and rest on hearts. They ride kiwi-moas or a roller coaster that loops above a tropical forest. Here, fairies and angels dance through the sky, birds form words like fa’aaloalo (respect), villagers lounge beneath fale, drink kava, and siva (dance). Circular rainbows radiate in the sky, “represent[ing] realized dreams . . . self-made rainbows, [and] personal halos” (Tonga 2007, 138). Hope dances throughout this work.

![Figure 4. Pisepleta Village on the Ufological Island of Sāmoa, by Andy Leleisi‘uao. Acrylic on canvas, 2006, 76 cm x 56 cm. Artist’s collection.](image-url)
KH: What do you see as Kamoans’ responsibilities towards their Samoan-ness?

AL: To educate and empower themselves with Samoa’s traditions and history, especially with New Zealand’s involvement. We must learn about the influenza epidemic that killed one-fifth of Samoa’s population in 1918, the emergence of the Mau movement and Black Saturday in December 1929, the Dawn Raids of the mid-1970s, Falema’i Lesa’s landmark court case in 1982, and other momentous events and issues so we can empathize with our Island-born brothers and sisters. We must recognize our Samoan history to understand why we must take advantage of the opportunities New Zealand offers us and use it to shape our identity for each other and our children.

KH: Why do you feel this responsibility?

AL: I decided I would take a stand and liberate myself rather than be stereotyped by others.

Figure 5. Untitled, by Andy Leleisi’uao. Acrylic on canvas, 2006, 130 cm x 130 cm. Artist’s collection.
Leleisi’uao’s daughter was the subject of the “Empowered Wallflowers” exhibition at Whitespace in March 2006. In these works, such as Untitled, she is depicted frozen in action, a deliberate reference to the historical images of Pacific peoples through the ethnographic gaze (figure 5). Here, the artist’s daughter wrings out a Samoan flag. This action suggests the ceremonial straining of kava or, alternatively, siva movements. The pink bodice worn by the subject symbolizes her youthful innocence. In contrast, the pink and white hibiscuses that constitute wallpaper in the background are melting, dripping, or dying. The background connotes the changing Samoan culture, decisions that Kamoans face, and the implications for the next generation of Kamoans.

Adorned with a graduation cap representing his achievements, and blue overalls indicating his working-class upbringing, the young Samoan’s face in Catch a Sparkling Spirit (2007) is divided: one half is brown and the other is white (figure 6). This division reflects his dual identity as a New Zealand–born Samoan. The young man’s face reveals an inner resolve; he looks at us expectantly as if to say, “We have to be amazing.” This underscores the pressure many Kamoans are under to succeed and thereby bring honor to their families.

KH: What can be done to foster a supportive and committed network for Kamoans?

AL: We are not growing our wings when we let ourselves be stereotyped or patronized. I believe our children’s emotional and spiritual identity rests with our generation. We are the first generation of this dual Samoan experience and we must share this experience for the well-being of our children and grandchildren. We must remind them of their grandparents’ struggle and that Samoa is the birthplace of our parents. Its culture, its sense of pride and duty has allowed us to inherit. Island-born Samoans in New Zealand are our responsibility to protect. Our Island-born brothers and sisters must never be made to feel insecure about our alofa [love] towards them. But as a New Zealand–born Samoan I choose who I want to be.
Le Onoeva (The Sixty-Nine) is a sixty-four-page graphic novel written and designed by Leleisi’uao (figure 6 provides a page sample). In the novel, the central protagonists are a group of super humans who band together to return sixty-nine escaped prisoners to the fictional island of Namua, the worst of whom are the protagonist’s brothers. The story takes place in the Islands of Sāmoa and involves a mélange of heroes who are Samoan, New Zealand–born Samoan, and Māori. The cast of characters include Vetu, the leader of the heroes, who is also gay; Malo, an ebony-colored human juggernaut; Lalomauga, a jungle behemoth; Ao and Po, New Zealand–born Samoan mutants; Tiki the Māori warrior; and the cynical Pe’a. Although they have superhuman powers, the heroes’ lives are far from perfect. Leleisi’uao weaves a fun and action-packed story that touches on sensitive issues. The characters ponder cultural identity, cope with alcoholism, and discuss the identity struggle of being New Zealand–born Samoan.
KH: What examples can be used to teach and empower young Kamoans?

AL: I’ll tell you a story. There’s an Island-born Samoan grandmother who is very much loved and respected amongst her family and friends. She is a faithful servant of God and Church. Her children have degrees and careers. Although suffering from arthritis and angina she had continued to work as a cleaner in a bank five days a week. Her daughter or son helped on separate days. They wiped the inside and outside windows, vacuumed the rooms, and cleaned the customer counters. She would always double-check they had done their work properly. She cleaned the teller counters, desks, and kitchen. The one room she refused to let her children clean was the toilet. She never allowed them in, conjuring excuses like a special cleaning mixture that she never shared. One day her children stopped asking. They realized, despite her aching joints and tiredness, her age and soreness, in her own humble way she was still
protecting them. This was dignity. This was fa’a Samoa. Not long afterwards she experienced a stroke and survived a heart operation. Today, she continues to serve her God and Church but I think she battled and overcame her adversities on the pure will of wanting to embrace her grandchildren again. This is alofa. This is my mother.

EMPOWERING THE KAMOAN

Andy has set himself a challenge which is that he will always be a very honest artist. This is one of the reasons that I admire and cherish his work because he knows that we need to see what he is seeing . . . from his profound self realization, he sees a cultural portrait of the Samoan diaspora to Aotearoa. (Ron Brownson pers comm, Nov 2008)

The cultural portrait that Leleisiʻuaʻo creates through his artwork is representative of his personal journey; the artwork is a potential meeting point and outlet for Kamoans who have felt alienated, marginalized, and confused.

At home, church, and school, Leleisiʻuaʻo’s generation was left to develop and negotiate an identity that had no precursor. Indeed, their Samoan-ness and Kiwi-ness have been fraught with cultural anxieties, the two states of being often dueling for primacy. With more patience and understanding of the inherited responsibilities and the expectations from their Island-born parents, Kamoans have learned to appreciate and respect fa’a Sāmoa and the struggles experienced by Samoan migrants. The values their parents used to guide their migration and lives in New Zealand have become a foundation for New Zealand-born Samoans. This foundation is complemented by their New Zealand upbringing and education, which helps them cope in the contemporary, globalized world.

By confronting the social, cultural, religious, and historical issues of Sāmoa and New Zealand, Kamoans are fulfilling their responsibilities to Island-born Samoans, empowering themselves and, more importantly, paving the way for the next generation. Kamoans are expressing their alter-indigenous awareness through various media. Kamoan artists like Leleisiʻuaʻo, through his exhibit “Lost Kamoans of the Godly and Godless,” demonstrate the ability to adapt and unify this dynamic identity.
We are grateful to Ron Brownson for his invaluable support, Deborah White of Whitespace contemporary art gallery for her ongoing encouragement, and Marata Tamaira for her tireless dedication to ensure our voices were shared with the spirit in which we wanted to be heard.

Notes
1. *Kiwi* is the colloquial name given to those who are born and raised in Aotearoa/New Zealand.
2. The kiwi is the national bird of Aotearoa/New Zealand, and the moa is a giant extinct bird.
3. Falema’i Lesa was a Samoan national residing in New Zealand who was convicted of overstaying her visa. When she appealed her conviction in New Zealand’s highest court, she succeeded in winning the case. Her argument was based on the logic that since all Western Samoans born between 1924 and 1948 were British subjects, when Western Samoa was transferred to New Zealand in 1949, they automatically became New Zealand citizens.

References


Abstract
This article critically considers the concept of Kamoan. Coined by visual artist Andy Leleisi’ua, Kamoan is a
hybridization of the terms Kiwi and Samoan. The authors discuss the issues surrounding what it means to be Kamoan, and the pressures Kamoans experience. Despite the difficulties they face in coming to grips with their identity, this article shows that Kamoans are successfully carving out a place for themselves in New Zealand—one that has provided a unique outlet for their voices to be heard.

KEYWORDS: Kamoan, New Zealand–born Samoan, Andy Leleisi’ua, contemporary art, identity, empowerment
My first ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i class was at Kalāheo Adult Night School, six or seven years ago. I wanted to learn the language of my family—my grandmother and her siblings’ first language, and their parents’ tongue. I wanted to learn the Hawaiian language, not only as a way to pay respect and honor to my family heritage, but also as a personal commitment—a journey to embrace a part of me that had yet to be revealed.

I am an ethnic blend of hapa haole, Hawaiian, and Chinese, and I was raised in what I now recognize as a distinctively Hawaiian cultural value system. Of course, I did not grow up thinking about the origins of the values I had been taught. I did not even consider my cultural identity, other than when I was asked: “What are you?” While I was raised to respond by including all of the ethnic groups to which I belong, today—because of the Hawaiian cultural values with which I was raised and having grown up in Hawai‘i—I identify as Hawaiian.

I attended school with a predominantly Asian heritage group of children. I really did not think about there being any appreciable differences among us. The only great difference that I could immediately perceive was that my friend next door had a furo—a Japanese-style bathing tub. My friends and I once tried to use it as a kind of Jacuzzi, but since it was too small for us to play in, we moved our childhood games back to the yard.

Another of my childhood memories involves spending time with my friend’s grandfather. The elderly man’s room was minimally furnished with only a bed and dresser; it was almost Zen-like and very functional. On his dresser were three medicinal bottles. I imagined they were filled with herbal tinctures and exotic remedies from unknown origins. My friend’s grandfather was a knowledgeable man, and the other children and I would ask questions like, “How do you cure a headache?” In response, he would show us which areas of the body to rub and massage to ease the pain. When we sat at my friend’s dinner table, I would look in wonder at their family’s two traditional, handcrafted Japanese dolls, which were encased in glass and placed on a shelf. The bottles of
“curatives,” the glass-encased dolls, and a katana sword as well, were all items I began to recognize as being culturally specific to my Japanese friends’ family homes. It made my friends unique. It also gave them a shared sense of identity.

When I was in the third grade, I experienced my first racial slur, directed at me by a classmate. He was an angry Chinese kid, and I never played with him because he was a bully. One day, while the other children and I were seated quietly in a chapel-like room waiting for the lunch call, he whispered to me, “Haole shit.” I had an older brother, so I knew what the last word meant, but “haole”? I was Hawaiian! I did not understand why he would be calling me a “haole.” As we got older, the “bullyboy” grew into a muscled, quarterback type, working as a bouncer at a local nightclub. After seeing him one night, I decided to confront him. I said, “By the way, do you remember you called me . . .”—his body tilted back ever so slightly, his eyes flashed, and his facial expressions indicated a sense of recollection of his ugly behavior. As I watched him squirm in embarrassment, I wondered how many other people he had hurt over the course of his lifetime.

Having taught grade-school children, I believe the boy did not think of calling me a “haole shit” on his own. Rather, I am inclined to believe that children who make such racial slurs do so because they hear them from adults, family, and friends, or even other children. Racial prejudice is not innate; it is learned.

As I got older, I began spending more time with my hapa Hawaiian school friends. That we came from the same cultural background meant that we were comfortable in each other’s company. There is a kind of camaraderie in finding sameness in a world of difference—a point that is exemplified when Hawaiian children ask their peers, “Wha chu stay? You Hawaiian?” and the response is an excited, “Ay, me too!”

My mother relayed to me, “Your grandfather would say to your father—you are what you are, take the best of being Hawaiian and take what you need from the Western world and make the best out of it.”

But what about being hapa Hawaiian? That was never a conversation I can remember having with my parents, simply because I did not grow up thinking about it. But somewhere along the line, the cultural “growing pains” hapa Hawaiian children experience become acute as the awareness increases that we are not simply Hawaiian, but part Hawaiian.

My siblings and I were blessed to have a mother who bestowed on us the value of being creative. The exploratory and imaginative aspects of these
activities seemed to always be in direct conflict with our father’s desire to see us engage in the more “useful” skill-building activities that came from playing competitive sports. Not that there is anything wrong with competitive sports—by no means—but I wanted to communicate my thoughts and feelings through the visual arts as experienced in a fine art museum. Some of my first experiences with the creative arts were spent making lei with my Tūtū wahine, or learning the deeper intricacies of weaving with my Aunty. However, these family practices were soon set aside for more formal classroom instruction in photography, ceramics, and painting.

In my very early twenties, I left Hawai‘i to live in the big city of San Francisco. This super-charged city was like an undulating wave attempting to transform a transplanted ‘ōpīhi like me into a metropolitan pearl oyster. The first difference I noticed was culinary in nature. The dishes in my new home all seemed to consist of white potatoes and lots of meat, like burgers and steaks. The difficulty for me was that I had grown up on a mostly fish diet (later to turn vegetarian through a post-pubescent global animal awareness and an abhorrence of twentieth-century mass farming methods). I missed my fish—dried fish especially—and I longed for poi. The dietary differences I encountered triggered in me a feeling of homesickness for Hawaiian food and a greater appreciation for my cultural roots.

I was hired as a waitress at a Japanese–French restaurant, where I found sustenance through nightly meals of fresh seafood and rice. The perfectly steamed fish and rice was to me a heaven-sent gift after so many flaky and unappetizing 1-minute rice meals from Chinese restaurants. I viewed the food at the restaurant for which I worked as a version of Hawai‘i-style food, and it helped me appreciate home as well as gain a sense of stability in the city.

But questions regarding my identity were constantly being asked. People would enquire, “What are you?” and “Please, do tell, what are your nationalities?” I initially answered that I was Hawaiian, Chinese, and Caucasian, but at times I would vary it with a more terse answer “American.” With all the questioning and staring—because to many Californians I looked “just so unique”—I began to question my identity because it was such a regular topic of discussion with customers. My uncertainty over my identity was amplified when people asked, “Do you speak Hawaiian?” The first time I was asked if I spoke Hawaiian it took me by surprise. It had never occurred to me to learn Hawaiian—although when I was younger I had studied other languages: a little
Japanese in primary school, French in high school, and Italian in college. But Hawaiian? I began to feel ashamed whenever the question was posed, because the simple truth was I did not know the first thing about the language of my Hawaiian heritage. I felt like an alien to my own culture. I could not even understand why I had never noticed this deficit before in my life. Why did it take so many years and my moving thousands of miles across the ocean to realize that something was missing? It is true: Sometimes it takes living in new places to recognize what is truly important in our lives and the journey we need to be on in order to return home.

While my personal exploration toward understanding my identity has brought me full circle—back to my ‘ohana—by no means does it mean a rejection of my other ethnic connections. Nor does my embracing of ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i imply a denial of the English language. Most of my ancestors over the last 100 years—from Norway to Hawai‘i—spoke English, and it is my first language. However, learning the language of my kūpuna has made me feel more complete; my life has been forever enriched and my foundation strengthened.

Palena ‘ole ku‘u aloha a me ka mahalo i ke Akua Mana Loa, ku‘u mau kūpuna, ku‘u mau māku, a me nā hoaloha a pau i ko lākou mālama ‘ana mai ia‘u. Kū ka piko, kahe ke koko, kū i ka hā.7

Figures 1 and 2. ‘Ike e Ho‘omaopopo Ai, by Makanani Parker. 2 of 4. Acrylic on canvas, 2008, 50 cm x 40 cm (each image).
Two stories are relayed in this article, one written and the other painted (figures 1 and 2). Both speak about origins, movements across distance, the beauty of growth, and the remembrance of where we come from. For me, learning ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i has provided an important key to understanding who I am. Without our indigenous tongue we lose our sense of being, our sense of personal and collective identity, and our mo‘olelo. In a report on the social and economic conditions of Native Hawaiians, Larry L. Kimura underscored the link between language and identity: “Language demonstrates the uniqueness of a people” and is “inextricably tied to the definition and identity of the Hawaiian people” (1983, 173). Conversely, renowned Māori filmmaker Merata Mita noted the outcome of not knowing one’s Native language: “If to choose a language is to choose a world, then being denied a language is being denied a world” (1989, 310). With those resounding words, I state my position: I have chosen to not be denied.

Glossary
‘āina: land
haole: refers to someone who is white, but “formerly, any foreigner; foreign, introduced, of foreign origin, as plants, pigs, chickens” (Pukui and Elbert 1971, 58).
hapa: part or fraction of
kūpuna: ancestors
lei: floral garland
mo‘olelo: stories, histories
‘ohana: family
‘ōlelo Hawai‘i: Hawaiian language
‘ōpīhi: a type of limpet of the Cellana species
poi: a Hawaiian staple food made from the pounded root of the taro plant
pono: justness; balance
Tūtū wahine: grandmother

Notes
1. I choose this particular ordering of ethnicities because it identifies “haole” as the ethnicity others perceive me as being
2. The use of a blood quantum rationale in Hawai‘i to define what constitutes being Hawaiian has been a prominent topic for discussion, particularly since its introduction to the Hawaiian Home Lands Act during Hawai‘i’s status as a US Territory. Under the act, one must have a 50 percent Hawaiian blood quantum to be considered Native Hawaiian. This stipulation has become a critical basis for deciding who is eligible to have access to ‘āina and other benefits. Today, the blood quantum rationale remains a pernicious means by which to determine
Hawaiian identity and can only be changed through legislative and congressional measures.

3. In this scene—though we were not speaking Hawaiian—the language we used, Pidgin-English, enabled us to communicate and share our understanding of our uniqueness and our belonging to Hawai‘i. Until the resurgence of the language in the 1970s, many Hawaiians could not speak ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, in large part due to its banning in 1898. For more on the banning of the Hawaiian language and its effect on Native Hawaiians, see Kimura 1983.


5. ‘Opihi is a limpet. Colloquially, in Hawai‘i, referring to someone as an ‘ōpihi means he or she is very close to another person, like a child to its mother. It can also connote one person’s neediness for another.

6. Kenyan intellectual Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o has discussed the sense of alienation colonized peoples often feel in relation to their cultural heritage: “Colonial alienation takes two interlinked forms: an active (or passive) distancing of oneself from the reality around; and an active (or passive) identification with that which is most external to one’s environment. It starts with a deliberate disassociation of the language of conceptualisation, of thinking, of formal education, of mental development, from the language of daily interaction in the home in the community” (1986, 28).

7. This passage in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i translates as, “My love and gratitude is unlimited to God, my ancestors, and my parents and all close friends for their guidance. Honor the source, perpetuate the genealogy, preserve the breath.” I would like to thank kumu hula Noēlani Tacher in particular for introducing me to the last phrase in this passage. Sam No‘eau Warner has asserted, “The Hawaiian language should be perpetuated because it is part of Hawaiian Heritage—what can help to make Hawaiians whole again as a people. Hawaiians need to learn and know their language, culture, stories, histories, and religion because they interrelate and are integrally linked to one another and to the people. Language—the words people use to describe the environment, thought, emotions—as an expression of world view—is a medium through which people transmit culture and history” (1997, 77). I use ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i here to denote the decision I have made to reengage with my Hawaiian heritage.

8. The two images were painted for and titled after this article, and convey ideas about origins, migrations, and genealogy. They provide a glimpse of what can be realized through recollecting our past and seeking a pono future.

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KEYWORDS: Hawaiian language, Hawaiian heritage, cultural difference, identity
Diasporic Dream: Letter to Grandfather
Ta'Fea Polamalu

I am the end product of opportunity
the final result of your foresight

I am what they call
“second-generation US Samoan”
that generation who has
never been to Sāmoa

I am first-world
fully-developed
fully-civilized

I am born and
raised among them
melted into them
fluent in their language and ways

I am Educated,
Modernized,
American

I am the quintessential neo Samoan
a walking wealth of Western knowledge

I know my pledge of allegiance
my presidents
all fifty state capitals

I can solve quadratic equations
formulate a thesis
type over 60 words per minute
dissect a frog and identify all of the vital organs
And discuss the theory of continental drift

I can tell you the difference between
Polynesia, Micronesia, Melanesia
I am well versed in the Lapita theory

I know all about Sāmoa
population, climate, geography
average life expectancy

I am the vision
Polamalu

the progress
a masterpiece of assimilation

The world is at my finger tips

I am the future
woven of fear and survival
the fully evolved immigrant
the diasporic dream
I have forgotten what is useless
and learned what is important

I am what eventually becomes of
those who left,
not native like you
but settler like them,
but not one of them
nor one of you

I am lodged between worlds in
the war zone where mine fields and
razor wire connect cultures

I wish I would have known you
I would like to show you this place,
but I do not remember you
or Sāmoa
or speak your language
or know your ways
I do not remember why I am here

I will never return
Voyage
Tafea Polamalu

Silence stuck to your skin
When you spoke
It was the ever changing
Color of water

Silver blue
You decorated the body
Of a dead Banyan with your

Poems knowing the wind would
Carry your words across the sea

When you slept
Your breaths created soft
Currents nonexistent to the
Untrained ear

But I listened
Memorized tides
Planned my life around
The two-beat rhythm
Hoping they might
Take me beyond

The reef of jagged teeth
Take me to the house of the sliding sun
Where no walls divide

Take me away
To April... to March... to May
Where we used to paint our
Faces red with clay
And say nothing for hours

I was in Jersey last year and
I heard wind echoing your
Voice through stone alleys
And concrete canyons

Long your words have traveled
From dead Banyan across sea
In soft breezes and strong gusts
Inside me the current recognizes
Your rhythm and we do not skip a beat

Silence is your voice
Reminding me to Love
SILVER SPOON
Tafea Polamalu

Then circles the possibility of now like
A lone vulture orbiting a starving nightmare

History splashes, clashes, whirls, and
Collides with the most convenient truth and
Drips onto the thirsty tongue of a bloodshot moon

Spit sprays into the atmosphere scattering
Like thunder-spooked flying foxes

The stone relic of a woman stands on
Coral-callused feet
Her ideas burn perfect holes in
A half-drowned sun as she concludes
Infinity is only accessible
Through the tunnel of
A loaded gun
BOOM! She vanishes and with
Her one thousand years of oral
History melts into mystery

An elder sings a soft chant of doom
In a language that is lost to me he
Reveals the location of
My freshly chopped roots

As the flies relentlessly dine on the exit wound
I begin to melt memories on a silver spoon

And when the bloodshot moon turned green

You were nowhere to be seen you were
Too busy weaving hollow gods
Searching the earth’s core for
Untouched metaphors and
Stockpiling heavy artillery for
A war that is no more

You see, long before birth we were
Robbed of ancestral wings and
Hung by imported puppet strings

With a rusted wire brush they scrubbed our
Uncivilized tongue until we regurgitated
Foreign scriptures that later became our crutch.

When I finally woke
I found myself
Sitting in the center of
A black field of stone

The moon gleamed bright as a sun-bleached bone
My only possessions were bitter questions boiling
Venomous blood like fresh Lava

I am and was
A snarling one-eyed, three-legged dog chained to
The burning tree called God
Searching like the flying fox for
Lava fields of endless black rock

For Lava fields of endless black rock where
We are born and will die in the sweet red light
Of a bloodshot moon
Where we will bathe in village song and
And wash clear our fears in blue
Salty flesh of sea

Tonight I promise to pay close attention to dreams
to my birth
to my death
to all of the stories never told that were washed away by riptides
to the stone relic of a woman who disappeared but never died
to the ancient chant that never lied
to my ancestral wings that
continue to fly,
to my roots that stretch too deep to up-root,
to the sacred tongue of the bloodshot moon and
every memory melted on
a silver spoon
Missionaries of Erased Gods, by Tafea Polamalu. Acrylic on canvas, 2008, 46 cm x 61 cm.
Cultural Confluences

John Webster and Taua Muru: The Space Between Cultures in 1840s Hokiana
Jennifer Ashton

At the Confluence of Poetry and Politics: Comparing the Lives and Works of Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Hone Tuwhare
Scott William Mackay
Untitled (Native Hawaiian Flora), by Roxanne Chasle
Diptych, oil on canvas, 2006, 7 cm x 10 cm
On 24 May 1847, as he was drifting off to sleep, a British settler and trader named John Webster was woken in his home near Kohukohu—a small settlement located on New Zealand’s Hokianga river—by the sound of a war party arriving on his front lawn.1 As he got out of bed and looked out from his verandah, he was confronted by the sight of a group of armed Māori crowded inside the hut usually occupied by three of his Māori workers. The party was a taua muru, a hostile expedition whose purpose was to plunder property in order to right a perceived wrong, and the focus of retribution was Webster’s workers, Pera, Terea, and Piko. Over the next twelve hours there was a standoff between the two camps, punctuated by moments of direct, armed confrontation. While Webster moved between the scene of the disturbance and the relative safety of his house, cutlasses were waved and pistol shots were threatened. Scuffles and ferocious yelling broke out and haka (ceremonial dances) were performed before the raiders departed, taking with them a box of Piko’s belongings.

Ostensibly, this was a straightforward affair that followed the basic rules of taua muru. According to historian Angela Ballara, the rules of taua muru are based on the concept of utu, or the balancing of an action or injury received with an equal action so that mana (power/prestige) and social order are maintained (2003, 82–83). The taua muru that was carried out at Webster’s homestead was rooted in an earlier disagreement between Piko and the men who conducted the raid. Allegedly, the men in the raiding party had stolen some of Piko’s belongings during a previous visit to Webster’s property. In retaliation, Piko made off with some of their possessions, saying he would hold on to them until his own goods were returned. Writing in his journal on 23 May, Webster noted that a subsequent attempt to resolve the dispute had seen some goods returned from both sides, but only after verbal insults had been thrown and one of the visiting party had threatened revenge (Webster 1847). In a wider sense, the raid was a continuation of tension between two iwi (tribes): Te Rarawa (based north of the Hokianga river) and Ngā Puhi (based on the south side of the river). The members of the taua muru were affiliated with the Te Rarawa people from further up the coast at Herekino and had gone to Hokianga to work for one of
the local Pākehā (European) sawyers. Conversely, Pera, Terea, and Piko belonged to a hapū (tribal group) from southern Hokianga that was affiliated with Ngā Puhi.

The form and course of the attack also followed a recognizable pattern. Traditionally, taua muru was a means of dispute resolution, which “punished offences, but was not intended to provoke war.” In appearance, taua muru could look very much like a full-fledged war party, “with full sound effects and apparent fury: weapons were brandished, muskets were fired into the air, haka or war dances were performed in challenge, accompanied by blood-curdling yells and set to words which outlined the offence . . . so that the offenders were left in no doubt that they were considered to be the transgressors” (Ballara 2003, 103–104). Importantly, unlike engagements of war, killing either did not occur or was very limited during taua muru.

The act of plunder that took place on John Webster’s lawn demonstrated many of the traditional characteristics of a taua muru, yet there were significant ways in which its conduct and resolution incorporated new cultural elements. Most of these new elements resulted from the involvement of Webster and a small number of other Pākehā. By conducting the taua muru on land occupied by a white man, the Te Rarawa party brought into play new forms of dispute resolution. Thus, Webster’s front lawn became a literal as well as a metaphorical space between. In this space, both Māori and Pākehā might have wanted their own cultural norms to exclusively apply, but when it came to dealing with each other they accepted the limits of those norms, and in doing so they produced new ways of interacting and new rules of engagement.

Because the only written record of the taua muru was made by John Webster, any analysis of the episode must bear in mind the absence of an explicit Māori perspective. However, the account does provide a glimpse into the mind of a man who seemed to see himself as the master of the indigenous people he encountered, and cracks that appear in Webster’s self-image throughout his personal narrative provide valuable insight into the relative positions of Māori and Pākehā at that time. Webster probably wrote his account for a British audience, or at the very least for members of his family in Scotland, and his journal reflects a propensity to cast himself in the leading role in the dramas of his life in New Zealand. Right from the start, when he wrote of seeing the taua muru arrive on his lawn, Webster portrayed himself as a major player in the affair—indeed, as the director of events. After seeing the raiding party, Webster
entered the sitting room to find his houseguest Mr Motte, his brother George, and Pera, Terea, and Piko arming themselves. According to Webster’s journal for 25 May, he then took control of the situation:

I went into our sitting room & found Motte Geo [George] & the boys loading guns & pistols, cutlasses & Bayonets were scattered about in all directions, Tatou ki raro I said (let us go below) I seized a cutlass Terea a gun & we two went down first. I stuck my cutlass in the earth unseen by the enemy close @ hand & Terea & I entered the hut confronting the party. Who are you and what want you here I asked, No answer, not a sound was heard, every man stood or sat still as statues leaning on their long spears their kakahus [garments or cloaks] drawn over their faces. I gave the fire a kick with my foot to make it blaze when I put my hand to two or 3 of their mats & drew them aside to see who they were I found them to be from Herekino. (Webster 1847)

After a brief standoff, Webster led Terea and Piko up the hill to the house, and waited for the raiding party to make the first move. All was quiet during the night, but in the morning a scuffle broke out:

We all rushed out I took a gun which I thrust in the verandah paling in case of the worst & be it understood if a gun had been fired by the other party I should immediately have supplied our lads with firearms instead of the spears & cutlasses. On our party coming out the taua commenced yelling quivering their weapons &c. I rushed down to the hut where two of our lads were scuffling with a party who were dragging out the Boxes I lent a hand to prevent them from being taken out of the hut the main body of the Taua were outside defying the lads on the hill We pushed those in the hut outside & shut the door . . . Now was the savage sight all our boys party were on the Brow @ the House just above the Taua Both parties yelled & made hideous faces & ran about like demons stripped almost naked, all the Herekino party made a feint of rushing forward I called to our party to Kokiri, to rush down but they were wary being all youths, two of the Taua now came forward with muskets & presented them @ our lads I rushed forward in front of them and said, Ka tangi to pu aianei ki konei koutou puranga ai (fire a shot and your party shall lie in a heap where you are) I told them I would on the first shot supply my lads with guns and not one of them should escape, this intimidated them a good deal, they danced a war dance and retreated to their canoe when our lads rushed with a yell to the waterside & danced in defiance. (Webster 1847)

For his readers, at least, Webster successfully cast himself as the hero, the man who led the counterattack against the raiders. This self-image was in keeping with the identity he had constructed for himself as much as a decade earlier when he left his Scottish homeland for the antipodean colonies. Webster’s
identity was initially formed in a Britain that enjoyed “a sense of superior
difference” (Colley 2003, 369), based on what it saw as its place on the world
stage and the blessings of Protestantism, moral independency, and the rule of
law, which Britons believed made them the rightful rulers of the peoples with
whom imperialism brought them into contact. This apparent right to rule was
partly based on the development of a “clearer racial hierarchy,” in which “tribal
peoples . . . represented the least developed of societies because they had failed
to generate a commercial society or a recognizable state” (Bayly 1989, 149; Bayly
2004, 110). According to this view, the best thing that could happen to the
peoples of the world would be for them to become more like the British.

As an adolescent, Webster absorbed these ideas of British supremacy in
relation to non-European peoples, and his first experience in the colonies served
to reinforce them. In 1838 he went to Australia and became involved in two
consecutive overland journeys driving cattle from Sydney to Adelaide. The
South Australia through which Webster passed was seen by the British as an
empty land, ripe for settlement. Aboriginales were either forgotten, or were
viewed as unknowable, nomadic savages whose lack of obvious signs of
civilization such as fixed settlement and cultivation meant they would wither

Throughout his journeys, Webster recorded his impressions of the Aboriginal
people he observed and encountered (see Webster 1908). Initially, Aboriginales
were to him objects of fascination whose unavoidable demise he both predicted
and lamented. However, they soon went from being a potential menace to a
direct threat after Webster and his traveling companions were attacked by a
group of Aboriginales who had been following them on the opposite side of a
river. In the ensuing fight at least six Aboriginal men were killed. Whether he
regarded Aboriginales as objects of curiosity or fear, Webster never dealt with
them on an individual or personal basis. Most of his experiences with
Aboriginales were through distant observation, and when contact became direct,
he perceived them, like the new land, as something to be conquered. There was
no point at which Webster had to acknowledge Aboriginales as people in
possession of the land. For Webster, in Australia, there was no space where the
rules of engagement between Native and newcomer were to be negotiated.
Instead, his experiences there confirmed rather than challenged his identity as a
member of the supposedly dominant cultural group. By the time he arrived in
New Zealand, Webster was firmly accustomed to viewing himself in this way.
However, his experience in New Zealand differed markedly from that in Australia, and this would affect his ability to convincingly portray himself as a dominator of indigenous peoples. When he reached Hokianga in May 1841, Webster joined a small, mostly male, Pākehā community of approximately 160 people, which had grown up during the 1830s around the timber industry (British Resident Dispatches). However, the community was outnumbered by the approximately 3,600 Māori among whom they lived and on whom their continued presence depended (Lee 1987, 174; Buller 1878, 146). From the beginning of Pākehā settlement in the late 1820s, sawyers and traders had married into Māori communities, not only to satisfy the need for sexual intimacy, but also to secure the protection of patron chiefs. They had also had to accept that their cultural norms could not be made to apply to Māori, and they had to suppress their ideas of superiority in an environment where they did not have the upper hand. This continued to be the situation even after February 1840, when New Zealand was annexed to Britain under the terms of the Treaty of Waitangi. British law might have applied in theory, but in the 1840s it did not govern Māori communities, which continued to observe their own laws and customs.

When John Webster saw the taua muru arrive on his front lawn, he must have recognized this as a Māori response to a Māori dispute, regardless of his desire to see and portray himself as a central player and controller of events. At one point in his narrative he admitted as much when he wrote, “Our party mustered 12 only not including Motte Geo [George] & I, who as it is entirely a native quarrel cannot interfere more than by countenancing our lads” (Webster 1847). Here, at least, he was willing to accept the limits of his power and influence. Indeed, the taua muru was clearly being conducted according to largely nonviolent custom, despite Webster’s perception that it was a dangerous and incendiary situation requiring him to protect the “lads.” Yet one episode in the dispute also illustrates the limits of Māori willingness to force their rules on to Pākehā. When the taua muru arrived, Webster identified them as being from Herekino by drawing aside the garment from one of their faces. He noted, “This was a dangerous proceeding of mine to touch their garment or put my hand near their faces which are sacred. Had it been a native the insult would have been instantly resented, as it was they moved not when I touched them but their eyes glared like fire upon me” (Webster 1847). This willingness by Māori not to apply some laws to Pākehā, such as those relating to tapu, or the sacredness of places and people, was not
The Space Between

uncommon in Hokianga in the 1840s, and was a result of Māori desire to attract and retain as residents those Pākehā who could provide access to material goods and trading opportunities (Maning 1922, 129; White 1846; Webster 1847). It was therefore in both parties’ interests to accept the limits to which their rules might apply to each other. While on the one hand demographic weakness and dependence on Māori meant that Pākehā were unable to force Māori to live by European laws, on the other Māori were unwilling to alienate Pākehā and risk losing the economic benefits they brought. This was the reason why Webster, contrary to his sense of racial supremacy, had to acknowledge that the taua muru was “a native quarrel” that was beyond his power to control, even though it took place on what he regarded as his own property. Similarly, it was the probable reason why the members of the taua muru, who had come to Hokianga to work for Pākehā, tolerated Webster’s provocative breaking of tapu.

Instead of dominance by one party over the other, there arose at such times a space between where the norms and laws of neither culture uniquely applied or held sway over all participants. In this space a form of cultural production arose in response to the complex circumstances created by cross-cultural interaction. Here, the customs of both cultures could coexist, applying to some participants but not others; alternatively, as will be seen, the customs could be melded to create new cultural norms. Greg Dening described this sort of space as liminal, as a place of “thresholds, margins, boundaries,” as an “in-between” place where ways of being were defined and refined (1997, 2). In Hokianga, boundaries were maintained at times. Māori continued to live by their indigenous customs, and Pākehā largely lived according to European norms. However, where boundaries met—a space linguist Mary Louise Pratt referred to as the contact zone—new cultural forms could emerge. Pratt deliberately chose the term contact “to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctions” and “to foreground the interactive, improvisational dimension of colonial encounters” (1992, 7). This type of improvisation was present in Hokianga as Māori and Pākehā came in contact with one another and negotiated which rules would apply to whom and when.

In the case of the taua muru, the space between was both literal and metaphorical; it was brought into being because the taua muru was a Māori custom that took place on land occupied by a Pākehā. Webster’s lawn became the site on which the rules of engagement were negotiated. While the taua muru followed a recognizable, largely ceremonial course, Webster’s involvement
added a complexity to proceedings that might not have existed had the taua muru taken place elsewhere. This became particularly clear in the aftermath of the taua muru. One response occurred entirely between the Māori protagonists, involved no Pākehā, and was conducted according to tikanga Māori (Māori custom). Pera, Terea, and Piko’s hapū from the head of the Hokianga river organized a war party to go up the Mangamuka river—where the Herekino party were staying—to seek utu for the perceived wrong done to their people and to regain Piko’s possessions. This was done against the advice of their allies, but they turned back only when Wharepapa, the Te Rarawa-affiliated chief from Kohukohu, warned them to call off the war party.

Another response, however, appears to have resulted from Webster’s involvement in the taua muru. Once the Herekino party had departed, chiefs Hone Paraone and Tutu from across the Hokianga river at Motukiore, arrived. According to Webster’s journal entry of 25 May, Hone Paraone proceeded to say, “I hear has the house of a white man been entered by a taua of Maories what is the cause of this violence did they think they were in a native village . . . had they [the two chiefs] heard of the taua they would have come quick and the party would have been returned weeping instead of carrying off a Box.” Hone Paraone then said that if Webster gave his consent, they would go to Mangamuka, fight the Herekino party, and recover the goods. Webster responded: “I told them that being a white man I would not have any thing to say on the subject lest I should be judged hereafter but if they went of their own accord well and good, he said they would not go unless I asked them which I declined” (Webster 1847). From Webster’s account, Hone Paraone and Tutu’s concern lay in the fact that the taua muru had taken place at the home of a Pākehā, and it is possible that Webster’s assumption was accurate. The two chiefs may have viewed Webster and his establishment as being within their territory and therefore under their protection. Their offer to Webster can perhaps be seen as an attempt to extend customary law on behalf of a Pākehā for whom they felt a responsibility. Webster’s declining of the offer could be perceived as a rejection of that relationship as much as a desire not to be “judged hereafter,” a rejection that Hone Paraone and Tutu accepted.

Webster’s occupation of the land on which the altercation took place was certainly a decisive factor in the third response to the taua muru. The day after the dispute, Webster advised Terea and Piko to go to the Bay of Islands—located on the east coast of New Zealand’s Northland region—and report the theft of the
goods to the Pākehā authorities stationed there: “I called the boys into the room & advised Piko & Terea to go to the Bay altho it is quite against the tikanga Maori or native usage to apply for redress to Pakehas yet they consented to go the taua being made on a white man’s establishment” (Webster 1847). Here, it seems, the location of the dispute was vital. Despite the taua muru being fought largely according to Māori custom, the fact that it involved a Pākehā and land he occupied opened up the possibility that Pākehā means of dispute resolution might have a place, even for Māori.

The three responses illustrate existing and new cultural norms that coexisted in the space between cultures where no one set of rules held sway. The first response illustrates the continuance of Māori custom between Māori; no Pākehā were involved and no cultural melding took place. The second and third responses, however, show the innovation that could arise when both Māori and Pākehā were involved. The third response, in particular, illustrates a new type of cultural production. For one of the first times, Māori were willing to seek redress from Pākehā law, to see themselves and their adversaries as being subject to that law, but only because they were willing to see the dispute as going beyond being an entirely Māori affair.

For John Webster, whose adolescence and early colonial experience had taught him to see himself as a member of a superior group, the realization that he was not master of all situations in which he found himself might have proved disquieting, but it was a reality of life in Hokianga in the early years of Māori–Pākehā interaction. And the location of the dispute—Webster’s front lawn—placed it in the space between, where the cultural norms, laws, and customs of both Māori and Pākehā mingled and enabled new rules of engagement to be formulated.

Note
1. Hokianga is located on the west coast of New Zealand’s Northland region.

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**Abstract**
In 1847, a taua muru, or hostile raiding expedition, was conducted by a group of Māori on land occupied by John Webster, a British settler and trader. The purpose of the raid was to reclaim goods the party believed had been wrongly taken by three of Webster’s Māori workers. Although the taua muru was primarily between Māori participants and was carried out largely according to Māori custom, the involvement of Webster and other Pākehā in the melee created a space between, where the norms of both cultures were able to coexist. In that space, both Māori and Pākehā may have wanted their own cultural conventions to exclusively apply, but when it came to dealing with each other they were forced to accept their limitations. This article uses the taua muru as a case study to examine the emergence of new cultural forms and their impact on
one British settler whose imperial identity was challenged in an environment where his and other settlers’ racial and cultural superiority could not be assumed.

KEYWORDS: New Zealand, Hokianga, culture contact, Māori, Pākehā, taua muru
INTRODUCTION

The importance and power of art is woven throughout the islands of the Pacific. Art preserves, sustains, challenges, and modifies culture. It is culture’s lifeline. Acclaimed Samoan writer Albert Wendt has argued that if the Pacific is not already the most artistically creative region in the world, then it certainly possesses the potential to become the most artistically creative (1983, 81). Art takes on many forms in the Pacific, whether through dance, sculpture, carving, ceramics, painting, tattooing, or oral and written forms such as plays, poems, and other types of literature.

Art is also political. Native Hawaiian scholar, poet, and activist Haunani-Kay Trask argued that in a contemporary context, politics as an art form has been “rendered illegitimate by the literary establishment who blindly envision art as separate to politics” (1999, 18). Such a division, she argued, is inappropriate in an indigenous or Native worldview. In Trask’s own experience, she does not imagine herself “crossing from political resistance into artistic creation and then back again.” “Life is a confluence of creativities: art is a fluid political medium, as politics is metaphorical and artistic” (Trask 1999, 18).

This essay focuses on the confluence of politics and art, specifically poetry. I consider the importance and effectiveness of poetry in conveying in a powerful way the experiences of indigenous Australian Aborigines and Māori brought about by the impacts of colonization. I examine the similarities and differences between Australia’s and Aotearoa/New Zealand’s colonial histories and the indigenous activism that emerged in those places in poetic form. I focus on the life and work of two prominent indigenous writers: Australian Aborigine poet Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Māori poet Hone Tuwhare.

From the outset I would like to point out that this essay by no means attempts to conflate or simplify the diverse experiences of Australian Aboriginal and Māori communities. In any society, people hold a variety of views; they are shaped by the sociocultural milieu in which they live. What I instead hope to do
is show how two influential individuals have used poetry to capture the social, cultural, and political contexts in which they lived and worked.

In this essay, I draw extensively from Kathleen J Cochrane’s 1994 biography of Noonuccal and Janet Hunt’s 1998 biography of Tuwhare. Both works contain rich sources of information not found elsewhere, and are written with an authentic flavor. Cochrane had met Noonuccal in the early 1950s through the Queensland Aboriginal rights movement and they became lifelong friends. Cochrane’s previous publications were in the field of special education, and before her retirement in 1988 she was a senior tutor at the University of Queensland. Hunt, on the other hand, focused on Tuwhare as part of a master’s thesis at the University of Auckland in the late 1990s, which was later published. Hunt has been a secondary school teacher and a lecturer at the Auckland Institute of Technology and Auckland University.

In recognizing that the commonly accepted frame for Pacific studies often excludes Aboriginal Australia, my hope is that this essay will illustrate the rich opportunities for comparative work between Aboriginals and indigenous Pacific Island peoples. My definition of the Pacific is not one that is merely defined by the arbitrary boundaries, categories, and stereotypes that have been constructed over the last two centuries by outsiders. It is my view that in sticking with such narrow definitions, one fails to acknowledge a region that had been thriving and growing for thousands of years before explorers, missionaries, and western academics arrived. In Wendt’s words, “Oceania deserves much more than an attempt at mundane fact” (1983, 71). By including Aboriginal Australia in our discussions of the Pacific, I believe our knowledge of this vast region will expand and be enhanced.

**COLONIAL BACKGROUND**

To understand the worlds in which both Hone Tuwhare and Oodgeroo Noonuccal wrote from the 1960s on, it is important to provide a historical framework of the social and political policies enacted by the colonial governments of Aotearoa/New Zealand and Australia. In understanding some of the key differences and similarities between Noonuccal and Tuwhare, one can clearly see how their life experiences influenced their future activism and poetry. With Noonuccal being born in 1920 and Tuwhare in 1922, and both having their
first books published in the same year (1964), meaningful similarities and contrasts can be drawn from the two, particularly in reference to their education, their experiences during World War Two, and their involvement in the Communist Party. I must emphasize here that the intention of this paper is not to offer a comprehensive account of their lives. Rather I seek to draw out specific themes that are helpful in showing how the works of two distinct individuals from different parts of the Pacific converged in such remarkable ways.

Early to mid-twentieth century life for Aborigines and Māori was quite dissimilar, despite the fact that both peoples became minorities in their own countries due to British colonial expansion. Kerry Howe has examined the disparate ways Māori and Aborigines responded to the arrival and subsequent settlement of Europeans in their homelands during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Howe stated, “Maoris were better able to cope with the consequences of European settlement than Aborigines. . . . This is by no means to suggest that Maoris were in any way ‘superior’ or that Aborigines were in any way ‘lacking’—each of their cultures must naturally be examined in terms of their own environments and value systems” (1977, 1).

The kinds of colonial policies implemented in early to mid-twentieth century Australia and New Zealand demonstrate the different circumstances Aborigines and Māori were trying to deal with. While Māori were struggling to maintain their culture and land, Aborigines were in a much worse condition, with few human rights afforded to them. Indeed, the Australian state and federal governments predicted and hoped that Aborigines would eventually just die out (Attwood and Markus 2007, 1). Both Aborigines and Māori, however, showed great resilience and fought to preserve their cultures and promote their indigenous and human rights throughout the twentieth century. Although both peoples faced many setbacks, they also experienced many successes. The emergence of indigenous artists proved to be a powerful influence as both Māori and Aborigines began demanding equal rights. During this time, Noonuccal and Tuwhare were very much at the forefront of their respective movements. In the following section, I examine some of the influences that shaped the lives of Noonuccal and Tuwhare. I consider the similarities and differences between the two, and how they fused poetry and activism to promote a deeper awareness of the plight of their peoples.
CHILDHOOD / EDUCATION

Both Noonuccal’s and Tuwhare’s childhood and education shaped their awareness of what was happening politically and socially around them. In later years, they translated those formative experiences into the rich and powerful poetry for which they became known. What they learned was not accomplished just through formal education, but also through the informal teachings of their parents and the communities in which they lived. While in the early years of the twentieth century Aborigines and Māori were for the most part not encouraged to pursue a formal education, much was learned through the strong oral traditions passed down from generation to generation.

Noonuccal’s mother Lucy, who was half Aborigine and half European, was never taught to read or write. This was a wrong she could never forgive (Cochrane 1994, 48). Deprived of educational opportunities herself, Lucy was determined that her children would become literate. Noonuccal would later write a poem—entitled “Teachers”—about her mother’s experience of not having the opportunity to be formally educated, which appeared in her 1970 publication My People.

For Mother, who was never taught to read or write

Holy men, you came to preach:
“Poor black heathen, we will teach
   Sense of sin and fear of hell,
   Fear of God and boss as well;
   We will teach you work for play,
   We will teach you to obey
   Laws of God and laws of Mammon”
And we answered, “No more gammon,
   If you have to teach the light,
   Teach us first to read and write”

Noonuccal’s formal education ended at the age of 13 in 1933 after she completed her final year of primary schooling at Dunwich Tate School on North Stradbroke Island. Most Aboriginal children were considered fit for work at this stage of their lives, and rarely did any of them progress further within the formal school system.

Noonuccal’s father, Ted Ruska, was influential in teaching her to stand up and fight for Aboriginal rights. Ruska built roads and was an important figure in agitating for pay raises for Aborigines, who earned considerably less than their
white counterparts in the state of Queensland (Cochrane 1994, 47). Recalling her father’s own brand of activism, Noonuccal stated, “He’d . . . walk home and tell me that Mrs. So-and-so said you walk this land as though you think it’s yours. [The young Noonuccal responded,] ‘It is mine, isn’t it?’ And he’d say, ‘Yes girl, and don’t you forget it’” (quoted in Cochrane 1994, 44).

Similarly, Tuwhare’s father, Ben Tuwhare, was also a road builder. Later in life, Tuwhare joked that his father “was a roads scholar. His school was on the roads with a pick and shovel” (quoted in Hunt 1998, 24). Like Noonuccal, life during the early years was tough for Tuwhare, with the family living a largely nomadic existence after the death of his mother in 1928. Tuwhare’s father was a great Māori orator and storyteller who encouraged his son to memorize his whakapapa (genealogy) and to be proud of his Māori culture. Yet he also saw the English language as the future for his son, and so encouraged him to master it (Hunt 1998, 28). Tuwhare’s father made a couple of attempts to further his son’s schooling when they lived in Kaikohe, but it was in Auckland, where they moved in 1929, that the young Tuwhare finally finished his primary schooling in 1937 at the age of 15 (Hunt 1998, 21–25). Tuwhare would later write a poem about his childhood entitled “Never Look Back,” which was published in his book No Ordinary Sun (1964):

Tastes were sharper then;  
sandwich spread was dripping fat  
on a dry old crust  
saliva’d exaltation  
to heaven’s doorstep pure  
and juicy angels.

WORLD WAR TWO

The outbreak of World War Two on 3 September 1939 had contrasting implications for Aborigines in Australia and Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Both Noonuccal’s and Tuwhare’s experiences bear witness to this, with the political and social ramifications of the times inspiring their thoughts and feelings, as would become apparent in their later poetry.

In Australia there was no conscription for overseas service during the first part of the war, although able-bodied men were called up for training unless
their job was deemed too important to wartime national interest. In contrast to white Australians, Aborigines were exempt from military service, since they were not considered Australian citizens. However, such restrictions did not deter their willingness to offer their assistance, and many did so. In fact, during World War Two, over 3,000 Aborigines (including Torres Strait Islanders) enlisted for military service, while a further 150–200 served without recognition or pay. Yet another 3,000 Aborigines supported the military services as civilian laborers (Hall 1989, 189). It is significant to note that neither commonwealth nor state governments acknowledged the contribution of Aborigine and Torres Strait Islanders to the war effort (Hall 1989, 189).

At the age of 21, Noonuccal voluntarily enlisted in the Australian Women’s Army Service (AWAS). She did so in order to escape life as a domestic servant, a form of employment that many Aboriginal women were forced into (Cochrane 1994, 12). Despite being told of the racial abuse she might face in the service, Noonuccal’s experience was quite the opposite. During her time at the tent barracks in Chemsde, Queensland, not only did she learn to operate a switchboard, but she also met Eris Valentine and Thora Travis, two white Australians. Both women were to be of great “significance to Kath, as they were the first experience she had of what it was like to live with white people who didn’t notice her skin colour” (Cochrane 1994, 13). Robert Hall has argued that the war fostered an understanding, respect, and cooperation between Aboriginal and white Australia not been seen before or since (1989, 193–194). Noonuccal’s involvement in the war effort lasted until 1943, when she had to leave the service due to poor health. By this time she had been promoted to the rank of corporal and placed in charge of training incoming servicewomen; she also worked in the AWAS pay office (Cochrane 1994, 15).

In contrast to the situation of Aborigines, Māori involvement in the war effort was extensive, with many enlisting in the famous 28th Māori Battalion. Recruitment for the Māori Battalion throughout the war was voluntary and groups were organized according to tribal affiliations. Rather than join the Māori Battalion, at the end of 1939 Tuwhare decided to try to enlist with the New Zealand Territorial Army. To his disappointment, he was turned down for several reasons: he was color-blind, only 17 years old, and employed by the railways, an industry deemed essential to the war effort. By the end of 1944, Tuwhare was finally accepted into the army and spent six months training as a soldier at the Trentham Military Training Camp as part of the 16th
Reinforcements. However, his dream to travel the world and serve his country was thwarted when, on 15 August 1945, the end of the war was declared (Hunt 1998, 48). In 1946 Tuwhare was given another opportunity to serve his country when he was sent as part of the Jayforce operation to demilitarize Japan.

The ocean voyage to Japan saw Tuwhare's artistic skills first emerge in the public eye. He had his first poem published in the ship's newspaper, although that poem has since been lost (Hunt 1998, 48). Tuwhare was also involved in a highly successful singing trio that entertained the ship's passengers. Indeed, the trio was so successful that they were asked to sing on radio stations and for departing US officers (Hunt 1998, 51–52). Although the group disbanded on their return to New Zealand, music, particularly jazz, continued to play a very influential part in Tuwhare's life and his poetry (Hunt 1998, 52).

The most moving and influential part of Tuwhare's war experience came in 1947 when he passed through Hiroshima a year after nuclear bombs were dropped on that city as well as on Nagasaki, killing 247,000 and 200,000 people, respectively. "No Ordinary Sun," the title poem of Tuwhare's first collection of poetry, which was published 17 years later, relates to the devastation he witnessed in Hiroshima. Indeed, this poem became particularly significant during the peace movement in the late sixties, seventies, and eighties (Hunt 1998, 49). Tuwhare stated, "The main theme is . . . the horror and desolation that the H-Bomb would bring, something I feel very strongly . . . I am aware all the time of the threat that is hanging over our world" (quoted in Hunt 1998, 49).

THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Australian Communist Party was established in 1920 and the New Zealand Communist Party a year later in direct opposition to capitalist exploitation. Noonuccal’s and Tuwhare’s interest in the Communist Party came in the wake of World War Two, albeit in contrasting ways. Noonuccal’s involvement with the Australian Communist Party came quite by accident. After buying meat from her local butcher one day, Noonuccal’s attention was caught by a letter to the editor printed in the newspaper her meat had been wrapped in. The author of the letter complained about a store in Bundaberg, Queensland, that displayed a sign in its window stating, "We serve Whites only." Impressed by the fact that the newspaper had dared to print the letter, Noonuccal later learned that the paper
was published by the Australian Communist Party (Cochrane 1994, 17). Noonuccal contacted the local Communist Party branch to enquire what their policies were regarding Aborigines. They responded by citing article 1 of the International Declaration of Human Rights, which states: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights . . . and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood” (quoted in Cochrane 1994, 17–18).

Initially impressed by their policy, Noonuccal was asked to accompany party members to Bundaberg to protest outside the store. Joining her there was a local Aboriginal war veteran, dressed in full uniform and wearing the medals he had won for bravery during World War One. When the veteran approached the counter, the storekeeper informed him that the store did not serve Aborigines. The statement was met with strident opposition by members of the Communist Party, until eventually the sign was removed and the ex-serviceman was allowed to purchase a shirt (Cochrane 1994, 18). The Communist Party’s enlightened attitude encouraged Noonuccal to start attending party meetings and reading Communist literature. Her excitement was short lived, however, as she became increasingly frustrated by the lack of direct action taken by the party against the discrimination of her people. Despite the party having established a program that covered Aboriginal land rights, social, political and legal rights, wages and working conditions, and education and the preservation of Aboriginal culture, such goals were never rigorously pursued, and the Communist Party failed to find a way to effectively work with Aborigines (Brown 1986, 53).

Noonuccal also grew impatient with her white Communist Party peers who insisted that they compose her anti-discrimination speeches for her (Cochrane 1994, 18). When her poetry first became public, people often assumed that it was not Noonuccal, but rather a well-known communist who had written her material (Cochrane 1994, 229). Noonuccal’s link with the Communist Party was also used to tarnish her work, even after she had left the party. Noonuccal would look into other political parties throughout her life; however, she found them all disappointing.

While Noonuccal’s involvement with the Communist Party was initially serendipitous, Tuwhare’s introduction was much more purposefully driven. Tuwhare was recruited by the New Zealand Communist Party in 1942 through his involvement with the trade unions at the railways. Like Noonuccal, he was
instantly impressed by what they had to offer. Tuwhare saw communism as a brotherhood and a cause in which racism was absent.

The party was involved in active protests against the maltreatment of Māori. In 1943 Tuwhare led a demonstration against the abuse of the Ngāti Whatua people of Orakei, Auckland, and in support of saving their traditional marae (a complex of culturally significant buildings) (Hunt 1998, 42). Tuwhare continued his membership with the Communist Party but was more focused on assisting Māori through the workers’ union. He split with the party in 1956 to protest the Soviet Union’s invasion of Hungary, but returned in 1973 to accompany a delegation of Māori to the People’s Republic of China, a trip that was conducted under the auspices of the New Zealand Communist Party. Tuwhare’s 1974 publication, Something Nothing, features poetry written during this trip, such as “Soochow 1973” and “Kwantung Guest House: Canton” (Hunt 1998, 118). Tuwhare finally ended his association with the party in 1978 when he was thrown out for writing in a publication run by the former general secretary of the New Zealand Communist Party, whom Tuwhare had earlier in that year helped expel from the party (Hunt 1998, 121).

On the surface, communism appealed strongly to indigenous and minority groups. However, the ideas of belonging and unity as promulgated by the party were often focused on improving the lives of white working-class citizens, rather than on advancing indigenous rights. Politics aside, both Noonuccal and Tuwhare seem to have been politically influenced by the Marxist literature they read during their time in the Communist Party, and both acknowledged the impact it had on their poetry. Despite the fact that the party proved to be limited in helping them advance the plight of their respective peoples, and while Noonuccal’s involvement with the Communist Party was not as long or intense as Tuwhare’s, communism gave them both the sense that anything was possible.

**ACTIVISM: A CASE STUDY**

The 1960s through to the early 1980s was a period of widespread protest in the Pacific and, indeed, around the world. The Vietnam War, nuclear testing, exploitative mining and logging, uncontrolled development, racial discrimination, grievances over land rights, and the denial of basic human rights were all contentious topics that sparked public dissent on a scale never seen
before. Aboriginal and Māori protests before this time had been portrayed by politicians, commentators, and the media as disorganized, isolated events run by indigenous radicals. However, sustained developments in Australia and New Zealand—such as Aborigines winning the right to a referendum that would determine their eligibility to become Australian citizens, and Māori holding a series of land marches to air grievances against the Crown—contradicted these assumptions. Both Australian Aborigines and Māori formed movements that were large in number, positive in action, and shared a common goal. Importantly, Noonuccal and Tuwhare launched themselves into these efforts toward self-determination in their respective countries.

The 1967 Australian Referendum

In 1962, at the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) Easter conference, Noonuccal was elected as the Queensland secretary. At the conference, she read a poem that she had written specifically for the occasion, titled “Aboriginal Charter of Rights.” The poem sparked an outpouring of support for Aboriginals attaining citizenship. When the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia was drawn up in 1901, Aboriginal people had no political power and were considered a “dying race.” As Bain Attwood and Andrew Markus argued, the drafters of the constitution paid little attention to Aborigines; indeed, the final document included only two mentions of them (Attwood and Markus 2007, 1).

The first specific reference to Aboriginal people in the Australian Constitution appeared in section 51. It stated, “The Parliament shall, subject to this constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth.” Importantly, clause 26 of the constitution defined precisely who was considered a member of the Commonwealth: “The people of any race, other than the aboriginal race in any State, for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws (Attwood and Markus 2007, 1; emphasis added). The implications of the constitution for Aborigines were considerable. Under it, they were not protected by the federal government or the commonwealth, and states could adopt whatever policies and laws they wanted, regardless of their effect on Aborigines. Incredibly, all other minority races were granted protection.
The second specific reference appeared in section 127 of the constitution: “In reckoning the numbers of people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth, aboriginal natives shall not be counted (Attwood and Markus 2007, 3; emphasis added). In other words, Aborigines were not even considered worthy of being counted as part of the national census—they were, for all intents and purposes, nonentities.

Noonuccal saw that much work had to be done if Aborigines were to win a referendum to change the constitution. Later that year, in 1962, a petition to the commonwealth government was organized for the removal of section 51, clause 26, and section 127 from the constitution. Noonuccal was asked by the Victorian Advancement League to tour all the states in an attempt to rally support for the petition. Noonuccal’s lectures and interviews during the tour were influential in garnering 103,000 signatures, which were presented to Parliament (Attwood and Markus, 2007, 32). During this time, Noonuccal spent much of her time in North Queensland, which was seen as important to the advancement of the movement, since the large Aboriginal population there was being oppressed by harsh state policies. The state government viewed Noonuccal as a troublemaker and refused her access to the Yarrabah Aboriginal Reserve where numerous reports of ill-treatment had been reported to the Queensland Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (QCAATS) (Cochrane 1994, 69). The complaints were largely centered on police brutality and the fact that Aborigines were not being permitted to control their own money and bank accounts.

Noonuccal was eventually granted access to Yarrabah in 1964. The visit and her subsequent damning report led to the drafting of new legislation to replace the 1939 Queensland Act, which

explicitly excluded indigenous people from voting in state elections, made it unlawful for any indigenous person in Queensland to knowingly receive or possess alcohol, restricted their movement, denied them any right to the lands of their birth or even the land where their reserves were located, and curtailed their access to the normal processes of justice available to the rest of the community. It also gave the relevant authorities the power to resettle them by force, remove their children without proof of neglect, forbid them to marry, censor their mail, compel them to work for low wages, withhold their wages without their consent and seize their property on the flimsiest pretext. (Fryer Library 2008)
The Space Between

It was hoped that the new draft would overturn many of the previous policies; however, the changes that were eventually made were only very slight.

In the midst of her activist work, Noonuccal was busy putting together her first volume of poems. With the release of *We are Going: Poems* in 1964 and *The Dawn is at Hand: Poems* in 1966, Noonuccal gave many lectures about Aboriginal beliefs, customs, and aspirations. That she spoke in front of predominantly white audiences was extremely important, especially given the fact that she was pushing for a referendum. Noonuccal’s poetry was well received by many; however, she did face criticism from both whites and Aboriginals. Many white people either were unable to believe that her writings were her own, or they simply dismissed them as not being “real” poetry. At the other end of the spectrum, some Aborigines criticized the way in which she worked with the white community, a criticism that Noonuccal believed was usually driven by jealousy (Cochrane 1994, 72). Noonuccal, however, was not deterred from continuing to reach toward her goals for the Aboriginal people.

A change of government in 1966 saw Harold Holt become prime minister and schedule a referendum for May 1967. Noonuccal became the campaign director for the “Yes” campaign in Queensland (Cochrane 1994, 76). On 27 May 1967, Australia voted 90.77 percent “Yes” and 9.23 percent “No” (Attwood and Markus 2007, 54). This was a heartening result for the Aboriginal people, as they had finally won the support of white Australia for their civil rights. But despite Noonuccal’s efforts throughout the 1960s, she was still dissatisfied—in reality, neither the referendum nor the changes made to the constitution brought appreciable and lasting change for Aborigines. A policy of assimilation was being promoted by the Australian government, but what Noonuccal wanted was more equitable terms under an integrationist policy.

Maori Land Marches

Maori struggles in the 1970s centered largely on addressing land grievances with the New Zealand government. Before European arrival, Maori possessed 66 million hectares of land. By the 1970s, Maori landholdings had been reduced to less than 2 million hectares. The introduction of the Maori Affairs Amendment Act of 1967—popularly referred to as the “Last Land Grab”—further alienated Maori from their lands. As a result of the act, any Maori land held by four or
fewer owners could be purchased by the general public. The act also gave greater intervention powers to the Māori Trustee, who was vested with discretionary authority to purchase and sell Māori lands (Harris 2004, 24). By 1975, government legislation continued to undermine Native land rights and tenure, leading Māori to mount protests on an unprecedented level. Prominent Māori leader and former Māori Women’s Welfare League President Whina Cooper, who was eighty years old at the time, spearheaded the formation of the land rights movement—Te Roopu o te Matakite (The Group of Visionaries)— which led a march to the parliament grounds in Wellington on 14 September 1975. Departing from three points at the top of the North Island—Te Hāpua, Cape Reinga, and the Bay of Spirits—the march became New Zealand’s longest, with participants covering over 700 miles in thirty days.

Tuwhare took a great interest in the march and vested much time in highlighting the plight of Māori and the significance of land to the indigenous occupants. As he stated, “Land is the very soul of a tribal people. It connects man with his ancestors in a great chain of being back through the mists of time to the creation itself through Papatūānuku, the Earth Mother. Land for all Māori is our tūrangawaewae [place to stand], where we have dignity before all people” (Tuwhare quoted in Hunt 1998, 131). Tuwhare also alluded to the 1975 Land March in his poem “Papa-tu-a-nuku (Earth Mother),” referring to it metaphorically as the awakening.

We are stroking, caressing the spine of the land.
We are massaging the ricked back of the land
With our sore but ever-loving feet.
   Hell, she loves it!
Squirming, the land wriggles in delight.
We love her.

Tuwhare became very important in documenting the march. While he was not as politically involved in the organizational processes of the indigenous rights movement as Noonuccal had been in Australia, Tuwhare’s presence during the march was greatly felt, and his words were to become an inspiration for many of those involved. He felt a strong sense of pride as he witnessed the unification of
Māori, Pākehā, Pacific Islanders, trade unionists, socialist organizations, churches, and the anti-apartheid movements all coming together in support of Māori. Tuwhare noted, “It was, for the first time in our country’s painful history, an honest and true demonstration by lowly and humble folk. Māori and Pākehā, who together gave a more meaningful expression to the platitude, We are one people” (Tuwhare quoted in Hunt 1998, 134).

The march eventually reached Wellington on 13 October 1975, with an estimated 5,000 people descending on Parliament. The march left a permanent impression on New Zealand’s history. Tuwhare included some of the poems he had written during the march in his 1978 publication Making a Fist of It. The poems document the event in a way that news articles could not. The only photograph in that volume, which shows Whina Cooper walking hand-in-hand with her young mokopuna (grandchild), became a symbol for the Land March, and for Māori protest more generally. The image in the book is accompanied by Tuwhare’s poem “Rain-maker’s Song for Whina,” a tribute to both her and the march she so passionately organized (Hunt 1998, 135).

I’ll not forget your joints creaking as you climbed into
the bus at Victoria Park to bless the journey.
When you broke down in the middle of the Lord’s Prayer,
I thought that what you left unsaid hung more tangibly
uncertain above us all than some intangible certainty
that we would all get a comfortable berth in the
hereafter.

Tuwhare continued to be actively involved with Māori issues over the next decade, and in 1984 took part in another Land March, this time to Waitangi in the Far North—the region he called home. Organized by the group Kōtahitanga (Unity), Te Hīkoi ki Waitangi (the Walk to Waitangi) was arranged to remind the New Zealand government that there were issues that needed to be addressed and obligations that needed to be fulfilled with regard to Māori. The march moved from Turangawaewae marae in the Waikato region, through Auckland, and through various other tribal lands all the way to Waitangi. By the time they reached the grounds at Waitangi on 6 February, there were over 4,000 protestors gathered. The governor-general had offered to meet with members of the protest group, but police refused them entry to the grounds (Harris 2004, 112). Despite such obstacles, the march was extremely successful in elevating public awareness
of Māori grievances. Māori historian Aroha Harris has stated that the 1984 march became the pinnacle of Waitangi Day activism, as it demonstrated the breadth and depth of Māori concerns regarding the Treaty of Waitangi and, like the Land March of 1975 before it, brought with it a large amount of support from non-Māori organizations and individuals. It “unified Māori across iwi [tribe/tribal] boundaries, and drew Pākehā, Pacific Islanders, young, old, conservatives, liberal and radical under the common cause of the Treaty of Waitangi” (Harris 2004, 112).

**IS IT POETRY, IS IT POLITICS?**

One thing that happens when you have a bit of white blood in you and have a bit of white education is that when you misbehave people say, “Aha, that’s the Aboriginal in you” and when you accomplish something they will say, “Aha, that’s the white coming out in you.” It happened [to me] as a child and it still happens. (Oodgeroo Noonuccal, quoted in Oodgeroo)

The strong political themes contained in Noonuccal’s and Tuwhare’s poetry have received considerable scrutiny from literary critics and scholars. As outlined in this essay, much of Noonuccal’s and Tuwhare’s work was inspired by the social and political contexts in which they lived. Noonuccal’s work in particular, which was much more politically open and upfront than Tuwhare’s, met with much criticism in Australia when it was first published.

As the late Australian poet, environmentalist, and campaigner for Aboriginal land rights Judith Wright stated, the white establishment expected Aborigines to be subservient, so when Noonuccal suddenly burst onto the literary scene, her poems were seen as “bizarrely dangerous to all preconceptions of what Aborigines were and all principles of what they should be” (Wright quoted in Cochrane 1998, 167). In the minds of supposedly academically qualified critics, Noonuccal’s work evidenced “neither the polish of English poetry nor the authentic voice of the song-man,” and therefore didn’t register as poetry in its truest sense (Wright quoted in Cochrane 1998, 167). But for Noonuccal, it was not possible to create Aboriginal literature that separated the social, political, and economic circumstances of the Aboriginal people.

To a lesser extent, Tuwhare faced the same backlash. Those of his poems that were openly political received less favorable reviews. According to
Hunt, this was often due to the fact that Pākehā critics held a different political position (Hunt 1998, 58–59). Conversely, Wright contended that the scathing reviews Noonuccal received from white Australian critics stemmed from the fear that the world would discover the unfair conditions under which Aborigines were forced to live (Cochrane 1998, 168).

Tuwhare never apologized for infusing his poetry with his politics. He warned: “If we become political non-participants, we’ll all end up like refugee ‘boat people’ who don’t identify, won’t fight, and just drift aimlessly from one country to the next. Real NOWHERE MAN” (Tuwhare quoted in Hunt 1998, 59).

Both Noonuccal and Tuwhare acknowledged that while protest and propagandist verse was not necessarily good poetry, it was nevertheless essential for expressing the political reality of indigenous people in Australia and New Zealand. Neither poet was attempting to imitate or rival the poetry the academic critics admired; rather, they were creating their own styles and writing for the people (not academia). The harsh judgments of the work of indigenous writers arose from an assumption that they were writing for a nonindigenous audience, which raised the expectation that they would project a nonindigenous point of view (Gilbert 1988). However, as Kevin Gilbert noted, “what is ‘protest poetry’ to one group of people is the ‘poetic expression’ of the black consciousness to another” (Gilbert 1988, xvi). In the case of Noonuccal’s and Tuwhare’s poetry, their work was being critiqued by individuals who were unaware of this important distinction.

Nevertheless, the power and intelligence of Noonuccal’s and Tuwhare’s work withstood the vehement critique, and they eventually received validation from the literary establishment, the wider arts world, and indigenous and nonindigenous peoples alike. In particular, Tuwhare found people from other islands in the Pacific such as Hawai‘i very welcoming and understanding of his work. He stated that the people of Hawai‘i saw his literature as not an object in itself, but rather a reflection of his heart and his culture. This was important to Tuwhare, as he always believed that “the work of art, the poem, novel or painting, should stand in relation to the society and culture in which it is produced” (quoted in Hunt 1998, 116–117).

Both Noonuccal and Tuwhare were pioneers of poetry in their own right. They created something new, something different. Their unique perspectives ignited fear in many people—people who denounced their work as illegitimate—yet they were not deterred. The honesty of the poets and the readability of their
work were key aspects leading to the success of their poetry. Both indigenous and nonindigenous audiences were able to understand and relate to their creative offerings. Their poetry was more than words on a page; it inspired action and documented the significant steps that were being made by both Aborigines and Māori. No longer were Aboriginal and Māori experiences being relayed by white people for a white audience—they were being written by indigenous people for indigenous people. Poetry was an empowering tool for indigenous self-expression and self-affirmation. In response to the question of what makes a poet, Noonuccal opined, “Poets are born, but they are not born poets. Society creates the system that the poet is born into, and the poet has to work at becoming a poet through this system. Through poetry, the poet tries to bring about change in the society. Poets are teachers of change, critics of society. The poet is but a tool of society—not the yes-man but the camera that exposes the good and the bad of society (quoted in Cochrane 1994, 101). Tuwhare’s response to the same question was less absolute: “What constitutes a poem? Well, I can’t give a precise chemical analysis: I mean, I can’t give a recipe for a creative anarchic mind-explosion” (quoted in Hunt 1998, 189).

Both Noonuccal and Tuwhare spent a considerable amount of time in schools in their later years, stressing the importance of education, their own cultures, and tolerance of other peoples’ beliefs. They viewed children as representing the potential for change, provided they received the appropriate messages. Noonuccal stated: “Children and artists, any creative artists, are close. Children are very creative and they stay that way until they join the establishment. . . . They are the ones who will create the change. You must learn things at a very tender age. It’s the children who are innocent and ready to learn. It’s the children who are the hope of mankind. And frankly I am tired of talking to mentally constipated adults. . . . Children don’t have racist attitudes unless they’re taught by adults” (quoted in Cochrane 1994, 100–101).

**CONCLUSION**

Noonuccal and Tuwhare experienced and achieved much more in their lifetime than this essay is able to detail. Their works are of considerable relevance to both indigenous and nonindigenous peoples today, and they will continue to hold significance for succeeding generations. While Noonuccal and Tuwhare never
met and were from different countries, their lives and experiences were similar in many ways. In focusing on the works of Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Hone Tuwhare, I have tried to expand prevailing notions of what constitutes the Pacific—notions that continue to exclude Australian Aborigines. While Māori links to the Pacific are clear through their Polynesian lineage, Aboriginal links to the island region are not so clearly evident. In a contemporary context, however, Aborigines are becoming increasingly attached to the Pacific through their involvement in regional and intergovernmental organizations, as well as educational, religious, sporting, artistic, and cultural activities. What this paper has attempted to do is demonstrate the rightful place of Aboriginal Australia in discourse on the Pacific and in Pacific studies. In the words of the late Epeli Hau’ofa, “Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding, Oceania is hospitable and generous. Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still, Oceania is us” (Hau’ofa 1993, 68–70).

In this paper, I have also examined the dynamic confluence and interconnectedness between the arts—specifically poetry—and politics in the indigenous context. Although I have narrowed my frame of reference to the Aboriginal and Māori contexts, I believe that their experiences resonate with those of other people from throughout the Pacific, and around the world. As Gilbert stated, indigenous poetry appeals not only to one but to many groups: “Theirs [Australian Aborigines] is another reality, a reality that could find parallels in the experience of the indigenous peoples of South Africa or Bolivia, or of one culture, the Jews in Nazi Germany or the Palestinians in Israel” (1988, xvii). Locating common ground within and between indigenous groups is extremely important for advancing indigenous rights and moving toward a more self-determined future.

From an indigenous perspective, politics and art will always overlap. The scars of years of being assimilated, or in the case of the Aborigines rejected outright, will always be visible in indigenous peoples’ art so long as injustice prevails. Noonuccal and Tuwhare exemplified how Aborigines and Māori were able to harness the written word and create beautiful and powerful poetry that will resonate long after they are gone.
Notes
1. Prior to 1988, Oodgeroo Noonuccal went by her English name, Kath Walker, which was given to her at birth. During that time, very few eastern Aborigines had preserved their tribal names, but Noonuccal was determined to retrieve and use hers. The name “Noonuccal” refers to the poet’s tribe, located on North Stradbroke Island, and “Oodgeroo” is the Aboriginal word for the paper bark tree. For the purpose of this paper and in honor of her people, I use the name Oodgeroo Noonuccal chose.
2. Like Tuwhare, Noonuccal also visited China—albeit in 1984—and four years later published a book of her experiences, titled Kath Walker in China.
3. Waitangi was the location of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi by representatives of the British Crown and northern Māori chiefs on 6 February 1840. The treaty was supposed to recognize Māori ownership of their lands and other properties and bestow on Māori all the rights of British subjects. In return, the Crown was given exclusive rights to purchase Māori land. However, due to competing interpretations of the document between Māori and the Crown, the treaty has been the subject of widespread debate in Aotearoa/New Zealand since its signing, Waitangi has therefore become a symbolic site for Māori to air their grievances with the Crown.

Editor’s note: This article is a condensed version of a much longer paper written by the author as part of an honors course in Pacific studies at the University of Victoria, Wellington, New Zealand.

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Abstract
In this essay, I examine the similarities and differences between Australia’s and Aotearoa/New Zealand’s colonial history and the indigenous activism that emerged in the form of poetic prose. I focus on the life and work of two prominent indigenous writers: Australian Aborigine poet Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Māori poet Hone Tuwhare, both of whom used poetry as a powerful tool of protest. I also consider the heavy critique they received, not only from the white literary establishment, but also from their respective indigenous communities. Using these examples, I show how the overlapping of indigenous activism and poetry was significant in advancing awareness of the plight of Aboriginals and Māori during a period of political awakening.

KEYWORDS: activism, indigenous rights, Oodgeroo Noonuccal, indigenous poetry, Hone Tuwhare
WON’T YOU PLEASE COME BACK TO GUAM? MEDIA DISCOURSE, MILITARY BUILDUP, AND CHAMORROS IN THE SPACE BETWEEN
James Perez Viernes
WEAVING SPACE
Craig Santos Perez
MY ISLAND IS ONE BIG AMERICAN FOOTNOTE
I WAS WRITTEN A LETTER BY A CHAMORRO SOLDIER IN IRAQ
I AM CHAMORRO
Michael Lujan Bevacqua
ROAD THROUGH MANENGGON
RE-MEMBERING WAIKIKI
WALKING THROUGH TOMHOM
Kisha Borja-Kicho’cho’
MAJ(y)AMAK (BROKEN)
BEWARE
FLIGHT
Angela T Hoppe-Cruz
Breathtaking, by Roxanne Chasle
Oil on canvas, 2006, 8 cm x 10 cm
WO\’NT YOU PLEASE COME BACK TO GUAM? MEDIA DISCOURSE, MILITARY BUILDUP, AND CHAMORROS IN THE SPACE BETWEEN

James Perez Viernes

Eighth of December, 1941
People went crazy right here on Guam
Oh Mr. Sam, Sam, My Dear old Uncle Sam,
Won’t you please come back to Guam!

The above epigraph is a verse from a popular song that Chamorros sang—oftentimes among themselves in hiding—in resistance to the Japanese occupation of Guam from 1941 to 1944, during World War Two. Composed by Pedro Taitingfong Rosario (“Tun Pete Siboyas”) in collaboration with Hawaiian national Louie Futado, by 1942 it had grown in popularity and was being sung by Chamorros across the island, much to the dismay of Japanese occupying forces (Aguon 2002, 220; Sanchez 1998). Today, the Chamorros who survived the occupation recount memories of brutality, starvation, forced labor and marches, displacement, dispossession, and other atrocities carried out against them by Japanese forces. Indeed, when United States forces reclaimed Guam on 21 July 1944 and effectively ended Japanese oppression, Chamorros welcomed them. From that day on, every 21 July the people of Guam have celebrated Liberation Day to commemorate the event. Today, many Chamorros who experienced the war continue to express their enthusiasm and gratitude toward the United States for liberating the island. But to what extent has this enthusiasm held among subsequent generations, each one more removed from the occupation experience and each one calling into question the “liberation” they inherited? To what extent has the longing for “dear old Uncle Sam” stood the test of time?

On 30 October 2005, the headline for the leading article of the Pacific Daily News (PDN) read, “7,000 Marines: Pentagon Announces Shift to Guam.” The article discussed the United States Department of Defense decision to relocate up to 7,000 US Marines from Okinawa, Japan, to Guam but remained vague as to the specifics of the plan. Despite not knowing precisely what impact such a move would have on Guam, local government and business leaders were swift to express their support. Lee Webber—who was at the time chairman of the Armed
Forces Committee of the Guam Chamber of Commerce, as well as the president and publisher of the Pacific Daily News—hailed the decision as “not only great news for our economy but also for Guam and our nation” (Park 2005). Webber’s sentiments were a prelude to the dominant discourse that was to develop over the next few years—discourse that was promulgated by Guam’s media outlets, by political and business leaders, and by both the United States and Japan to sell the military realignment to the people of Guam.

In this paper, I offer a historic framework for understanding the kind of discourse that has emerged in relation to US military presence in Guam. I also examine indigenous modes of resistance on the island, which have often been overshadowed by prevailing discourse that touts Guam’s indigenous people as being wholly accepting of the US colonial agenda. More generally, I explore how Chamorros navigate the space between their indigenous identity and the experience of living under US colonialism in the twenty-first century.

**UNCLE SAM’S “Patriots”**

Guam’s relationship with the United States spans over a century and began in 1898 as a result of the peace agreement made to end the Spanish-American War, the Treaty of Paris. Guam had previously been a colony of Spain for over three hundred years before the treaty transferred all of Spain’s colonies—including Cuba, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam—to the United States. The US Navy took immediate control over Guam, establishing the Naval Government of Guam. A series of naval governors—who were appointed to carry out President William McKinley’s order of “benevolent assimilation” regarding the indigenous people of Guam—ruled the island with unrestrained authority (Hattori 2004, 22). The naval administration of Guam assumed the responsibility to “not only better the material circumstances . . . but to achieve a transformation in the bodies and minds of the people,” as well as to “transform the Chamorro populace into an ‘American’ society, a new people who would be productive, disciplined, educated, and sanitary” (Hattori 1995, 1).

The first era of US Navy rule over Guam lasted from 1898–1941. During that time, the US Navy represented Chamorros as happy, hospitable, and patriotic. Chamorro historian Anne Perez Hattori has stated that the “frequent and unequivocal representations of Chamorros as peace-loving and generous quite
naturally (de)generated into conceptualizations of loyal, grateful, patriotic Chamorros who were proud to be American, friendly to American rule, and satisfied with Naval rule on the Island” (1995, 13). The navy’s perception that it was “responsible for the material and moral development of the Chamorro people” and President McKinley’s policy of benevolent assimilation provided the impetus for the penetration of American ways and values into all areas of Chamorro life (Hattori 1995, 13). The fabrication of a welcoming and enthusiastic island people accepting of American military worked to position Chamorros as childlike, dependent, and feminine, justifying the need for a masculine and paternalistic American system to be established on Guam. As Hattori noted, “The Navy would view themselves as ‘parents’ of the ‘child-like’ islanders, and as their ‘parents,’ they were then responsible for the material and moral development of the Chamorro people” (1995, 13).

American fabrications of Chamorros as a naturally docile, law-abiding, and loyal people were central to the successful Americanization of Guam. However, while some Chamorros were compliant with the US project to colonize Guam, others were resistant. Chamorros engaged in various modes of resistance that were indirect in nature to thwart encroaching American rule. Such expressions of Chamorro resistance mirror those characterized by political scientist James C Scott in his theoretical formulation of peasant resistance. On an everyday basis, these included “foot dragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, [and] sabotage” (Scott 1985, xvi). Hattori has noted that US efforts to assimilate Chamorros during the era of naval rule on Guam relied largely on “the goodwill of the Chamorro people,” and their choosing to comply with only those policies they felt would benefit them (1995, 41).

By the turn of the twentieth century, Chamorros were engaging in more active and coordinated modes of resistance. As early as 1901, a petition drafted by thirty-two Chamorros was sent to the US Congress. The petition requested the establishment of a permanent civilian government, adding that “a military government at best is distasteful and highly repugnant to the fundamental principals of civilized government” (Hattori 1996, 58). A similar petition was drafted in 1933 and was signed by 1,965 Chamorros. This document outlined indigenous aspirations for US citizenship and demanded that the political status of the island be determined once and for all as mandated by the Treaty of Paris. Between 1933 and 1950, four more petitions making similar demands were
The Space Between

drafted, but they were opposed by the navy and later rejected outright by the US Congress (Hattori 1996, 58).

That Chamorros actively resisted American domination on Guam during the pre–World War Two era subverts in a critical way the conception that life on Guam was “unhurried, fairly routine and largely uneventful . . . peaceful and contented” and that Chamorros believed “Uncle Sam would take care of the island and her people” (Sanchez 1998, 169). Indeed, the active agency of Chamorros in demanding citizenship, a concrete political status, and freedom from military domination is in stark contrast to the view that Chamorros are weak and have complied with the US colonial project in Guam. Nevertheless, despite the high level of Chamorro resistance, there remains a deep sense of ambiguity among Chamorros toward the United States—an ambiguity that is largely born out of the US liberation of the island in 1941.

The experience of war, Japanese occupation, and liberation has nurtured sentiments of unwavering patriotism among Chamorros toward the United States. As Chamorro scholar Keith Lujan Camacho noted, “The return of American soldiers, as personable and symbolic representations of America, convinced Chamorros of the perceived humanitarian dimension of American military expansion into the Pacific” (2005, 111). Such perceptions of American military humanitarianism have extended to all facets of US activity on Guam, activity that World War Two survivors and the generations that immediately followed have embraced and eagerly accepted.

While it has been over sixty-five years since Guam’s liberation from Japan, Chamorro acceptance of US control over Guam and moves toward fulfilling American objectives on the island remain clouded by complexity. The announcement of the realignment of military forces from Okinawa to Guam has sparked controversy and poses a dilemma for many Chamorros. At one end of the spectrum, Guam’s main media outlets and political and business leaders support the plan on the basis that it will increase jobs, boost a struggling island economy, revamp Guam’s dilapidated infrastructure, improve security against terrorism, and open the potential for more fruitful relations with the United States. However, at the other extreme are those who resist allowing the military to increase its presence and control in Guam at the risk of Chamorros losing yet more of their autonomy. In the middle—indeed, in the space between—are Chamorros who remain ambivalent, grateful for the US forces ending Japan’s
wartime occupation, but wary of the unknowns that this new situation might bring.

“GUNG-HO FOR MARINES”

Owned by Gannett Co. Inc., the leading newspaper publishing company in the United States, the Pacific Daily News has served as a primary source of information regarding the current US plan to relocate troops to Guam. A cursory survey of PDN headlines between 2005 and 2006 in many ways hints at the newspaper’s tacit endorsement of the proposed move:

7 November 2005: “Relocation of Marines to Guam Could Be a Good Thing”
15 August 2006: “Let’s Follow Okinawa’s Example and Flourish with Marine Buildup”
4 December 2006: “Military Buildup, Relocations Will Change Island, Hopefully for Better”

Those serving in the highest political offices of the Government of Guam have echoed the sentiments expressed in the PDN headlines. In a speech given to the Guam Chamber of Commerce, Guam’s delegate to US Congress, Madeleine Z Bordallo, stated, “Guam is poised to receive a significant amount of federal investment to support an increased military presence. The increase in spending on Guam and the benefits associated with having more military personnel and their families promises to breathe new life and renewed strength into our economy” (Bordallo 2006). In his annual State of the Island Address in 2006, Governor Felix P Camacho stated that the military’s proposed expansion in Guam was “set to bring about the greatest economic boom our island has yet seen” (Limtiaco 2006a). In a regional hearing of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) held in Los Angeles, Speaker Mark Forbes of I Mina’ Bente Ocho Na Liheslaturan Guåhan (the Twenty-Eighth Guam Legislature) provided written testimony in support of continued and expanded military presence on Guam, writing, “Guam remains enthusiastic, as it always has been, to do its part to promote the National Defense and ensure the safety and security of all our people” (Limtiaco 2006a)

Congresswoman Bordallo’s stance on the military buildup extended beyond the proposed economic and security benefits it was expected to bring.
Significantly, Bordallo linked the US military relocation to the US liberation of Guam in 1944: “The Expeditionary Force [to be moved to Guam] is the same that helped liberate Guam from Japanese forces during World War II. . . . We will now celebrate many Liberation Days in the future beside men and women that carried on the tradition of those that freed our people” (Park 2005). She continued to invoke Chamorro memories of the war in a separate publication, stating, “When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, they invaded Guam at the same time. . . . We were occupied by the Japanese for three and a half years. Now you’ve got South Korea-North Korea, Taiwan-China. There’s a lot of unrest. A lot of us remember the Japanese occupation and don’t want something like that to happen again” (quoted in Glantz 2006). In his written testimony to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, Speaker Forbes noted, “The local population of Guam contains large numbers of military veterans and retirees. We may have the largest per capita number of veterans of any American community. Indeed, military service is a broad local tradition. Guam is a recruiter’s paradise” (Limtiaco 2005). In a strategic way, both Bordallo and Forbes appealed to Chamorros’ sense of allegiance to the United States and—by alluding to their war experience with Japan—fostered the idea that the US military realignment would serve as a safeguard against possible future threats. It becomes evident that influential leaders such as the congresswoman, governor, and Speaker—who represent the people of Guam on the national and international stage—are producing a one-sided perspective that has had a direct impact on the decision-making process to relocate military personnel to Guam.

Support for the military buildup has been expressed not only on Guam, but also on neighboring islands whose leaders have worked to expedite the process. A June 2006 PDN issue reported the comments of various regional leaders attending the fourth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting in Okinawa that included discussions about the planned relocation of troops. Foreign Affairs Minister Gerald M Zackios of the Republic of the Marshall Islands stated, “We are closely watching what is happening in Guam. I think we will benefit [from the military relocation], especially with tourism” (Crisostomo 2006). Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) President Joseph J Urusemal shared Zackios’s enthusiasm, stating, “We hope the FSM will be looked at us as a [rest-and-relaxation] destination [for military personnel]” (Crisostomo 2006). Urusemal also expressed his hope that the move would bolster employment opportunities for FSM citizens. Republic of Palau President Tommy E Remengesau, Jr, asserted that his
island nation would look at developing new forms of tourism, mainly eco-
tourism, to accommodate the influx of military visitors (Crisostomo 2006).
Governor Camacho announced, “We are moving forward with plans to market a
‘Magnificent Micronesia’ to the world and to leverage federal dollars to build a
strong regional work force” (Crisostomo 2006). Nearly one year after the decision
to move troops to Guam was announced by the Pacific Daily News, the
newspaper commissioned a survey to gauge the feelings of registered voters
about the military relocation. According to the poll, 61 percent of those who
participated in the survey agreed that the influx of military personnel and the
resulting population boom would be a “good thing” for the island, while 15
percent viewed it as a “bad thing” (Dumot-ol Daleno 2006a).³ The headline
boasting these seemingly conclusive findings read, “Voters Gung-Ho for
Marines.”

Two months later, the newspaper commissioned another poll. Much like the
one that preceded it, the poll asked Guam voters whether they thought the
military buildup would have a positive or negative impact on Guam, or if they
were undecided on the matter. This time, 69 percent of participants reported a
positive view, while 10 percent felt the buildup would be a “bad thing” (Dumot-
ol Daleno 2006b).² The headline for the article reporting voters’ responses this
time read: “Poll: Voters Salute Military.”

It is interesting to note that the questions used in the polls failed to go beyond
the simplistic binary of “good” and “bad.” Further, the first poll included only
502 registered voters, and the second poll only 500. Using those figures, each poll
included less than 1 percent of the 55,311 people registered to vote in 2006. There
is no way to determine how the remaining 99 percent of Guam voters would
have responded had they been included in the PDN polls. However, what is clear
is the way the Pacific Daily News shaped people’s perceptions of military
expansion in Guam by using headlines that implied overwhelming support for
the buildup based on a small sample of registered voters.

RETHINKING THE ECONOMICS OF MILITARY BUILDUP

As demonstrated thus far, the argument in support of the military buildup on
Guam is primarily the promise that it will boost Guam’s economy and thereby
improve the lives of its people. *PDN* articles have focused heavily on the positive aspects of increased military presence on Guam, citing a number of favorable outcomes, including economic gains through an increased number of jobs, growth of foreign investment, developments in technology; improved infrastructure through federal funding of upgrades, and expansions to water and power systems and roadways; continued “partnership” between the people of Guam and the United States; and improved national security against terrorism and the perceived threat of North Korea’s nuclear advancements.

Nevertheless, despite the perceived benefits of military expansion in Guam—benefits that have been touted by Guam’s political leaders and *Pacific Daily News*—many remain suspicious of such an optimistic outlook. A critical question to be considered is the extent to which the expected economic benefits and improvements to Guam’s infrastructure will trickle down to the ordinary people of Guam. While the influx of military personnel and their dependents will most certainly require the construction of new facilities and the improvement of Guam’s dilapidated infrastructure, local firms and local workers may not necessarily be hired to take on those projects. As Bordallo has admitted, “Some of these contracts will be so large that they exceed the capacity of local firms” (2006). Further, to what extent will the new jobs created by the influx of military personnel and their dependents be available to local workers? The very real possibility exists that such jobs, as has occurred in the past, will go to foreign labor from the Philippines, Korea, and other Asian countries whose laborers have the necessary skills and are willing to work for less pay on a limited-term basis. As for other types of jobs beyond construction and infrastructure projects, there are no guarantees that the US military will refrain from importing its own workforce to run its bases and provide services, as it has done numerous times previously. The jobs remaining after the importation of outside, skilled labor will undoubtedly be menial and in short supply.

While the US federal government has promised to provide the financial means necessary to upgrade Guam’s infrastructure, there remains the question of whether such improvements will be only used to benefit incoming military personnel and their dependents. On Guam, there has been a tendency for local residents to be denied basic services, while military personnel continue to receive them. A case in point comes from my own observations while on Guam in the aftermath of Super Typhoon Pongsona in December 2002. During that time,
many residents on the island were without power, or running water, or both, for up to two months. However, military bases and residential areas for military personnel and their dependents only had to endure one week without utility services and were compensated monetarily for their hardship. Many Guam residents—especially those living in the southern villages—wondered why their taps had been dry for weeks, while just over the fence in military housing they saw American children running through sprinklers and their fathers washing family cars with garden hoses. It is interesting to point out that the water used by villagers and military personnel came from the same source—Fena Reservoir—which was supposedly “running low.”

Finally, anxieties about the island’s security have been fueled by the threat of terrorism and the possibility of North Korea developing nuclear weapons capable of reaching Guam, the American territory closest to Asia. But does the current state of Guam’s security warrant such a massive influx of military personnel to the island? After all, two large and well-equipped military bases—US Naval Station Guam and Andersen Airforce Base—already exist on the island. In addition, at present, there is no evidence to suggest that either terrorists or North Korea plan to mount an attack on Guam. Justifying the major movement of military forces to Guam as a safeguard against such threats falls in line with what political commentators Greg Fry and Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka have identified as the wholesale use of “war on terror” rhetoric by world powers to justify military intervention in the Pacific (Fry and Kabutaulaka 2008, 18).

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

While the dominant media discourse would have us believe that the majority of residents in Guam were in support of the military buildup, in reality, opposition to the plan was being expressed by a number of different groups, ranging from everyday grassroots communities to highly organized social movements. Critiques against military expansion have for the most part been marginalized—usually appearing at the tail end of articles or tucked away in the PDN opinion section—but they have nevertheless been a significant force in challenging the assumption that the military is a “good thing” for Guam (see, eg, Anderson 2006).
In the PDN section “Voice of the People,” which accepts letters from readers on current issues, former Marine Jess Cruz argued that the influx of military troops to Guam would only increase US paternalism and domination over the island, and pointed out that Guam would continue “to be considered a military depot and not be recognized for its rich culture and heritage” (Cruz 2005). Cruz went on to state that someone “has to tell big brother what he can and can’t do at times. . . . I’m not quite sure if [this move] is for the better” (Cruz 2005). In another letter published in “Voice of the People” under the heading “Don’t Count Marines’ Cash Before They Spend It,” David Godfrey warned the people of Guam against “counting [their] chickens before they are hatched” (2006). Godfrey suggested that people should consider more critically the assumption that large amounts of cash would be infused into the economy by military personnel and their dependents. He reminded readers that most military personnel would probably not be accompanied by their dependents (thus decreasing the number of people spending money), and tours of duty would likely be limited to a single year. Godfrey also asserted that many married military personnel tended to be “extraordinarily frugal” with their money. In a third letter to “Voice of the People,” Blaine Afaisen considered the strain on natural resources like water that an influx of military would present to the geographically small and resource-limited Guam. Afaisen posed a critical question: “To all who advocate the military relocation, our island lifestyles will be influenced immensely. Is this the price we who call Guam home are willing to pay?” (2006).

The feelings expressed in the “Voice of the People” extended beyond concerns held by individual residents. On 23 May 2006, when Governor Camacho met with Defense Department Undersecretary Richard Lawless to discuss the transfer of Marines to Guam, a large group of protestors gathered along Marine Corps Drive—Guam’s main thoroughfare—displaying signs that read, “Yankee go home!” and “No more Marines!” A central reason behind the demonstration stemmed from residents’ belief that “the indigenous people of Guam do not have enough of a voice in what happens” (Limtiaco 2006b). This organized and very public show of resistance illustrates the coordinated ways the people of Guam are beginning to speak out against the military buildup in particular and the much wider issue of colonization.

Three days after the Marine Corps Drive demonstration, a group of women concerned about the social impacts increased military presence would have on
the island met to discuss the issue and a proposed plan of action. Central to their
discussions was the strain military personnel and their dependents would have
on an already beleaguered social service system. Sarah Thomas-Nededog,
executive director of Sanctuary, Inc.—a community-based organization that
provides social services such as counseling, conflict resolution, and drug
treatment for local youth and families—noted, “Sometimes people think military
personnel don’t come to the private sector, and that’s not true. . . . They are in the
system” (Limtiaco 2006c). Thomas Nededog added that the military currently
does not offer certain support services on Guam for its personnel and their
dependents. While they can access help off-island, she stated that they tend to
seek help through local avenues.

Chamorro resistance to the military buildup has also extended to the World
Wide Web as evidenced by the launching of the online Peace and Justice for
Guam Petition in June 2006 by the Guåhan Indigenous Collective, a Chamorro
rights group.3 Addressed to then United Nations Secretary General Koffi Annan
and then President of the United States George W Bush, the petition implored
the United Nations and the US federal government to address many concerns
relating to the buildup. Citing the lack of consent by the Chamorro people
during deliberations over military expansion on Guam and pointing out the
potential negative impacts the move could have on Guam residents, the petition
was circulated through e-mail networks and via online message boards, blogs,
and Web sites. It soon garnered hundreds of signatures from the people of Guam
as well as supporters in the United States and many other countries. The weight
of the petition and its success in gaining support will be an interesting
development to follow in the months ahead.

Chamorro resistance to military expansion has also been expressed at the
highest levels of international discussions. On 4 October 2006, a group of young
Chamorro leaders presented testimony to the UN Special Political and
Decolonization Committee. Julian Aguon—a Chamorro rights activist and
member of I Nasion CHamoru (Chamorro Nation)—urged the committee to
“pass a resolution condemning [the] massive military transfer and buildup of
Guam as a grave breach of duty on the part of the Administering Power, in no
less explicit terms” (2006, 7). Hope Alvarez Cristobal of the Organization of
People for Indigenous Rights echoed Aguon’s call for the cessation of US military
expansion on Guam, noting that “the US holds its security interests above any
other concerns present in Guam and thus the scope and breadth of military
activity on Guam are a result of a unilateral and arbitrary US policy rather than from mutual agreement” (2006, 9). Cristobal went on to comment on the threat that increased military presence poses to the political development of the island as it pertains to indigenous concerns, noting that “military personnel and their families are eligible to vote in local elections by virtue of their US citizenship and in spite of the transitory nature of their residency” (2006, 9).

Other Chamorro leaders from Guam representing organizations such as the Guåhan Indigenous Collective, the International Peoples’ Coalition Against Military Pollution, the National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum, and the CHamoru Cultural Development and Research Institute, joined Aguon and Cristobal at the United Nations to register their concerns over the negative impacts the military realignment would have on Guam’s economy, public safety, culture, environment, and land tenureship. In response, UN Undersecretary-General for Political Affairs Ibrahim Gambari said, “It is the goal of the United Nations to help the Chamoru people attain the basic right to self-determination, as part of its Charter and that it is also an ethical issue of great concern” (Hita Guåhan 2006, 17). In recognizing the urgency of the matter, Gambari arranged a second meeting between the Chamorro and Political Affairs Bureau representatives to discuss moving the decolonization process in Guam forward using a UN framework (Aguon 2006, 17). However, whether or not Chamorro aspirations toward decolonization can be realized through UN channels remains to be seen.

THE SPACE BETWEEN

The emergence of an overtly vocal, assertive, and visible Chamorro resistance is a recent development on Guam. While in the past Chamorros expressed resistance, they did so in ways that were indirect and therefore less likely to upset communal harmony. But times have changed. Younger generations of Chamorros who are disconnected from the occupation experience and who have been exposed to university courses where colonialism, globalization, and self-determination are common themes of critical discussion are increasingly ambivalent about their role as Uncle Sam’s patriots.
Today’s generation has come to expect and demand the basic human rights guaranteed to them, and are armed with the tools and knowledge to assert those rights through more active and overt forms of resistance.

For far too long, the Chamorro people have been misunderstood as being a content island people who are uncritical of their history with the United States and their continued relationship with it in the present. Yet it is clear that, whether by indirect or active means, Chamorros have resisted and continue to resist US colonialism. Guam’s colonial history has shaped a people that are in every sense occupying multiple spaces between being indigenous and American, patriotic and disaffected, content and enraged. It is an ambiguous space that requires careful negotiation on the part of Chamorros—it is a space in which their social consciousness shifts uneasily in an increasingly globalized world.

There has been much debate since the United States first announced its plans to expand its military presence on Guam. As I have demonstrated, there has been prominent support for the scheme, not the least of which is based on proposed economic benefits to the island. But Chamorro detractors have not been silent on the matter. While the modes of resistance they have employed to express their opposition may differ from those enacted during the earlier phase of Americanization on Guam, they nevertheless retain the core principles of indigenous pride and self-determination held by many Chamorros.

Violence, civil unrest, coups, and other forms of more visible conflict have not yet reached Guam’s shores as they have in other islands in Oceania. But there remains a keen sense of unease among the people of Guam—an unease that has been concealed by various forms of propaganda and popular media representations that depict Chamorros as supporting the decisions being made on their behalf. While the United States has consistently turned a deaf ear to Chamorro opposition to the military buildup in particular and its colonial agenda in general, I wonder how long it will be before we finally cease to utter that historic and plaintive request, “Dear old Uncle Sam, won’t you please come back to Guam?”

This article was completed in April 2007, shortly after plans to relocate US military personnel to Guam were made public. The author recognizes that, since then, the situation regarding military realignment in Guam has developed in ways that are not discussed in this work.
Notes
1. The PDN article failed to disclose how the remaining 24 percent of the sample voted.
2. The PDN article failed to disclose how the remaining 21 percent of the sample voted.

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Dumat-ol Daleno, Gaynor

Fry, Greg, and Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka

Glantz, Aaron
Viernes • Won’t You Please Come Back to Guam?


Godfrey, David H

Hita Guåhan

Hattori, Anne Perez


Limtiaco, Steve


Park, Gene

Sanchez, Pedro C

Scott, James C

Abstract
In October 2005, Guam’s major daily newspaper, the Pacific Daily News (PDN), reported on the United States Department of Defense decision to relocate over 7,000 US Marines and their dependents from Okinawa, Japan, to Guam. Politicians and businessmen lauded the decision as a potential boon to the island’s economy. Over the next few years, the Pacific Daily News served as the primary print medium through which a dominant discourse was promulgated in
support of military expansion. In this paper, I provide an historic framework for understanding the kinds of discourses that have emerged in Guam in relation to US military presence on the island. This paper also considers the various modes of indigenous resistance that have been enacted on Guam—in both the past and the present—as means of disrupting the prevailing assumption that Chamorros wholeheartedly accept the US colonial agenda. This analysis is also revealing of ways in which Chamorros navigate the space between their indigenous identity and the experience of living under US colonialism in the twenty-first century.

KEYWORDS: Guam, Chamorro, Micronesia, United States, military, media, US Marines
WEAVING SPACE
Craig Santos Perez

plàtu

guihan dângkolo

kulepbla  ‘voice is alive because sound is alive’

rusât

katupat

haggan

paluman dângkolo

higai

guagua’ kuadrâo

gue’ha

kuronan potta

tuhong

guagua’ antigu —kampo—

‘voice is alive because space is alive’

plate

big fish

snake

rose

pointed diamond rice basket

turtle

big bird

thatched roof weaving

square basket

fan

door wreath

hat

traditional basket

—a speaking silence—

—state reasons why it is important to know how to weave
‘to preserve our culture, source of money-making, for the joy of
[yesterday and today] : [‘mother tongues are carrying the field’] [‘kampo’ halom i tano’]
MY ISLAND IS ONE BIG AMERICAN FOOTNOTE
Michael Lujan Bevacqua

Guam, Where America’s Day Begins!!1,2,3

1. Life in the colonies, the borderlands, the territories sucks.
Sucks like nationally strategic words and verbs used to keep my ethnicity selfishly un-determined
It sucks like cluster/mustard bombs buried in your land or landing on your head.
It sucks like carefully crafted, beautifully bound footnotes that no one bothers to read or quote.

My island is one big American footnote,
Sitting black/brown as day on the bottom of every red whitewashed and blue page
Through textual treaties or wars these narrow margins are our new, now, old or eternal homes.
Whether we liked it or not (Wanted it or not) our bloods were mixed with colonly supplied inks and our lives recast, set typed and dyed woven into tyrannical threads of foreign flags that call us to war with familiar terms of friendliness, unity, warmth, love of life, yet that same textual flag will blind a budget, or an international summit to our superfluous “footnoted” needs.

Footnotes? Small islands of text really,
Off the margins, somewhere between margins of national importance we sit there, ideologically spaced/almost erased like far-flung chick-peas etched/embossed on these pages of strategic seas by a constitutional, conscious and colonial disease,
Colonial dis-ease.
We cannot be incorporated for insane and inconsistent reasons
A hundred years ago it was because our skins were different.
Then it became because we spoke different languages
Or our lack of rights and liberties was integral to military strategy,
Now it is because we would receive too much power if we became a fair and equal part of the union.
We are the territorial thoughts that are too precious to let go, but not precious enough to bring into the fold.
Not critical enough to really think on, and not real enough to think critically about.

Welcome to the footnotes, like the foothills of some forever inferior land.
Because when you look up upon the wealth of words, verbs, periods, commas and paragraphs of the text, their completeness of thought, their unlimited potential, their self-referential existence (while yours seems so conditional,
contextual, so dependent on the text) their ability to endlessly reference their “glory.”
You realize that in this world, In This text
It is not hard to believe there is something inferior about inhabiting this tiny footnote.
And thus we exist always trying to live up to the sprawling, overwhelming example of the text. Its structure, its syntax, its semantics are all implanted in our tiny notes.

Alas, we are nothing but footnotes. Barely quotes.
We are the crap between America’s political toes that no one knows or cares about.
The exceptions and imperfections are excesses that don’t really belong in this “glorious” document of democracy and freedom.
In the case of Guam
Our existence uncontroversially and uncontrollably questions established “truths” about the espoused equality of the text’s democracy, its unfreeing military strategy of freedom, and its supposed support for human rights.

2 See, a footnote always poses a question, or supplies an answer
Is an excess or an extra thought,
Always articulates something that just doesn’t fit into the regular text
So what does my footnote do?
Among other things it calls for American people to reconcile their proud to be not colonial not imperial existence with the fact that what they keep off their margins of layouts/maps/discourse proves blatantly that they are.
My island footnote is an uncontroversial example, but other militarily trampling around other texts, in dozens of languages all make the same point.
American style democracy is really just American sovereignty
Anywhere on the page and anyplace in this world.
The discourse on domination, on control, on sociopolitical subjugation local, foreign and domestic is coded into each line of text just as much as liberty, equality and justice seem to be.

Why can’t this “great text” see that with their very apathy, with their disinterest, their notorious anti-human patriotism, they allow their text to create genocide, allow their text to abuse human rights, to deny human rights?
For me to hear people believe in the pieties of American benevolence or grandeur is like watching snow fall slowly back up into the sky, or bombs being dropped up, sliding and imploding back into the planes that birthed them.
It is supposed to be unbelievable, but how then can so many people believe it?

3 But back to my footnotes that don’t and I quote “fit in” with the flow of the text.
Since we don’t fit, since there isn’t room for us on the flag, or in the Capitol, let us go I say!
Release us to flutter beyond these American borders and margins!
Leave us to determine self-fully! A text of our own!
But no, that would never do the Congressional chorus calls back
And they are right, as national (in) securities will always intercede and strategic reasoning will sweep us politely to the bottom of any flag/budget/page, but push us unknowingly to the forefront of any imperial activities.

Speaking of which, should the son or daughter of a footnote die on a field of battle, distant or far, and the eulogy can be politically profitably—the flag is stripped from its perpetual half mast posture on the book’s spine and placed, draped into patriotic pose over the footnote’s footsoldier’s fallen casket.
But a soldier, fallen out of a footnote, absorbed into the field of the text at the last second is an unknown soldier nonetheless.

With no voice, no space other than silent cries to flag stained states of the textual union, the makeshifting of this patriot only obscures where in the hell he came from.

But I’ll tell you where he came from. He came from my tiny island, and he went to war without a vote! Without a voice! Without so much as a space or place in that big book of apple pie American wonderfulness! But now after his passing words will be shed of how his death and sacrifice were not in vain, but what could be more full of uselessness than words of regret which have no effect? All the words sacrificed or laid before the altar of freedom, equality and justice mean nothing if they do not produce, protect or pursue freedom, equality or justice.

Such is the fate of those unfairly placed in the fringes
And it is that cruelly formalized fate that guides my frustrated fingers daily into silent and dissident prayer.
That God please help the footnotes
Because if the book whose constitution is supposed to be built upon freedom, liberty, democracy won’t liberate, elevate or make its own footnotes, then who will?
Kinattäyi yu’ ni’ sindalun Chamorro giya Irak...
(I was written a letter by a Chamorro soldier in Iraq...)
Michael Lujan Bevacqua

Manrisibi yu’ kätta
(I received a letter)
Na un tuge’i yu’
(That you wrote to me)
Nai gaigaige hao gi gera
(While you were away at war)

Sumaonao hao
(You had joined up)
Sa’ taikepble
(Because you had no money)
Lao ti un hasso
(But you didn’t think about)
Put i linachin militåt
(The wrongs of the military)

Lao nai un li’e
(But when you saw)
Estao Iraki
(The plight of the Iraqis)
Ya taimanu ti manmana’libre
(And how they haven’t been freed)
Ha na’hasso hao ni’ Chamorro
(You thought about the Chamorros)
Ya un tungo’ hafa debi di u macho’gue
(And now you know what has to be done)

Ilek-mu
(You said)
Ti bai mumu, para Siha
(I will not fight, for them)
Bai hu tachu, para Hita
(I will stand, for us)
Esta ki manlibre hit, fanhongge
(Until we are free, you better believe)
Mungga hinalang
(Don’t give up)
Lao usuni
(But keep going)

Umessalao hao gi langhet
(You shouted into the sky)
Lao paki ha’ umoppe
(But guns alone replied)
Ilek-mu ti magâhet
(You said, it’s not right)
Na mana’gera yu’
(That you were sent to war)
Achokka’ taya’ botâ-ta
(Even though we can’t vote)
Lachi hu konfotme
(It’s all wrong I agree)

Ilek-mu
(You said)
Ti bai mumu, para Siha
(I will not fight, for them)
Bai hu tachu, para Hita
(I will stand, for us)
Esta ki manlibre hit, fahnongge
(Until we are free, you better believe)
Mungga hinalang
(Don’t give up)
Lao usuni
(But keep going)
Ti sahngge
(Not separate)
Ti achaigua
(Not equal)
Ti Amerikânu
(Not American)
I AM CHAMORRO

Michael Lujan Bevacqua

I am falling.

Falling from the edge of my cliff of last defiance.

Howling into the fresh searing wound at my side, that feels so unnatural unreal unwanted.
Crashing downward into the trees and the sandful seas, breaking then below the grounds into the layers of pre/post history, past its pages and into its bordered margins of obscurity under Spanish colonial authority.

Others would fall as well, or kneel in this new colonial hell. Subjected to death or subjugation beneath the chokehold of something claiming to be civilization.

But nonetheless, I am living, still static encased and moving in the lifelust and words spoken by those who lived and live long after I fell into the dust of somethingness.

From deep beneath the layers of soil, rocks, and roots of trees and coral life I sink my own roots conscious roots, latent for so long beneath and between even the layers of dis and miscolored skins and stacked facial features and flooding/bulging veins of my own conquered people

I am breathing.

Silent, quietly at first.

And I am watching as my people are marinated in the wet greeded gold/God lust of Spanish germs, guns and steel, and fired for centuries and barbequed til the teeter tottering brink of extinction from being over-cooked, over-killed, over-diseased, over-civilized and over-christianized.

I am sleeping. So serenely in this blood that so many say, was spat and splattered into the sea with no funeral ceremony or historical memory.

But I am still swimming in this blood so ceremoniously slaughtered by men who would be saints, and sometimes still tested by “saints” who would be scientists.

But I am crying as I flow, not from the innumerable tears my people have shed from war, famine, disease and violence, or the mantle of shattered and splintering impurity that is constantly shifting on our shoulders, uneasy to burden, yet impossible to put down,
My tears join this blood bathing all around me, for all of those who would say our impurity controls and cancels out our palpable reality.
I am soaking in the rejection of my people, who drink me daily, but think me dead.

And as well by those others who would cripple and control us for Gold, galleons, coal, tourists, economic prosperity spheres, patriotism, strategical military and domaination.

I am sinking in the sensationalism of constant progress and cultural regress.

I am agonizing as the land, the plants, the people my blood pumps life into fall apart more and more each day in more and more decisive, divisive, and disaffected ways.

I am reeling, livid and lost as the cost becomes too much, the price too painful to rethink, as more and more of my blood leaves these shores heading for distant and persistent American dreams (of more and more) that seem to tear at our social seams.

White picket plane tickets to up-tight commuting communities of middle class overrated opportunities who couldn’t Survive a night on a deserted tropical island even if they were dumped or castawayed there with Tom Hanks, a movie crew and a script.

I am worrying. That my stand, spear in hand before the hordes of filthy Spanish soldiers long ago, was for nothing, as I am sinking less and less into the science of the present, instead being pressed back into the sacred toppled stones of the past lives of our people.

By being called far from contemporary, “ancient” “old” implying far from necessary.

I am dying.

I feel, as I find my flow slowing, stuttering as the world around me closes in, being killed kindly in politically correct, “multi-ethnic culturally enlightening” patronized blood culture clotting

As my twin towering hills of culture and history are smashed, bombed and entombed annually in July and September by pushy little red white and blue terrorist cells.

But now I am responding, as my limits of pressure tolerance are reached

I am turning toiling over and in myself pushing out,

Frothing foaming making my presence known through persistent protests of even this very voice I find myself using

Written in English without a trace of Chamorro?
I am diluted, even as I am being promoted.

And I am rising now, not because of Spam, diabetes, or because our culture has changed.

But rather, because each day more and more people deny my existence in their daily lives
In ways I cannot even imagine people annunciate our extinction, and with sickly distinction proudly advocate that they are proud to be Americans.

Or just dying to be Chamorro-Americans, Guamanians, second-class citizens.

I am simmering over now, stewing intensely with the fury of a typhoon

You were Chamorro long before your birth, I say to all whose veins give me shelter

You chose your home, your family, your island long before you were put on this earth.

Do not deny it, do not write it off with your passport, or with your car, or your job,
or your dreams of America, colonially cultured in each of us like caustic cancer.

Love your family, love your island, love your history, love your culture.

Shout this from the island’s highest mountains, from cliffs like mine of last defiance…

I am rising...
I am boiling...
I am here...
AND I AM CHAMORRO...
We don’t need another road to divide and disconnect our people from each other.

We don’t need another road that separates US from our culture, from our ancestors who sweat and bled while marching through the hills.

These hills have natural connections. When hiking to Segua, I am part of the rich red dirt. I am part of the rope that connects tâno’ yan tâsi.

When jumping off Segua, I hear the voices of those who have jumped before me.

We don’t need another road.

I want to hike Segua. I need to jump off Segua.

My blood, rich and red, is yearning for Segua.
Borja-Kicho‘cho‘

*Manenggon is an area in the village of Yo‘ña in Guåhån (Guam)*
1. Seguá Falls is in Manenggon.
2. In the Chamoru language, tåno‘ means land and tåsi means ocean
RE-MEMBERING WAIKĪKI

Kisha Borja-Kicho’cho’

Concrete jungle—
This is the view I have of Waikīkī
as I look beyond the balcony
of my high-rise condo.
Lē’ahi:
severed in three
by some anonymous hotels.
Waikīkī:
place of “spouting waters”
disconnected from itself
by the Ala Wai.
Once part of a
flourishing ahupua’a,
now part of a multimillion dollar industry.
Roads have replaced streams,
concrete slabs—kalo fields
sunburnt bodies—Hawaiian royalty
and even the local Chinese farmers,
people who would brown, not red.

Staring at this concrete jungle,
my mind triggers thoughts—
of peoples once thriving but now dying,
peoples once living off the land and the sea
but now
displaced
replaced by haole tourists
wearing lei,
drinking mai tais,
tanning on the beach
in front of the Royal Hawaiian,
trying to feel like
Hawaiian royalty,
royalty who have become
pictures and paintings
hanging
on walls
and who have been remembered
by haole tourists,
not for what they did,
but for how ridiculously long
their names seem.
Borja-Kicho’cho’

Looking at this concrete jungle,
I wonder:
If people driving down below
know this place of “spouting waters.”
If they remember that three years ago,
“spouting waters”
transformed into
raging waters,
flooding Kūhio and Kalākaua,
its anger spreading,
seeking revenge on those of us
who forgot
to
Remember
that before this concrete jungle lived…
That before this concrete jungle,
lived the people of this land
and of this sea.
That before concrete,
there was swamp
and water,
and people.
Real people
of this place.
People who knew Lē‘ahi,
not Diamond Head.
Waikīkī as “spouting waters,”
not a tourist destination.

Wandering through this concrete jungle,
my heart breaks.
How could I forget to remember—
that roads have replaced streams
concrete slabs—kalo fields
sunburnt bodies—the bodies
of Hawaiians and even
the local Chinese farmers
People who would
brown
not
red?
WALKING THROUGH TOMHOM
Kisha Borja-Kicho‘cho’

I had a dream last night.
I was walking through the jungle,
and as I passed each tree,
it collapsed right beside me.
The ground was dug up,
the naked raw earth exposed.

How could this happen—
to our tâno’
to our mañaina

to our familía

to us?

The big strong tronkon nunu
the taotaomo’na hid in
were no more.

I screamed,
tears numbing my
blood red face.

As I walked
through the naked earth,
my body weakened.

I fell to the ground,
my palms touching
the unfamiliar earth,
my eyes searching
for the old tronkon nunu,
my ears open
to the calling of our mañaina.

I didn’t know this earth.
I couldn’t see the trees.
But
in the distance,
I could hear:

“Munga ma’âñaø, hagâ-hu.
Munga ma’âñaø.
Ti bai in dingu hao.”

“It’s okay, our daughter.
Borja-Kicho‘cho‘

It’s okay.
We will never leave you.”

Tomhom (also known as Tumon) is Guåhån’s tourism hub.

1. ancestors
2. family
3. banyan tree
4. ancestral spirits of the Chamorus
MAJ(y)AMAK (BROKEN)
Angela T Hoppe-Cruz

Part I
Guela yan Guelu, what meaning do our words have if we cry to you in English?¹

Part II
Guahu

si
chaggi i
fino
Chamorro
Dispensa yu,
guahu
si
fino
Chamorro
si
m
aj(y)
a
ma
k

I
am
trying to
speak
the language of the Chamoru
people
Forgive me,
My
Chamoru
is
br
o
k
e
n

¹ In the Chamorro language, Guela and Guelu translate as grandmother and grandfather.
surprised, you compliment my english
while my sister laughs at the perfection with which my tongue enunciates
and my elders laugh at my feeble attempts to speak in our native tongue.
what is it about my english that impresses you so?
hmmm...is it the color of my skin that caught you off guard?
did you not think it possible for a brownskinned woman to
art-iculate
post-ulate
to not be consumed by the colonizer’s hate?
beware of the [micro] brown- skinned woman
for we are broken, yet full of surprises.
FLIGHT
Angela T Hoppe-Cruz

Times New Roman
Font Size 12
Letters
Rise into the
Night Sky
The Liminal Space
Dotting the Expanse
Constellations of Verses
Embody Tragedy Triumph
Of our Struggles
Attempts to
FREE
Our minds.

Fill an infinite Void with
OUR Love
OUR HopePassion
OUR PastPresentFuture
Echoed in
Times New Roman
Font Size 12
Letters
Rising to light the starless night sky
Transformed, my arms Grow into wings
Transformed, my spirit Grows courage
I float between
Constellations of Verses
My body
Brushing against Them.
Touched by Them.
Moved by Them.
Through clouds of Tears
I land on
Full moon Glowing
Gazing upon Humatac Bay
The Ocean Black Onyx Sparkling
Faces of my Ancestors on the crest of Waves.
Tides rising Upward
Reaching for
Full moon Glowing
For us.
Hoppe-Cruz

Times New Roman
Font Size 12
Letters
Constellations of Verses.
They hear us.
See us.
I smile at them They at me
Refueled I Return
Out of breath
Inhaling
Full moon Glowing
Exhaling
Constellations of Verses
Breathe
I log out, shut down until
Our next joy Flight.
BETWEEN OCEAN AND LAND

MOANAĀKEA
B Pualani Lincoln Maieluā

KE MELE KAMALI‘I
KA HO‘ĀLA O NĀ ‘ĀINA
Pelika Bertelmann

GETTING FOUND
DIVINING
CATALOGUE
Julia Wieting

MANA WAHINE
‘UA TIFATIFA LE ‘ĀTAFÁ
KE ALA O KAHIKI
Lufi A Luteru
Untitled, by Roxanne Chasle
Mixed media on canvas, 2007, 18 cm x 13 cm
MOANAÄKEA

B Pualani Lincoln Maielua

We are the young generation of ‘Ōiwi Hawai‘i, conscious of the past and living in the present, with the desire to regain the pilina of our kūpuna to our ‘āina through language and practice.

Our kūpuna (ancestors) bestowed names on every type of wind, rain, and sea. Some names were specific to particular places, while others were generally descriptive (Andrade 2008). For example, the general term ua ‘īawa is used to describe a cold, bitter rain. However, on the island of Hawai‘i, the people of Waimea refer to a rain with similar characteristics more specifically as kīpu‘upu‘u. We find these names in mele (songs), oli (chants), mo‘olelo (stories), and within our mo‘okū‘auhau (genealogies). The natural phenomena for which the names were given were observed and cherished by our kūpuna. While some ‘Ōiwi Hawai‘i (Native Hawaiians) continue to follow the legacy of our kūpuna by using the names they gave and by creating a pilina (relationship) with the land and the ocean, the majority of us no longer know how to engage at this level. The reasons for this lack of connection are varied and complex, but stem in large part from a series of significant events. First, the Māhele (Land Division) of 1848 led to the privatization of ‘āina (lands) that had previously been held communally by ‘Ōiwi Hawai‘i. Then, in 1893, American businessmen overthrew the Hawaiian Kingdom illegally with the complicity of the United States government. Three years later, ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i—the Hawaiian language—was officially banned. Such sweeping and traumatic changes meant that many ‘Ōiwi Hawai‘i were geographically and socially displaced.

Our ability to recognize the many types of winds and rains that exist, or the varying ocean conditions—indeed, the act of simply and consciously observing the elements that surround us—has fallen into neglect. While our kūpuna fostered deep connections with the ‘āina (which, for ‘Ōiwi Hawai‘i, includes both land and sea), many of us now casually reside on it. I ka wā kahiko, in past times, a relationship was formed between the people and places in which they lived. That relationship was strengthened over many generations through a process of reciprocity. Names reflected and preserved the memory of the relationship between the people and their natural environment.
For present generations of ‘Ōiwi Hawai‘i, the relationship with the natural world is no longer as strong as it was for our kūpuna. This is not to disclaim the connections preserved by mahi‘ai (farmers), lawai‘a (fishermen), po‘e hula (hula dancers) and many other practitioners, who not only recall important aspects of nature but also rely on them for physical and spiritual sustenance. Many ‘Ōiwi Hawai‘i desire to have this same type of a pilina with the ‘āina. While some resources are available for us to learn many of the ‘Ōiwi Hawai‘i names bestowed on the natural world by our kūpuna, not all have been recorded or remembered. When names cease being spoken, new ones are created. In some cases, the new names are inappropriate and do not capture the pilina that existed between our kūpuna and their environment. We now live in a world where we refer to our own ocean by a name that was created not even six centuries ago by a foreign voyager who passed through it once. We descend from a legacy of voyagers who frequently navigated this same ocean for thousands of years and survived in it for countless generations. Their pilina i ke kai—relationship with the ocean—is our ancestral foundation.

In order to honor our kūpuna and their heroic voyaging, and to claim this sea once again as our home and our sustenance, we must rid our vocabulary of the name “Pacific” as the sole label for the ocean in which we live. So what shall we call the road of our people, the provider of our sustenance, the water that connects us? ‘O wai kona inoa? What is his/her name? We already have hundreds if not thousands of names for the types of seas that have been observed and experienced by our kūpuna. An inoa (name) for our particular ocean should encompass all the variations that exist: ke kai malino (calm sea), ke kai hohonu (deep sea), ke kai hānupanupa (surging sea), ke kai ko‘o (rough sea), and so on. The name should not attempt to bottle up or compromise the vastness of the sea’s many characteristics. Pacific implies simplicity, calmness, tranquility; however, while there is no doubt the ocean does most certainly exhibit these qualities at times, it is my contention that such a label is ultimately limiting. The energy of this great ocean cannot be controlled or overpowered by any individual or people, and in its many forms only a few can survive it. Such a powerful entity should be acknowledged properly and respectfully—simply referring to it as the Pacific is inadequate. While there are several names that exist for the body of water popularly known as the Pacific in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, including kai ‘e’ele (the black sea), kai Pōpolohua mea a Kāne (the purplish-blue reddish-brown sea of Kāne) and so on, many other Pacific Island peoples
who consider it their home refer to it by other names. For example, Māori in Aotearoa call this great sea Te Moana nui a Kiwa.

For the purpose of this paper, however, I use the name *Moanaākea* as a replacement for the Pacific—a name that was provided in *Moʻokūʻauhau ʻElua: A Genealogical History of the Priesthood of Kanalu* (Nāmakakeahi 2004), and was documented in accounts in numerous ʻūpule Hawaiʻi (Hawaiian newspapers). The first part of the name, *moana*, can be translated as ocean or open ocean. However, the addition of *ākea* as a suffix expands *moana* to mean “broad, wide, large, full”—something of great energy that cannot be harnessed, something unpredictable. As a descendant of ocean voyagers and as a student of the canoe myself, I offer the term *Moanaākea* as an empowering alternative for ʻŌiwi Hawaiʻi, as well as to encourage us all to seek out these ancestral names and proclaim them. While Moanaākea is my personal preference at this time, it is but one of many names to choose from.

‘O WAI KONA INOA?

In 1520, Portuguese maritime explorer Ferdinand Magellan encountered Moanaākea and as he did so bestowed on it the name *Mare Pacificum* (peaceful sea), from which the name *Pacific* was later derived. Almost five hundred years later, this name is recognized and used by people all over the world, including the indigenous peoples who inhabit it. The term *Pacific* is not only inappropriate and Eurocentric in its application, but is degrading as well and leads to a common misunderstanding that the inhabitants of this vast ocean are themselves pacific. Use of this name also implies a kind of inertness or blankness of being. This is how foreigners have viewed our home, Moanaākea: “not as a place to live in but an expanse to cross, a void to be filled in with lines of transit: ploughing the sea” (Sharrad 1990, 598). Millions of ships from all over the world continue to power through these life-giving waters regardless of what they represent and provide for all Moanaākea peoples, not just ʻŌiwi Hawaiʻi.

In his 1990 article “Imagining the Pacific,” Paul Sharrad—an English professor at the University of Wollongong, Australia—drew critical attention to the use of two terms used in popular discourse: *Pacific Rim* and *Pacific Basin*. As Sharrad pointed out, the *Pacific Rim* is defined by the major continental powers that line the edges of the ocean. This is a site of economic gain, capitalism, and
international business exchange. It is from the Rim that European explorers launched their voyages of discovery, and in the contemporary period it is the Rim that sends ships of war and vessels laden with toxic cargo across what has been derisively referred to as the Basin. As Sharrad has asserted, the distinction between the Rim and the Basin derives largely from the economic and political interests of metropolitan powers. While the Rim is defined symbolically as an industrious port of transit, the Basin is understood as a vacant space—“a passive receptacle of observation, a space for European adventuring, an area of natural science, history, anthropology and ‘development studies’” (Sharrad 1990, 597).

But, from the perspective of those of us whose ancestral origins are in Moanaākea, the ocean that we call home is so much more. Moanaākea is an energy that no human can possess or control. This energy was revered by our kūpuna as something that assumed a mana (power/prestige) equivalent to that of the akua (gods). The akua for Moanaākea was recognized by ‘Ōiwi Hawai‘i as Kanaloa, who was rightfully honored and respected by all those who entered his realm. It is with this humility that our kūpuna loaded their wa’a kaulua (double-hull canoes) and courageously sailed for thousands of miles across the vast surface of Moanaākea. Today there are a few of us who have been privileged to experience the kind of voyages our wayfinding kūpuna set out on. In 1976, Hōkūle‘a—the first replica of a traditional wa’a kaulua to be built and sailed long distance in hundreds of years—was guided to Tahiti by Papa Pius Mau Piailug, a master navigator of the island of Satawal in the Caroline Islands. This humble man had never been to Tahiti before, yet with great confidence in his knowledge of Moanaākea and its many elements, he succeeded in “pulling” an island thousands of miles from his home out of the sea.

For many years, po‘e Hawai‘i (the people of Hawai‘i) were not able to read Moanaākea’s signs, nor were we able to embark on long-distance voyages as Papa Mau and his people had continued to do. However, when we were ready and felt the need to reconnect with our voyaging heritage, Papa Mau came to Hawai‘i to teach us the ways of the sea. He taught us many great lessons: that courage was necessary for survival (Low 1983), and that trust in our kūpuna and ourselves would provide focus, determination, and calmness in times of fear. Papa Mau expected this type of courage and commitment from his crew as well as from himself. His interpretation of courage is in many ways equivalent to faith, the power of which is illustrated in figure 1. The photograph depicts two courageous men steering the vessel Alingano Maisu from Chuuk to Satawal.
this day, Moanaʻkea was certainly not “pacific.” The men steering the vessel are inherently skilled; they are wayfinders, connected to the very sea they sail on. With undoubting respect for Moanaʻkea, they—like their ancestors—eventually reached their destination safely, and were forever changed by their experience with Kanaloa. Through Papa Mau’s many lessons, ‘Ōiwi Hawai‘i have grown to understand that Moanaʻkea binds us to all people who thrive in this dynamic ocean.

![Figure 1. Ma Ka Hana Ka ʻIke (In the Doing there Is Learning). Voyagers steering Alingano Maisu, 2007. Photo by author.](image)

ʻĀINA…THE LAND AND THE SEA: THAT WHICH SUSTAINS

The Pacific Basin has been viewed by metropolitan centers as “a vessel that exists to be filled or emptied” (Sharrad 1990, 599). However, Moanaʻkea is not so easily managed; there is no option to refill what is lost. The idea of a constant flow of resources, a never-ending supply of sea life, is a concept foreign to our kūpuna. What sustained us as a people was the ʻāina, which, as mentioned previously,
encompassed both land and sea. A complete meal in a Hawaiian setting consisted of ‘ai (often poi, a substance made from the pounded root of the taro plant) and i’a (often fish). Therefore, it was vital to protect both environments equally. The metaphor of mālama ‘āina (to care for the land) extended past the cultivated kula lands (open country) and well into Ke Kai Pōpolohua mea a Kāne, the purplish-blue, reddish-brown sea of Kāne (Pukui and Elbert 1986, 520). Though the inhabitants of Moanaākea, the po‘e Moana (the people of the ocean) are required to have such a respect for their home, I contend that those who blithely pass through it perceive it differently. The residents of the Rim understand that the Basin is a provider of sustenance, yet they treat it as a wasteland. The same ocean used “to engage in whaling, sea-bed mining and drift-net fishing” is also where the “dumping [of] toxic wastes and urban rubbish” occurs (Sharrad 1990, 599). The abuse extends to the disposal of chemical weapons in Moanaākea. As Sharrad has intimated, what is assumed and astonishingly believed by Western powers is that “the sea can take it” (Sharrad 1990, 599). Such an approach to this fragile region has had a dire impact on Moanaākea and its inhabitants.

Between 1946 and 1962 the United States conducted a series of eight nuclear tests in what it called the Pacific Proving Grounds. This area included a number of Marshall Islands, including Bikini Atoll and Enewetok Atoll, as well as islands further to the east, such as Johnston Island and Christmas Island. The nuclear tests affected not only the islands on which the bombs were detonated but also neighboring islands and ships that passed nearby. In 1963, this testing was officially banned, but not until the lives of thousands of inhabitants had been negatively impacted and their lands and seas irrevocably changed. After the ban, the United States targeted other areas it deemed to be remote and vacant, such as Ka Pae ‘Āina o Hawai‘i (the Hawaiian Archipelago’s) island of Kaho‘olawe, Mākua Valley on the island of O‘ahu, and Pōhakuloa on the island of Hawai‘i. Like Moanaākea, these lands were perceived as free to be used for any purpose. No doubt government officials justified the destruction of these places with the assumption that “there [was] no-one around anyway,” or if so, they were insignificant, pacific people (like the sea in which they lived) and their lives would not be disrupted (Sharrad 1990, 599).
ĀKEA: SITUATED KNOWLEDGE

From the beginning of European exploration in Moanaākea, visitors took on the roles of cartographers, ethnologists, and anthropologists. As scholar Margaret Jolly has asserted, these observers “discerned among the ‘nations’ of the South Seas, differences of race and differences of place” (2007, 516). They then took it on themselves to place each island into what they believed to be the culturally appropriate groupings of Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia, the formulation of which was based on “racial and cultural typologies” (Jolly 2007, 516).

In the early years of foreign exploration, “the Europeans plotted the peoples of the Pacific at various removes from themselves and, thus, from each other” (Jolly 2007, 516). The power that their maps possessed over po’e Moana actions and thought processes isolated us from each other, creating unstable relationships, and diluting our power as a single ocean nation.

It is my belief that as the indigenous people of this ocean we call home, we must stand firm with the knowledge of place that our kūpuna have left us. Our indigenous names must be reinvigorated and reintroduced into our everyday thinking, language, and practices; as we remember them, pilina will once again be formed. The way we reimagine and reimage the Pacific through our respective indigenous lenses will generate new ways of seeing and understanding the ocean that sustains us. For ʻŌiwi Hawaiʻi, if we begin to perceive the ocean as our kūpuna did, we will create relationships like those they had with Moanaākea. By our nurturing such bonds with the ocean, the world will come to know that it is not a vacant space for bombing or dumping waste. In the words of the late Epeli Hauʻofa: “We are the sea, we are the ocean, we must wake up to this ancient truth and together use it to overturn all hegemonic views that aim ultimately to confine us again, physically and psychologically” (1993, 160). In many ways Hauʻofa interpreted the very essence of Papa Mau’s teachings in academic form. His many writings remind us that our ocean is our link to each other, to our past, and to our future.

A reinvigorated image of Moanaākea should be based on an indigenous perspective, while at the same time capturing movement and travel. The majority of images that have been rendered of Moanaākea stem from the objectivity of cartographers, who mathematically plotted the islands from a bird’s-eye view. Prior to Western contact, ancient voyagers of Moanaākea relied on their situated knowledge of the environment: “lying low in a canoe, looking up at the heavens,
scanning the horizon for signs of land, and navigating the powerful seas with the embodied visual, aura, olfactory, and kinesthetic knowledge passed down through generations of navigators” (Jolly 2007, 509).

On this page, I have included a diptych to illustrate for readers the modern-day voyagers’ perspective of Moanaākea (figure 2). Sitting at the bow of the canoe on the palekai (bulwark located at the bow of the canoe), looking out to the ‘alihilani (horizon)—it is from this perspective that the island will appear and be identified, not from above. Titled He Wa’a He Moku, He Moku He Wa’a (the canoe is the island, the island is the canoe), the diptych emphasizes the meaning of ākea. Look to the left, toward the ama (port hull) and you will see only ocean, but widen your perspective, make it ākea, and you will see the island you are searching for. It is important for a navigator to be able to visualize the island as the wa’a sails toward it. This technique prepares the navigator spiritually, and connects the entire body to the purpose of the voyage.

Moanaākea is just one of many beautiful names that exist in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i for the ocean that surrounds and sustains us. Every island group that finds sustenance in it has formulated names to honor its power and importance. The challenge for all who are of this ocean is to seek out these ancestral names and proclaim them. Eō Moanaākea!

Notes
1. Ferdinand Magellan was the first person from the West to lead a voyaging expedition from Europe to Asia.
2. Without the kai (the sea) we would not have been able to travel from one island to another, or sustain ourselves nutritionally. This relationship established with the kai was vital to the survival of Hawaiians.
3. For further discussion on how ‘Ōiwi Hawai‘i perceive akua, see for example Kame‘eleihiwa 1992, 19–49.

4. Piu Mau Piailug was given the name Mau by the people of his island, because of his commitment and perseverance in the tradition of navigation. When he arrived in Hawai‘i, Mau was the name commonly used to address him. Today, many voyaging students refer to him as Papa Mau.

5. Alingano Maisu was built under the auspices of Nā Kalai Wa’a Moku o Hawai‘i to fulfill a promise made to Papa Mau by Captain Clayton Bertelmann. In January 2007, the Alingano Maisu departed the island of Hawai‘i and, along with Hōkūle‘a, was sailed to Satawal where it was given to Papa Mau as a gift in his honor.

6. In Hawaiian culture, ‘ai is the word for food, “especially vegetable food as distinguished from i’a, meat or fleshy food” (Pukui and Elbert 1986, 9). While i’a is popularly equated with fish, it is actually “any food eaten as a relish with the staple (poi, taro, sweet potato, breadfruit), including meat, fish, vegetable, or even salt” (Pukui and Elbert 1986, 93).

7. The phrase “he wa’a he moku, he moku he wa’a” was often used by Captain Clayton Bertelmann during my training with the voyaging canoe Makali‘i. The idea is that when at sea, the canoe becomes one’s island and the people on board one’s family. In order to survive one must mālama (care for) fellow crew members and keep the pono (balance). Once back on land those same values of honoring one’s ‘ohana, mālama ‘aina (caring for the land and the ocean), and instilling pono must be continued.

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Nāmakaokeahi, Benjamin K, transcriber

Low, Sam, writer and producer

Pukui, Mary Kawena, and Samuel H Elbert

Sharrad, Paul

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**KEYWORDS:** Pacific, voyaging, Moanaākea, Hawaiian heritage
The fire of Kāmaile rises in triumph, as does Makana, whose bosom is adorned with laua‘e,

Naue, where hala reaches out to sea, the sea that caresses the sands of my birth

The surf of Pu‘ukahuanui murmurs, as we frolic in the stream at Koia,

Refreshed in the chilling waters, the rippling waters of Limahuli

In the presence of Nāmolokama, delightful is the beach with its white sand,

Mahamoku with the slippery limu of love that ripples slippery back and forth

The winding streams flow forth, a gift of life from the Ualena rain.

In the calm of Hanalei, it is Hāloa who is cherished.

Famous is Kaukake with its kukui grove, kukui is the shelter that protects us

It is this hilly land of Pila‘a, we are without worry at Halekou in the Kiukainui wind

And in the cold spray of Piliamo‘o, growing up at the spring of Wailoli

Remembering these things are valuable, for they flow forth, my love

My love is like the sweet appealing sound of water (pouring out of the mountains)
From Hawai‘i, we sail
A journey through ‘Alenuihāhā and
‘Alalākeiki
In the dawn, Haleakalā stands
majestic
Kaho‘olawe reaches out to sea on
the horizon
Here indeed is the island of Kanaloa
The precious child of Hina
It is there that our early warriors
gather
Beautiful is the strength of our precious kūpuna
This is greatly valued by the people
The reawakening of the land
The rains arrive and rainbows
My pounding heart is swept away
by the things my eyes behold.
We return to the surging sea
Sprayed by sea spray
I gaze at the beauty of the four
mountains
(Haleakalā, Kohala, Maunakea &
Hualalai)
Tell the refrain of the reawakening
of the land
...And indeed, there will be time
to wonder and sit, to practice
a craft of appropriation. A cool
and natural iteration, a simple feat:
Steal it all. Memorize and repeat,
in muttering retreats, this truth of mine;
Like a thief: take, and own, and speak.

And how should I presume?
Steal a song of fear, or the briny scent of night, or the sigh
of the woman you’ve tired of as she sleeps
close in the early morning light:
write all the ends into each other.
The words and the world are yours.
I see, I steal; I speak, I am.

Do I dare disturb the universe?
Impose my voice upon this verse?
Bridge the sound between kiss and curse?
Do I dare
stare at mountain, ocean, sea, and sky
inhaling the scent, exhaling an I(land),
   a me made
of basalt bones, undertows, surf slapping at strata
deep underneath, and the full moon’s glow:
that round round face, pinned above, a white eye
buttoning horizon to black black sky.
In a minute there is time
For revisions and collisions that a lifetime
must traverse.

And how should I begin?
I sing a song of love, this hymn,
To catch between cupped hands—
water for drowning, for solving and dissolving in.

Shall I say, I have gone to this island,
escaped the Middle’s wide, its far flung sky?
Exchanged a sea of corn and beans
for a sea of salt? The edges stay,
today, where they always were:
palm fronds like ribs breathing
cloud drift like pupils seeing
ridge lines like hair streaming
my geography stretched like a lover on a bed,
wondering when the next time will come.

On which instrument are we strung?
With which voice do we sing?
Arrange these themes of life and death as map or symphony,
So, moʻoleloʻd, be a ridge to ride these stories down.

Ke mele, ka moku, ke mele.
I have seen them, these hill sledders.
I have seen them riding homeward on the grass
Combing the red hair of their heads thrown back
When night lava lights the hills yellow and black

We have lingered on these flows
in meanders wreathed in memories red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

Let us go then, you and I,
where the hills recline, smiling to the sky
Like a lover spent upon a bed,
Let us go through certain half-mapped whys
of heart and mind
the routes traversed in and out;
each breath, each mouth follows with unspoken intent
to ask the hardest question....
Years after, we still do not ask, “What are we?”

I have heard the stories singing, each to each
I do not think they will rest with me.

And indeed there will be time, yours and mine.

And if I am carried off by the breaking sea, I die.
DIVINING

Julia Wieting

My friend, you say
Haleakalā floats there
blue mountain on white sky.
‘Aumakua settle always
   around you
And the God of your fathers agrees:
The distance He made between
   islands is not, is never
so large as we think.

And I remember on Thursday seeing
how the clouds of my own sky
were uddered with a far deep blue,
curving up and up.
I’ve carried this time with me
waiting, for the right time.
I’ll wager that the ground is only
   half of life:
rain won’t ever taste of milk
but mouths upturn themselves
   all the same
mewling
and I think
the God of our fathers
and the body of our mountains
   the body of our sky
my metaphor and yours
manna and mauna
speak to each other in low
   and tender voices
that we only sometimes hear,
when clouds prompt us to pray
looking up.
Catalogue
Julia Wieting

Words. String clanking seraphs
around your neck and announce
your presence to those afraid, and weak.

Bodies. Held: hair, bosom, hips, bend of legs,
egregent falling hands (a dying fall):
a language of measured and beautiful motion.
Encircle and be circumscribed.

And God. Lean that slant of light against a wall
and climb to heaven. The floral scent of neighborhoods
wafts up even there, screaming, Tiare, puakenikeni, Malabar jasmine.
Blooming loneliness. And so
make a lei and kiss God, honi Him warm and nice
and leave.
MANA WAHINE, HE PULAPULA NO KA MOANA ĀKEA
Lufi A Luteru

Hina glorious
moon mother
empower the seed
ko te māramatanga
seed of revival thriving

contained deep
within oceanic skin
sacred child
ke awe o Kanaloa
he purapura

swim with kaitiaki
manaia, mangōpare
sandpaper skin
lead her
wonderous father manō

burst forth
Moana ākea
seek Siamese mothers’ wisdom
womb of pō infinity
he kākano

manifest the vision long silenced
blackened kukui
mo’o speak
of malu stars
and hua pods of knowledge
tap deep
within land and sea
timeless
ancestral stories
te ara o te wairua

guide her
pueo hands
within diving
spiral currents,
outstretched upward
inward awaken
ka ‘ike pāpālua
lead her to koru insight
mana wahine
he pulapula no ka Moana ākea
‘UA TIFATIFA LE ‘ĀTAFA (FOR PAULO)
Lufi A Luteru

‘o le tufuga tātatau
vessel of forebears
keeper of knowledge
son of Tilafaigā and Taemā
recording the lineage
of my aliʻi since past
adorning
my Sāmoan skin with stories
nifo cut
tap my spirit awake
arise from
my unconscious slumber
melodious tapping
conjures up my ancestors
through agonizing pain,
wisdom is received
Paulo, proud silent witness to
my rite of passage
these gogo fetū fingers
convey my sadness
body gone but spirit soars
he flies and dives
through my fingers as I write
he thrives in my malu
amongst fetū o le lagi
embedded in my skin
he whispers to me
‘ua agi midie le matagi
he swims freely with
his mothers in the calming sea
he glides with Tagaloa
in the fierce roaring sky
Ke Ala o Kahiki

Lufi A Luteru
(Me ke aloha palena ‘ole no Kumu Kanalu Young)

e ho‘i aku, e ho‘i aku i ke Kumu
ka pō loa, ka pō mamao
take the long awaited journey
do you feel the warm breeze?
ke anu mahana that travels through your hair
and awakens your legs
as you move towards Ka‘ena
feel your feet depart from Papahānaumoku
e lele, e lele ho‘i ‘oe!
leap freely and soar
embrace the now crisp air
that carries you from our leina
dusk ocean sprays tickle
and quenches your body no longer weary
remnants of the last sunset soothe your eyes
as Wākea reveals magnificent gifts of
gentle swirls of fuchsia and salmon
piercing streaks of gold
and calming indigo glory
splashes of the last dusk
enveloped and swallowed by limitless pō
Hina appears in Muku stillness
as the beautiful blanket
of stars infinite
welcome and light your way to Kahiki
tihei maoli ola!
‘āmama, ua noa
Ku'u 'Aumakua no Ka 'Āina a me Ke Kai Loa, by Lufi A Luteru. Acrylic on canvas, kukui leaves, and shellac, 2009, 46 cm x 61 cm.
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Michael Lujan Bevacqua is Chamorro from Guam. He is the grandson of Elizabeth Flores Lujan (familian Kabesa) and the Chamorro master blacksmith, Joaquin Flores Lujan (familian Bittot). Michael is the father of two Ņangñang children, Ņuamă and Akli‘e’, and is currently an instructor of history and English at the University of Guam. He recently defended his dissertation in Ethnic Studies at the University of California, San Diego, titled “Chamorros, Ghosts and Non-Voting Delegates: GUAM! Where the Production of American Sovereignty Begins.” His research deals primarily with outlining the structures of colonialism in Guam, and theorizing the everyday possibilities of decolonization for Chamorros. Michael maintains numerous Web sites and Weblogs. In 2008, he was the official blogger for Guam during the Democratic National Convention, which he covered through his personal blog site, “No Rest for the Awake—Minagahet Chamorro.”

KISHA BORJA-KICHO’CHO’

My name is Kisha Ann Borja-Kicho’cho’ (Quichocho, familian Lasåru). I am from the village of Mangilao on the island of Guåhån. In spring 2008, I earned a BA degree in English from Hawai‘i Pacific University, and I am currently pursuing an MA degree in Pacific Islands studies at the University of Hawai‘i at Månoa. My research interests include exploring Chamoru culture and identity and critically analyzing how Chamorus are represented in popular discourse. I am also committed to using creative writing—mainly poetry—to express and investigate issues related to the Chamoru culture and people. My ultimate goal is to return home to Guåhån so I can give back to the place, people, and culture that I come from.

KATHERINE HIGGINS

Katherine Higgins is a PhD candidate at the University of Auckland whose academic research focuses on artists’ residencies and artistic exchange in Oceania. Her doctoral work is motivated by her time as a visiting artist at the Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture in Suva, Fiji, and builds on her graduate
studies in Pacific Islands studies and museum studies at the University of Hawai‘i. Her scholarly engagement with Oceanic art stems from her previous experience teaching in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and she is interested in exploring further the growth of contemporary art in Micronesia.

ANGELA T HOPPE-CRUZ

Angela T Hoppe-Cruz is Chamoru and was born and raised on Guam; she currently resides in Mākaha, O‘ahu. In 2001, she received a bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Hawai‘i Pacific University, and is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Pacific Islands studies and social work. A social justice advocate, Angela intends to use her education as a tool to address issues relating to violence, specifically violence against women in the Micronesian community and other minority groups.

ANDY LELEISI‘UAO

Andy Leleisi‘ua is a New Zealand–based artist. Early in his career he used his art to address social and political issues affecting Samoans living in New Zealand. His current work is exploring and developing a more enigmatic cast of imageries and themes. He is represented by Whitespace art gallery in Auckland, New Zealand, and BCA Gallery in Rarotonga, Cook Islands.

LUFI A MATĀ’AFA LUTERU

Welina mai ke aloha kākou e nā kini o ka pae ‘āina ‘o Hawai‘i a i Moananuiākea! ‘O au ka pulapula ‘o Hawai‘i a ‘o Sāmoa nō ho‘i. Greetings to all of my brothers and sisters of Moananuiākea! I am Lufi A Matā’afa Luteru, a single parent, ‘Ōiwi artisan, and graduate student at Hawai‘i‘unuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge at Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies.

SCOTT WILLIAM MACKAY

My name is Scott William Mackay and I hail from Wellington, Aotearoa/New Zealand, where I recently completed my honors year in Pacific Studies at Victoria University, Wellington. I currently reside in Melbourne, Australia, where I am pursuing a master’s degree in cultural studies at the University of Melbourne. As part of my academic research, I focus on indigenous musicians and activism in the Pacific. My interests lie within the realms of indigenous cultures, music, human rights, artistic expression, activism, and education.

B PUALANI LINCOLN MAIELUA

I am from the uplands of ka ua kīpuʻupuʻu, Waimea, Hawai‘i, and currently reside in Kahaluʻu, O‘ahu. I am currently completing graduate school at Hawaiʻi‘unuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge at Kamakakūokalani Center for
Hawaiian Studies. My two focuses of study—mālama ‘āina (resource management), and hālau o kaka (visual arts)—allow me to draw from my experience on the ocean as a voyager on the vessels Makali‘i, Alingano Maisu, and Kānehīnāmoku, and express myself visually. This article stems from an assignment I completed in Hawaiian studies 620, titled “‘Ike Pono.” I would like to encourage all peoples to find their ancestral place names and use them!

Makanani Parker
Makanani Parker was born on the island of O‘ahu and grew up in Maunalua and Kuli‘ou‘ou. She received her undergraduate degree from the Academy of Art in California, and has since returned home to complete her graduate studies at Hawai‘inui‘kea School of Hawaiian Knowledge at Kamakahonokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies. Makanani’s academic work focuses on the articulation of Hawai‘i’s history through the cultural arts and Hawaiian language. She continues to make Kailua, O‘ahu, her long-term place of residence.

Tafea Polamalu
Tafea Polamalu earned his MA in Pacific Islands studies from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in 2009. As part of his thesis, Tafea explored the politics of identity through interdisciplinary modes of art, including poetry, fiction, and painting. He plans to pursue a PhD in interdisciplinary studies and, in the process, intends to film a documentary that investigates different levels of sustainable living in various Samoan communities in Sāmoa and Hawai‘i. Tafea was born and raised in Oregon and has ancestral ties to Ta‘u in the Manu‘a archipelago of Sāmoa. He is the proud father of two daughters.

Craig Santos Perez
Craig Santos Perez, a native Chamoru from Guåhan (Guam), is the author of the poetry collection from unincorporated territory [hacha] (Tinfish Press, 2008), and co-founder of Achiote Press. He received an MFA in creative writing from the University of San Francisco, and is currently pursuing a PhD in comparative ethnic studies at the University of California, Berkeley, where he studies Native Oceania and Native America literature and theory.

Bernida Webb-Binder
Bernida Webb-Binder is currently a PhD student at Cornell University in the Department of History of Art and Visual Studies. She holds a Master of Literature in English from the University of Auckland and a Master of Arts in art history with a concentration in museum studies from the University of Denver; both degrees were completed under the auspices of a Fulbright grant. Building on her prior research in New Zealand, she is currently exploring the work of contemporary Pacific artists living in the United States.
GRAEME WHIMP

Graeme Whimp is a Pākehā New Zealander, originally from the north of the country. For most of his adult life he has been a trade union activist, official, and educator. More recently he has completed a BA in musicology and Pacific studies, a BA (Honors) in art history, history, and Pacific studies, and an MA in Pacific studies at Victoria University, Wellington. His writings on a range of Pacific-related subjects have appeared in a variety of peer-reviewed publications, including *The Contemporary Pacific* and the *Journal of New Zealand Studies*. His present research interests include Pacific studies as a field of study and the analysis of colonial representations. He is currently a PhD candidate in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the Australian National University.

JULIA WIEETING

Originally from Chicago, Julia Wieting made her way first to Scotland, and then to Hawai‘i, where she graduated with a BA in interdisciplinary studies (linguistics) with an emphasis on language use in the Pacific from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. She is currently pursuing an MA in linguistics, also at UH Mānoa. Julia’s experience of being transplanted to wildly different locations has fostered in her an abiding interest in the vagaries of language, and in the boundaries of cultural perception. She hopes her poems express her fascination with the Pacific as a place of meeting, and as a place of departure.

JAMES PEREZ VIERNES

James Perez Viernes completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in English with an emphasis on literature at the University of Guam. After having worked in both the private and government sectors for several years on Guam, Viernes completed a Master of Arts degree in Pacific Islands studies at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Pacific Islands history, also at UH Mānoa. James’s professional and research interests include US military colonialism, the politics of historic preservation, the relationship between history and memory, and oral history in the Pacific.
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