Car(ry)ing Tongan:
Ideologies from Tongan Punake on Language, Land, and Tauhi Vā

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Tapu mo e ‘Otua ‘oku ‘afio ‘i he Langí
Mo e kānaka Maoli ‘o Hāloanakalaukapalilī
Pea tapu mo mānoa Malo‘o mo Kahalaopuna
Pea mo Kauakuahine, pea mo Kahaukaní,

Fakaʻapaʻapa makehe ki sīʻeku faʻē ohī
Nanuma Lavulavu ko e ʻuluakī
Mo ʻene fānau moʻui mateakī
Sungalu, ʻEtuate, mo Siakī

Tulou atu ki he kau faiako ʻo Kulanuí
Palōfesa Alex Mawyer,
Palōfesa Yuko Otsuka,
Palōfesa Lisa Uperesa,
Mo Palōfesa Tēvita ʻŌ. Kaʻilī

Fakamālō, hounga moʻoni, mo e ʻofa lahi
Ki sīʻoku ʻofaʻanga ko Adaure Ezinne Tāsoní
Sīʻene touʻanga mo kikītakī
ʻO taufonua ai sīʻeku ako fakaʻatamaʻi
ʻOfa lahi atu ki sīʻoku fanga kiʻi ʻuhikī
Tauange ke mou kumuni e tala mei tuaʻi
Fakamālō

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To Nanuma, you shared your heart and your love with me to pull me up when I was down. There are not words to express my feelings to you and what you gave me is beyond compare. I look forward to seeing you again as you wait for me above. I dedicate this work to you. 'Ofa lahi atu.
Abstract

This thesis examines the heritage language of the Kingdom of Tonga and Tonga’s traditional orators, the Punake. The Punake have been identified as a special class of orators and poets whose language practices and language ideologies illuminate the state of traditional and contemporary Tongan. The three chapters of this work explain and clarify who the Punake are, their history, the roles they play within Tongan society, and especially their language practices, and document the self reflections of the Punake, their role in Tongan culture, language, and society, and thereby identify and interpret their language ideologies. With specific attention to borrowing, tauhi vā, and the concepts of tuʻufonua and fakafonua, this thesis argues that punake are carrying the Tongan language forward into the future as they are caring for Tonga and Tongan language through certain language ideologies connected to the land and the speech practices that correspond to that and are motivated by them. In this thesis my goal is to identify, describe, and begin to think with the language ideologies of the punake and suggest the centrality and importance they have played and could continue to play in preserving Tongan language use for future generations. This work contributes to a better understanding of the Punake, Tongan language, Tongan culture, the patters and currents of language change, and the dynamic challenges facing communities across all of Oceania. By highlighting traditional poetics and poetic ideology, this work brings attention to the centrality of Tongan poetics established by ‘Okusitino Māhina, ‘I. Futa Helu, and Queen Sālote. In a real and tangible way, this work explores traditional language use in the context of a changing Tongan language and society.
A poetic message from Sisiʻuno Helu

Kuo uho kuo aká
Tala ‘a Maui, mo Tangaloá.

Ne fakahifo ha Fonuá,
Ne fakahifo ha Koloá.

Tukutala, mei Langí
Fatu ‘anga ‘o laló nií.

‘Io, ‘a e kakalá
‘A e kie hingoá
Fola ke mätā
‘E he fofonga e La‘ā

Te u fiefiá
Te u hākahakā
Te u kalangā
He Lea Tukufonuá

“Fakafeta‘i ʻoku kei no'o e Hifofuá
Kei lolololo hono tohoʻangā.”

Fakafeta‘i e afuhia ‘i Hakautapú
ʻO melo ai e hiku e laumanu maʻā.

Fakafeta‘i ʻoku tuʻu ‘a Fangatapú
Kei fisí hina hono peau maʻā.”

Ka ʻoku langa hoku mafú
Ke ‘oua te ke ‘ave aū

ʻOua te ke toʻo e lea mei hoku ngutú
Ko e lea ne fafanga ‘aki au ʻe Loʻaū
Ko e lea ne faʻo he hui tuʻa eku fanga kuí
Ko e lea ne fakamohemoheʻaki au heʻeku puké.

Tuku au ke u kailá
Tuku au ke u tengihia
Tuku au ke u toʻé
He ko e lea pē ia te u ʻiló
Ko e lea pē ia te ne kafu au ‘i faʻitokā

Sisiʻuno Helu
April 2016.¹

¹ Composed specifically for this thesis 26 April, 2016. The English translation has been left out intentionally to magnify Sisiʻuono’s central point.
Introduction

Tongan is undergoing language shift and change due to the influence of English, but is this indicative of the loss of being Tongan? This concern has been addressed by Yuko Otsuka in her article “Making a Case for Tongan as an Endangered Language.” The issue is however, that Tongan is indeed changing, and it does not carry the same markings that other endangered languages provide, its positionality is not primarily or perfectly healthy. Yuko Otsuka asked if this is “The Impoverishment of the Indigenous Language.”

ʻOkusitino Māhina, when writing about the “strictly poetic” nature of Tongan and the invasion of lea ohi (borrowed words) says, “The specific changes in Tongan language mirror a broader transfiguration of Tongan society, culture and history, informed mainly by the Western...which transform the Tongan cyclical arrangement of time and space into a state of linearity.”

In this work, I examine a specific and special class of Tongan speakers, the punake who play a broadly recognized formal social role in mediating Tongan language practices. I argue that by attending to the speech practices of punake and their language ideologies—their beliefs and thoughts about speech practices—this thesis contributes to

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3 Tongan words throughout this thesis are not italicized. This is done for two reasons: 1) Tongan is a regional language of a sovereign state and therefore does not need to be. But most importantly; 2) I consider Tongan to be on the same intellectual level as English. Bringing special attention to Tongan language by using italics in an English academic space, imperialistically depreciates the language and defeats a key point of this thesis.

understanding and responding to issues of language shift, language change, and the risks of language loss in the Kingdom of Tonga.

I have noticed that there is an ever growing quantity of English words being implemented into lea faka-Tonga (Tongan), words that are being “Tonganized” as explained by Māhina, instead of speaking words that are rooted in the land, or lea tuʻufonua. Is the result of this imposition, this language shift, this language change, a stripping away of native thought, concepts, ideas, and the connection that lea faka-Tonga has to the fonua? Do these lea ohi prevent lea faka-Tonga from being tuʻufonua, rooted in the land? Tonga is subject to the global forces of the modern world, but is Tonga a passive victim? I believe Tonga to be an agent and I do not wish to make the mistake of stating that outside influence, culture, or even Christianity is so powerful that it overwrites Tonga’s human will, their freedom, or their agency.

Having said that, maybe a more heartfelt question would be, with so much English invading the Tongan language space, is English affecting the relationship Tongans have with the fonua? ‘Anapesi and Tēvita Kaʻili asked, “Can We Become Tongan Without Speaking Tongan?” Their article is not directly connected to the topic of borrowing, and seems to be more focused on the concept of identity. However, the subject does beg to be evaluated concerning the relations one has to land, if one values that relationship as being a paramount pillar to being Tongan. Does the use of lea ohi within lea faka-

5 Ibid.
6 Tuʻufonua can describe a native person of Tonga but when lea is attached to it the meaning changes to being a language rooted in the land (speak as if rooted in the land).
Tonga take away from one connecting to and rooting themselves in Tonga as they may suggest?

I am not alone in my concern with the current position of contemporary lea faka-Tonga, in addition to Māhina and the Kaʻili siblings, the former minister of education in Tonga, ‘Ana Taufeʻulungaki too has voiced concern over English becoming what she calls the “great equalizer.” She believes that the layered ways of talking (WOT)⁹ that run parallel with the layers of Tongan Society, are being diminished by Tongans speaking less Tongan.¹⁰ Furthermore, the late Tupou Pulu expressed care and frustration when she said, “We’re losing Tongan because we are letting go of the things that used to be a part of us...the Tongan children of today have a limited vocabulary in their native language, with words being borrowed from English for which Tongan has almost perfect equivalents.”¹¹

Aside from the idea of borrowing, there is additional concern with Tongan shifting toward a grammatical structure patterned after English. Māhina elaborates that this “is evident in the Tongan language. On the abstract level, there has been an unconscious shift in the Tongan language, where the sentence structure has been slowly but surely moved towards the syntax of the English language.”¹² Eric B. Shumway, also noted similar phenomena during the early construction and teaching of his “Intensive Course in Tongan” book while providing Tongan language education for American Peace Corps

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volunteers on the island of Molokaʻi, Hawaiʻi. Shumway, vastly considered to be an exceptional Tongan orator, even by Princess Sālote Mafieʻo Pilolevu Tuita and the Hon. Māʻulupekotofa Tuita, was given the hingoa matāpule (oratory title): Faivaola, for his Tongan linguistic achievements and his ability to be a master of ceremonies. In the film, The Punake of Tonga, an older native Tongan gentleman approached Shumway during one of these classes and suggested that he instruct the lessons and the Tongan language in the manner Tongan ought to be spoken and not the way people currently speak it. The gentlemen who goes unnamed in the film, shares with Shumway an inspirational comment on Tongan language, culture, and identity:

“Remember that our oral culture is the last and greatest spiritual heritage we have, it is our legacy from the past, the way we identify with our forebears. Our spoken language is the only medium that fully and genuinely expresses ourselves, our souls, our wisdom of the ages. If our language deteriorates then our uniqueness and identity as a people deteriorate. When our language is gone, then we as a people will be gone.”

Language is a severely crucial tool for humanity, and debatably more so in Oceania, which is an oratorical region that favors and privileges oratory and has only

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14 This is an important distinction as a hingoa matāpule is different than a chiefly title, hingoa ʻeiki.

15 Shumway, Eric B. The Punake of Tonga, Lāʻie, Hawaiʻi: Brigham Young University – Hawaiʻi Campus. VHS, 26 min. Released as a videocassette: [Laie, Hawaii]: BYU-Hawaiʻi Campus, [1994].

16 Tangataʻifonua and tuʻufonua are ways of saying indigenous or native in Tongan. The more commonly used word is tangataʻi fonua (human in/on/of the land). Tuʻufonua is significant as it creates a poetic and metaphorical interpretation of this, as tuʻu means to be firmly established, or more poetically, rooted.

17 Shumway, Eric B. The Punake of Tonga.
recently (historically speaking) begun experiencing the linguistic effects of colonialism. The languages that we speak shape our perception of the world, and do so by embedding specific histories and local perceptions within them; therefore, our language strongly influences our experience of that world. Tonga’s punake are the bearers and guardians of these histories and perceptions. It was the punake that the chief Tukuʻaho called upon to assist him in the creation of the dance, lakalaka. He sought after punake, as only the punake could simultaneously compose poetry and carry the Tongan language into physical actions involving the hands and feet.\textsuperscript{18}

In the era after regular and continued contact with Europeans and the Americas, scholars working in Oceania have undertaken pioneering work on the compact and complex interconnections among linguistic form and material exchange. Additionally, Oceanic societies exhibit enormous diversity in language varieties, practices, and ideologies, even across small speech communities. Small speech communities often experience sociolinguistic change at an accelerated rate, with transformation depending on innovations and strategic language choices on the part of fewer individuals.

Miki Makihara’s research suggests that there is danger in having what she calls “puristic styles” by which speakers are actively engaged in purposefully purging the heritage language of foreign words. But Makihara is still worrisome about the consequences of borrowing. Puristic styles may force puristic standards and devalue internal language developments that naturally occur in language due to both internal and external forces. Puristic styles may also create ethnolinguistic boundaries between native peoples.

This thesis contributes to the greater conversations involving the dialogue(s) of identity, culture, and language. Metaphorically speaking, has the Tongan language sailed or navigated off course? Is it unnatural to speak lea faka-Tonga without the use of lea ohi? Has it become unnatural to speak Tongan void of any English elements? Should lea faka-Tonga return to a puristic style of speech similar to that spoken of by Makihara in Rapa Nui?

Part of what makes language such a challenging topic of research and discussion is its inherent ability to simultaneously ostracize and embrace. Language has stood as a symbol of identity for time immemorial, and consequently has been the quintessential tool of cultural genocide, for example the Hebrew story about and term, Shibboleth.  

This creates a unique and exceedingly difficult situation. The first question that comes to my mind is: How does one appease the demands of the Western educational system of writing in a language and manner initially intended to separate the “educated” from the “other”? More importantly however, is the second question: Can the first question be answered with the invocation of indigenous epistemologies, or the use of indigenous cultural ideologies?

This thesis is about lea faka-Tonga, the native tongue of the Kingdom of Tonga. As noted earlier, lea faka-Tonga is considered by some to be an endangered language. This argument, according to Otsuka, hinges on politics, economics, education, and media influence, specifically a “serious lack of entertainment programs and literature in

\[19\] See the Book of Judges Chapter 12. Holy Bible.

\[20\] The term endangered may be considered an exaggeration by linguists as the term “endangered” has a specific definition for which Tonga does not specifically fit the profile of.
Tongan.” These factors are viable, but to speak of these contributing factors to the Tongan community can be challenging. This is not to diminish the actualities associated with such factors, this is simply proposed as a suggestion that in order to make an impact on the Tongan community, specifically those in Tonga, one must do so from a Tongan perspective. By “Tongan perspective,” I do not suggest using genealogy, but Tongan epistemology. Using Tongan epistemology is consequential, as epistemology often differentiates from opinionated belief and does so from the source of indigenous truth, from the cultural context.

This paper investigates through the study of language use, how lea faka-Tonga is facing a difficult future. Further, I explored lea faka-Tonga through the Tongan cultural concept of tauhi vā, traditionally referred to as tauhi vaha’a, to look into the changes that occur in lea faka-Tonga though ngaahi lea ohi (borrowed words). Tauhi vā is the practice of maintaining and caring for the space between individuals or entities. Using tauhi vā, I researched if this relationship exists in Tongan and whether and how it can be maintained between lea faka-Tonga and the fonua. What I found was that the answers resided with the punake of Tonga.

Fonua in Tonga is defined as land, but also, the land and its people, the physical and sociocultural environment. This concept of “the land and its people” is further established in the word fonua, as fonua is also defined as the placenta and the afterbirth. A specific form of tauhi vā is tauhi fonua. Faikava, and the use of language in faikava, is often referred to as tauhi fonua, caring for the land. But the language of faikava is also

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22 The difference between these two variations is vā is simply the distance between. But vaha’a is the intervening of space and time. See Churchward and Māhina.
referred to as pukepuke fonua, to retain, maintain, and keep hold of (both literally and figuratively), the land. These contributions will come through data that will support the concerns already established by Tongan philosopher and punake ‘I. Futa Helu, anthropologists ‘Okusitino Māhina and Tēvita ‘Ō. Ka‘ili, and linguists Melenaite Taumoefolau and Yuko Otsuka, and others whose work has provided the foundation for this thesis.

Inspiration for this Thesis

I have many stories relating to Oceania, Tonga, and lea faka-Tonga; but I do not have a single story for this place. Like Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie, I offer words of caution to the reader; to insist that the stories that I will undoubtedly share as inspiration for this thesis are the only stories that make me who I am, is to diminish my experience and ignore the many other experiences that I have had, but choose not to share with you, because collectively, they have formed me into who I am today.23 You see, the problem is, single stories create stereotypes and are indeed incomplete and focus on that one story being the only story. So if you are one to stereotype and pigeon hole individuals into particular categories, indeed, based on a single story, then I say that this story is not for you.

I begin by explaining the name on the first page of this paper: Kāfakafa. Kāfakafa is the name given me by Maui Tāvā He Akó,24 who I am honored to have on my committee. Its meaning can be translated as great, immense or colossal; similar to the

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24 Tēvita ‘Ō, Ka‘ili.
Celtic definition of Brian (high, noble). But Kāfakafa contains the word kafa (sennit), the cord that binds the ta'ovala (waistmat) to the body. This is symbolic, as the wearer of the ta'ovala\(^{25}\) (that is made from the fonua), wraps themselves in Tonga, and is nono’o (tied) to the body by the kafa; being secured to Tonga at all times. By acknowledging the use of Kāfakafa, I imagine myself being bound to Tonga, no matter where I go.

Kāfakafa was given to me after I created keyboard layouts for lea faka-Tonga on both Apple and Windows operating systems.\(^{26}\) The keyboards allow easy access and use of the standardized diacritics associated with lea faka-Tonga; the toloi (¯), the fakau’a (‘), and the fakamamafa paú (‘). In Tonga there are people who know a great deal about language, but they typically do not know the same about technology, and those who know a great deal about technology, often do not know a great deal about language. The keyboards have therefore acted as the kafa and have kept the two sides bound together in technology. I am honored to have the name Kāfakafa and even more honored to have someone feel I am worthy of such a name. I strive to fulfill its meaning and strive to have Tonga nono’o to me at all times and throughout this thesis.

Without going into great detail, I left home at a young age due to unhealthy living conditions and abusive atmospheres. Shelter was taken at my brother Kafea Sungalu Lavulavu and Etuate Lavulavu’s home. These brothers, are not “brothers” as understood by the current comprehension of the term in America. Furthermore, I will not call them my “Tongan Brothers” either, as many might expect me to do. For such a statement would create a division between us and our kāinga (familial relationship) and our

\(^{25}\) Ta'ovala are also referred to as the fonua.

\(^{26}\) See [http://oceanicorthography.com](http://oceanicorthography.com) for downloadable keyboards.
hohoko (genealogy), and I will not do that, they are my brothers and no other definition is necessary. I use the word hohoko for the purpose being that I believe genealogy to not exclusively be defined as blood, and my brothers and I have a shared genealogy. Although primarily genealogy traces ones blood lines of ancestral descent, I believe genealogy to be inclusive of experience as well, even education. There is an intellectual genealogy involved, what I have learned and what has become my story and my knowledge, has come from a personal tupuʻanga (source). This tupuʻanga, was the birthplace of my learning. Naʻe pusiakiʻi au ʻe he kāinga Lavulavu mei he Vavaʻu, and Samuela Sungalu and Nanuma Kiloamanu Lolohea Lavulavu became my parents with Sifa, Seini, Samu, ‘Etu, Isi, Siaki, Saane, Pine, Jr., and Kafea becoming my brothers and sisters, and will be for as long as Tangaloa permits.

Growing and learning under their supervision and care, I was taught anga faka-Tonga (the way of doing that which is culturally Tongan). Samuela taught me how to work hard and play hard simultaneously, always reminding me to laugh. He took me to ʻiate, pouring concrete, working stucco, and additional various activities that called out to those ancestors who constructed the Haʻamonga. Nanuma taught me compassion and care. Additionally, Nanuma taught me the importance of language and expression. She taught me that expression can lead to relationships and in relationships you must tauhi vā, always talking care of those you have cared for and those that care for you, creating a continuous cycle of reciprocity that continues through multiple generations, looking forward by looking back; what I learned is beyond measure and I am eternally grateful.

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This is the famous prehistoric trilithon between Kolonga and Niutoua on Tongatapu island.
This was the 1990’s, and unless one lived in an area heavily populated by overseas Tongans i.e. Lāʻie, Hawai‘i; Oakland, California; or Salt Lake City, Utah, chances are the only “Tongan” that people were aware of, was Vai Sikahema, the two time NFL Pro Bowler and News Reporter, or the pop music group The Jets. It may be cliché to say, but I fell in love with anga faka-Tonga, and by extension lea faka-Tonga, it was the closest thing to Hawaiian that I had direct access to, who would not be captivated? I felt as if I was connecting with that part of me that was buried, dying to come out.

In the pre-adult stages of my life, I could care less if anyone else knew anything about anga faka-Tonga, what it was, or where it came from. In other words, I was not proclaiming to the world the beauty of the language and culture, nor was I concerned with its preservation or promulgation. Simply put, it was just a part of me; you could take it or leave it. I often encouraged Kafea and ‘Etu and our families to help me learn, and to speak to me as often as they could, regardless of my comprehension skills of the time. I regularly attended what one would refer to as Tongan ceremonies: funerals, birthdays, church, weddings, putu, and all things recognized as being “culturally Tongan.”

As I aged and entered a career in the world of retail, I moved all over the continental United States. Communication between us was thin, but reciprocity continued, we practiced the art of tauhi vā (to preserve [care for] the relationship and distance [space] between). When in places far removed from anything Tongan, the internet offered a place of solace for me, as I could email, chat, and even buy music. I

28 I have Hawaiian genealogy on my maternal side. Our family mo‘olelo explains that my hapa haole grandmother was adopted at birth into a white American family. The culture and language tied to my grandmothers blood-line was never passed onto any of her children and consequently, her grandchildren as well. Anga faka-Tonga provided me with a cultural, rooted connection that I felt had been missing from my person since birth.
was in New York for a large part of this displaced time, and Tongan functions were nonexistent. I could however visit websites the likes of polycafe.com (now non-existent), which was a great place stay in touch, amazon.com however, became a favorite. It was there that I could get the numerous resources I felt I needed to stay connected when not speaking on the phone; i.e. language books, dictionaries, CDs etc.

Eventually, I decided that I had had enough of the distance and needed to re-connect, but this time in Oceania. I began college in Troy, NY with full intent of transferring to Hawai‘i. Always mindful of my Hawaiian genealogy, Hawai‘i was the perfect place for me to go. In Hawai‘i I would have the chance at delving deeper, by taking Hawaiian cultural classes for both the ‘āina (land) and the kai (sea), and I could also study lea faka-Tonga. I received a degree in Pacific Islands Studies with a language completion in lea faka-Tonga. My ongo faiako lea faka-Tonga were Mele Ongoongotau and Tēvita ‘Ōsoni Kaʻili (Maui Tāvā He Akó).

Their guidance combined with studying my ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i roots, side by side with lea faka-Tonga, allowed me to develop an even greater appreciation for lea faka-Tonga and all Oceanic languages, including the critical topics of language loss, and language revitalization. In 2010, through my capstone paper, “Oceanic Orthography: A Resistance to Linguistic Imperialism”, and with the assistance of my capstone mentor, Tēvita ‘Ō. Kaʻili, I was inspired to actively do something for the languages and the orthographic representation issues in Oceania. Having genealogy from Ireland, Scotland, Scandinavia, and Hawai‘i, I am aware of the consequences of linguistic imperialism, as many of my bloodlines are currently fighting linguistically to survive; with Irish Gaelic
having approximately 130,000 native speakers remaining,\textsuperscript{29} Scottish Gaelic having 57,000,\textsuperscript{30} and ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i having 24,000 native speakers.\textsuperscript{31} I unequivocally and without exception, support indigenous peoples, indigenous languages, and the use of heritage languages in a contemporary society.

Vitality

I believe the work in this thesis to be vital. It explores the established relationship between language, culture, and land, and how these relationships are expressed and nurtured by the punake. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o speaks of a similar relationship in Africa, “Culture is almost indistinguishable from the language that makes possible its genesis, growth, banking, articulation and indeed its transmission from one generation to the next.”\textsuperscript{32} I believe that when people disregard the relation their language has to the land, a slow erosion of the language begins, and I believe that when a language begins to erode, a culture begins to erode, when a culture erodes, a people erode, and when a people erode... well, the rest becomes history and people often think about what could have been done.

K. David Harrison mentions such relations to land in his book “When Languages Die,” “Languages like Carrier, Nivkhm and Squamish each force a speaker to pay attention to some particular aspect of the world around them and then encode this

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{2011Census} 2011 Census of Scotland, Table QS211SC.
\bibitem{USCensus} U.S. Census (April 2010). “Table 1. Detailed Languages Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over for the United States: 2006-2008” retrieved at \url{http://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/language/data/other/detailed-lang-tables.xls}
\end{thebibliography}
information in the grammar of everyday talk.”  

Furthermore, when speaking of new words, he implies that, “they do not reflect hundreds or thousands of years of adaptation to a particular ecological niche, nor the accumulation of wisdom.”  

This relationship between language, culture, and land can be summed up once again by Ngũgĩ as he states that, “Language carries culture, and culture carries...the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world”...“language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world.”  

Tonga took it upon themselves to carry their culture into the translation of the Bible beginning in 1844 and concluding in 1962. Tongans, using their agency, domesticated the Bible. As a Christian, like the majority of Tonga, I take a moment to reflect on a passage related to that agency, Koe Tohi A Isaia XXIX, 13 reads:

“koe mea i he unuunu mai ae kakai ni kiate au aki ho nau gutu, bea fakaabaaba kiate au aki ho nau lougutu, ka kuo nau manavahe kiate au oku tubu ia mei he gaahi fekau ae tangata be.”  

**English Translation**

“Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men.”

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34 Ibid, 115.

35 wa Thiong’o, *Decolonizing the Mind The Politics of Language in African Literature*, 16.

This passage has fueled my passion for language, language loss, and lea faka-Tonga and contributed to language becoming the center of my studies. This scripture is subtle. Thus, to provide context, one notes that this scripture describes how the Savior rose up in righteous anger against hypocrites such as the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees—those who tried to appear righteous in order to win the praise, influence, and wealth of the world, all the while oppressing the people they should have been blessing. At the same time, it describes how the Savior was understanding and compassionate with sinners whose hearts were humble and sincere.

Echoing this scripture, I would ask, are Tonganized words far from the heart of the land, even though they sound Tongan? Are Tongan speakers drawing near to it [by making it sound Tongan] with lips as the scripture suggests? Are Tongan speakers attempting to win the praise, influence, and wealth of the world, all the while oppressing their indigenous language? If so, then this thesis seeks to give back to Tonga, and allow the language to draw near to the land once again and lea tuʻufonua. How much of this language shift is primarily related to agency? Are speakers of lea faka-Tonga intentionally choosing transliterations rather than choosing to create new words?

Through this research I turn to the punake for such answers, and discover that when one practices tauhi vā with the language by using lea tupuʻi, or creating Tongan words, not simply pronouncing foreign concepts or objects with a Tongan accent, one strengthens and maintains their relationship with the fonua. This allows all speakers to see that Tongan is caring for them as they care for Tongan by carrying Tongan through the use of lea faka-Tonga. I anticipate building anga faka-Tonga from a Tongan cultural
lens rather than through a Western one, and do so through the words and thoughts of punake.

In this thesis I distinguish the relationship between the punake of Tonga, borrowing and neologisms, and other more enduring features of Tongan. This creates an understanding of the role that fonua plays within lea faka-Tonga through the cultural practice of tauhi vā that allows one to lea tu'ufonua. This is imperative to not only understand the life of the punake, but the role that lea faka-Tonga plays in daily life and what lea faka-Tonga does for puake, Tongans, and Tongan speakers.

Carrying Organization

This thesis is comprised of three principal chapters with the expectation of generating Tongan epistemological comprehension and appreciation. This thesis exhibits the title Car(ry)ing. This intentional parenthetic amalgamation carries double meanings of both the words Caring and Carrying, which are featured regularly throughout. The first of these chapters is titled Car(ry)ing Language, which analyzes the challenges facing endangered languages throughout Oceania and the world by centering around borrowed words. This chapter is establishes a baseline by identifying and evaluating language shift and language change within lea faka-Tonga. Furthermore, by exploring the dimensions of lexical analysis, I believe I can support the discussion of how one might maintain the Tongan language when faced with endangerment and or loss, including the application of Tongan epistemological guidance provided by the punake.

Punake, Fonua, & Tauhi Vā explores the varying forms of Tongan poetics practiced by the punake of Tonga. But more than that, this section explores the punake of Tonga
as both historians and as a social conscience for the people and investigate the roles of punake as guardians, purveyors, and preservers of language and the oral culture of Tonga. The relationship that nature and fonua has to the words, songs, and actions created by the punake becomes an underlying foundation throughout the chapter, and is orchestrated to encourage the reader to consider the role tauhi vā plays in this relationship to nature though language.

*Punake Epistemologies & Ideologies* contains the voices of three punake from the town Nukuʻalofa on the island Tongatapu and the island group of Vavaʻu that contain the why and how language is used in Tonga, including what it means to use lea fakafonua Tonga. This chapter hinges on punake voicing their ideologies and their indigenous theory of knowledge and their methods that lend voices to the concepts of lea fakafonua and lea tuʻufonua. Through the process of interviews, the punake in this chapter explore the use and influence of lea ohi and I examine how language not only ties one to their heritage land, but how one is indeed rooted to it. As a result, this chapter includes discussions of identity, politics, education, and how language defines Tonga.

It is with these three chapters that I achieve what I sought out: to examine and consider the influence of English into lea faka-Tonga. By exploring the process of word borrowing in contemporary Tongan, speaking with punake directly, this thesis explores the centrality of tuʻufonua and the practices of the punake who are the cultural forbearers of lea faka-Tonga and lead Tongan thought, culture and speech. Tongan philosophy, epistemology, and ontology are essential to *Car(ry)ing Tongan*. I hope this work will honor Tonga and the fonua by not centering on the works of Western academics, but be in constant conversations with Tongan scholars.
Chapter 1 – Car(ry)ing Language

I begin this chapter with thoughts from Kenyan writer and novelist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o found in his ground breaking work “Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature,” which has contributed dramatically to the studies and relationships between language and culture. wa Thiong’o notes:

“The oppressed and the exploited of the earth maintain their defiance: liberty from theft. But the biggest weapon wielded and actually daily unleashed by imperialism against that collective defiance is the cultural bomb. The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people’s belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves; for instance, with other peoples’ languages rather than their own.”

Unpacking this deep statement by wa Thiong’o, in his first point we see that he is suggesting that as a result of a country’s focus on maintaining an active defiance against colonialism and the theft of native home lands, domestic speakers consequentially subject themselves to the influence and beliefs that their native tongue and culture offer nothing but an economically hopeless wasteland. wa Thiong’o goes on to say that,

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37 wa Thiong’o, Decolonizing the Mind The Politics of Language in African Literature, 3.
“It makes them identify with that which is decadent and reactionary, all those forces which would stop their own springs of life. It even plants serious doubts about the moral rightness of struggle. Possibilities of triumph or victory are seen as remote, ridiculous dreams. The intended results are despair, despondency and a collective death-wish. Amidst this wasteland which it has created, imperialism presents itself as the cure and demands that the dependant sing hymns of praise with the constant refrain: ‘Theft is holy’.” 38

In this his second point, such cultural bombs cause significant cultural decline and bring about unprogressive leadership and stagnant sense of self worth. In the case of Tonga, both his first and the second points seem to be entirely relevant. In this thesis as noted in the introduction, I am attempting to tease out some of these observations in relation to some points that wa Thiong’o has made on politics, language, culture, and society in Kenya. And although his homeland did experience colonization first-hand, whereas Tonga did not, that is not exactly what he is talking about. He is speaking to subterranean forces that sneak in through global capital and additional Western influences. How is it that Tongans in the last decade and presently are being encouraged to not embrace traditional language skills and practices in support of English as a global language. This is an issue that connects the Pacific to the global colonial and post-colonial context.

When compared to their Oceanic counterparts, Tonga has been uncommonly successful, as they have never been formally colonized or overthrown. Tonga is a

38 Ibid.
sovereign independent nation, one of the few remaining non-colonized countries in the world, aside from Thailand, and the last remaining Kingdom in Polynesia. Politically, Tonga is clearly unlike anywhere else in the Pacific, Tonga is a special place. Additionally, The Kingdom of Tonga and its more than 170 islands supports roughly 200,000 native speakers of lea faka-Tonga (Tongan) with Tonga being primarily a proud and strong cultural society.

Once again, this thesis investigates the punake because they seem to be playing the role of language guardians responding to the needs identified by wa Thiong’o. Though Tonga appears to be in a healthy state, culturally and linguistically on the surface of the everyday, below the surface lies political oppression of commoners by the aristocrats (chiefs, nobles, royal family members), combined with mounting political pressure from overseas. Niko Besnier explains that Tonga has been experiencing global actions and systems exerting political influence on Tonga dating back to the 1900 Treaty of Protection when George Tupou II was forced into signing said treaty by a British Representative.39

Such political and economic pressures continue today, from financial institutions such as the World Trade Organization, and the World Bank encouraging, if not pushing Tonga to democratize; these have all contributed in a multitude of ways to the Nuku’alofa riots in 200640 and other signs of historical and contemporary wounds and


40 This brief description is truncated. There were/are indeed far more factors that contributed the riots and to the continuing challenges facing the nation, including the heavy influx of Chinese immigrants, seabed mining, and trash in the Tongan Trench. Please see Niko Besnier, On the Edge of the Global, for further information regarding such challenges and the continuing negotiation of tensions between traditionalism and modernity. More importantly, how the future of Tonga does not just happen, it is shaped by agents of change who actively engage with Tonga while simultaneously pursue local life.
social traumas and tensions. It seems that these events go hand in hand with the discussion started by wa Thiong’o about this contemporary moment where a sovereign island state that has remained independent avoiding colonization, is nevertheless wrapped up in post-colonial abuse, heightening the colonization of the mind, in a place that never was materially colonized.

Although Tonga has 200,000 speakers of Tongan, “Tonga High School and Vava’u High School, which are considered the best schools in the country, have adopted an English only policy, prohibiting the use of Tongan on campus, even outside of the classroom.” The “English only” policies are not limited exclusively to Tonga High and Vava’u High, they stretch to well established religious schools such as Liahona High School in Nuku'alofa and Sainehā High School in Vava’u. Augmenting the challenges of having an “English only” education, many Tongans are utterly convinced that “English is key to success and a brighter future.” Some may chalk such events up to the realities of modern global ebbs and flows, but nonetheless, as a “nation-state,” Tonga is economically dependent with English being the key to a better life. Cathy Small has historicized such ebbs and flows and suggests that Tonga would likely collapse without such continued support of migrants who have voyaged overseas and the remittances they send. But is this the cultural bomb wa Thiong’o referred to? Another African writer, Senegalese author Cheikh Hamidou Kane expressed his concern about Western education:

42 Ibid, 453.
43 Ibid, 452, 455.
“On the Black Continent, one began to understand that their real power resided not at all in the cannons of the first morning but in what followed the cannons. Therefore behind the cannons was the new school. The new school had the nature of both the cannon and the magnet. From the cannon it took the efficiency of a fighting weapon. But better than the cannon it made the conquest permanent. The cannon forces the body and the school fascinates the soul.” 45

This quote focuses on the subterranean influences taking a foothold in Western education and its ability to captivate the mind to the point where one is unable to see the imperialistic nature of it.

Nettle and Romaine explained that about half the known languages of the world have vanished in the last five hundred years, 46 and if one was to look at countries like Australia, the USA or even South Africa, whose regions have been colonized recently by the Europeans in the last few centuries, one will see rapid rates of indigenous language death as a direct result of the impact of English. 47 Unfortunately, the influx of English (among additional outside languages) is not a recent phenomenon in Oceania. Languages of oppressors, colonizers, and imperialists permeate the Oceanic region; English penetrates Papua New Guinea and “American” Sāmoa, French is laden

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45 Quote from Senegalese author and writer, Cheikh Hamidou Kane from his novel L'aventure Ambiguë. (Ambiguous Adventure). This passage was translated for Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o by Bachir Diagne and is found as such in Thiong’o’s, Decolonizing the Mind, page 9.


throughout “French” Polynesia, New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna. Chilean Spanish is piercing, if not carrying away the indigenous language of Rapa Nui (Easter Island).

Generally, there is an understanding that having the knowledge of other languages gives one a far-reaching network of connectedness with the greater diasporic communities that more than often include relatives, spouses, and the extensive networks of friends. This understanding raises someone to the status of being one who “counts” in the greater interconnected world. Unfortunately, this interconnectivity also opens the door to tremendous influence, indeed, from those outside languages. Furthermore, among this sea of influence, often the traditional languages are seen as the enemy of economic development by those advocating for a monolingual society. This includes economists, nationalist governments, and especially “disenfranchised minority parents who want their children to get ahead in the national language and therefore talk to them in whatever scraps of it they can manage.”

It is not uncommon that older generations become extremely proud that their modern children speak in such a prestigious outside language, and quite frequently, this older generation views language shift as an inevitable ticket out of the non-modernized world. In some cases, such feelings are taken to the extreme wherein “some individuals simply decide to take their spurned language to the grave, being so distressed at what has happened to their world that they deem nobody worthy of receiving such a treasure.” Some punake in Tonga recognize the value of their language

48 Evans, Ibid, 9.
49 Evans, Ibid, 213
50 Evans, Ibid, 217
51 Evans, Ibid, 217
and continue to hone their craft, increasing their poetic fervor, and endlessly attempt to care for Tonga by carrying the Tongan language in their work.

Language shift begets language change and language change can be a fast-paced phenomenon that can often occur without knowledge of it actually materializing or understanding the whys and hows of it transpiring. K. David Harrison explains that:

“it is easy to think new words like ‘blog’ or ‘emoticon’ that have come into use just in the last few years. But these kinds of adaptations are fresh, they do not reflect hundreds or thousands of years of adaptation to a particular ecological niche, nor the accumulation of wisdom contained in geographic terms.”

The indigenous knowledge that is embedded in indigenous languages act as exquisite repositories of both the past and the present that essentially become more reliable sources of information than non-indigenous sources do.

According to Nettle and Romaine, it has been demonstrated through sociolinguistic studies of language attitudes that “stereotypes about peoples are projected onto their languages and cultures.” Europeans often dismissed indigenous languages as being primitive and barbaric with whom they regarded the speakers of such languages as uncivilized and that one being linguistically different, condemns the

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Other to being savage.\textsuperscript{55} This is not to say that indigenous communities view themselves as “savages,” for there are a multitude of factors that lie behind and contribute to language change and the change of language consciousness.\textsuperscript{56}

English language use in the Kingdom of Tonga indicates that “many people consider it fashionable to use loanwords instead of indigenous terms. Otsuka argues that gratuitous borrowing should not be taken as direct evidence for language shift, however. It is indirect evidence, suggesting that speakers consider English to be better or ‘cool’ in relation to their indigenous language. Bauman argues that ‘it is their eagerness for assimilation that raises concern.’\textsuperscript{57} This “eagerness” in not indifferent to Rapa Nui, where rapid economic growth combined with an increase of local political and economic control, striving for integration into the national and global economy, is an essential desire.\textsuperscript{58}

But according to Makihara, the significance about this surge into the global economy, is the choice of using the indigenous Rapa Nui language for such topics and settings: “these same participants could have easily carried out the same kind of discussion in monolingual Spanish, and they likely would have done so in the past. But

\textsuperscript{55} {Ibid. They further explain that the word barbarian is derived from the Greek barbarus, meaning "one who babbles." “The Greeks called others barbarians if they could not speak Greek or pronounced it improperly. Even before them, the Aztec people of ancient Mexico called those who could not speak their language savages or mutes. Their own language, however, they called Nahuatl, which means ‘pleasant sounding’.”}


\textsuperscript{57} {Otsuka, Yuko. “Making a Case for Tongan as an Endangered Language,” 461.}

now they are speaking ‘in Rapa Nui’,”\(^{59}\) whereas in Tonga, Parliament is conducted in Tongan and Government conducted in English. The same desire to be both contributor and recipient of the global economy is evident in Papua New Guinea (PNG) where there is a widespread belief indicating that if there was indeed a complete shift to using both Tok Pisin (the local creole) and English by abandoning the use of local indigenous languages, English and Tok Pisin would bring widespread economic gain.\(^{60}\)

One big difference between PNG and Tonga and Rapa Nui is that PNG has numerous indigenous languages that are not mutually intelligible. Thus, within the boundary of a nation state, Tok Pisin (and English) serves as the lingua franca\(^{61}\) of PNG. Also, the situation in Rapa Nui differs from Tonga in that the former is part of a larger nation state (Chile), which is multilingual itself and needs its own lingua franca; and as such, Rapa Nui itself does not have sovereignty.

The Kingdom of Tonga sports Tongan and English as official languages of the nation, and since the arrival of the British and the baptism of King Tāufa'āhau, Siaosi (George) Tupou I, “Tongans have been indoctrinated into believing that the English language is the primary language in which they may obtain power, prestige, and economic well being.”\(^{62}\) And as mentioned previously, English words, or transliterations, have been penetrating Tongan,\(^{63}\) creating an interesting relationship

\(^{59}\) Ibid.

\(^{60}\) Evans, Nicholas. *Dying Words: Endangered Languages and What They Have to Tell Us*, 216.

\(^{61}\) A lingua franca is an adopted common language typically used between a variety of speakers that speak different languages.

\(^{62}\) Ka'ili, 'Anapesi Lakalaka and Tēvita 'Ōsoni Ka'ili. “Can We Become Tongan Without Speaking Tongan?,” 85.

\(^{63}\) Otsuka claims the process has become gratuitous.
with English. “From the time of the Tongans’ first contact with English-speaking people, there has been a need to borrow English words for the new things encountered, such as items of material culture, personal names, and social and religious institutions.”\textsuperscript{64} This act of borrowing creates a problem as it may interfere with or replace language-embedded or dependent indigenous epistemology to define the new things and materials. Generally speaking, languages function the same way as a living organism does. In a personal email, wa Thiong’o explained how language operates in such a manner, “It can swallow any food but in a balanced way. But the organism absorbs the new into itself and ‘homes’ the foreign. If it over-swallows the foreign, it might get constipation and other ills.”\textsuperscript{65} Like all languages, lea faka-Tonga will and has transformed. But the reality is, that “we also experience the deletion of old words from and the addition of new ones to the existing vocabulary.”\textsuperscript{66}

Tonga’s former Minister of Education, Dr. ‘Ana Taufe‘ulungaki, believes that those “fewer” individuals that bring about strategic language choices, are those in the “high class” of Tongan society, “Because the so-called high class of our society is leading the way in not wanting their children to speak Tongan, and if this attitude is not changed, the use of English as the medium of instruction at school will increase and eventually the Tongan language will become only a ceremonial language...If we lose our language, we lose our culture.”\textsuperscript{67} If Tongan does become a ceremonial language,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[65] wa Thiong’o, Personal email communication, March 14, 2014, 7:18 pm.
\item[67] Fonua, Pesi. “‘Ana Taufe‘ulungaki’s Up-hill Battle to Save the Tongan Language,” 11.
\end{footnotes}
knowing that “knowledge and its cultural content is passed on in songs, stories, prayers, and many other ways of speaking,”68 will the ceremonies be invaded with English words? This is a valid question when considering that “for each ceremony or ritual to count as a valid instance of its class, the appropriate form must be rendered in the appropriate way by the appropriate functionary.”69 The punake traditionally would be the ones conducting such ceremonial language practices. It is their work that is flooded with stories and prayers. What if the punake were the instructors at school? Could this increase the use of Tongan in school? The punake are the experts in rendering the appropriate way of using Tongan.

Linguist and Tongan language specialist Yuko Otsuka sees the challenges of widespread English use and indicates that “gratuitous borrowing” of English words occurring in Tongan makes a strong case for Tongan being labeled an endangered language. Otsuka builds on the work of late Tongan linguist Tupou Pulu, who believed that language, whether one accepts it or not, is not simply a method for communication, but “language is your identification”. Pulu stressed that if Tongans were to look beyond the mere matter of words, they would see that the Tongan language was the pathway for younger generations, or any generation for that matter, to comprehending anga faka-Tonga, Tongan culture, and as such, language would instill the sense of one’s true worth70. Furthermore, culture is perpetuated through language,71 and the process of

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71 Ibid, 13.
borrowing contributes to not just language loss but cultural loss as well, “we’re losing Tongan, because we are letting go of the things that used to be a part of us.”

“Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world. How people perceive themselves affects how they look at their culture, at their politics and at the social production of wealth, at their entire relationship to nature and to other beings. Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world.”

According to the views of both Pulu and Thiong’o, language is an essential tool, if not the quintessential tool that humans have, and Tonga traditionally favors and privileges oratory. Specifically, Tonga has privileged the oratorical skills of the punake. Is this a form of essentialism? Tomlinson and Makihara explained that:

“One of the reasons why Oceania has offered rich case studies of the links between language and social life is the central place of talk and oratory in the construction of social life in many Pacific societies, where talk figures prominently in the regulation of social relations, in the formation of group and personal identities, and in negotiations of power and interpersonal and group conflict.”

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72 Ibid, 13.
73 wa Thiong’o, Ngũgĩ. Decolonizing the Mind The Politics of Language in African Literature, 16.
One of the most beautiful characteristics of language, or any language for that matter, is that each language has words for things that other languages just do not have and “most languages divide up and name the world differently from one another.” In other words, language creates a space for expression with oneself, one’s loved ones, and anyone else one choses to come in contact with. Language contributes to one’s identity and the identity of one’s progeny. Moving beyond the typical analysis of the structure and pattern of a language, language shapes and creates ones perception of the world; language in a remarkable, visceral, powerful way, influences ones experience of the world. And on the abstract level, there has been a shift, conscious or unconscious, in lea faka-Tonga:

“The sentence structure has been slowly but surely moved towards the syntax of the English language. The shift from Tongan to English has been from a uniquely verb-subject-object (vso) structure to a predominantly subject-verb-object (svo) syntax. The casual relationships that have been responsible for bringing out this change are many, but those arising powerfully from the Western capitalist democratic culture, and scientific and technological ways of thinking have played a crucial role.”

Māhina believes that this syntactical change is occuring as a direct result of the Western capitalist democratic system and that Tonga has placed this movement as an obligation in Tonga, shifting the reciprocal inclusive life culture to a self-centered one.

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77 Ibid.
In 1991, Dr. ‘Ana Taufe‘ulungaki stressed that the importance of lea faka-Tonga was that “language is what makes a person a complete being, it makes you what you are, it makes a Tongan, a Tongan. To speak Tongan you have to think like a Tongan, and that is something that is installed in your subconscious, it is your culture and heritage, and it is something which you can’t express in any other language.” Taufe‘ulungaki has a sense of anxiety, because in reality, the Tongan language, although still widely spoken, is becoming less used as the medium of instruction at school, and it is rarely used as a language of communication by government, and in commerce. Is she suggesting that people are only partially thinking as Tongans?

In the following section I draw attention to the work of Miki Makihara, whose focus is in a different Pacific Island, and a contrastive context on language ideologies in order to further illuminate the linguistic challenges facing island nations and cultures. Makihara has researched extensively on the indigenous language of Rapa Nui that consequently provides an ample supply of linguistic particulars and the challenges facing an indigenous Oceanic language in the face of modernity, and modernity’s linguistic behemoth. Her work in Rapa Nui chronicles the impact of Chilean Spanish on the indigenous Rapa Nui language and therefore offers great insight by which Tonga and the impact of English can learn from.

It has been estimated that there are between 1000 and 1200 distinct Austronesian languages (including Tongan) and about one sixth of the world’s languages are Austronesian. These Austronesian languages are spoken in Papua New

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78 Fonua, Pesi. “‘Ana Taufe‘ulungaki’s Up-hill Battle to Save the Tongan Language,” 10.
79 Ibid.
Guinea, New Britain and New Ireland, the Melanesian Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, including New Caledonia and Fiji. These languages extend out to include all of the languages of Polynesia and take in all of the languages of Micronesia.\(^8\)

But what is language and culture? Language is a dimension of culture and also at the same time, a carrier of culture. For linguists and linguistic anthropologists, here is what Harrison and Evans say about language and culture. Evans shared that, “One by one, at a quickening tempo, many of the world’s six thousand languages are falling mute and withdrawing from the parliament of tongues.”\(^8\) He explains that at first this is barely noticeable, but eventually a day comes when there are no households left in which a child is taught their indigenous language.\(^8\) Amongst all this loss, and the complexities that are embedded in language, Harrison explained that “language change just happens”\(^8\) and that languages continue to evolve and exist for the purpose of conveying information intended for a specific “cultural matrix.”\(^8\) We see that what they are saying is very similar to what has been previously mentioned, they are just approaching the discourse from a new angle. Here is how many languages there are in the Pacific and here is how many are at risk.

This context provides something of the larger picture. This work is not focused on formal field research in linguistics or anthropology, but stands in the intersection of

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\(^8\) Evans, Nicholas. *Dying Words: Endangered Languages and What They Have to Tell Us*, 207.

\(^8\) Ibid, 211.


\(^8\) Ibid, 205.
language and culture within the social sciences. Often linguists do not focus on culture, they even avoid it. But this thesis argues that language shift can be dealt with if we focus on using indigenous ideologies to combat the loss. Harrison mentions that people often uncontionally change their speech habits, and if this is true, then people can contiously protect their speech habits equally. The punake have done so, albeit facing the influence of English, but have done so noentheless.

Rapa Nui Purism and Syncretism

Contextualizing the research and information about language, culture, identity and the practice of borrowing words, Makihara’s work stands in contrast to Tonga. Makihara believes that there is a new Rapa Nui identity that has emerged out of the syncretism established in the 1970’s and 80’s. Makihara uses the term “syncretism” as a way to refer to the new ways people are speaking Rapa Nui, but additionally uses the term to describe the interactional norm and “practical” consciousness of the language users who allow and expect bilingual simultaneities and demonstrate great accommodation toward speakers of varying bilingual competence and preference.

These “ways”, Makihara documents, emerged during the 1970s and 1980s and these “ways” characterize a substantial amount of contemporary linguistic practice amongst the Rapa Nui speakers, and therefore index the new Rapa Nui ethnic

86 Ibid, 208.
identity." This “new” way of speaking Makihara refers to as Rapa Nui Spanish and “Rapa Nui Spanish is characterized mainly by the inclusion of Rapa Nui lexical items” and that “Rapa Nui have come to view syncretic speech as such a normal way of speaking in informal in-group interactions, that they would find it unnatural or difficult to speak Rapa Nui void of any Spanish elements. Is there a new identity being formed amongst Tongans speaking lea faka-Tonga with the “gratuitous” borrowing of English words eluded to by Otsuka and replacing the perfect Tongan equivalents mentioned by Pulu?

Tonga uses both English and Tongan in its hierarchical political engagements locally, Rapa Nui too has “successfully appropriated Spanish and accommodated Rapa Nui to their political and economic advantage.” Much like Tonga, Rapa Nui looks to Spanish as not only positive, but appropriate, when evaluating the primary language for trade and political legalities, which have dramatically motivated the development of bilingualism. Rapa Nui is part of Chile, where Spanish is the official language (similar

90 Ibid, 731.
91 Lee, Helen Morton. Tongans Overseas: Between Two Shores. Honolulu: U of Hawaii, 2003. She wrote extensively about diasporic Tongans and their experience living outside of Tonga. A healthy amount of Tongans Overseas, looks at the debatable importance of speaking Tongan and the role Tongan plays in the creation and maintenance of a Tongans identity. In the Introduction chapter, she specifically asks “Is knowing the Tongan language that important?” and in the chapter Life Overseas, she provides statistics taken from Melbourne households wherein she “found that for people over the age of five with Tongan ancestry, 26.6 percent spoke only Tongan at home, 24.8 percent spoke only English, and the rest spoke a mixture of the two languages.” This “mixture”, is the same “syncretism” spoken of by Makihara. “English is taught in both primary and secondary schools in Tonga, and the 1996 Tongan census recorded a literacy rate of 98.5 percent, with 72.8 percent of this total literate in both Tongan and English. While literacy should not be confused with linguistic ability, these figures do indicate that most Tongans are arriving overseas with at least some knowledge of English. page 49.
93 Ibid.
to PNG, as a lingua franca to “unify” a linguistically diverse population), and since the 1980s, communication in Spanish has proven to be crucial, especially when considering the numerous attempts Rapa Nui has engaged in since the 1890s to “negotiate for better treatment by the company and later direct appeals with the government to bring a civil administration to the island. Spanish became the language of the public domain and the main instrument of access to material and political resources.”

Although Tonga has not been formally colonized like Rapa Nui, they nonetheless have been eager to participate in the international society and economy in very similar patterns as Rapa Nui. This eagerness, by both Tonga and Rapa Nui has indeed contributed too, if not created a “serious intergenerational gap in language competence,” that is associated with “the beginning of language loss.”

I see this ‘eagerness’ as a by-product of transnational migration, but also something that can be directed and limited. In chapter four, we will hear from one punake in particular about how this ‘eagerness’ of using English, weakens the argument that Tonga has not been colonized.

Makihara’s research additionally covers Rapa Nui speakers not primarily constructing syncretic ways of speaking, but how they furthermore developed what she refers to as a “purist” speech style, by which speakers are actively engaged in intentionally ridding the heritage Rapa Nui language of Spanish words and Spanish transliterations that have crept into common everyday use. Rapa Nui as a language is now being tooled as an ethnic distinction with the notion for one to speak Rapa Nui correctly, one must identify the Spanish transliterations and elements, and erase and

94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
replace such components with Rapa Nui or Polynesian counterparts, as Spanish components are inappropriate.\textsuperscript{96} Makihara further states that the Rapa Nui children and their “linguistic choices are motivated by their positive identification with their Rapa Nui identity, but by choosing Spanish they are significantly contributing to the ongoing process of language shift away from the Rapa Nui language and redefining the ways in which language differences are mapped onto social and ethnic identity differences.”\textsuperscript{97} This phenomena has yet to occur on a large scale with Tongan language speakers, but will be mentioned later as an alternative course of action in response to the growing use of English transliterations.

Makihara argues that Rapa Nui speakers have not only established syncretic and purist speech styles, but additionally apply both speech styles as linguistic registers’ intended “for political ends to perform stances in ways that have served to reconcile different but not necessarily mutually exclusive sets of values–those of democratic participation and those of the politics of ethnicity.”\textsuperscript{98} Ping-Ann Addo spoke of such politics, “cultural and personal representations are complex, power-laden, and negotiated along with stereotypes of people of other ethnicities and so-called races.”\textsuperscript{99} Despite this, Makihara points out that the purist styles of Rapa Nui have been used primarily to enhance the indigenous Rapa Nui claims over their symbolic and material


\textsuperscript{98} Makihara, Miki and Bambi B. Schieffelin. \textit{Consequences of Contact: Language Ideologies and Sociocultural Transformations in Pacific Societies}, 50.

resources.” But the real challenge linguistic purism faces, comes from those that fear such purism. The Rapa Nui purism, as mentioned, is achieved by purging Rapa Nui of the Spanish words and one could fear that provides too much power and control over revitalization efforts and that this “policing” may obstruct natural linguistic growth, flexibility, and liveliness.

However, Tupou Pulu did not see “purism” in this context. Although similar, she stressed the importance of taking precautions, not necessarily for the sake of “purism” per se, but she said that Tongans “are too busy being overwhelmed by the dominant culture. We forget until it’s too late...It’s a losing battle that the Tongan don’t even realize they are in right now.” In contrast, Pulu states that Tonga, by the action of using so much English, is really saying that “Tongan isn’t that important and that English is. That’s the worst thing happening.” Need we forget that “the Rapa Nui language came to be devalued by its speakers vis-a-vis Spanish and was increasingly restricted to private, in-group, and family domains; this accelerated a community-wide language shift to Spanish. As a result, a majority of Rapa Nui children and teenagers are not fluent Rapa Nui speakers.” This devaluing came at the behest of a national “requirement” that Spanish be the medium of education and other official matters and

100 Makihara, Miki and Bambi B. Schieffelin. Consequences of Contact: Language Ideologies and Sociocultural Transformations in Pacific Societies, 51.

101 Ibid.

102 Ibid, 50

103 Pulu, Tupou L. “Me No Can Speak Tongan No More,” 13

104 Ibid.

105 Makihara, Miki and Bambi B. Schieffelin. Consequences of Contact: Language Ideologies and Sociocultural Transformations in Pacific Societies, 52.
ban on using Rapa Nui in certain domains as a government policy. Are ethnic Rapa Nui that support the purist speech style truly saying Rapa Nui is more important? Or are they just preventing their linguistic identity from evaporation? Should Tongans begin to establish their own purist approach to speaking Tongan? Should they fear Tongan evaporating?

Another challenge that Makihara has seen in the use of a purist speech style, is when actively choosing to use the purist Rapa Nui, by erasing Spanish elements, especially in public speeches. Rapa Nui “fortify the ethnic boundaries” particularly where the audience includes “monolingual Spanish-speaking Continentals,” additionally “deploying linguistic boundaries.” These boundaries between communities can be painful, particularly when people have heritage from both side of the boundary. Or because one may want to imagine a community that embraces both its indigenous and Chilean, or even ex-patriot members language. Or because in the future, the youth that do not have full command of their heritage language, might feel that they have been excluded by the inability to do purist speech, excluded from their own Rapa Nui-ness. And in Tonga’s case, Tongan-ness, wounded by an older generation telling them they are insufficently Tongan.

During my visit to Tonga in 2015, this level of divide has not yet occurred, despite having a large Chinese migrant or significant English speaking ex-patriot population. But in Tonga, as opposed to the Chileans in Rapa Nui, Chinese-Tongans for instance are

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106 Tonga does not have such a “external” constraint.

107 Continentals is the local term for Chileans that have migrated to Rapa Nui.

108 Makihara, Miki and Bambi B. Schieffelin. Consequences of Contact: Language Ideologies and Sociocultural Transformations in Pacific Societies, 61.
actively speaking Tongan and are indeed not pressuring Tonga or Tongans to speak Chinese. This may be because their status is different. Continental Chileans “belong” to Chile whereas Chinese or even westerners in Tonga are immigrants or guests. Though this raises an interesting question of whether this multilingual situation should necessarily lead to a necessity of a lingua franca in Tonga. On the other hand, there is a divide occurring between those who speak English and those who do not, with those speaking English being elevated in society above those of their monolingual Tongan speaking counterparts. In essence, Tongan is being de-valued.

As a matter of point, Otsuka spoke to a study performed by former Minister of Education, ‘Ana Maui Taufe'ulungaki, by which Taufe'ulungaki concluded that people’s attitudes toward Tongan were generally positive but today, ethnic Tongans themselves willingly subject the younger speakers to forms of punishment for speaking their own language, as they should be speaking English, the language of success. According to Tēvita Kaʻili, during his tenure at Havelu Middle School, Nukuʻalofa, students who violated the “English Only Policy” by speaking Tongan were placed on “punishment duty”. This punishment included for example, cleaning the school by pulling weeds at the school’s plantation. Are such English Only policies a by-product of language insecurity? Otsuka addressed this when she quoted de Bot, saying that

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111 Tēvita Kaʻili, Personal communication, 3/31/2016.
speakers’ insecurity, “generally discourages use of the [native] language and ultimately leads to language loss.”

The divide amongst and between indigenous Tongans, is a concern for Makihara and indigenous Rapa Nui, as she fears that “purism might further polarize social groups within communities and create negative associations or insecurities among people who do not speak Rapa Nui or do not speak it well.” In Tonga, it is the non English speakers who are being polarized, whereas in Rapa Nui this polarizing effect leads to some Rapa Nui voicing their frustration. Even amongst a collection of written texts and planning efforts that brought about dictionaries and even a reference grammar launched by the Rapa Nui Council of Elders with the assistance of local schoolteachers; many Rapa Nui are finding that the Polynesianization and de-Hispanization unnatural. “It is perfectly fine to speak in half Chilean and half Rapa Nui; we prefer to speak so that people can understand.” This acceptance of Rapa Nui syncretism may point to both its practical and symbolic values for the Rapa Nui, so much so that Makihara exhorts that the “embracing attitudes underscore the strong sense of ethnic solidarity among the Rapa Nui, who often emphatically insist that they “are not Chileans at heart” and readily extend group membership to Spanish-speaking children of mixed marriages.”

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113 Makihara, Miki and Bambi B. Schieffelin. Consequences of Contact: Language Ideologies and Sociocultural Transformations in Pacific Societies, 61.

114 Ibid, 62.

115 Ibid.

travels to Tonga and viewing the few, even rare cases that Tongan-Chinese marriages occur, the Chinese language is not appropriated into Tongan, whereas Spanish in Rapa Nui is. But English is appropriated into Tongan with English still being valued higher than either Chinese or Tongan.\footnote{117} \footnote{118} Or is this orchestrated out of necessity if the common language between the two is English?

A particularly interesting point from Makihara comes with the the belief that Rapa Nui speakers expressing the language feeling strange without Spanish loanwords, “they would find it unnatural or difficult to speak Rapa Nui void of any Spanish elements.”\footnote{119} Such comments are indicative of greater conversations around Oceania, where many languages are struggling to remain not only alive, but stay in the forefront. In any case, Makihara stresses the importance of protecting indigenous languages with the express creation of both national and international projects executed and planned by the native speakers. For such protection, the protection should be financed by the national government for local empowerment and even restitution for colonized nations.\footnote{120} Despite her call for government to step up and take responsibility to protect

\footnote{117} This situation is particularly interesting when considering the large population of Chinese throughout all the islands of Tonga where one does not need statistical analysis to know the Chinese out number any other ethnic group currently in living in Tonga both as Tongan citizens and Tongan nationals.

\footnote{118} According the Tonga Citizen Census of 2011 prepared by the Tonga Department of Statistics, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), New Caledonia, there are 569 Europeans in Tonga, 437 Fijians, 236 miscellaneous Pacific Islanders, 186 “Other Asians” and 843 Chinese. The next scheduled Census report for Tonga is later in 2016, I anticipate the Chinese population to increase 40-50 percent above the 843 reported in 2011. If this does indeed happen, then the Chinese population will surpass the 1,069 Part-Tongans in Tonga, see (http://www.spc.int/prism/tonga/tonga-documents?view=download&fileId=302) (accessed, 1 February, 2016). This report however does not include the Chinese “Nationals” population living in Tonga, where in 2006, ABC News Australia reported approximately 4,000 living in Tonga, see, (http://www.abc.net.au/news/2006-11-22/flight-chartered-to-evacuate-chinese-in-tonga/1316302) (accessed, 1 February, 2016).


\footnote{120} Makihara, Miki and Bambi B. Schieffelin. Consequences of Contact: Language Ideologies and Sociocultural Transformations in Pacific Societies, 61-62.
Rapa Nui, the purist sociolinguistic change was not the product of conscious concerted effort, but has nonetheless become “integral to the island’s recent political transformation.” One cannot repudiate the position of dominance that Chilean Spanish occupies in Rapa Nui, in terms of language socialization of Rapa Nui children, almost all have higher proficiency in Spanish than their heritage language, Rapa Nui.”

Makihara’s research in Rapa Nui relates to that of wa Thiong’o and the Kingdom of Tonga. Additionally, new identities are emerging amongst the influence of economic forces that Niko Besnier highlighted, including English, and these new identities divide kakai Tonga much like the divisions occurring in Rapa Nui, and are happening in new and unexpected ways related to imitating an effective global language, English. wa Thiong’o could argue that the policing found in Rapa Nui is a decaying position to be in. But Tonga could defer by rebutting that Tonga is merely experiencing natural linguistic growth, flexibility, and liveliness. I believe Tonga to be experiencing implicit residual effects that echo the cultural bomb illuminated by wa Thiong’o. Makihara simply provides the Pacific perspective of such a cultural bomb.

Tonga as a nation has not officially reached the point of its native population having greater fluency in English as the nation of Rapa Nui has with Spanish. However, thirty years ago in the 1980s, Tupou Pulu noticed that Tongan children have begun to evidence a limited vocabulary in lea faka-Tonga. So much so that they (the children) commonly speak “with words being borrowed from English for which Tongan has

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almost perfect equivalents” using ‘pangike’ for bank instead of the literal ‘fale pa‘anga’ as fale pa‘anga is know used to mean Government Treasury.

In the early 2000s, that extensive “gratuitous” borrowing from English continues, and raises concern for Tonga’s linguistic future. Echoing Tupou Pulu, Otsuka explains that in Tonga, there are primarily two possible circumstances by which the use of transliterations occurs: “(1) The language may need new words to refer to new concepts. This type of borrowing is relatively harmless. (2) In contrast, gratuitous loanwords can replace lexical items already present in the language concerned, thereby reducing the size of indigenous vocabulary.”

Makihara does not mention overseas education as a primary factor for Chilean Spanish invading Rapa Nui’s vernacular space, Otsuka on the other hand does, through personal conversations with ethnographer Heather Young Leslie, by which Leslie states, “Nobles are commonly educated overseas and are often not very fluent in Tongan which could be the main reason why English is preferred among this group. Since those of chiefly status are the main users of the honorific speech register, that register has little chance of survival if members of that group stop using it.”

In this next brief section, let me turn to Tongan ways of talking as one of the places that in everyday Tongan speech, we can see the ideologies tracked in Makihara’s work, play out a little more and offer some reinforcement.

Understanding Tongan Ways of Talking


125 Ibid, 459.
Here is a space in Tongan language where we can see these idealogical ways of talking playing out. People have their own local sense and ways of speaking. Tongan linguist Melenaite Taumoefolau has analyzed this system showing the ideologies of purism and syncretism elaborated by Makihara. The Ka'i'ili siblings build on these ideologies by centering the interwoven relationship ways of talking have, with the relational link of faka'apa'apa (respect).  

This relational link includes the various ranks of the social hierarchy that is at the core of the Tongan language and culture and is valued and carried throughout the Tongan language, often referred to as lea fakatu'i. Rapa Nui children and Tongan children are much in the same vaka if you will, as Tongan children have a “very limited vocabulary in their native language.” The example comes from the top, and if the hierarchical system is not speaking lea fakatu'i, then competence in Tongan is declining. But lea faka-Tonga, not unlike other Western Polynesian languages, has a stratified linguistic system, often regarded as a three tier system as a result of Tonga having three layers in society.

These three layers of society are typically understood to be determining “a whole range of appropriate social behaviour, and this also includes linguistic behavior: the language of respect” or faka'apa'apa. Even more so, this “language of respect” as

126 Ka'i'ili, 'Anapesi Lakalaka and Tēvita 'Ōsoni Ka'i'ili. “Can We Become Tongan Without Speaking Tongan?,” 86.


128 Ka'i'ili, 'Anapesi Lakalaka and Tēvita 'Ōsoni Ka'i'ili. “Can We Become Tongan Without Speaking Tongan?,” 85.

defined by Vökel, is an honorific system intended to indicate rank having three ways of talking that mirror the three levels of society: (1) associated with the king, (2) another one with the chiefs, (3) and a third one with the commoners. This three tier linguistic congregation is however, a truncated and misinterpreted understanding of not only the three levels of Tongan society, but is a simplistic analysis of the relation Tongan language has with Tongan society. For instance, a more robust understanding on Tongan language use can be found in Melenaite Taumoepleau’s analysis of Tongan ways of talking. Her ways of talking (WOT) are:

- WOT 1. lea fakatuʻi—way of talking to or about the monarch/king (tuʻi)
- WOT 2. lea fakahouhouʻeiki—way of talking to or about chiefly people (houʻeiki)
- WOT 3. lea fakamatāpule—polite way of talking that is characteristic of titled orators (matāpule)
- WOT 4. lea fakatākilalo / fakaʻakiʻakimui—self-derogatory way of talking when addressing those of higher rank
- WOT 5. lea tavale—way of talking to a person with whom one is familiar or with whom one is socially equal, or way of talking to or about commoners (tuʻa)
- WOT 6. lea ʻita—abusive way of talking

These WOT clarify that there exists distinct times and places of use for each, with each having its own purpose. Each purpose determines the WOT needed to communicate, but even more so, the majority of the WOT often intermix one with another, ceremonially

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130 Ibid.
and colloquially. Taumoefolau believes that the intermixing of WOT is especially true in the lengthier “non-interactional pieces such as public speeches and prayers.” These contain a mix of features from the various ways of talking. With a variety of defined ways of talking in Tongan, the argument of purism is strengthened, especially when considering Māhina’s observation that Tongan grammatical structure is shifting towards English. Taumoefolau provides a deeper insight to these WOT so that one may see the individual purposes and understand how the overlap of them occurs:

“There is no one to one relationship between the three main levels of society (king, chiefly people and commoners) and the ways of talking, but they are related in the sense that WOT [ways of talking] 1 is a way of referring to, but not exclusively, the king; WOT 2 is a way of referring to, but not exclusively, the chiefly classes; and WOT 5 is a way of referring to, but not exclusively, commoners. WOT 5 reflects the common situation when rank is not an issue, and therefore can be used by anyone regardless of their rank as long as that situation applies. The other three ways of talking are not aimed at any particular level of society but are used mainly in accordance with the speaker’s purpose. WOT 3 is a polite way of talking which is characteristic of orators, hence its name lea fakamatāpule, and is used to address or refer to people who are not necessarily chiefly but who are respected in the society or at least by the speaker. WOT 4 is the humiliative way of talking and is therefore a necessary corollary of WOT

132 Ibid.
1-3, but it can be used by persons of any rank to show humility. WOT 6 bears witness to the situation in which the speaker wants to release their frustration about some subject matter.”

Taumoefolau explains the language of respect that Vökel is referring to. However, the language of respect is actually three distinct and separate ways of talking that includes the simultaneous use of WOT 4, (not highlighted by Vökel) self-derogatory speech. The beauty of Taumoefolau’s WOT is her deep analysis of these WOT, uncovering Tongan epistemologies:

“The expression of respect in both kinds of lea fakamatāpule is largely figurative in nature, such that many existing words are applied to new (respectful) situations. In lea fakamatāpule, for instance, the word tokoni ‘help’ is used for eating. Instead of ha’u ‘o kai! ‘come and eat!’, the lea fakamatāpule version is afe mai ‘o tokoni! ‘turn this way and help!’ ‘unu atu ‘move over’ is in everyday speech, but in lea fakamatāpule it is ma’uma’u atu ‘close up the gap [by moving over]’. One would say in ordinary language sio ki he peesi 2 ‘look at page 2’, but the use of the word sio ‘look’ would be inappropriate in a situation of, say, Bible reading with a congregation. In lea fakamatāpule, one would say hanga ki he peesi 2 ‘turn towards page 2’. When one says goodbye to an elderly person in lea fakamatāpule, instead of saying ‘alu ā ‘go then’ in ordinary everyday speech, one would say faka’au ā ‘be gradually gone then’. With goodnight,

135 Ibid, 335.
instead of the everyday mohe ā ‘sleep then’, one would say po‘uli ā ‘have
the night then’.

An small example of how WOT 1, 2, 3 (all stratifications of respect) vary is provided in this diagram:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lea Fakamatāpule (WOT 3)</th>
<th>Lea Fakahouhou'eiki (WOT 2)</th>
<th>Lea Fakatu'i (WOT 1)</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'Alu</td>
<td>Me'a</td>
<td>Hā'ele</td>
<td>Go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kai</td>
<td>'Ilo</td>
<td>Taumafa</td>
<td>Eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohe</td>
<td>Toka</td>
<td>Tofā</td>
<td>Sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mate</td>
<td>Pekia</td>
<td>Hala</td>
<td>Die</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taumoefolau makes a case for the use of maintaining these registers, as presently, Tongan speakers primarily use WOT 5. But the significance here is that all six ways of talking engage six different purposes of speech and in use actually overlap each other, The simplistic analysis of the three ways of talking with the three societal layers of Tongan society misses much of the play and function of spoken Tongan. The lumping together of the abusive form, the polite form and the ordinary conversational forms obscures the fact that these ways of talking are very different in terms of use.

Taumoefolau’s research suggests that WOT 6 is also used widely, which supports the argument that when a language begins to decline, it is the more formal ways of talking that are the first to go; because language maintenance depends on use, and formal registers tend to be the least used within the current Tongan communities.136 One thing is for certain, both indigenous Rapa Nui and indigenous Tongans are convinced that their ancestral land and their ancestral language is a resource and a form of cultural

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136 Ibid, 328.
property whose inherited ownership must be recognized by, and wrestled back from, the
colonial powers, and subterranean forces.  

Language ideologies are profound and Tongan has its own traditional structure of ideas about language that correspond to these different ways of talking. Proficient Tongan speakers are familiar with these ways of talking and we can see that these ways are changing over time and even disappearing. With these traditional structures beginning to shift, lea faka-Tonga becomes more vulnerable to global economic pressures, allowing English to sneak its way into Tongan, masked as fashionably cool. Language change influences vulnerability on an account of English becoming more important than Tongan. As a result, Tonga, like Rapa Nui, is experiencing its own language loss through syncretism, slowly evaporating indigenous knowledge and thought, making it difficult for many to carry the Tongan language into the next generation.

Through punishment in school Tonga is dividing and polarizing its people into groups of English speaking “haves” and non-English speaking “have-nots”. This adds pressure to Tongan youth using Tonga’s ways of talking, carrying English through the use of lea ohi rather than caryying Tongan, simultaneously dissolving Taumoefofolau’s WOT 1-3, which are centered around faka’apa’apa. I wonder if the youth understand WOT 1-3 but are restricted somehoe in using them in their own speech practices.

The next chapter engages with the special Tongan artists who hold the keys to appropriately carry and care for the Tongan language, and how they are caring for Tonga and lea faka-Tonga simultaneously. I will share how these Tongan ideologies are

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137 Makihara, Miki and Bambi B. Schieffelin. Consequences of Contact: Language Ideologies and Sociocultural Transformations in Pacific Societies,” 61.
centered around fonua, tā, and vā. As well as embedding Tongan history within words and how the use of these special artists bind one to Tonga, as all things in nature, mind, and society are eternal.
Chapter 2 – Punake, Fonua, and Tauhi Vā

It has been said that the poetics created by the punake of Tonga are so magnificent that anyone desiring to grasp a good idiomatic knowledge of the lea faka-Tonga “could scarcely do better than study the poetry.” The Tongan language is full of poetry and words have multiple meanings and are wildly dynamic. Poetry is the quintessential Tongan genre, and how it fits into language use, is most often recognizable through the art of dance, which unfortunately is typically defined in Western academic research simply as, faiva. However, faiva is the general word for art that, according to Futa Helu, may have derived from a combination of two words – fai = to do, to make; and hiva = to sing, music. Nonetheless, some of the most identifiable poetic forms in Tonga are the faiva ta’aanga found in lakalaka, mā’ulu’ulu, the

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142 Ibid, page 185-186. She further explains that “whilst Tongan Faiva is most often discussed in association with Tongan “performing arts” it is also associated with a wider and varying range of activities. For instance, whilst Faiva includes a range of aspects that appear to “look like” the Western performing arts in faiva hiva (“music”), faiva ta’aanga (“poetic” expression), faiva haka (“dance-like expression”), and in associated forms such as faiva maau (“poems”), faiva lea heliaki (reciting “proverbs”), faiva talatupu’a (reciting “myths”), faiva lea (“speech giving”), faiva fakamamahī (“art of tragedy”), faiva fakaoli (“art of comedy”), faiva faiana (“mythmaking”), it also includes a diverse range of seemingly unrelated practices such as faiva faifolau (“voyaging”), faiva ‘eva (“courting”), faiva no’o’anga (“shark noosing”), faiva ukuloloto (“art of deep-diving”), faiva siu (“art of fishing”), faiva hi’atu (“art of bonito-fishing”), faiva pākimangamanga (“art of bonito-related fishing”), faiva taumāta’u (“art of line-fishing”), faiva makafeke (“art of octopus-luring”), faiva taumata (“art of matu line-fishing”), faiva lafo (“disc-throwing”), faiva sika (“javelin throwing”), faiva fuhu (“boxing”), faiva fangatua (“wrestling”), faiva fānifo (“surfing”), faiva loavaoka (“boat-racing”), faiva lova’a’alo (“art of canoe-rowing”), faiva kakau (“art of swimming”), faiva heulupe (“pigeon snaring”), faiva tāfangufangu (“nose-flute-playing”), faiva teuteu (“clothing-fashion design”), to name but a few.”

meʻetuʻupaki, kailao, sōkē,144 and the hiva kakala;145 these are produced by the punake of Tonga. Dance is an essential and central facet of Tongan culture. The poetic compositions that accompany these dances are the most popular and recognizable.

The punake of Tonga are commonly regarded as true poetic specialists in Tongan dance.146 Simply calling the punake a “poet” would be a narrow English translation of the Tongan word punake, as punake are the composers of the poetry, music, and choreography.147 Even more revealing, punake is an abbreviated form of the two words puna = to fly; and hake = on high. This abbreviation indicates that the complete meaning of punake is one whose sensibility “goes up as if flying to heights but non-poets are not endowed by those gifts and so are held down on to lowly, very mundane emotional levels.”148 But most importantly, as will be shown throughout this chapter, the authority of history and language contained within the knowledge of the vernacular “ecology-centered” mode of cultural and historical representation, is a privileged possession provided to the punake of Tonga.149

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144 For a further understanding, even analysis, of some dances found in Tonga, accompanied by their meanings and physical movements, please see Poetry in Motion: Studies of Tongan Dance by Adrienne L. Kaeppler, 1993.

145 Love poems are referred to as hiva kakala. These are the poems and songs of sweet-smelling flowers, maidens. Gifford provides hiva kakala in Tales and Poems of Tonga p. 125 by which he explains that direct references to passion in Tonga are remarkably rare, except in modern present-day compositions. Instead, the punake, as a metaphor, speaks of his crush, or would be maiden through pleasing sights and sounds and fragrances, and the imagination of the punake must supply the circumstance that the lover would be pleased to walk with his crush in these sweet-smelling spaces. The punake may do so by suggesting frequent attendance of festivals, gifts, or provide at the hands of said crush with, sweet-smelling garlands and flowers, hence the title, hiva kakala.

146 Kaeppler, Adrienne L. Poetry in Motion: Studies of Tongan Dance, 54.


148 Helu, 'I. Futa, Art of the Community: People’s Art, 45.

The Tongan word for poetry is taʻanga and is comprised of the lexical entries tā: to hit or to beat, and the suffix -ʻanga: a place or space wherein one may hit or beat. Māhina believes this word to be “truly a spatio-temporal phenomenon”, as on a very general level, integrates both tā and vā (time and space) into poetry, by claiming the object of taʻanga, lea, words and/or language, taʻanga is then defined as the “hitting or beating of language or words in rhythmic ways to produce symmetry, harmony and beauty...transformation from chaos to order.” Tongan poetry is therefore a special mode of expression, performed by a select few, the punake and matāpule, who are indeed poets and orators of Tonga. But “punake” and “mātapule” vary in the composition of melodies and choreography. Mātapule are primarily composers of poetry, pulotu faʻu, which is an aspect of the making of a punake, but mātapule are not pulotu hiva/pulotu fasi (composers of melodies), and pulotu haka (chorepgrapher).

From generation to generation a punake plays the roles of not only teaching the traditional dances but within their choreography they associate the cultural happenings in a way that identifies that the performance is a Tongan dance performed to Tongan music, and that music identifies who Tongans are. Sometimes punake recited prepared compositions, but at other times punake improvised. Improvisations by punake have

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150 Māhina, ‘Okusitino. “Tatau, Potupotutatau and Mālie: A Realist Reflection on the Symmetry, Harmony and Beauty of Queen Sālote’s Poetry”. In Polynesian Paradox: Essays in honour of Futa Helu, ed. I. Campbell and E. Coxon, 168-83. Suva, Fiji: Institute of Pacific Studies, USP. 2005. The suffix -ʻanga in Tongan, is attached to verbs, in this case to hit or to beat, and in doing so transforms the verb into a noun. Attaching -ʻanga, forms a word that denotes the place, the seat, or the source of such a noun. In the case of taʻanga, the source or beating language.


152 A chief’s spokesman, a matāpule, is typically a trained pulotu faʻu. So in this case, one may envision them as being one in the same.

153 Collcott, E. E. V. “Tales and Poems of Tonga,” 64.
contributed to the practice of fetau (poetic competitions) between punake. The chief Tuku'aho, who has been regarded as a distinguished patron of the arts, died in the latter part of the nineteenth century, but is reported to have organized a contest in poetry between a man from Vava'u named Siliva opposite a woman from Nomuka, named Hihifo. In a full composition however, one, two, or even three specialists may take part—the composer of the poetry being the most important. He or she may also add the melody and polyphony, or this may be entrusted to others.

Tongan poetry is typically divided into four periods. These periods are recognized as the: Ancient, Middle, Transitional, and Modern. The shortest of these periods belongs to the Transitional period, this lasted from the mid 18th century to the early 19th century. As explained by Helu, the Ancient period primarily contained fakatangi;

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154 Varying details of such, including collected events of punake competitions are made available in Laumātanga, Fakalāngilāngi, Tales and Poems, Punake of Tonga VHS, Poetry in Motion.

155 However, in “His Majesty’s Ships in Tongan Oceania: Tōtō mo hopo” found in Life in the Pacific of the 1700s, Volume III, Emil Wolfram clarifies that the Tongan Patron God, Tangaloa Tufunga, is the original patron of the arts, along with Vele sī’i, Māui Motu’a, and Hikule’o. Page 39.


157 Kaeppler, Adrienne L. Poetry in Motion: Studies of Tongan Dance, 54.


159 Morphologically, the word fakatangi contains two lexical entries: (1) the prefix faka-” to make, to cause, or appear as” or ”in the mode of”; and (2) the noun/verb tangi ”to weep, to cry”, or ”to entreat earnestly”. This can indicate that the literal meaning of the word fakatangi is ”to create tears”. However, in Tongan Poetry II: The Fakatangi, Futa Helu is caused to believe that this “weeping mode” as he calls it, suggests a musical origin for the fakatangi as a form of poetry. Furthermore, Helu believes that it is also highly probable that the evolution of the fakatangi occurred simultaneously with the introduction and rise of the fangufangu, the bamboo nose-flute. Helu is drawn to this conclusion as musically, the scales (A, B, C, D) of the fakatangi are very similar in nature to those produced by the fangufangu. Helu declares that “this characteristic scale is, the prototype of all modern fakatangi chants.” See Faikava: A Tongan Literary Journal, vol. 2, pages 31-33.
the Middle, dance poetry;\textsuperscript{160} Transitional, lave;\textsuperscript{161} and Modern, hiva kakala.\textsuperscript{162} This division is based on general consideration of theme and form. On the thematic side, the periods broadly correspond to changes in outlook or thinking which ultimately has been related to the changing social organizations and even structure. As in history, there are overlaps of course. In the case of dance poetry for instance, the Transition Period could have started earlier. But like any other system of poetry, earlier periods influence later. Elements of the older poetry live on, are developed, and are thought to be “perfected” over time.\textsuperscript{163} In the Tongan tradition the element that persists more strongly is style and that which has changed most is form.

The poetry of the Ancient Period consists mainly of very short poems (sometimes only two to four lines). They are usually part of a myth and usually summaries of the important points of the story.\textsuperscript{164} They are always recited or chanted by the storyteller

\textsuperscript{160} In \textit{Tongan Poetry IV: Dance Poetry}, Futa Helu in greater depth explores the dance poetry of Tonga, the bulk contributor to Tongan poetry. In former days there were many more dances than those currently known and performed today. “Apart from action chants, there were dances to mark the successful completion of important communal work and victories in battle, dances to commemorate great historic events, to propitiate deities or to please chiefs, and dances to re-establish liaison, and many more.” Many of these, for example, the tau’a’alo the actions songs, have transformed into ceremonial pieces “due to the destructive influence of early missionaries, who associated these dances in their minds, with heathen practices.” See \textit{Faikava: A Tongan Literary Journal}, vol. 4, pages 28-31.

\textsuperscript{161} Here in Laumātanga, Helu speaks of the laumātanga of modern poetry, having its antecedents in the ta’anga (dance texta) and lave (epic-like odes), nature poetry, of both the Middle and Transition periods. See Laumātanga page 4.

\textsuperscript{162} The laumātanga has continued to be a strong element in modern dance poetry and also in the hiva kakala (the sung love lyric) which, according to Helu is the only contribution of the modern period to the musical arts of Tonga as all other forms of poetry are developments of older existing genres. Hiva kakala gives to laumātanga a new function the kindling of love in the heart of woman. Helu is convinced that Hiva kakaia (kakala) must always be understood on two levels, the physical level and the emotional, as hiva kakala are typically sung by suitors to sweethearts. See Laumātanga page 18.

\textsuperscript{163} Helu, ‘I. F. \textit{Laumātanga, Pride in Locality in Tongan Poetry}, 1.

\textsuperscript{164} Ibid, 2.
(punake) to bring faiva and dispense māfana (inner warmth) through the narrative. When a punake gives rise to faiva, often the sensation of mālie (commendable pleasure) follows. Mālie can be interpreted as being the “real” measure of beauty, as mālie is innate in all good works of art, as function of rhythm, symmetry and harmony is achieved by strengthening tā and vā, time and space. The important point here is the magical outlook of the ancient period poetry, “every simple object, every little event, be it a stick or a stone, a trip of the foot, a fruit falling from a tree, any thing whatsoever is absolutely infused with magical connotations.” It is quite possible that this “magical connotation” is connected to the ancient religion of Tonga, as objects such as sticks, stones, trees, and people were infused with mana, or supernatural power. The characteristic of this period and its poetry are referred to as fakatangi.

The Middle period is important in that this is when the great dances of Tonga were developed. Additionally, this is when the sharing of neighboring islands dances

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166 Faiva allows a distinction between good and bad punake to exist, these are punake kakato (the complete punake) and punake kapo (the self taught puana). This distinction between punake kakato and punake kapo is extended to faiva as art in faiva mālie (pleasing and commendable art) and faiva palakū (disgusting and repulsive art). See Māhina, ‘Okusitino. “Tatau, Potupotutatau and Mālie: A Realist Reflection on the Symmetry, Harmony and Beauty of Queen Sālote’s Poetry,” 171.

167 Māhina interprets tā as time, as time is the measurement of strikes and beats. As in the pounding of a drum and the paddling of a canoe.


170 Ka’ili, Tēvita, personal communication, 2/9/16

with and for each other entered into Tongan culture. The poetics became longer and canonized into form. “Ideologically, poetry in this period testify [sic.] to a clear distinction between gods and the earth and men they created and ruled. The poem Folau ki Pulotu comes from this period.

The Transitional period is the beginning of the modern period, the period in which Christianity plays an influence. Ideologically, however, that influence is superfluous, as Christian values and the values cultivated during the relatively short Transitional period, hence the title, do not necessarily clash in any significant way. Futa Helu expressed that, “In fact, Christian ethics, especially in its anti-Jewish aspects, agree remarkably with Tongan morals at so many points to warrant it being described as a particular case of Polynesian ethics. However that may be, we have in Transition poetry the testimony to a full awareness of men as human beings tied in every direction by social links to their fellow men or groupings of men which are staggered in a hierarchically ranked system. In-a word, we are here dealing with an aristocratic society.” Dance poetry here continues to abide by the norms established in the Middle period.

Poetry with its dance enhances Tongan life. Without going into great detail of the motifs that accompany many of the dance forms, the motifs are performed consistently.

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172 Ibid.
173 Ibid.
with nafa (skin drum) and sung poetics, with the exception of the kailao. These performances are written, composed, and choreographed by punake. The punake are regarded as one who can produce the text or orature of faiva. Faiva commonly, although not necessarily consistently, encompasses the separate arts of taʻanga (poem), hiva (song), and haka (rhythmic movement of hands). But faiva is more than strictly entertainment, Tongan faiva is a ritual reinforcement of the fundamental values that bind the Tongan society together, and this is precisely why a shift in Tongan poetics is important.

Tongan dance focuses on three parts of the body. Leg movements are often no more than a series of side steps executed nearly in place, while in seated dances no leg movements are made except for a rhythmic pulse kept with one foot. Kaeppler believes that the most important movements are those of the hands and arms, which together form a series of movement motifs that specifically refer to selected words of the text or concepts arising from the poetry. However, a slight head tilt to the side known as a teki or fakateki, is visible and sometimes choreographed, but often is improvised by the

176 Kaeppler, Adrienne L. *Poetry in Motion: Studies of Tongan Dance* 16, 39, 113.

177 Kaeppler explains that the Kailao, is a standing dance typically performed by men only and is based on the manipulation of wooden clubs combined with the beating of cracker tins. The dancers twirl the pate (clubs) in a similar fashion to that of modern Samoan fire knife. Traditionally, Tongans did not have war dances either, which is why the Kailao, along with the subtraction of poetics, is unique among the other performed dances. Furthermore, the foot and leg movements are different from all other Tongan dances. According to Baron Vaea, the Noble of Houma, an Uvean, settled in Haʻapai and taught the kailao to the Haʻapai people. Two men who descend from this Uvean went to Tongatapu and Vaea asked them to teach the Houma people.

178 Faiva is loosely defined as any form of entertainment that requires a level of skill or ability such as a performance, game, and film.


181 Kaeppler, Adrienne L. *Poetry in Motion: Studies of Tongan Dance*, 2.
dancer to express an inner feeling of excitement and joy referred to as māfana. 

Shumway believes that māfana is “the highest artistic moment in Tongan faiva, when all elements of a performance come together into a gestalt of feeling known as ‘kuo tau e langi’ (the singing has hit the mark).” One could indeed argue that this unrestrained māfana or warmth is the purpose of not only faiva, but the punake as poets, and all of their work.

However, some punake, those that primarily focus on a singularity, such as the composing of poetry, leaving out the choreography and composition for instance, “are called punake, but they are not punake.” Many or even most of them just write songs “but they know very little about dances.”

Today, “many Tongans fail to make the distinction between a punake and what is known as a pulotu. “Specialist artists who, depending on varying degrees of their artistic and literary abilities, sensibilities and capabilities, practise each of the three arts are called pulotu.” Recognized pulotu include pulotu faʻu: a composer of poems or taʻanga which, according to the nature of Tongan faiva, will inevitably be put to music; pulotu hiva or a pulotu fasi: the creator of melodies; and pulotu haka: the creator of dance, a choreographer.

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182 Shumway, “Ko e Fakalangilāngi: The Eulogistic Function of the Tongan Poet, 29.
184 Ibid.
186 Pulotu is commonly referred to in Tonga historically and colloquially as the ancestral homeland and afterworld (heaven) of Tonga, but also for its highly organized social and moral conservatism.
Given this distinction and regular use of the term pulotu, it is easy to confuse, or even combine the two entities into a single form. In reality though, a punake is an amalgamation of sorts, of various pulotu, and when one excels in all three of these pulotu creative and interconnected activities, ta'anga, hiva, and haka, one achieves the distinction of punake and forms a deeper relationship with, and even does the work of the god(s). Additionally, the term pulotu refers to the divine underworld, where the gods reside, therefore punake are achieving in godly interconnected activities, which makes the title of punake, a godly title. And if one could only take a moment to consider the significance of having a Tongan relationship with the god(s), the translation of punake by Helu, puna = to fly, and hake = on high (even to the heights of the sky), the role Tangaloa Tufunga played in being a patron God of Art, as pointed out by Emil Wolfgramm, and especially Tonga’s ancient religion with the kāinga Tangaloa playing a significant role in the creation of the first Tu' i Tonga; one can find it quite

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188 Shumway, Eric B. “Ko e Fakalangilāngi: The Eulogistic Function of the Tongan Poet,” 25.

189 Futa Helu spent a great effort linking the work of punake to the work of gods by examining other world mythologies and man’s relationship with god(s), drawing conclusions that upon man’s great works they can indeed be one with god. See The Art of the Community, pgs. 6-7, 34-35, 45.

190 Tonga’s Gods were the kāinga Tangaloa in the sky, the kāinga Māui in the under-world, and Hikule’o in Pulotu. It was Tangaloa ‘Atulongolongo who discovered the island of ‘Ata (not the island of ‘Atā), had Tangaloa Tufunga plant a fue (creepers) that would grow and be divided by a manu into three parts who would become the first men, Kohai, Koau, and Momo. Māui, would then fish up the islands of Tongatapu, Ha’apai, Vava’u, and the Niua’s. And finally it was the god Tangaloa ‘Eitumatupu’a who, disguised as a large toa, married Va’epopua (from Tongatapu) and had a son, the first Tu’i Tonga, ‘Aho’eitu. See History and Geography of Tonga by A.H. Wood, the late principal of Tupou College, Nuku’alofa, 1943.
difficult to disagree with Helu on the relationship of punake and their significance in Tonga.

Thus it is the achievement of all three pulotu activities that makes one a punake. Punake is not just a composers, punake are historians. Punake are the social conscience for the people of Tonga. All faiva, punake and pulotu point to some form of uniqueness, rarity or speciality linked with each or all of them as forms of social activity.\textsuperscript{191} Even more so, the punake are guardians, purveyors, and preservers of culture, language, and the oral traditions of Tonga. The plethora of heliaki (proverbs) that flood the Tongan language, made ever popular by linguistic purveyors, the punake, proves the levy of their placement in society and demonstrates the close relationship between society and the language that facilitates communication between Tongan speakers.\textsuperscript{192} Heliaki are essential additions to Tongan poetry as heliaki stand in opposition to hualela, or simply lela, as these signify one’s redundancy in one’s words or even stating the obvious.\textsuperscript{193} Heliaki as proverbs involve the effective exchange of current existing symbols, by associating those symbols qualities with things or objects that too have been symbolized.\textsuperscript{194} It would then seem that the sheer use of heliaki contributes to lea faka-Tonga, and by that extension poetry, by providing an emotional outlet that binds together both natural and social elements.


\textsuperscript{192} For an in-depth look at Tongan proverbs please see Māhina, ‘Okusitino. Reed Book of Tongan Proverbs.

\textsuperscript{193} Hualela and lela are not defined as such, as documented in Churchward’s Dictionary, hualela (233) lela (290). There they are defined as simply being offensive and hurtful to one’s feelings, but understood colloquially as repeating one’s self. See Māhina, ‘Okusitino. “Tatau, Potupotutatau and Mālie: A Realist Reflection on the Symmetry, Harmony and Beauty of Queen Sālote’s Poetry,” 172.

The punake, by bringing faiva, fulfill a psychic need and provide an additionally needed therapeutic emotional release to both performer and spectator through their carefully selected poetics, musical harmony, and rhythmical movement. The words of punake become extremely significant for their words symbolize the richness of imagery. The faiva of the punake becomes a ritual reinforcement of fundamental values that bind the society of Tonga together. These values include the worshipful consideration for the Fale ‘Alo (Royal House) of King Tupou IV, the maintenance of the sovereign privilege and advantage of the hou’eiki, the love of Tonga and church more than self, and the insistence that Tonga is the best of all possible worlds.

Malukava, regarded as one of the greatest punake, was the punake for the late Queen Sālote. “Malukava” as it were, is a title, and was given to Tēvita Kavaefiafi who was called upon to replace his father, the initial Malukava, Malukava Fineasi, upon his passing. Malukava Fineasi was punake for the late King George Tupou II. Malukava (Tēvita Kavaefiafi) finds inspiration for his poetry from Paepae ‘o Tele’a (the ancient royal tombs of Tonga) where he will be buried, which is indeed a great honor, “It is here that I mingle my voice with the voices of the past, here I catch whispers of phrases and melodies for people.” This concept of drawing from nature and the descendants of the past is echoed by the rival of Malukava, Peni Tutu‘ila, “the rhythms of true Tongan music and dance, are those of nature, the metaphorical pagan of the poetry draw from natural objects.”

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196 Ibid.
197 Shumway, Eric B. The Punake of Tonga, Lā‘ie, Hawai‘i: Brigham Young University – Hawai‘i Campus. VHS, 26 min.
198 Ibid.
The punake lead Tongan thought and speech through the centrality of the fonua for the crown work of a punake in the fonua. Punake juxtapose the earth, its environment, its ocean, its sky in their songs, dances, stories, and are indeed reflective of Tongan notions of connection as well as being an epistemological idea of Tongans’ place in the world; which proves the essentialness of practicing tauhi vā/tauhi vaha’a as it connects Tongans to not only each other, but to place, to the fonua\textsuperscript{199} and that tauhi fonua is the practice of connecting Tongans harmoniously to the fonua.\textsuperscript{200} Centrality in the fonua is encapsulated in the heliaki Va‘ava’a he ko e tangata, Branching out as people do.\textsuperscript{201} “As a befitting imagery for genealogy, a real tree, like a symbolized human tree, produces and reproduces va’a (branches), like the production and reproduction of ha’a (lineages), carried out by means of connection and separation. These proverbial expressions point to members of a kin group who are actively engaged in the social process of tauhi vā, that is, the maintenance of exchange relations within the social unit, on the material, emotional, and social levels, through the performance of their fatongia.\textsuperscript{202}

The actions of Malukava speak to the process of Tongan poetry, but specifically they also speak to the poetry of nature, and nature poetry differs from the other poetical traditions found in the afore mentioned periods. The poetry of nature never generalizes nature and the poetry never places nature in the abstract. Nature poetry is consistently


\textsuperscript{200} Lea faka fonua, lea tu’u fonua tauhi ‘o e lea makes tauhi more explicit in the terms of tauhi vā.

\textsuperscript{201} Māhina, ‘Okusitino. \textit{Reed Book of Tongan Proverbs}, 108.

about the appearance and embodiment of nature in a very specific and local context.\textsuperscript{203} The observance of these two principles (locality and specificity) has directly contributed to laumātanga.

“Laumātanga has the effect of reinforcing and consolidating the oneness and togetherness of Tongans by extolling ancestors and places of origin and through the use of an abundance of positive concepts, many contained in metaphor. Some of these metaphors are fixed, but because metaphor is also a way of relating prior knowledge to new subject matter, it has a creative aspect that makes it capable of being productive.”\textsuperscript{204}

This compound word, is comprised of two morphemes; (1) lau, defined as to mention, to say, to reckon, to recite and, (2) mātanga, is something well worth looking at because of its scenic beauty or its historical associations. In nature we find our roots.\textsuperscript{205}

Therefore, if Malukava goes to the fonua for guidance and inspiration, then one could argue that the fonua is the quintessential procedure to producing poetics, faiva, mālie, and māfana. Malukava humanizes the fonua supporting thoughts attributed to Māhina, as “social, emotional, economic and political relationships between groups in society, which were, or are, tied in with the environment...onto the landscape.”\textsuperscript{206} Here we come to understand that nature, through oratory and tala ē fonua (telling this land, or even the telling of stories and narratives of the fonua and its people), is humanized.

In poetry, one refers “to social, emotional, economic and political relationships


\textsuperscript{204} Taumoefolau, Melenaite. “Tongan Ways of Talking, 352.


\textsuperscript{206} Ibid, 109.
between groups in society, which were, or are, tied in with the environment.” 207 As a result, this happens in contrast to the position of anti nature that modern society has created, which allows nature, in its realistic form, to be no respecter of persons having tangata‘i/efine‘i fonua (indigenous man/woman of the fonua) and fonua being one in the same and subject to the laws of nature. By allowing lea faka-Tonga to retain its connection to the fonua, one is reminded that they are indeed a part of nature. Furthermore, the practice of tauhi vā across the globe, through kinship ties, religion, and most importantly people and place (by way of the fonua), create social connections with animate objects in nature 208, and “in nature we find our roots.” 209

In modern dance poetry, especially the lakalaka and the māʻuluʻulu, the accompanying text must have a laumātanga section 210. The first section of the text is, according to Helu, always a fakatapu, which will be covered shortly and can be compared to by the Sāmoan equivalent, laulasiva. 211 Tongan poetry is inextricably woven together in music and dance, with the exception of, debatably, the fakatapu. A fakatapu is a stylized respectful expression of the principal dignitaries on any given occasion who are present. 212 In a fakatapu that precedes an oration, the order in which recognition is given typically signals the rank of each person mentioned. In the fakatapu

207 Ibid.

208 Francis, Steve. Chapter 15 in Sharing the Earth, Dividing the Land: Land and Territory in the Austronesian World, 351.


212 Fronting this thesis, I provide a fakatapu.
of a poem, which is not as lengthy or detailed as that of an actual oration, rather than
calling the chief by his title, the punake may normally recognize his clan or haʻa: Tapu
mo e Haʻa Moheofo (acknowledging the Moheofo clan).  

The second part that follows the fakatapu can be topical, and then comes the
third piece, the laumātanga, in which the punake recounts all the beautiful spots,
historical sites, and the parts of the locality/fonua that he and the dancing group hail
from. Sometimes the laumātanga is incorporated into the last section of the poem along
with the tatau (farewell), but they both may be treated separately. The ultimate piece of
presenting a fakatapu however, comes not in the poetry or in the performance itself, it
comes as the punake returns to the village. Punake recognize that their kavenga or
purpose is to wait for another future command to return and perform once again,
sharing their knowledge and linguistic prowess. This is characterized by punake Alamoti
Taumoepeau:  

Te u ngata hē ka u foki aú
Ki hoto fātongia fakatalutalú,
Ko e fai ‘anga ‘ete laukaú
‘A e fakaongoongo mo e talifekaú.

I will stop here and return (home)
To my immemorial responsibility;
The source of my deepest pride
Is awaiting instructions and receiving commands.

The punake essentially, using imagery, hyperbole, traditional symbolism, including heliaki, weave the various forms of social life into an “artistic harmony of

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213 Shumway, Eric B. “Ko e Fakalangilāngi: The Eulogistic Function of the Tongan Poet, 33.

214 Ibid.

215 Kolo, Finau ‘O and ‘Okusitino Māhina, “The Role of Social Symbolism in Tongan Ta'anga”, Faikava: A
Tongan Literary Journal, no. 9, 16-22.
theme and form.”\textsuperscript{216} Additionally, as one can see by Alamoti’s tata (poetic dabbing) that each line concludes with the same vowel sound, in this case ‘ú’.\textsuperscript{217} This verbal oral communication will transfer a poem to a higher status of reality, as lea faka-Tonga is secular, prosaic, and memorable, and more importantly, language is the device through which different forms of human activity are transmitted in the social and material reproduction of society, creating culture.\textsuperscript{218} If taking into consideration all roles, responsibilities, and faiva that socially have been indebted to punake, it would appear that Māhina is indeed correct in his tā vā theory indicating that “all things, in nature, mind, and society, stand in eternal relations.”\textsuperscript{219} More importantly, where this thesis is concerned, “all things” includes language and the words used by the punake that indeed shape lea faka-Tonga.

If the punake lead Tongan thought and speech and are indeed the creators of culture by reproducing societal norms and human activity, how does culture shift or change? Have changes to culture already begun? Modern poetics consist of only five forms: (1) the Sipi: a type of wooing madrigal is an ancient practice, but it is still widely known and used by would-be suitors to their sweethearts not only in speech but, at present, more in their love epistles;\textsuperscript{220} (2) the successor of the Meʻalaufola dance, the


\textsuperscript{217} This is typical of Tongan poetry.

\textsuperscript{218} Māhina, ‘Okusitino. “The Poetics of Tongan Traditional History, ‘Tala-e-Fonua’: An Ecology–Centered Concept of Culture and History 113


\textsuperscript{220} According to Collcott in Tales and Poems of Tonga, due to the competition that arose through the use of po-sipi (pō sipi) in kava parties by opposing punake, the sipi as it were, were stopped by the Government in the latter days because of engendered feelings. See page 64.
Lakalaka;\textsuperscript{221} (3) the Hiva Kakala or love lyric; (4) the dance Māʻuluʻulu; and (5) the Langi, a composition to accompany a solo dance called the Tauʻolunga. Both the Tauʻoluga\textsuperscript{222} and the Māʻuluʻulu (which is a seated hand-dance) are of Sāmoan origin and came to Tonga relatively late.”\textsuperscript{223} Seeing that both the Māʻuluʻulu and the Tauʻolunga derive from Sāmoa, one could argue that borrowing from neighbor Sāmoa is creating a new kind of Tongan culture. Both Sāmoa and Tonga are intertwined historically and linguistically, so on both the surface and the interior, this makes sense. However, some may argue that Tongan is heavily influenced by Sāmoan, indicating that Tongan is not “authentic.”

Regardless, Helu concludes that both poetics and the use of words are directly more meaningful than the use of pure tone and movements to act as instruments of communication. So if one is using borrowed English words that they 1) do not understand its meaning; and 2) are using purely for tonality, then they are missing the point of Tongan poetics and the use of Tongan words. Additionally, given the nature of the hierarchical structure explained by Taumoefolau, the Tongan \textit{punake} had to make the poetry basic, while in their desire for communication, they must make sure they used a suitable and effective melody to act as reinforcement of the composed substance. Helu explains that all “Tongan poetry is music oriented: it is always intended to be sung

\textsuperscript{221} According to Kaeppler, the lakalaka has totally replaced its predecessor, the meʻalaufola. See \textit{Poetry in Motion}, 9, 15, 17 and Ferris-Leary, 219.


\textsuperscript{223} Ibid.
or chanted, and often to be danced as well. And this musical intention of Tongan poetry makes rhyme a necessary feature of it, for sung, just as spoken, words are transmuted, quickened and tremendously enhanced when rhymed."

This importance of the rhyming scheme of Tongan poetry mentioned by Helu is recognized in Collocott’s *Tales and Poems of Tonga.* Here, the reader understands that rhymes are carried through stanzas, which can sometimes, even often, be long, with having each line rhyming to the same vowel and its sound, emphasized by the fakamamafa paú. In the closing tangi (cry) versus of the story *Tongamāuluau and Kulakekahau* provided by Collocott, we see the evidence of this scheme:

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\begin{align*}
E & \text{ Tongamāulu'aú} \\
& \text{Ke ke ha'ú,} \\
& \text{Kuo hela 'a Kulakekahau,} \\
& \text{Pea ne fekaú,} \\
& \text{Keu tangi atú,} \\
& \text{Ke ke 'ofa mai na'aku manatú.}
\end{align*} \quad \begin{align*}
\text{Ah Tongamāuluau} \\
& \text{Do thou come,} \\
& \text{Aweary is Kulakehahau,} \\
& \text{And he orders,} \\
& \text{That I plead,} \\
& \text{That thou love us lest I pine rememb’ring.}
\end{align*}
\]

In 1978 Helu believed that the role of the punake as creator, “seems to have declined because of the loss of ‘court patronage’ afforded under the old political systems,

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224 Using the word *chant* is tricky. Typically Tongans will say that there is no chanting in Tonga, especially when comparing such “chants” to existing chants in Hawai‘i, French Polynesia, and Cook Islands. However the closest English translation to what poetic styles such as fakatapu, maau, or sipi can be described as, is a chant. But they are not performed in the manner as other regions of Polynesia that have traditionally accompanied the term.


227 Ibid, p. 63. Fakamamafapaú are added to stanza in Tongan translation with the intent to provide imagination to the reader of the pronunciation and sound.
and despite the potential offered by literacy and printing techniques, the tradition remained essentially an oral one.” Twenty-eight years later, this is still the case, but worse, as noted by his daughter, Sisi’uno. While recounting a time that she did a radio interview in Tonga, she says, “I did a show on how it was important to speak the language until you finish high school, cause we weren’t brought up in lea faka-Pālangi. We started speaking English when we went to Australia or when pālangi come to meet my dad or teachers. But we were brought up speaking Tongan and so we did this talk show and I said how it was important to speak Tongan. And I do speak English to my kids sometimes, and this lady called up and said the worst people with Tongan grammar are the people in the media in the newspaper, writing stories and people on the radio.”

As Helu again notes, “this virtual absence of a written literature is a major factor in the strong tendency for the arts in Tonga to show an unreflecting imitation of old, established forms, images and topics; and many creative talents have been wasted. There is no regular publication which would promote in artists and audience alike a conscious and analytical awareness of the national literary tradition, of contemporary writing here and elsewhere, or of the many possibilities inherent in literature.”

Modern punake, Sisi’uno Helu, daughter of Futa Helu as she agrees that more people need to write, especially punake.

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228 Faikava Volume 1, foreword, 1978.
229 Ibid. Futa Helu continued by championing radio as a platform that can enthusiastically capitalize on the preservation of both oral and written tradition.
230 Helu, Sisi’uno, Personal communication, January 7, 2015.
231 Faikava, Volume 1, foreword, 1978.
“Firstly it is to create, create artwork. Secondly, I started writing because I was influenced by my father, that there is probably a need for people to write more of the language. But today I think we need to encourage people to write, and the role of the punake is to create artworks that reflect the social happenings at the moment. Not just social, but political as well. All things happening within the society and country. Not only to keep the language, but to tell a story in passing down knowledge to the next generation.”

This is pointing to a shift in Tongan poetics, a shift that had become evident and problematic to Futa Helu and he noted the loss of losing something when borrowing occurs. The editors behind the Tongan journal Faikava also recognized the shift in language in the late seventies, “One could possibly question the inclusion of English items in a Tongan literary... but one should not forget that many Tongans, especially those who have studied or are living overseas, either consider English to be their primary language or find it a more appropriate medium for the expression of many of their ideas.” Faivaola in his article *Fakalāngilangi: The Eulogistic Function of the Tongan Poet*, too sees a shift in Tongan poetics by using English. He provides a poem by Nau Saimone of Ha’alao. Notice the number of English transliterations used:

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232 Helu, Sisi’uno, Personal communication, January 7, 2015.


234 Faikava was a ten volume journal out of Nuku’alofa, Tonga, and the brain-child of Futa Helu. The Editorial board consisted of Futa Helu, Epeli Hau’ofa, Thomas Schneider, and Konai Helu Thaman.


Afio mo e Kaha’u ‘o Tonga

Nau Saimone

1 Pupunga lose teunga e tafengavai ‘o taimi,
2 Tauhia he ta’au ‘o e ofa fakapaloviteni.
3 Polepole ai pe motu ‘oku lau ‘e he himi,
4 Kei toka e monū ki he palataisi ‘o e Pasifikí.
5 Tu’unga’anga ia ‘ete hūmatavikí,
6 He ko e laukau’anga ‘o Ha’a Tongafisi.
7 Malimali loto ai pē fine fine ‘o e Halapainí,
8 Tafe sino’ivai e kalonikali e ‘otu feleniti.
9 Kuo fihi e kakala he tofi ‘a siuelí,
10 Taufā ‘ene ngangatu fakamo’oní’i ‘o e palomesí.
11 ‘Oku fotu ‘o hangē ko e takanga (sola sisitemí),
12 Pe ngaahi huelo e maama lahi e ‘univesí;
13 ‘Oku ‘ikai malava hano fakatatauá
14 ‘A e koloa fungani ‘a Tonga ma’a e kaha’u ná.
15 Pea mo’oni e lau ’a e ‘ipiseli ‘a Paulá:
16 He ‘ikai fakamāvae ‘a e ‘ofa pea mo ki tauá.
17 Tuē tuē tuē tuē ki he la’ā tupu’á,
18 Tuē tuē tuē tuē ki he huelo koulá.
19 Kai ‘utungaki ai pe me’avale e fonuá,
20 Hakailangitau ‘o ‘ikai tukuá.

1 Cluster of roses decorating the stream of time,
2 Nurtured in the wake of providential love.
3 On this proud land, praised by the hymn,
4 Sweet fortune still rests--the paradise of the Pacific.
5 This is the substance of my worshipful praise,
6 The source of all beauty for the Ha’a Tongafisi.
7 The woman of Halapaini continually smiles in her heart,
8 In her flows deep the history and culture of the Friendly Islands.
9 Fragrant abundance, enshrining this jeweled estate,
10 Is wafted abroad, an emblem of the covenant.
11 It now appears as a mighty solar system,
12 Or the rays of the universe’s largest light.
13 No apt comparison can capture
14 The crowning treasure of Tonga’s future.
15 How true Paul’s words in his epistle:
16 We will never be separated from God’s love.
17 Hail, hail, hail, hail to the eternal sun, (i.e. the Queen)
18 Hail, hail, hail, hail to the golden beam. (i.e. the Royal Family)
19 For even the lowliest people of the land eat freely
20 They dance in an ecstasy which ceases never.

Saimone is a talented, high quality poet, easily inviting māfana. Note however, that there are also thirteen lea ohi (English words), including a name (highlighted in red). According to Shumway, Tongan poets usually disdain the use of English words in
their compositions, except those that have long been assimilated into their language, such as taimi (time), and palataisi (paradise), “but Nau has pulled out all stops. He hopes that foreign words such as providential (2), chronicle (8), jewel (9), and promise (10) will evoke a freshness and power for his already gilded altar of praise”. Shumway brings up a great point, and I believe that the question has now become, should English words be the tools by which “power” and “freshness” are conveyed and then used for inspiration? Or should we use Tongan words and Tongan understanding to accomplish this task? Furthermore, I pose such questions not primarily as a result of comments made by Shumway, but additionally by comments made by Futa Helu, who pointed out that there are indeed challenges and even a major problem that exists with the use of ngaahi lea muli.\footnote{As lea ohi and lea muli does enrich the language, it simultaneously pushes out and even eliminates the beautiful Tongan words that are already there.} Tongan punake are the orators of the heavens; far-reaching social commentators with the skill(s) and blessing(s) of drawing inspiration from the Gods and forbearers of Tongan history and society. Through faiva, punake reinforce Tongan values existing through time and space, holding the society of Tonga together. Through tauhi vā they bind lea faka-Tonga and society to the fonua, strengthening the eternal relationships of man and nature. Punake are the forbearers of Tongan thought and speech, slowly becoming disabled through the use of lea ohi, making it more and more difficult to carry and care for Tonga and Tongan.

\footnote{The Tongan definition of muli is defined as another country outside of Tonga.}

\footnote{Helu, Fakaholo Talanoa (Ko e Ngaahi Lea Ohi), 1985, 1-2.}
In the following chapter I speak with punake directly, sharing their thoughts on the use of language and its relationship to land, colonial beliefs permeating the region, and maintaining the vā of the fonua through the use of lea faka-Tonga. The punake in this chapter talk of Queen Sālote, her role(s), her impact, and her use of lea ohi. What do punake believe the best route for Tongan language maintenance should be? Is Tonga being colonized? More importantly, the punake share the difference between speaking in the leaves and speaking in the roots of trees.
Chapter 3 – Punake, Epistemologies, and Ideologies

When I first began interviewing punake, I had sought to investigate a relationship between language and land, lea faka-Tonga and fonua. This exploration of thought intensified when recognizing regularly found words that pointed to this relationship, tu'ufonua and fakafonua. Fakafonua means nation, or things pertaining to the nation (nationhood). But I was also cognizant of faka- meaning to create, it is a causative word. So when I saw fakafonua, I did not only see a ‘nation’, I also saw the creation of that nation’s land or the creation of something that derived from that nation’s land. With tu'ufonua, I knew that it often referred to one who is native or indigenous to Tonga, tangata'ifonua. But tu'u meant to stand firm, and even for one to be rooted. So I saw, being ‘rooted’ in the land. As a result of this exploration, I was convinced that, if someone speaks lea tu'ufonua, then they are speaking in a way that is rooted to the land, or they spoke in a way that rooted them to the land, essentially, keeping them rooted. Fakafonua, builds on this ideology and shows me that when one lea fakafonua, one speaks in a way that creates land. 239

In my mind I had discovered the association, and I saw an ethereal relationship between the land and language that hinged on the cultural practice of tauhi vā. Speaking the words that come from this place, its fonua, roots one to the fonua, to Tonga. The following chapter is a reflective process of interviews collected during my time in Nuku'alofa and Vava’u, Tonga in 2015. Selections of interviews with three punake, their ideologies, their beliefs, and their stories make up the three subsections in the chapter.

239 Faka- is a causative affix, but it does not always mean ‘to create’, but is used to create an adjective ‘pertaining to or like something’ e.g., faka-Tonga,
Dialogue is indented. I have provided extensive portions of the interview. Doing so is significant and I believe, allows the reader to gain a better understanding of position and thought process of both myself and those who have provided their voices, while consecutively acknowledging and respecting their voices. Breaks with no indentation are reflective thoughts and questions, but nonetheless guide the reader through the interview.

**Leotisia Malakai Manu**

**Mailefihi Siu'ilikutapu College, Neiafu, Vava'u, Tonga, 23 January, 2015**

I interviewed Sia at her home. We began our conversation on her porch, across from her breadfruit tree, dining on tea and cookies. Sia shared with me her love of poetry, especially that of Queen Sālote. In speaking of her, we began discussing the use of borrowed words into Tongan, the lea ohi/lea muli.

LM: Do you have an idea of the first punake who first used the lea ohi or Tonganized the English words? Can you guess?

BD: Either the opponent of Malukava or Queen Sālote.

LM: Queen Sālote! According to my knowledge, she is the first Tongan to use the lea ohi; “ōkani”, “sameloki”, “pefeumi”, “palatiumi”,240 you know. There was a reason why she was using that. She did not find a word in the Tongan language to mean the same with the words she wants to put in there, in her poem. That’s why she Tonganized the words, just to get the idea of what what she was to write down. But you know, some people are angry for the using of the lea ohi. But I am one of those who are happy for

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240 These words are borrowed word for organ, shamrock, perfume, and platinum. See Glossary.
the lea ohi, because it has helped. Some people want to say it’s a borrowed word, but it has helped to enrich our language, I’m on the positive side. Some people they are angry for using them every time. But you know, those who are using the lea ohi without meaning, they are angry. But those who use them, are happy with what they have, and some people, some linguists say that the lea ohi is to help our language, to enrich our language. Because we do not have enough words to express our ideas and such. Did you get the book the Songs and Poems of Queen Sālote?

BD: I have access to it.

LM: Many of the lea ohi are in that book. I have a copy of the book here. I am teaching. Actually, I am teaching both English and Tongan. This is the only book that I use to do poetry with the students. But for the punake and the lea ohi, I am okay with the lea ohi. It helps and it has helped our students here. The words increase the number of words in our vocabulary. Even if we Tonganize the word. We have our own word for the thing that we Tonganize. But at the same time, we can still use it. But some people, they say that our lea tuʻufonua will be lost, but for me, no. Only if we do not study the Tongan language in school, we lose our lea tuʻufonua. But at the moment, in the primary schools, they start in class three. But in the Free Wesleyan Church and the bilingual schools, and some primary schools, they start straight from class one. We study the Tongan language from that class up to form five, compulsory. In form 6 they have to choose...You know the taumafa kava? Even though there are changes, our
singing, our faiva, we change the costume see? Because nowadays, people are too lazy to do what was done in the past. You know in our form six class, we use to use the lea ohi. Because there is a section in there about 15 marks, and they have to do the translation. But sometimes they have to translate a whole paragraph from English into Tongan, and we came to the states and they use only a sentence. Now they are trying to bring the sentence with the lea ohi that is Tonganized and they said to give the real Tongan word for the lea ohi. That is the case nowadays. Maybe they are up to 8-10 words in a sentence and they require the kids to write down the real one. Say for example ko e keisi fakatuʻutāmaki naʻe hoko he hala Makave, a very dangerous case on the road to Makave, see? “Case” is Tonganized. Naʻa moʻua ‘a talaiva, and you know some students, it’s funny, some students are thinking, “what does the word talaiva mean?” But only those who never go and join in the conversations with other students and people.

BD: Tauhi vā is driving my work. It is the only way I know how to give back to Nanuma and Sungalu. I’m thinking of the lea ohi and I’m thinking of the lea tuʻufonua, if we use the lea tuʻufonua, are we practicing tauhi vā with the fonua?

LM: If we are using the real words, we are using our fonua to express what we feel, then we are tauhi the fonua. To say for example, we are preparing a big puaka, a puaka toho, and a kava and a very big mat and tapa to take

\[241\] Borrowed word for driver. See glossary.
to the king.... We have to use the correct way of using the lea tu’ufonua just to express what we want and what we feel about our king; in a Tongan way, and you know, some matāpule or some of the punake who about to, once they want to go there, we take our faiva and such presents to the king. The one who is going to bring the malanga or doing the lea to the king or to the matāpule of the king, he will prepare the very special words just to show the relationship between. You know, some punake will say that, not the normal one that we use in the everyday language; they use to bring, some people say they use proverbs. They use the names of the historical places just to express, and sometimes they have to put themselves in a very lower rank. Even though we are taking a very big puaka and very long tapa, they just try to show it’s nothing. They show it’s still a very small token of what the king has done to us. To know what George Tupou I did for the country, emancipate the people, make battles to set us free, give the land to the nobles to distribute, everything; his children are in the throne, and some people think you have to tauhi vā. Is that christianity or not? hahaha. But using the lea, I think it’s more like to tauhi the vā of the fonua.

Not only that, but, what’s the word?... fakatolonga, to keep for a long time.

Sia in a short amount of time, reveals the active communal challenges centering around language and the lea ohi. A rigid dichotomy is disclosed concerning the use of lea ohi, and it appears that such use was magnified by the eloquent Queen Sālote. What I find most interesting, is the influence that linguists are continuing to have. The use of arcane, racist ideologies, convincing the native peoples that their language is
inadequate, so much so, that one lacks the capability of self expression, is socially irresponsible and academically ignorant. Why is this happening? On the other hand, Sia, as a punake, is a massive benefit. As an educator ensures the children are learning the Tongan way of expression when face-to-face with lea ohi. But how many educators have this same approach? How many punake? How many educators see the use of “real words” as a way to tauhi the fonua? After all, children are placed in classrooms of teachers and are not often found in the guidance of punake. Additionally Sia believes that lea tuʻufonua are essential in maintaining, over long amounts of time, “the vā of the fonua”.

If speaking lea faka-Tonga, and if using the original words, the lea tupuʻi, or the lea tuʻufonua, if those words are caring for the vā, what happens when we use the lea ohi? Are we caring for someone else’s land? Do we tauhi the vā for the fonua in America? or the fonua in Australia?, the fonua in New Zealand? The word that always comes to my mind is vakapuna. When the first airplane came it was not called ‘eliopileini, it was called vakapuna. The word vakapuna in and of itself tells a history and has a story. From vakapuna one may know that the first airplane that came to Tonga was not the airplane that could land on the runway, it was the plane that could land on water, and from this water, it would jump to another land. So vakapuna makes sense, it really was a flying boat. Later on, I asked this same question:

LM: I think only part of it that we tauhi. Some people, they just use it without thinking, fakapikopiko pē. The way you look at it, I admire the way you look at it, and you know, it helps. Those people who are doing the malanga, if they look at the word fāmili, they will try to look at the
meaning of the word fāmili. Or even the “nuclear family, the polygamist family, and every type of family”. But you know, by using the word itself and thinking about the vā with the fonua, I think that we never take care of the vā with the other fonua. We are just selfish, looking at us, gaining a lot from these words, that’s what I think... There are two things in the composing of poems and songs, the maau, sipi, heliaki, the sound and the meaning... They use the lea to rhyme and they repeat it, they repeat it to have it sound nice... It’s just to make the poem sound sweet and nice, and these are known and accepted world wide. But to use the simile, the metaphors, the personification and the contrast, they contribute to the meaning of the poem. Not the sound. That’s why the punake are using the lea ohi. When Queen Sālote began using the lea ohi she wanted her poems to sound sweet and nice and have the greatest meaning that she could... also the Tongan kakala, heilala, pua-Tonga, all the Tongan flowers with the sweet smell, the siale, they use these words as a poetic device that punake use... it was Queen Sāolte that was the one first to Tonganize the words in the poems.

BD: I did some research on Malukava and he said that whenever it was time for him to compose, he would separate himself from his family and from his wife and he would go to the ‘uta and to the royal mala’e fa’itoka and he would listen to the fonua. Letting the spirits of the dead and fonua talk to him so that he could know the right words to use. Malukava is already heralded as one of the greatest punake ever. These actions and
words tell me that there is a relationship between the language and the fonua. Could you talk to me about that relationship?

LM: ‘Io. It is related in a way, you know, to our heliaki, our Tongan proverbs... Just take for example, the first one of the Tongan proverbs, ā fakaʻamu mei, wake up and wish to eat breadfruit. It was because at that time, there was mei all around, especially in Haʻapai, and they used to pick the mei, and at the moment, we wake up and we eat the crackers and bread from the shop. We should have changed that one eh? To the sipi or the moa ā fakaʻamu sipi! Because you wake up and you think of the meat for the day. But at that time it was the mei, the only thing. Somebody said that Queen Sālote’s poems is more like the sum of the words that she was using were not very big ones, but had big meaning. They say it is because she knew the history and the origin of the words and the genealogy of the houʻeiki and where they come from, which fonua they come from... she knew the history. I think this is related to the fonua because they use the language from every place to explain. To see if there is a faiva from a place just to present for an occasion. They have to compose...to include the historical sites and the historical place, from that place. Like Hokoa, they use the nickname of the island fungavaisē and they have to include this stuff in their composition and they have to try to explain how the people live in that place and how they respond to what is going on.

BD: One thing that I have noticed regarding the lea ohi/lea muli that was used by Queen Sālote, is that they are objects or items that are not found
in Tonga, like the shamrock the sameloki, the ʻōkani the organ, or it’s not a readily accessible item in Tonga... In a fakatapu that Tēvita Kaʻili composed, he speaks of the Atomic bomb. He used ʻĀtomi for Atomic because Tonga does not have an Atomic bomb. But I asked him why he didn’t use pomu for bomb. A common word amongst the younger generations, such as foʻi pomu. He replied and said, no, I used fesi (to break), ukamea (steel) {Atomic breaking (exploding) steel/iron}.

LM: Those are rarely used here. It’s like an organ here in Tonga but it is brought and it is rare. You can find it in a place like church but more in the Anglican Church or the Seventh-day Adventist. They used to play the organ for their singing... Queen Sālote used that word ʻĀtomi pomu in one of her compositions, but she used it as a metaphor. In a composition for Holonga, a lakalaka to relate it to Christianity. It is very touching to me.

BD: It’s very interesting to me...knowing that Queen Sālote, the first queen educated outside of Tonga, who used lea ohi, because she had a different perspective than others and she was educated both, the English way and the Tongan way, but with a strong emphasis in English. Knowing that, it makes a lot of sense as to why she would use a lot of borrowed words.

LM: She took into consideration her role and some people say that once you are in mourning sometimes you use large words that express your feelings. Her second son passed away in 1936, and the half sister passed away in 1933. In 1941, the husband passed away, and she had three miscarriages. She was going through hardship all the time with family and
relatives. The way that she composed her poems was touching and the words that she was using. Even in the lakalaka she composed to Kanokupolu in Tongatapu, using the place that she was related to in Halonga, Vava’u here. She used lea ohi to express her feelings and such. She usually used the lea ohi, and she used it freely to express herself and also the vā that she felt with the people and the fonua and the Tongan people.

Sia is revelatory when saying that “thinking about the vā with the fonua, I think that we never take care of the vā with the other fonua”. I believe this comment reinforces the idea that there is indeed an ethereal relationship between the land and language predicated upon the practice of tauhi vā. Were there not, it would be quite challenging for one to say there is a need to comprehend the definition of the word one is borrowing before implementing such word. Furthermore, If Queen Sālote was indeed the one responsible for popularizing lea ohi as both Sia and history suggests, and at the same time thoroughly comprehended the deeper meanings of such lea ohi, then her intelligence is not only beautifully captured and preserved, but majestically magnified.

Should the use of lea ohi shift to having emphasis on comprehension rather than implementation? As our time together was ending, we shifted to discussing a function of punake rarely discussed, the creation of words. Punake it would seem, have always created words and I wanted to know if Sia had ever done so.

   LM: No. But actually, the punake, if you look at them they already put into practice what they did; I used to compose things like a poem or something that I was asked to do. The punake can do what is asked of them, and I can
do what they want me to do, and compose, and I sometimes think of a word. I just put the word, I take the first part of the word and just put it with the second part just to make it sound new. But only with the old words like tala'ofaki. I sometimes say tala'ofakitala. It’s the same thing. But to look at a new thing like a keyboard or computer or something else and make a new word for it, I have not done that. But it’s good that it could be a new skill for me.

Sia then inquired about my genealogy, I shared with her that biologically I am Irish, Scandinavian (Viking) and Hawaiian and that I grew up speaking English. But more important, studying my genealogy I found a common denominator that united these parts of my genealogy. The indigenous languages that accompany my genealogy, all of them, are either currently endangered or are moving in that direction. That is very emotional for me and it’s often difficult to comprehend, especially when I consider the relationship that language has to land. What relationship will I have to my many homelands as I age? In my early teenage years, I remember Tongan constantly being spoken and if I were to look back knowing what I know now, Tonga was always present. These transitional adolescent memories have navigated my journey. I love Tonga, and not just the superficial images. Tonga is in my heart because of the Lavulavu family an they made sure that Tonga was always with me. Sia then told me a story of when she interviewed Palavi Thaman,

LM: He said “I speak English, Fijian and Tongan”. The father taught the same and the mother. How did you learn Tongan? “We live together with our granny, and our father taught us that we have to learn the language so
that we can communicate with her and other Tongans, because once we go to Tonga, we talk in Tongan, and when we go to Fiji we talk in Fijian, and when we go to my family in the states, we talk English.” And when are the other times you are using the Tongan language? “When we don’t want other people to know what we are talking about, we use Tongan.”

I am thankful to Sia for sharing this personal interaction with me. It causes me to think about how much this idea of passing down the heritage language of Tonga is shifting. With English being elevated to such high levels of prestige, are people emotionally willing to take the time and pass it down? So many youth today are not receiving lea tupu’i and are simultaneously using and creating lea ohi. Do the users of lea ohi know that they, in reality, are speaking English words with a Tongan accent? This is how I see it. To me “Tonganizing” a word, in the way that Sia has explained Tonganize, is not truly Tonganizing. In English, the suffix -ize, that is used in “Tongan-ize” is the equivalent of the Tongan prefix faka-. They both mean to make or to become or to cause something to be, they are causative. So understanding this, to truly Tonganize a foreign word, then one must cause the word to be Tongan. Not simply pronouncing the word with a Tongan accent.

BD: I was given a Tongan name by Tēvita Ka‘ili, Kāfakafa. I once had a conversation with him about the giving of that name, and how the name is often given to hou’eiki and/or matāpule, and he said, “but, that is what your name means, it is the Tongan equivalent of Brian”, “so I truly Tonganized your name”.

LM: He is right telling you the word.
BD: This experience has also contributed in my approach to the lea ohi, lea muli, tauhi vā, tauhi vahaʻa with the fonua.

LM: I like the way that you talk...like what you say about Tonganize the word, see we just say it because we use a Tongan name for it in a Tongan accent but we never think of the meaning just to make it. But the way that you express yourself about Tonganize is very important to me.

BD: Thank you. I feel that if I was to use the name Pulaieni instead of Kāfakafa, then I would be placing emphasis on the English at that time and at that moment, to be more important than the Tongan way of understanding.

LM: You are thinking that once you are using the lea ohi, than English is more important than Tongan?

BD: Yes. In that moment. To me, I think there is power, inside power, if we can speak and only use Tongan without lea ohi. The ancestors of the world and the ancestors of Tonga, when they saw something new, they explained it in a way that made sense to them and not in a way that made sense to someone else, a Tongan way if you will. It would break my heart to see Tongan disappear to the lea ohi. I am not a matāpule, houʻeiki, or even a tangataʻifonua, but what I do know, is that we are related to the language and the language is related to the fonua.


BD: One way that we can tauhi the fonua is to tauhi lea faka-Tonga and I do not think that we can tauhi lea faka-Tonga with lea ohi. But I do think
that there are times and places for them, like ‘ātomi etc... You mentioned it earlier, a lot of people use the lea ohi because they believe that Tongan can’t explain what the word is, and I do not believe that. I believe that Tongan can explain anything.

LM: Yeah they can explain.

BD: We just have to think about it and figure it out.

LM: You know what, one of my beliefs in teaching the language, I used to tell my students that if you’re to be the best in Tongan language, you’ll be best in speaking another language. I tell them the importance of my learning the Tongan language. Once I am expert in the Tongan language and sometimes once I am teaching grammar in English, I sometimes like to say that in the English language you can tell the time from the tense of the sentence. And in the Tongan language you can tell the time from the fakaʻilonga taimi. Then they say “how come you know that?” I am a Tongan I learned about that.

BD: I have learned so much from you, mālō lahi ‘aupito.

LM: I hope that our little talk today is important for your research.

BD: I hope that my research is important for lea faka-Tonga and the punake.

LM: ‘Io, it is.

**Sisiʻuno Helu, Longolongo**

ʻAtenisi, Nukuʻalofa, Tonga, 7 January, 2015
I was honored to speak with Sisi in her home on the campus (swampus) of ʻAtenisi University. Sisiʻuno is the Director of ʻAtenisi, an accomplished vocalist, esteemed punake, and daughter of the late Tongan philosopher, academic, and punake, ʻI. Futa Helu. I had been engaged in active online conversation with Sisi for some time before making my way to Nukuʻalofa and she knew what types of questions I was searching answers for.

BD: What is the role of the punake today?

SH: Firstly it is to create, create artwork. Secondly, I started writing because I was influenced by my father, that there is probably a need for people to write more of the language. But today I think we need to encourage people to write, and the role of the punake is to create artworks that reflect the social happenings at the moment. Not just social, but political as well. All things happening within the society and country. Another role is to talk about the history and location of various places. Where they’re from or if they’re writing about a person, where that person is from, and talk about significant and relevant places in that location. Not only to keep the language, but to tell a story in passing down knowledge to the next generation.

BD: Can you build on that a little more?

SH: Some punake these days they use lea ohi a lot. I was judging at a kava music competition after Christmas, and they are supposed to write about their village and they did mention some significant places from their village, but they were also using a lot of borrowed words. This word,
“philosophy”, is used a lot in some of the poems now. That, and komipiutā, ko e democracy, ko e telescope, all these words. They borrow them and they are just like “Tonganizing” it. I saw the first, it said Filasofi o Manatu. Is there such a thing? I told them in my speech, when you borrow words from pālangi, you have to know what the word means. Because philosophy is a subject, and people study philosophy, it has five branches... I have never heard that there is a philosophy of memory. It’s so weird!

BD: Mentioning the lea ohi, your father’s book, in the last paragraph of the introduction he points to the use of borrowed words and says that we’re not losing everything, but we are losing something when we use them, when we lea ohi. What do you think he meant?

SH: I think he means to try and find a Tongan word rather than just borrowing a word. I remember I was trying to translate some text from English into Tongan, and I cant remember the word, but there was a Tongan word for it, ko e love sick. There is a Tongan word for lovesick. In one of Queen Sālote’s songs. I remember Māhina, ‘Okusi, translated funga hau’alofa and funga is like a plain, like a little mountain, and he said plain and I told him hau’alofa is lovesick. My dad told me that hau’alofa is lovesick, so there is a Tongan word for lovesick. Maybe he meant that, that when we just maybe borrow words and Tonganize it, rather than finding a Tongan word for it. I think that’s what he meant by we’re losing something. ‘Cause were not trying. But I mean democracy, how do you translate that and not just Tongnaize it?
BD: I think it goes back to what you mentioned earlier. Before you Tonganize it, you have to know what the word means. Because what’s the philosophy of the mind? But do you lose Tongan thought and Tongan interpretation?

SH: I think so. Because we lose the Tongan understanding of it or interpretation of the word.

BD: With the punake, what is the importance of the fonua?

SH: Say for example Queen Sālote, I know a lot about her work and she talked a lot about the royal grandchildren, her writing is for them. I think it’s political as well, because she would talk about the location and name of the child and praise her status, or his status. I think that historically and culturally, they are important. But I also think she does that to tell the other chiefs that my grandchildren are the highest. And pride as well, pride of your fonua where you are born and raised. I think that is also important, and a lot of the punake’s work is about pride of the location, telling the stories of the village. Talking about heroes from that village and myths as well are brought in. But it’s good for some, and this generation, they go back and they know the important parts of that location. But I also think it’s important to me as a punake, because it connects you to that location, and in Tonga, its very important. When a child is born and the fonua is being buried low in the ‘api and it has that connection where we originally come from.
BD: So when you lea about the fonua, it’s like the language becomes the umbilical cord.

SH: Yes, yes, yes. It connects us. I’ve written a couple of songs about our cousins and one had just graduated from med school in Sydney, and so I wrote the song about his ancestors. His mothers ancestors, his fathers ancestors, and I’m really happy cause I try and connect them back to where their fonua is. I think it is important. It is the essential. I think it’s importance to us Tongans, to me, me to have a connection to the fonua and not just fonua as land but fonua as your home.

BD: Is there a way to tauhi vā (within poetry and the work of the punake)?

SH: Not sure. It seems like these days they just do whatever they want. But traditionally, yes. There was a lot of respect for the fonua. It was but now its not. In many competitions I’ve been to, I encourage them to study Malukava and other traditional composers, so they can learn how to write and respect the language and use a lot of our puanke language. Rather than borrowing and being very forward in their writings. But I don’t think they know what I mean. But that’s how I did it. I studied a lot of punake. I think there is a need to go back and to connect to the fonua.

BD: So if one uses lea faka-Tonga instead of borrowed words, is that a way of caring for the language?

SH: Yeah and the fonua too. I think so. When I write I don’t borrow words.

BD: So if one does borrow words, do they tauhi vā to America or NZ?
SH: ‘Io. They tauhi vā to those countries and those languages while losing ours.

Sisi’uno and Sia are sharing similar ideologies here. They both recognize one of the many roles of punake, but where Sisi’uno separates herself is in her desire to have others write and compose poetry. It is as if she wants to educate as many people as she can so that a new generation of punake is born. They are both speaking to the use, albeit overuse, of lea ohi, and the necessity of knowing the definition of the word(s) one is attempting to “Tonganize” or borrow. But is clearly facing challenges in defining complicated issues or words like “democracy”. I wonder what impact this mode of thinking contributes to the approach of borrowing words. How many Tongans are really not trying? How often is she faced with a challenging word and decides to give up and not try? Her last comment is the most compelling. She shares the same thoughts as I do concerning one’s ability to care for another country’s land by using their words, and supplanting those words into Tongan as “lea ohi.”

SH: I try to describe the location and talk about myths from that location and always pay respect to those sites. I remember one song I wrote, about a navigator, Fāfā Kongatahi. Cause there was one time they were lost at sea, they would bring this guy and he would just descend into the water and feel the water, he would locate them. But before he descends, he usually carry a piece of tapa with him, and that tapa was called po'ui. That name is originally from mo’unga and was a grandfather to tuita and the tautahi and they travel and when they’re lost. They would just descend, but he can feel the water and navigate them so I use that and his ancestors
were very happy that I mentioned him. And his ancestors are “how did you know that we are related to him?” So yes I do pay a lot of respect to things like that from the fonua. I think once you start writing, you have to connect them to their fonua.

BD: What do you do when you only know a borrowed word or a difficult English word?

SH: Me and my sister, we were translating Tongan Ark, and there is one part where I was too lazy, and my father in the film said that “I like to know how the world hangs together, how the world ticks”. I just went tiki. And then tau tau. I just went ai māmanī and then tautau and how the world ticks. She e-mailed me and said “you lazy!!” “You just went tiki.” And I said I know you gonna edit it! I left it in there for you to do it. But what he meant was how the world moves. So yes, if we’re lazy were just gonna go for the easy way out.

BD: I believe that there is a way to explain it. No one has to just borrow and use a Tongan accent with an English.

SH: ‘Io. Mo‘oni. The treasury in town is called fale pa‘anga and they called it that. So why did they just go bank instead of just sticking with fale pa‘anga? Cause thats where they go to get their money. But it’s funny now, cause people just say tola and seniti. See there are words that our ancestors used.

BD: You said there are so many words now. Is there a way to get Tongan words back in?
SH: If we could ask our leaders to use more Tongan, and in Parliament and THOSE ON THE RADIO! Masi'i! You listen to the parliament when it is in session, like the chair at the last speaker, he hardly speaks Tongan ‘cause he was raised lea faka pālangi, and um... that conversation is quite half-half. So now they are introducing into primary schools Tongan until they are 11, and then they go to high school and they learn lea faka pālangi, and that is difficult as well. I think the media and the leaders need to speak more traditional Tongan. Because now it’s just in the formal kava ceremony and you hear the traditional language and the punake and the matāpule, but not the everyday. And people need to write more, write in Tongan. The Malukava right now is not as good as his predecessors anyways.

For me the big take from Sisi here is amongst all the beauty expressed by punake, either for themselves, or to benefit others, and despite her even she is sometimes the victim of being influenced by lea ohi and becomes, as her sister puts it, “lazy”. I wonder if that is the term that should be used though. The moniker “lazy” being applied to those who borrow words, nonetheless a Pacific Island population, may have residual effects that echo current negative stereotypes of marginalized minority communities present in America, Aotearoa, and Australia. Nonetheless, Sisi is diligent in her personal work to not include lea ohi, she believes that the responsibility of eliminating, or at the very least, limiting the use of lea ohi, lies in the hands of Tonga’s leadership and media. It is interesting to think that Sisi did not mention the influence of diasporic Tongans and their use of lea ohi. However, She did mention that many politicians and MPs are
“raised lea faka-palangi.” Are they raised in English in Tonga or are they returnees?
How does she see herself, being educated overseas, along with her children.

**Gary Pasina Lavaki**

**Saineai, Neiafu, Vavaʻu, Tonga, 6, 8 February 2015**

Throughout Vavaʻu and Nukuʻalofa, it is a tremendous challenge to find someone who does not know the punake Gary. He has written numerous compositions and ceremonial fakatapu that include but are not limited to the coronation of the King of Tonga, King ‘Aho‘eitu ‘Unuakiʻotonga Tuku‘aho Tupou VI. I spend two days with Gary and many electronic exchanges in an effort to share his thoughts, feelings, suggestions, and ideologies. Out of the Punake I had the honor of spending time with, Gary was the most vocal. I feel that this is a result of his tenured experience as a punake and his endless travels throughout Oceania sharing his gift everywhere he goes.

**GL:** Being a punake, viewing it with what is so important for Tonga now, punake I’m sure has its own unique blessing of trying to express what the story is all about and give it in a way that is not only entertaining, but it has available content in the composition. Especially with beautifying it, with the right words, to tell it like it is, in the way that has a noble status. To uplift whatever it is you are talking about, in a way that is respectable. So to me, it is so important with the job of a punake. I should say, 90% or more of the work that a punake does, is to keep the culture, specifically with the language. It’s the best tool to prolong that part of our legacy, or identity. We can say punake here, in my own, cause I’m very traditional in my own way of looking at the being of a punake, but many people
nowadays they say they’re punake cause they write songs or they compose songs. But those elements that we have been talking about, using correct words, and Tonganizing words, may seem “alright” in some situations. But it can really erode the culture, and our language. So the punake, if they’re a “good cook”, then it is, really good, and if you don’t know what you’re doing, it’s all messed up. Like so many people, they’re trying to do things like write songs and write things like that, but it really kills and ruins our identity in being a Tongan... I think the most important is the retaining of our culture, the dances and music. So the punake, whatever they do, it’s either they ruin it, or they preserve it. They add on to the good things about it, or they kill it. Because, like any other society in the world, there is a lot of “everybody mix mix and make a new style” and call it culture. Like like many people say, culture is a living thing it can grow out, it can change as time grows. But I’m sure that the punake’s role here should be a monitor. They should monitor which speed is causing the change. Either it’s slow enough to retain it for the next decade, or its 3 or 4 decades to come, or other wise just ruin it a create a new culture, create a new language.

BD: So you feel that by mixing and adding its creating a new culture?

GL: Yes... So what I mean is the punakes’ role should be the monitor or should be the one that controls the speed of the changes. If you believe in tradition and stuff of that nature, but knowing for sure that you are fighting changes and the timing. If you are punake, you are trying to help
keep it at a slow speed, instead of rushing the change to happen tomorrow.

Which has already started. It’s already happened.

Identity. Such a precarious word. A word that so many of us provide our own definitions to. Language is definitely a carrier of culture and is an essential piece of culture. Is language an identity? Is language like food being cooked for succulent flavor? The comment of being a “good cook” is in reference to an email I sent Gary him if lea ohi are lea tu‘ufonua, Gary responded and said, “I don’t think so, it will be like eating a lūpulu but with soy-sauce instead of coconut cream.” A strong statement and most likely an indicator as to why he views lea faka-Tonga as his legacy. Gary also puts a heavy social responsibility on punake, essentially an “all or nothing” or “win or lose” leadership role of punake. Should this burden be placed on the shoulders of punake? or should it be placed on those in parliament and media? If we consider the influential power that media has, and the speed by which national leadership can implement societal changes, then I would agree with Gary. The fact of the matter is, punake have the language experience that others do not, that is just the reality. Monitoring the rate of language change or language shift, is an advisory role I see no one taking command of better than punake.

Returning to Gary’s comments on “identity”, I ask myself, is language one’s legacy? I have heard the argument in favor of identity before, but legacy? Gary choosing “legacy” shakes my soul and he echoes the sentiment by the unnamed man discussed by Shumway in the introduction of this thesis, “Remember that our oral culture is the last and greatest spiritual heritage we have, it is our legacy from the past, the way we identify
with our fore-bearers.”\textsuperscript{242} The Royal Coat of Arms of Tonga has the scrolled text Ko e ‘Otua mo Tonga ko Hoku Tofi’a, which essentially means Both God and Tonga are my inheritance and heritage. The word legacy in English is analogous with the word inheritance. Legacy in Tongan is defined as koloa tuku, entrusted possessions of what one values. In my view, koloa tuku and tofi’a, too are analogous, considering the word tofi’a is defined as inheritance/heritage. So if I was to contextualize the idea that lea faka-Tonga and the fonua are indeed ethereally connected, than lea faka-Tonga would be embedded in the scroll on the Coat of Arms, within the word Tonga. Essentially, to me, the deeper meaning of the scroll reads, Ko e ‘Otua mo Lea mo Tonga ko Hoku Tofi’a, God and Language and Tonga are my Inheritance and my Heritage.

BD: What is the importance of using lea faka-Tonga?

GL: First of all its all about your identity. Being a Tongan you had to speak Tongan. To be a Tongan you had to not only be a Tongan being, which included the language; and like any part of anything, you really need to know the things inside. The true part of the language, instead of just knowing. Without wandering your mind, you always need to know the real word. To go deeper in understanding the word, instead of just a mix of fie pālangi in a way and Tongan. Cause nowadays, we have been hearing the slangs from everybody. Like the word paipa. Those high and mighty, they now call it tau paipa. It started with a joke, and is now slang. Change, its very sad. and the worst thing is, it’s coming to social status and classification, its especially impacted Nuku‘alofa. The kids here speak

\textsuperscript{242} Shumway, Eric B. \textit{The Punake of Tonga}, Lā‘ie, Hawai‘i: Brigham Young University – Hawai‘i Campus. VHS, 26 min.
more English regularly, and people speak English because they are from a rich family, they are high class. I know this. Even dances, tauʻolunga, you go to America, most Tongan kids there know how to do tauʻolunga, but not anymore here. They look down at the tauʻolunga, “It’s a fobish thing”, “it’s from the bush”. They would rather do the disco, the hip-hop instead of tauʻolunga. You’re still in the cannibalism days.

BD: And you think all of these are coming from English?

GL: Yeah. Cause everybody looks up at English as the mighty thing. Guess what? Who do we blame? The Christian missionaries? It’s funny, it’s confusing. Nowadays, starting with the former minister of education. She, ‘Ana Taufeʻulungaki, she changed the syllabus and English didn’t have to be practiced until you came the elementary school fourth grade. Which is great. I can see her point. But the measurement, to be fair enough, we can agree with the change, but gradually we should have control of the speed.

BD: One thing I noticed about ‘Ana’s implementation, which I believe officially ends in 2019, I think in many ways she has done a lot. She didn’t stress a monolingual educational system, she supported bilingualism. Which in many ways is very good. My concerns were when they were learning English. English becomes the language of instruction very early on, the fourth grade. Then once you approach the high school level, in many schools, it’s English only with Tongan becoming an elective, Tongan is optional. I find that interesting. In America, English is the language of instruction for everything, and once you get to High School or even Middle
school it’s the “other” languages that are electives, or optional. But in Tonga, English is the language of instruction, and the native language is optional.

GL: And that is weakening the idea that Tonga has never been colonized. Some people say, “yeah we were never colonized”, yeah not through overt power. But we have been colonized through western concepts and beliefs of language and everything.

Has Tonga been the victim of concealed imperialism? linguistic imperialism? Thinking about the conversation, if lea faka-Tonga becomes a subject rather than a mode of instruction, how can students participate and achieve a high standard in speaking? Is the high standard only an English one? According to the Tongan Education Policy Framework, all Tongans should be literate in both Tongan and English “as the language of much business in Tonga, make proficiency in English for all Tongans a necessity” but “proficient” literacy in Tongan is vague and often “basic” precedes the word “literacy” as pertaining to Tongan vernacular skills.\(^{243}\) As our conversation continued Gary began putting the use of the fonua by punake into context.

GL: The elements and the elements in the work, are all a part of the fonua. When a punake starts their writings they all have things about or from the fonua. The physical parts of it, all the words connect to the fonua.

BD: What is the importance of doing that?

GL: It’s important, because you can say things like “empty”. The fonua is the part that makes it real. Do you know what I mean? You can talk through your choices of language, but its still “empty”, like an empty vessel. But when the fonua is there, it’s all coming from here [points to heart] then you feel it. The feelings are there when the fonua is there.

BD: Which creates māfana?

GL: Yes. Because anyone can talk or read a poem. But until you do that in the most decorative way, it still has nothing inside. It’s something like, there is no content inside, it’s like an empty bottle. But the fonua is the feelings that fill the inside of it.

BD: Is lea tu'ufonua or lea fakafonua a contributing factor?

GL: Yes. Because it is more like the roots. Those are the real roots of every and all the stories using those. Because sometimes you can [long pause] “look you know its cheap, thats some cheap shit”, it’s a cheap thing. But when you use those lines, lea fakafonua, lea tu'ufonua, it connects you to the roots. And the roots are what keeps a tree from collapsing.

BD: Tu'u means to stand firm or to stand strong, and with this understanding, I think of the trees that provide us with sustenance and even the buildings that now in many cases supply us with work. The tree, no matter the species, wether it be narrow or broad, short or tall, the roots of said tree is of the upmost significance, as the roots not only provide the tree with nourishment, but prevent the tree from collapsing. The deeper the roots the stronger the tree.
GL: YES! Its like, just look at the trees. If you don’t really use the tu'ufonua, it’s like your talking in the level of the branches and leaves. But when you use the lea tu'ufonua, it’s all from the roots.

BD: So what is a lea tu'ufonua for you?

GL: Lea tu'ufonua is its more like the original, the root, or the truth, the truth of the story; of being, why I am a Tongan, that is what ties me strong to this country so called Tonga.

BD: So lea tu'ufonua are Tongan words?

GL: Yes. because the lea, the word itself doesn't breathe until you know it very well, you understand and absorb the meaning of it, it’s not just a word. But is has to tie to the roots, from the heart, from everything.

BD: Does the cultural concept of tauhi vā play into this concept?

GL: Yes.

BD: How?

GL: Tauhi vā and the Tongan language is beautiful in my own judgement, because it has a lot of respective views in living among society. Because most of the words, the lea tu'ufonua, talk about how we are interrelated in one community living here in Tonga, moving from a smaller unit into the bigger circle of the community; going from the family into the kāinga... As the circle grows bigger and the tauhi vā as you know how to interrelate it from the smaller unit into the bigger one. So the lea tu'ufonua, you really need to use it to bring together all these communal circles in a respective way of keeping the ties among them... Thats why they are very
metaphoric... That’s the interrelation of the tauhi vā...This is part of the punake in some ways of their writing.

BD: So that makes me think of the relationship between lea faka-Tonga and the fonua. Is there a relationship? If there is, what do you believe that relationship to be?

GL: The relationship, it’s only meaningful if the fonua is there. It’s meaningless if it’s just blah blah blah in the language. But the language is an element of the fonua... People create the wordings depending on the timelines, and that’s the scary part. The lea faka-Tonga will start diminishing and be replaced with the new activities of the fonua. Because in those days, the traditional wordings, all originated from the practice of those days. Am I right?

Gary is saying so much here. It can take some time to really understand just how deep and spiritual his thoughts are, otherworldly really. Lea faka-Tonga is a vaka, carrying the koloa tuku, tofi’a and the fonua. But when one uses lea ohi, the vaka or “vessel” as Gary calls it, becomes empty. Comparing lea to the roots of a tree, Gary paints an exquisite image that is challenging for me to ignore. But he takes the analogy to the next level by monetizing lea, indicating language with lea ohi is some “cheap shit”. This is a level of honesty from punake regarding lea ohi, and it is difficult to ignore the passion and intimacy Gary has with lea and continued to share more thoughts about lea ohi and the creation of words. But I wonder, would he call Queen Sālote’s work as such?

GL: The borrowed words to me, are used right, only if there is the meaning of the words were not from right here in Tonga. But if it’s something new,
technologically new to the island, then hey, what else can we say? Because we never had that before in Tonga. But the culture that is flowing around, you can carry the culture in music... I think it’s all imposed with the timing, and also, the capturing of the moment of the words. Cause a lot of people, we can do that as you say [create words]. But I think Tongans are lazy nowadays, especially the last ten years. Sometimes Tongan wordings are a little too long and the mindset is different nowadays. Instead of believing in it and saying let’s call it papatongi, let’s call it this way.

BD: It’s affecting Mālō e lelei as well. People are now saying Māleí.

GL: Everyone is saying hello nowadays too. I don’t see anyone say Mālō e lelei. I think the mindset has to be different. Nowadays they need to implement it throughout the educational system. The words choices in lea faka-Tonga. They’re the ones that are teaching and they are the ones setting the syllabus for the kids. So the new generation adopted a new generation of using those words. Because otherwise, everybody will be very confused. It’s very confusing. Especially the key people, the people that people will look at, and let it be practiced not only at work but also at home. But everyone is having the English mindset. I tell you... go into a coffee shop, you go into anything, the menus are all in English. It’s interesting when you go into Asia, they keep it to their own language...It’s the best thing to hear. The sweetest thing to hear is English nowadays. We have to really change and help with the mindset of the people.

BD: How do we do that?
GL: We need to do a big convene at home and the village. Because it’s not only about studying the language, you have to do it in the whole concept of living. Daily life in a way that the people will like it. Because English is everywhere and English is your identity. You’re a better person. You’re rich, your a high person of the society. You are first class from a first class family, because you speak English. Going to Tonga school, if you speak English, you are from an elite family and are in the elite class because you speak English.

BD: So what you are saying is that essentially, Tonga is devaluing Tongan?

GL: Yes. And the kids go practicing. ‘Oku sai e kau leka nau lea faka-pālangi, and the kids are not really good in English. Vale koa! They are dumb because they don’t speak English. It’s a clash in the classic division of the community... the Chinese don’t care what is in English. But they are out there, they are doing good in the economy and all those things. So Tonga, it’s gonna be kind of scary because it’s either confused or conflicted. I did an essay that I wrote, I published this essay a long time ago, 1992 or 3. The evolution of the word so called ‘ofa‘anga. And how do Tongans, with time, call to their sweet hearts. So I reflected that in the 50’s and the slang that was used to reflect the emotion, and in the 50’s it was fo‘i ‘ate. If you see a girl and start dating her, fo‘i ‘ate. And when fo‘i ‘ate started, like today, Tongans loved food. But they will see that Tongans were eating and depended on a diet that were local foods, fishing and farming and raising up your own pigs and fowls. So, the diet in those days
very so good, and people ate fish a lot, and fo‘i ‘ate lolo. ‘Ate is the liver of a
big fish, and the liver was the top, the top sirloin of the catch. So everybody
loves it and praises the fo‘i ‘ate lolo. When you have a big fish, it’s often
seen as the best thing, and fo‘i ‘ate is the same. When they see somebody
that is the top sirloin of the catch, that they love and praise as their sweet
heart. In the 60’s they called it fo‘i mafo. So the concept of food and diet is
still their, because people like the mafo of the pulu or the puaka to eat. But
at the same time, we understand pālangi concepts coming in. Then into
the 70’s, sō. So I tried to look where the word sō started. You know when
you see someone you’re dating, sō, sō a naua. So to me, sō, it is a sweet
word, sōsō (intensified). In the 70’s they use to have a lot of celebrations.
National big celebrations, and celebrations in Fiji is sōsō. This is where
men and women mix and mingle together and do their little thing. So the
Tongans said, “tau o sōsō!” Lets go and sōsō, and hanging around boys and
girls called each other sō. Towards the end of the 70’s and into the 80’s
fo‘imafo was being carried from ear to ear and sō was still hanging around.
But the one that really impacted was the moa in the early 90’s. And I see
this as being caused as by the change in the diet from the sipi to the
American chicken and the American word “Chick” [for “thats my chick”].
It was a combination of both, but still with the food. Everyone was a sipi
generation, now it is a moa generation. So people like to eat moa
nowadays. But at the same time, my chick, thats how it is. So when we
come to the millennium, what will they say? They call it cousin now,
hahahaha. But that has been the evolution, and from time to time, it is 
impacted by the invading and surrounding activities, the tā and vā.
The punake of Tonga have a remarkable history in Tongan society, constantly reflecting 
the times, but grounding themselves in nature and their predecessors. Lea tuʻufonua 
and lea fakafonua are real ethereal Tongan ideologies shared amongst the punake and 
applying these concepts allows one to tauhi the vā of the fonua, as there is indigenous 
knowledge, history, stories, and identity embedded in them. Using “Tonganized” 
English words in one’s Tongan speech/poetry is crippling the language, the culture, and 
the understanding of colonization in Tonga. Using lea ohi is not just an easy way out, 
but causes Tongan thought, understanding, and interpretation to be lost. English is 
contaminating lea faka-Tonga which in turn is weakening the roots that hold and bond 
one to Tonga. This is having a negative effect on the tā and vā of the fonua, as well as the 
social stability of Tonga. It is changing the way one interacts with Tongan space and 
time. Some punake are ready to face the challenges head on, monitoring and leading lea 
faka-Tonga to its rightful place in Tonga’s legacy.
Conclusion

There are all sorts of suggestions regarding action scholarship and community returns, but the basis of this thesis is that I join Otsuka in caring and worrying that Tongan is not as safe a language in this modern connected age of continuous language loss and language shift. Is Tongan as safe as people might suggest? Or is Tongan as Otsuka suggests, truly endangered? The punake are in essence, one dimension of anga faka-Tonga that I have discussed as being both active, as there are both classical and contemporary punake doing works in traditional and educational realms. And although the punake do not universally agree on topics of language loss and the influence of English, Tongan is at some degree of risk because of the shift in use of lea ohi.

In Chapter 1 the exploitation of language is discussed and this exploitation diminishes one’s own belief in themselves and their heritage. This changes the perception of what struggle and moral rightness is by contributing to cultural decline. In cases such as Tonga, unprogressive leadership is a form of colonialism. It focuses on global capital at the behest of Western influences. Such Western economic pressures have led to oppression on the native lower class and those have led to riots.

Languages all over the world are vanishing at alarming rates and especially so with “English Only” policies that perpetuate the fascinating conquest of a Western education. English has become a status symbol actively being chosen by Tongans, and symbolically approximates to a ticket out of indigenous non-western world, and in some cases, spurns indigenous knowledge to the grave. Indigenous knowledge embeds both the past and the present and is viewed as being more reliable than non-indigenous
sources. Non-indigenous knowledge through English, is creeping in with an eagerness of assimilation with the desire to be “cool” and socially fashionable.

Small speech communities such as Tonga, are using English in their parliament and governmental functions, seemingly appeasing those that can bring economic gain. Tonga has officially pronounced English, a foreign language, as an official language of the kingdom. Ironically, they have done so in the face of its leaders proclaiming that losing their heritage language equates to losing their culture; with gratuitous borrowing directly contributing to language loss. This refusal is letting go of things that are a part of Tongan culture, changing and altering ones self perception and their place in the world. Language is inseparable from culture and carries the cultural values of a people through oratory and literary practices.

Languages and cultures divide the world differently one from another with language contributing to ones identity and even progeny. Lea faka-Tonga has diminished as a primary language of instruction in school, but contributes to one being a complete being. Unfortunately however, syncretic language use has, in some cases, come to be a more natural way of speaking and conversely, unnatural to speak a heritage language void of foreign language influence. This syncretic eagerness intends to negotiate for better treatment from other nations, but instead weakens the argument(s) of colonialism never occurring.

Choosing outside languages by using borrowed words, contributes to language shift and language change in addition to redefining the understanding of natural language growth. Tonga has become heavily influenced, possibly overwhelmed, by the dominant culture coming from English, engaged in an almost unrecognizable
evaporation of both its heritage language and culture. So much so, that speaking Tongan is often followed by swift punishment at school and as a result is polarizing those who do not speak English well and dividing the country into the speakers and non-speakers. It is not considered shameful for a Tongan person to be unable to speak Tongan fluently. Rather, they are praised for it. This is presumably because such individuals are from affluent families (who can afford to live abroad). The polarizing has become so intense, that to some it may feel strange to speak their heritage language without using borrowed words, a pure language.

Borrowing English words in such large amounts is now leading to the eradication of native words that are indeed perfect equivalents. But the process of borrowing is still being viewed as “harmless”. Language purism exists in Tonga and is a specific way of talking; speaking pure Tongan shows fakaʻapaʻapa and additionally does so to the layered hierarchical society in Tonga. In Tonga there are various ways of talking before any thought of using a borrowed word should be given any attention. These are found in the many levels in Tongan language and Tongan society.

In Chapter 2 I conveyed that the punake of Tonga hold the keys to faiva through poetry, music, and dance, but additionally, they hold the keys to the great idiomatic knowledge of lea faka-Tonga. The poetry of the punake integrates both tā and vā by creating beauty from chaos. Their poetry has continuously grown and builds from one period to another, carrying on the indigenous knowledge of Tongan traditional history, dance, language, fonua, and music. Punake measure their poetic art through mālie and māfana, testifying on behalf of Tongan values through Tongan time and Tongan space.
Punake embrace Tongan life through faiva, reinforcing those Tongan values, binding society together.

The punake are special artists who intently strengthen the relationship(s) with Tongan deities, as punake fly high in the heavens (puna–hake). Having unique relationships with fonua, language, and society, punake are the Tongan patrons of art, the guardians of culture, and the purveyors of language and Tongan orality. Punake draw from native objects and as such, lead Tongan thought and speech through the centrality of the fonua. By using the cultural element of tauhi vā, the punake bind themselves and lea faka-Tonga harmoniously to the land in which they derive. Building on the harmony they create, punake to a greater extent, humanize the fonua through social, emotional, economic and political relationships, once again binding them to the fonua.

Through the use of heliaki the punake apply imagery and cultural symbolism into artistic linguistic balance by reinforcing tauhi vā, reminding us that all things in nature, mind, and society are indeed eternal relationships. This is further supported by oratory, dance, and literature. However, a virtual absence of written literature by punake and even Tongan language in general, is minimizing the influence of the old giving more prevalence to the media personalities of the current generation. The role of punake is to create linguistic art that binds people to Tonga, but language shift and the use of English borrowed words in poetry is making this role difficult to accomplish. English is gaining powerful influence that is considered to be inspirational and is pushing out the use of lea tuʻufonua.
In chapter 3 I discovered Tongan words that point to an ethereal relationship between language and land found in the words tu'ufonua and fakafonua, that today’s punake too recognize and support. I showed that Queen Sālote popularized the use of lea ohi, but this has divided Tongans in appreciating the lea ohi with some being angered by their use. Old colonial beliefs that suggest Tongan does not have enough intelligence to express itself through Tongan thought still permeate everyday conversations. Furthermore, using lea tu'ufonua exists, but does not come into any depth until form six, when students begin to translate English to Tongan.

Puanke shared that if one was to use real Tongan words, then they are practicing tauhi vā with the fonua. Academically, children are placed in the hands of teachers in classrooms and rarely receive the guidance from experienced punake, who are essential in maintaining the vā of the fonua. This is important to consider as lea tu'ufonua provides embedded historical information and stories. Punake have also expressed a desire if not a need for more documentation to make the passing down of indigenous knowledge to this next generation more appealing.

I highlighted that many punake have used lea ohi purely for the purpose of rhyming and sound. Older more experienced punake used the spirits of the ancestors in conjunction with the fonua to receive guidance in finding the right words to use. This adds levity to the relationship between lea faka-Tonga and the fonua. By punake knowing the history and origins of words, they can more adequately choose the more acceptable lea ohi that are often nouns not readily found or used in Tonga, such as an Atomic bomb. Queen Sālote, who became so influential in her use of the lea ohi, received an entirely different and uncommon academic experience from that of her
Tongan peers by undergoing an education with a strong emphasis in English. Queen Sālote used lea ohi to express her feelings and elevate her status, but more than that, she understood the English meanings of the words she was borrowing, magnifying her majestic compositions.

Like Queen Sālote, one who borrows words must know what the words mean and not just take the easy way out, be lazy, and “Tonganize” it. For in using lea tuʻufonua is Tongan thought, understanding, and interpretation. Borrowing may be causing these to be lost. Or their loss (and replacement with non-indigenous counterparts) may lead to the use of borrowing. Punake have traditionally always done what is asked of them, using the lea tuʻufonua to bind themselves to Tonga in much the same way one is bound to Tonga by wearing the taʻovala with the kafa. The use of Punake has declined though, and today, lea tupuʻi are not being learned and borrowing English words seems to be taking over. Punake recognize that there is ancestral power in using the lea tupuʻi and lea tuʻufonua and doing so allows one to tauhi lea faka-Tonga and the fonua simultaneously.

The Punake that I interviewed believe that when one lea faka-Tonga using the lea fakafonua and the lea tuʻufonua, one is being connected to the fonua, as if the lea is the umbilical cord. But unfortunately, people are just doing whatever they want, minimizing the relationship with the fonua, not caring for Tongan and caring more for borrowed words. Building on this thought, using lea ohi is essentially practicing tauhi vā with another language and another fonua. Furthermore, this is perpetuated by the media, as more leaders should speak traditional Tongan, rather than having it relegated to a formal kava ceremony.
Finally, punake expressed that the responsibility to create a wider Tongan language practicing space that lies in the hands of the leaders, but should indeed be led by punake, as the work of punake is the best tool to prolong Tonga’s legacy, language, and identity. A possible suggested role for punake is being a language monitor of sorts limiting, if not controlling, the rate at which language change occurs. This would combat the lea ohi corrupting Tongan in the same way soy sauce corrupts lū. But would the society at large follow their instructions? How influential are punake today? Nevertheless, the Punake I interviewed believe that we must take the necessary efforts to learn the deeper meanings of Tongan words to create a more potent and efficacious relationship with lea faka-Tonga.

The culture too is shifting away from its more traditional ways. American hip-hop is polarizing those who tauʻolunga, creating new stereotypes amongst the community with “traditional” being fobish. This has led punake to believe that Tonga is being colonized though western concepts rather than overt power. Tongans are distancing themselves from the fonua. To punake, the fonua is what holds you up, makes the language real, and the fonua is what holds the roots that keep the tree from collapsing. Speaking lea tuʻufonua, in the level of the roots and not in the level of the leaves, ties and “roots” one to Tonga.

Punake suggest that Tongan speakers cannot and should not let English determine their identity and class. Tongan language is affected by both the tā and the vā. It is affected by the social activities and by society itself. So if Tonga comes first, then the tā and the vā of Tonga too will come first. Tauhi vā is the key. Practicing tauhi vā with
the fonua by using lea tuʻufonua, lea fakafonua and lea tupuʻi, carries the koloa tuku, the tofiʻa, and the fonua.

Finally, I note that there are other viewpoints that this research encountered and began to engage with but which did not become primary or, even, particularly focal discussions in this thesis. Indeed, this thesis bumped into a number of things along the way with which future work may want to engage. Notably, I did not give an concrete analysis of the poetry by punake. Future work might, for instance, collect 30-100 poems of punake and explore those poems for how land metaphors are used and then compare those poems and how land metaphors are used within them to the things that punake are actually saying and the language ideologies evident in the interviews I documented and began to analyze in this work.

Equally intriguingly, if one wanted to understand linguistic borrowing and it’s impacts and consequences, one would need to produce an historical account of borrowing in Tonga. What was borrowed in the past vs what is being borrowed now, what kinds of things are borrowed, in what context were they used, and how has borrowing moving into or out of punake poetry vs everyday speech would clearly be highly valuable questions to explore. Similarly, speech levels deserve additional attention and have not been completely resolved by recent fieldworkers in linguistic anthropology such as Völkel or Bennardo.244 One significant and timely question that requires attention: are the punake increasingly writing poems in the democratized speech level in the present moment? Do the punake themselves evidence the democratization of Tongan society in a way not normally associated with Oceanic

poetry? Is the fact that the punake are no longer only chiefs and queens but are everyday citizens significant? Do we see in this very interesting way of life evidence of the broader influence of the democratization of Tongan society?

I want to articulate the points that I made above. However, at the root of things, I am honestly quite concerned about the future of lea faka-Tonga. I encourage local language workers, community activists, and especially punake to attend to the centrality, beauty, potency of the lea tu'ufonua an other language ideologies I have identified in the thoughts of the punake and in the Tongan speech practices as central to the health and vitality Tongan language. Poetry and the art of the punake is a critical feature of Tongan culture and social heritage.

Ultimately, I want to be a little prescriptive in addition to the analytical work that constituted this thesis. My Tongan speaking friends, guard and arm yourselves for the future as poets of lea faka-Tonga. Please listen to those indigenous voices that this work is definitely in conversations with: Māhina, Helu, and wa Thiong’o. Realize that things are changing. But most importantly, consider that there are ways of caring and carrying Tongan into the future generations.
**Glossary**

The Tongan language has twelve consonants (f h l m n ng p s t v ’) and five vowels (i e a o u), roughly identical to the sounds of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) that are written with the same symbols, except for ng, which is a velar nasal (IPA n), and the inverted apostrophe, which represents a glottal stop. Vowels can be phonemically long, in which case the letter is superposed with a macron (e.g., ā ē ī ō ū). This orthography is standardized by the Privy Council of Tonga, 1943. Standard reference works on the language continue to be C. Maxwell Churchward’s *Tongan Grammar* (1953) and *Tongan Dictionary* (1959).

The definitions contained within the following glossary are taken by the Standard reference works of Churchward’s grammar and dictionary. There are a few words not contained within those standards, most of which being more recent lea ohi. The definitions for these non-defined words come from Taumoefolau, punake featured in this thesis, and myself.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>terme</th>
<th>definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>anga</td>
<td>n., habit, custom, nature, quality, character, characteristic; way, form, style, manner, method; behavior, conduct, demeanor, way(s) of acting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>atu</td>
<td>adv., hence, away from here, out, forth, outwards, onwards; to or towards you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>faʻitoka</td>
<td>n., cemetery, graveyard; grave (i.e., grave-top, the hole being called fonua.</td>
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<tr>
<td>faʻu</td>
<td>v.t., to bring into existence; to make, construct, put together; to build (canoe, boat, etc.); to found, institute; to formulate, draw up, make, bring in (a law, etc.); to compose; to write.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fai</td>
<td>v.t. or i., to do, etc As v.t., to do, to attend to, to carry out, carry on with, engage in, perform.</td>
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<tr>
<td>faiako</td>
<td>n., school-teacher.</td>
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<tr>
<td>faikava</td>
<td>v.i., to prepare and drink kava together with due form or ceremony.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faikava</td>
<td>n., Scholarly journal that sought to provide a forum for writers, poets and critics and to make their work accessible to a wider audience. Ten volumes beginning in 1978. Faikava was published twice a year. Contributions were submitted to its editorial team: Futa Helu, Epeli Hauʻofa, Thomas Schneider, and Konai Helu Thaman. Its final publication was December of 1983.</td>
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<tr>
<td>faiva</td>
<td>n., work, task, feat, or game, etc., requiring skill or ability; trade, craft; performance, play, drama, item (at a concert, etc); entertainment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>faka-</td>
<td>prefix denoting likeness, causation (causing or allowing to), supplying, having, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>faka-Tonga</td>
<td>aa., Tongan, like or pertaining to Tongans, in the Tongan manner, etc Hence: lea faka-Tonga, to speak Tongan, or (as n.) Tongan word or Tongan language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fakahouhouʻeiki</td>
<td>way of talking to or about chiefly people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fakaʻakiʻakimui</td>
<td>v.i., to speak in a self-disparaging way or in self- derogatory terms; to pretend or pro fess inability or unworthiness, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fakaʻamu</td>
<td>v.i., to wish, to long, to hope (wistfully).</td>
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<td>Term</td>
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<tr>
<td>faka'amu mei</td>
<td>v.i., to wish or long for mei.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faka'apa'apa</td>
<td>v.i., to do homage or obeisance (to, ki); to show deference or respect or courtesy, to be deferential or courteous. Adj., showing deference or respect, courteous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faka'ilonga</td>
<td>v.t. (‘-i), to make a mark on, to mark, to distinguish by means of a mark or sign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faka'ilonga taimi</td>
<td>v.t. (‘-i), to make a mark on, to mark, to distinguish by means of a mark or sign in time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fakalāngilangi</td>
<td>v.t., to give splendor to, to grace, to honor, to glorify.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fakamamafa</td>
<td>v.t. (‘-i), to make heavy (lit. or fig.); to stress or emphasize; to take seriously, to regard as a matter of importance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fakamamafa pau</td>
<td>n., the definitive accent. Fundamentally the distinction between the ordinary form of a Tongan word and its definitive form corresponds to the distinction between the two ‘phases’ of Tongan words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fakamatāpule</td>
<td>aa., like or pertaining to a matāpule; gentlemanly, in a gentlemanly manner. V.i., to act and speak in a gentlemanly way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fakapikopiko</td>
<td>a.v.i., to be lazy or slothful. Adv., lazily.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fakatākilalo</td>
<td>self derogatory way of talking when addressing those of higher rank.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fakatangi</td>
<td>a.v.i., having a doleful sound, sounding like a lament.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fakatapu</td>
<td>v., perhaps only in the expression hangē ko ia kuo ‘osi fakatapū or hangē kuo (or koú u) ‘osi fakatapú, often interpolated in a speech to avoid repeating an apologetic tapu mo. Cp. fakataputapu.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fakataputapu</td>
<td>v.t., to set apart as sacred, to make or declare to be sacred or holy, to dedicate or sanctify.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fakateki</td>
<td>v.i., to move the head suddenly (intentionally, as in certain kinds of dances or action songs): deliberately. of teki.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fakatolonga</td>
<td>v.t. (‘-i), to cause to last or endure, to preserve, or to embalm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fakatu'ī</td>
<td>aa., like a king, as befits a king, kingly, royal(ly).</td>
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<tr>
<td>fakatu'utāmaki</td>
<td>a.v.i., causing or liable to cause disaster; disastrous or dangerous or noxious. N., danger; disaster, accident.</td>
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<td>Word</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>fakau'a</td>
<td>n., glottal stop. (´)</td>
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<tr>
<td>faki</td>
<td>v.t. (-'i, -a), to pick or pluck, esp. a banana or plantain or a coconut. faki implies more force.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fale pa’anga</td>
<td>treasury. Cp. pangike.</td>
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<tr>
<td>famili</td>
<td>n., family (lit. or fig.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>fasi</td>
<td>n., tune or air (melody).</td>
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<tr>
<td>fatongia</td>
<td>n., duty, obligation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fefine</td>
<td>n., woman or girl.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fefine'i fonua</td>
<td>n., woman who really belongs to the country, or female citizen. Cp. tangata’ifonua.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feleniti</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word adj., friendly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fesi</td>
<td>v.t. (-'i), to break (a stick, rod, etc).</td>
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<tr>
<td>fetau</td>
<td>v.i., to engage in repartee.</td>
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<tr>
<td>filasofi</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., philosophy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fob</td>
<td>colloquial derogatory slur for a Tongan being Fresh Off the Boat, F.O.B.</td>
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<tr>
<td>fo'i</td>
<td>single, individual.</td>
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<tr>
<td>folau</td>
<td>v.i., to voyage, to travel or journey by sea. N., voyage, voyagers).</td>
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<tr>
<td>fonua</td>
<td>cn., land, country, territory, place; people (of the land, etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>funga</td>
<td>n., top, upper surface; lap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ha'a</td>
<td>(a) p.n. (preposed), persons having the rank or status of; (b) l.n. (preposed), descendants of (kings, etc.); (c) en., people, race, tribe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha'amonga</td>
<td>n., the famous prehistoric trilithon between Kolonga and Niutoua (on Tongatapu).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ha'u</td>
<td>v.i., to come; to leave (when coming), begin to come, come away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haka</td>
<td>v.i., to move the hands rhythmically, esp. while singing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>hake</td>
<td>adv., up, upwards, along, past, etc.; v.i., to go up, esp. from the sea to the land.</td>
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<tr>
<td>hala</td>
<td>v.i., (of king or queen) to die.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>hanga</td>
<td>v.i., to turn (so as to face in a specified direction).</td>
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<tr>
<td>heilala</td>
<td>n., k. flowering tree, inc. h. pulu, which bears fruit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heliaki</td>
<td>v.i., or v.t. with lea, talanoa, fakamatala, etc., as obj., or adv.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>qualifying lea, etc, to speak ironically, or to say one thing and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mean another.</td>
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<tr>
<td>hiva</td>
<td>v.i., to sing. N., singing; song; singer; choir.</td>
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<tr>
<td>hiva kakala</td>
<td>n. or v.i., (to sing a) love song.</td>
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<tr>
<td>hohoko</td>
<td>n., lineage, genealogy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hoku</td>
<td>def., 1 exc. sg., my.</td>
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<tr>
<td>hou'eiki</td>
<td>n. (often p.n.), chiefs, pi. of 'eiki. In public speaking it is often</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>equiv. to 'gentlemen' or 'ladies and gentlemen' or 'you.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hualea</td>
<td>v.i., to make offensive jokes, to be humorous in an offensive or</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vulgar way.</td>
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<tr>
<td>'alu</td>
<td>v.i, to go (of persons, etc., or of a road).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'ala</td>
<td>suffix forming nouns from verbs. (Such nouns normally take the</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>objective forms of the possessives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>'ate</td>
<td>n., liver. Fig., star performer (sometimes 'ate lolo).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atenisi</td>
<td>n., university in Nuku'alofa; transliteration of Athens in Greece.</td>
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<tr>
<td>'ātomi</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., atom. Adj., s.u. pomi.</td>
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<tr>
<td>'aupito</td>
<td>adv., very, extremely, wholly, completely; altogether.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eiliopileini</td>
<td>possible colloquial transliteration of airplane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iate</td>
<td>colloquial term for “yard” work, but is often applied to the</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>majority of manual labor work jobs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>'ilo</td>
<td>v.i. and t., hon. for kai, to eat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>io</td>
<td>interj., yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'ipiseli</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., epistle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'ita</td>
<td>v.i., to be angry. N., anger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ofa'anga</td>
<td>n., object of affection, darling, sweetheart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ōkani</td>
<td>n., organ.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>ʻoku</td>
<td>sign of the so-called present tense: but 'concurrent' would be a better term, since its essential mg. is concurrence with, or going on at, the time (or point of time) referred to, whether it be present, past, or future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʻotua/ʻOtua</td>
<td>n., object of worship, deity, god; (cap.) God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>univesi</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʻunu</td>
<td>v.i., to move over or along.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʻuta</td>
<td>n., land (not sea); interior or in land (not coast).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kafa</td>
<td>n., sennit (string or rope made of coconut fiber).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kai</td>
<td>v.g., to eat; (of fish) to bite (at the bait).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kailao</td>
<td>n. or v.i., (to perform a) k. war-dance in which clubs are thrown up (and caught) with a quick twisting motion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kāinga</td>
<td>n., relation, relative; brother or sister in the sense of comrade or compatriot, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kakai</td>
<td>n., people (collectively).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kakala</td>
<td>n., sweet-smelling flowers, or trees or plants bearing sweet-smelling flowers, of any kind; (poetical) girl, maiden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kau</td>
<td>sign of pl., before nouns denoting persons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kava</td>
<td>n., kava: either the plant (Piper methysticum) or the beverage made from its crushed root.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kavenga</td>
<td>n., burden, load; responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keisi</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., case.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>koloa tuku</td>
<td>n., something left to a person in a will, legacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>komipiutā</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., a computer keyboard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>koula</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n. or adj., gold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kuo</td>
<td>sign of the so-called perfect tense, but often equiv. to the E. present or (in narrative) past. Essentially it indicates transition from not being to being, from not happening to happening, or from not doing to doing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lahi</td>
<td>a.v.i., big, large, great, or big enough; old, older (elder), oldest (eldest); head, senior, as in matapule I., head or senior prefect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>lakalaka</td>
<td>k. ballet or action song performed while standing (cp. mā'ulu'ulu). V.i., to perform a lakalaka.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>langi</td>
<td>n., sky; heaven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fāngilangi</td>
<td>n., splendor, glory, honor, magnificence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lau</td>
<td>v.t., to consider, regard, reckon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laulausiva</td>
<td>Sāmoan v.i., (in a mā'ulu'ulu) to recite or sing the words before the action begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laumātanga</td>
<td>The third piece of a fakatapu, the laumātanga, in which the punake recounts all the beautiful spots, historical sites, and the parts of the locality/tonua.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lea</td>
<td>v.i., to speak; to utter or make or produce a sound. N., word (often fo'i lea).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lea muli</td>
<td>speaking the word(s) of another country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lea ohi</td>
<td>n., borrowed word, adopted word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lea tavale</td>
<td>way of talking to a person with whom one is familiar with or with whom one is socially equal, or way of talking to or about commoners (tu'a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lea tu'u fonua</td>
<td>to speak in a way that roots one to the land (Tonga).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lea tupu'i</td>
<td>to speak the original language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lolo</td>
<td>n., oil (cp. lolo milimili, lolo pani); sauce (of native puddings: cp. kelevi). V.i., to taste oily (also ifo lolo).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lū</td>
<td>n., taro leaves used as food. Hence: lū pulu, beef wrapped in taro leaves and cooked; lū ika, fish so treated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lū pulu</td>
<td>n., beef wrapped in taro leaves and cooked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maaau</td>
<td>n., poem (pl. ngaahi m.); poet (pl. kau m.); poetry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>māfana</td>
<td>a.v.i., warm (inwardly, subjectively); warm, such as warms us (of country, time, day, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mā'ulu'ulu</td>
<td>n., k. action song sung by a company of singers while sitting down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ma'uma'u</td>
<td>v.i., (a) in m. pē, to be more or less successful (in catching, getting, or learning); (b) in m. mai (or atu, or ange).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malanga</td>
<td>v.i., to make a public speech or to preach.</td>
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<tr>
<td>malei</td>
<td>colloquial term, short for mālō e lelei.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mālie</td>
<td>a.v.i., good, pleasing, pleasant, such as one likes or enjoys; interesting; advantageous, fortunate, helpful; fine, splendid; commendable, admirable, very satisfactory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mālō</td>
<td>Thank you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mālō e lelei</td>
<td>A general greeting, equivalent to 'Good morning' or 'Good afternoon' or 'Glad to see you'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>māmāni</td>
<td>l.n., the world, this world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manatu</td>
<td>v.i., to think of, call to mind, remember, or bear in mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masiʻi</td>
<td>pn., Boy! (short for tamasiʻi).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mātanga</td>
<td>n., something well worth looking at because of its scenic beauty or its historical associations, etc.; beauty-spot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>matāpule</td>
<td>n., man of honorable rank or status; minor chief; chief's attendant and spokesman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mate</td>
<td>v.i., to die; s.s. to be stunned or quite unconscious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meʻalaufola</td>
<td>n., dance, precursor to the lakalaka.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meʻetuʻupaki</td>
<td>n. or v.i., (to perform a) k. dance in which short flat clubs or paddles called paki are used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mei</td>
<td>n., breadfruit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moa</td>
<td>n., fowl, cock, rooster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mohe</td>
<td>v.i., to sleep, be asleep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moʻoni</td>
<td>a.v.i., true; genuine, real, actual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moʻunga</td>
<td>n., hill, mountain; fig., person to whom we look for support or protection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muli</td>
<td>l.n., another country, place out side of Tonga.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nafa</td>
<td>n., drum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nau</td>
<td>cp., 3 pi., they.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>naua</td>
<td>ki-naua., 3 dl., them, they.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ngaahi</td>
<td>sign of plural (preposed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>nonoʻo</td>
<td>v.t., to tie, tie on, or tie up, or lace up; to tether.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ohi</td>
<td>v.t. (-ʻi, -a), to adopt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ongo</td>
<td>sign of dual number.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paipa</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., pipe; tube; tap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>palangi</td>
<td>see papālangi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>palataisi</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., paradise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>palatiumi</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., platinum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>palomesi</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word v.i, to promise. Christianity often refers a covenant as a two way promise. Typically between one and God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>palovitenisi</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word adj., providential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>panike</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., bank.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>papa</td>
<td>n., sawn timber, plank(s), board(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>papālangi</td>
<td>n. or adj., European, (person) belonging to any white-skinned race.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>papatongi</td>
<td>suggested colloquial term for a computer keyboard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasifiki</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word pn., Pacific.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pau</td>
<td>a.v.i., without doubt or uncertainty; certain, definite; settled, determined, decided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English name pn., Paul.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pē</td>
<td>adv., only, neither more nor less nor other nor otherwise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peesi</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., page (of a book).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pefeumi</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., perfume.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pekia</td>
<td>v.i, to die, etc., hon. for mate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poʻuli</td>
<td>n., night, darkness, lit. or fig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pomu</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., bomb, originally pomi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pua</td>
<td>n., k. flowering bush. Fragrea berteriana.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>puaka</strong></td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., pig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>puaka toho</strong></td>
<td>adj., very very large pig (lit., dragged, i.e., so large that it has to be dragged along).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pukepuke</strong></td>
<td>v.t., to hold on to or keep hold of (lit. or fig.), to retain or maintain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pukepuke fonua</strong></td>
<td>v.t., to hold on to or keep hold of the fonua (lit. or fig.), to retain or maintain the founa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pulotu</strong></td>
<td>n., composer of songs or dances. Cp. punake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pulotu</strong></td>
<td>l.n., the underworld, the abode of the dead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pulu</strong></td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., bull.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>puna</strong></td>
<td>v.i., to fly; to leap, jump, spring, or bounce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>punake</strong></td>
<td>n., poem; poet. Cp. pulotu, maau, ta'anga, sipi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pusiaki'i</strong></td>
<td>v.t. (-i), to rear (a child or a young animal) away from its mother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>putu</strong></td>
<td>n., funeral rites (inc. the gathering of friends, etc., at the house).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sai</strong></td>
<td>v.i, to be good, good enough, unobjectionable, all right; to be good or suitable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sameloki</strong></td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., shamrock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>seniti</strong></td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., cent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>siale</strong></td>
<td>n., k. flowering bush: the gardenia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sio</strong></td>
<td>v.i. (At), to look, look at, or see.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sipi</strong></td>
<td>n., love poem, sentimental poem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sō</strong></td>
<td>v.i, (of boy and girl, or man and woman) to be sweet on each other, to be in love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sōkē</strong></td>
<td>n. or v.i., (to perform a) k. native dance somewhat like the kailao, but using long sticks instead of clubs. Also called vaka-eke and sōkē.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sola sisitemi</strong></td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., solar system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sōsō</strong></td>
<td>v.i, (of boy and girl, or man and woman) to be sweet on each other, to be in love.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tā</strong></td>
<td>to hit (in various senses), v.g., to hit, strike, beat, also taaʻi; to chop, to cut or carve (e.g., a canoe) by chopping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>taʻanga</strong></td>
<td>n., poem, esp. one intended to be sung in a lakalaka.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>taʻovala</strong></td>
<td>n., piece of matting worn round the waist over one's loin cloth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>taimī</strong></td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tala</strong></td>
<td>v.t., to tell, relate; to state, assert; to tell, command; to announce, or inform people of.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>talaʻiva</strong></td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., driver.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tangata</strong></td>
<td>n., man (human being), man (not woman), man (not boy).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tangataʻifonua</strong></td>
<td>n., native, or person who really belongs to the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tangi</strong></td>
<td>v.i, to cry, weep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tapa</strong></td>
<td>ngatu, n. tapa cloth (native cloth).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tapu</strong></td>
<td>a.v.i., forbidden, prohibited, unlawful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tata</strong></td>
<td>V.t. (-ʻt), to dab with a tata.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tatau</strong></td>
<td>v.i, to express thanks to one's host or hostess, or to those who have entertained one, just before leaving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tau</strong></td>
<td>1 inc. pi., we.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tauhi</strong></td>
<td>v.t., to tend, look after, take care of, or to minister to; to keep safe, preserve, observe, keep inviolate, maintain, to attend to, carry out, to serve or be faithful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tauhi fonua</strong></td>
<td>v.t., to tend, look after, take care of, or to minister to the fonua; to keep safe, preserve, observe, keep inviolate, maintain, to attend to, carry out, to serve or be faithful to the fonua.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tauhi vā</strong></td>
<td>keep safe, preserve, observe (e.g., the Sabbath), keep inviolate, maintain; to attend to, carry out, e.g., one's duties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tau'olunga</strong></td>
<td>n., k. individual action song (ula) introduced from Sāmoa. V.i., to perform a tau'olunga.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>taumafa</strong></td>
<td>v.g., regal for kai, to eat, inu, to drink.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>taumafa kava</strong></td>
<td>regal for inu kava, to drink kava, or for faikava (q.v.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tautahi</strong></td>
<td>v.i, to be continually swimming or bathing in the sea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tautau</td>
<td>v.t., to suspend, hang, hang up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tavale</td>
<td>adv., roughly, anyhow, without attention to order or measurement or exactitude, to any length or size, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tavale</td>
<td>adv., roughly, anyhow, without attention to order or measurement or exactitude, to any length or size, etc, in any old way, all over the place, without arrangement, indiscriminately, haphazard, at random.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teki</td>
<td>v.i, to move the head or look up suddenly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tiki</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., tick (mark).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tōfa</td>
<td>v.i, regal for mohe, to sleep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tofi’a</td>
<td>n., inheritance, heritage, patrimony, — in land or fig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toho</td>
<td>adj., very very large (lit., dragged, i.e., so large that it has to be dragged along).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toka</td>
<td>v.i., (of a boat) to run aground, or to rest at the bottom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tokoni</td>
<td>v.i. (ki), to help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tola</td>
<td>colloquial term for the English word n., dollar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toloi</td>
<td>v.t., to lengthen out, draw out, extend; to put off, postpone, defer, or adjourn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>n. or adj., south, l.n., Tonga, esp. Tongatapu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tongi</td>
<td>or tongitongi (r.cm.), v.g. (~i), to engrave or carve, or to cut notches or grooves or serrations or scallops in (wood or cloth, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tufunga</td>
<td>n., skilled workman, artisan, craftsman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu’a</td>
<td>n., back, space or place or time behind or beyond, back or rougher side or inner or under surface.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu’u</td>
<td>v.i, to stand, to be, to be situated; to be in existence, to have been set up or established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tu’ufonua</td>
<td>a.v.i., native, indigenous, or so long and well established as to seem so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tupu’anga</td>
<td>n., place where, or reason why,, something grows or originates, source, origin; progenitor, ancestor, forefather.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tupuʻi</td>
<td>lit., growing-of, original, aboriginal, belonging to (or dating from) the very beginning.</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukamea</td>
<td>n. or adj., iron or steel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vā</td>
<td>n., distance between, distance apart; fig., attitude, feeling, relationship, towards each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vahaʻa</td>
<td>n., intervening space or time; fig., relationship, mutual feeling or attitude.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaʻa</td>
<td>n., bough, branch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaʻavaʻa</td>
<td>a.v.i., having branches, branched, branching, lit. or fig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaka</td>
<td>n., boat, canoe, ship, of any kind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vakapuna</td>
<td>(lit., flying-boat), n., airship or airplane (of any type).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vale</td>
<td>a.v.i., foolish, silly, ignorant, unskilled, incapable, incompetent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vavaʻu</td>
<td>l.n., the most northerly of the three main island groups of Tonga.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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