

Culture, class and community

The application of heliaki (imagery) in Tongan songs and the roles of journalists and censorial punake in their censorship between the 1960s and the early 2000s.

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‘Epitaleki (Abstract)

Hiva kakala (kakala songs), which emerged as a distinctive Tongan genre during the late nineteenth century, became a major focus of censorship by the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) from the 1960s to the early 2000s. The process was characterised by both agreement and tension. Even Queen Sālote Tupou III, who was instrumental in the censorship process, did not always agree with censorial decisions to ban particular songs. Despite this complex history and its status as one of the richest repositories of Tongan language and literary artistry, hiva kakala has received little in-depth and rigorous scholarly investigation. This study investigates why hiva kakala were required to employ heliaki and undergo scrutiny, initially by censorial punake (composers) and later by journalists (kau faiongoongo), before radio broadcast.

The censorship served several principal purposes. It moderated offensive, culturally inappropriate, or otherwise objectionable content that might breach fetauhi‘aki, the practice that sustains the broader nofo ‘a kāinga which underpin the newly proposed kāinga–‘ulumotu‘a–mehekitanga (fahu) social stratification and the recognised kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i constitutional hierarchy. It also upheld heliaki as the defining literary and expressive framework of hiva kakala, enabling compositions to be shaped through the figurative potential of literal expressions. In addition, it moderated Western and other foreign influences by ensuring their culturally appropriate integration into hiva kakala. Throughout the investigation, the application of heliaki and the tensions surrounding it revealed conflicting interpretations that ultimately led this study to challenge longstanding misconceptions and address them through the standardisation and reconceptualisation of key cultural practices.

The study reconceptualises hiva kakala as a song genre fundamentally defined by the heliaki system. Accordingly, any song that does not exhibit a sufficient degree of heliaki should not be classified as hiva kakala. The song genre was profoundly shaped by the arrival of the early Christian missionaries particularly through their translation of hymns, the Holy Bible, and other religious texts into Tongan. Against this historical background, the study further establishes that heliaki, the defining literary system of hiva kakala, was substantially refined and further developed through engagement with the English figurative tradition. As no previous study has systematically accounted for this process of literary integration, the research also reconceptualises heliaki as a semantic–figurative system grounded in the intrinsic qualities of literal expressions. Within this system, heliaki is realised through imagery, symbolism, or figuration, which are expressed as lea heliaki (figurative language) and subsequently classified into particular lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech). Building on this framework, the study systematically classifies more than 30 lea ‘o e heliaki.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signature:

Date: 21.11.2025

This research was approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (ref: AUTEK 23/172)

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Sepitā 1: ‘Ilotakisoni (Introduction)

1.1 Kakala: From botanical meaning to heliaki

Literally denoting plant parts, kakala, the defining literary foundation of the hiva kakala genre that forms the focus of this study, has attracted increasing scholarly attention in recent decades as a dynamic cultural framework through which identity, expressive forms, and social relations are symbolically articulated. A body of scholarship (Havili, 2022; Wolfgramm, 2024; Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019) indicates that kakala encompasses flowers and other plant parts, as well as floral garlands and ornamental girdles. These scholars further distinguish these forms according to their fragrance. Those that are sweet-smelling are collectively categorised as kakala ‘eiki (superior or chiefly kakala), while those characterised by unpleasant odours or lacking fragrance are classified as kakala vale or kakala tu‘a (subordinate or common kakala) (see Section 4.3.2). Beyond these botanical distinctions, the literature also attributes figurative meanings to kakala. Kailahi (2017), for example, demonstrates the broader figurative range of kakala by using it to refer to a hingoa (honorific name) bestowed upon a matāpule (talking chief) (p. 3). Similarly, Churchward (1959) defines kakala figuratively as a “girl” or “maiden” (p. 249). Collectively, these studies indicate that the botanical classification of kakala reflects culturally embedded systems of value rather than merely physical characteristics.

Despite broad agreement on the botanical and figurative significance of kakala, its cultural history remains marked by competing interpretations of its origins, symbolic status, and appropriate application. Several scholars, for example, argue that kakala, particularly kakala ‘eiki, derive part of their cultural significance from recognised mythical origin traditions (Helu, 2012; Wood, 1997). However, a closer examination of the literature indicates that heilala is the only kakala whose mythical origin is clearly documented. Helu (2012) also cautions that, although introduced plants were traditionally not regarded as kakala, they may become recognised as such over time. The traditional exclusion of introduced plants from kakala therefore warrants reconsideration, as this possibility has already been realised in Tongan compositional practice. Queen Sālote's compositions provide important evidence of this development, as she employs foreign botanical elements such as ‘ōketi and katinia as kakala to represent her Prince Consort, Tungī Mailefihi, and other members of the royal family (see Sections 2.3.2 and 5.5.1.1). These discrepancies between prevailing interpretations and documented compositional practice suggest that the figurative significance and application of kakala remain insufficiently reconciled, highlighting a conceptual gap that must be addressed to provide a sound foundation for investigating the censorship of hiva kakala.

To address this gap, this study proposes the Semantic–Figurative Continuum Model (SFCM) (see

Sections 5.3.1.1 and 5.5.1), which provides a systematic framework for explaining how figurative meaning develops from literal language into specific figures of speech, thereby resolving this conceptual puzzle. The SFCM comprises four interconnected stages that constitute the heliaki system: literal language (*lea 'ilongofua* or *lea maheni*); imagery, symbolism, or figuration (*heliaki*); figurative language (*lea heliaki*); and figures of speech (*lea 'o e heliaki*). This progression begins with literal language, from which *heliaki* develops through three interrelated characteristics: intrinsic qualities¹, sensory appeal, and cultural associations. Using the *heilala*, a highly esteemed *kakala*, as an example, this study clearly illustrates this progression. In its literal sense, *heilala* refers to a flower. This plant part has a distinctive fragrance that appeals to people. When people want to make something of cultural importance vivid, evocative, and memorable in the minds of their listeners, they use *heilala* to symbolise it. Through these associations, *heilala* comes to function as imagery (*heliaki*), generating figurative language (*lea heliaki*), which is subsequently classified into specific figures of speech (*lea 'o e heliaki*) (see Sections 5.3.1.1 and 5.5.1). It is therefore proposed that the SFCM reflects how pioneering *punake* used cultural entities such as *kakala* within the *heliaki* system to symbolise culturally significant persons or things (see Section 5.6.1.2). They did so according to either the inherent 'eiki (superior) and tu'a (subordinate) qualities that categorise the *kāinga*–'ulumotu'a–mehekitanga (*fahu*) hierarchy or the 'eiki (chiefly or royal) and tu'a (commoner) classifications associated with the *kakai*–hou'eiki–tu'i constitutional social hierarchy (see Section 1.4.3.1). Importantly, these classifications governed the cultural entities used as *heliaki* rather than restricting their figurative application to people of corresponding social status, despite attempts by some censors to impose such restrictions.

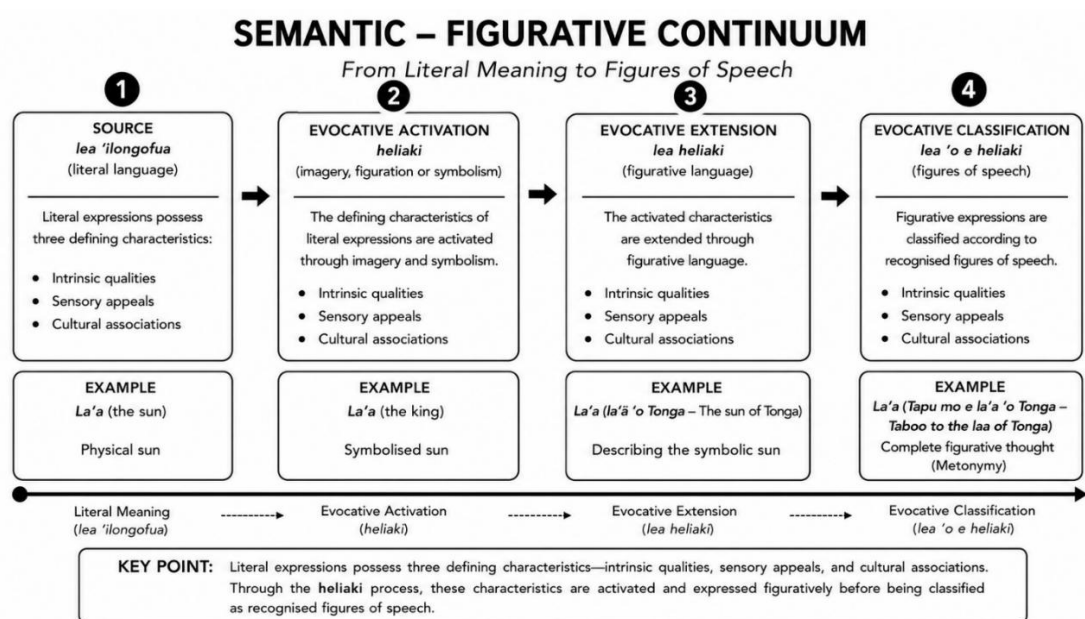


Diagram One

¹ Intrinsic qualities refer to the inherent properties of a literal entity that enable it to function as *heliaki*. Sensory appeal denotes the ways in which those intrinsic qualities are perceived through the human senses, including sight, touch, hearing, smell, and taste. Cultural associations refer to the shared meanings, conventions, and experiences that connect those intrinsic qualities and sensory appeal to figurative interpretation.

1.2 Aim, Objectives and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to critically investigate the cultural, regulatory, literary and journalistic mechanisms that control the kakala song genre in order to understand its moderation grounds.

To achieve this aim, the following objectives have been formulated:

1.2.1 Objectives.

1. To critically analyse the guidelines used to censor kakala songs during the research period.
2. To examine the role of heliaki (figuration, imagery, or symbolism) in kakala songs.
3. To investigate the roles of faiongoongo (journalists) and punake in the kakala song censorship process.
4. To analyse the influence of Queen Sālote on the censorship process, particularly in relation to her role as a pioneering composer of kakala songs.

These objectives directly inform the following research questions:

1.2.2 Research Questions (RQs).

RQ: Why were hiva kakala required to be composed in accordance with the heliaki system and moderated by journalists and censorial punake before they could be broadcast on Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio from the 1960s until the early 2000s?

Sub-Research Questions (SRQs):

1. To what extent did the involvement of the late Queen Sālote Tupou III, as a reformer of the hiva kakala genre, influence Tongan understandings of the composition and regulation of hiva kakala?
2. Were the censorship guidelines established to enhance the quality of hiva kakala, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of royals and chiefs over commoners?
3. Did the involvement of censorial punake and journalists undermine the authenticity of the hiva kakala genre, or did it contribute to its preservation and enhancement?

1.3 CARS Framework

Owing to the complex and multi-layered nature of the research problem, Swales' (1990) Create a Research Space (CARS) model was adopted to structure the Introduction. The model provides a

unifying framework and common reference point for maintaining coherence across the study. Its three fundamental moves are: establishing a territory, establishing a niche, and occupying the niche. Move 1 establishes the significance and relevance of the research topic; Move 2 identifies a gap, limitation, or weakness in prior research; and Move 3 demonstrates how the present study addresses the identified niche and extends existing knowledge. The contributions proposed in Move 3 and their supporting arguments are systematically developed and justified in the Discussion chapter, while relevant theoretical and empirical foundations are established and, where necessary, revisited in the Literature Review chapter.

To illustrate the application of the CARS model, this chapter consolidates the three moves under unified thematic headings. Each section contains three core paragraphs that sequentially address Move 1 (Establishing a Territory), Move 2 (Establishing a Niche), and Move 3 (Occupying the Niche). These paragraphs are labelled with their corresponding moves. Although the CARS model provides a sequential move structure, this study applies it flexibly rather than as a rigid template, allowing background information and further explanation to be incorporated where necessary to develop the argument surrounding each niche. This integrated structure develops coherent and self-contained arguments within each subsection and avoids the discursive fragmentation of a more dispersed approach.

1.4 Censorship

Move 1: Establishing a territory. Investigating the concept of censorship provides an essential foundation for this study. The concept is broadly associated with the suppression or regulation of expression and information considered objectionable, harmful, sensitive, or otherwise unacceptable. However, its forms, rationales, and boundaries vary across historical, political, legal, institutional, and cultural contexts (Darnton, 2014; Müller, 2004). In the Tongan context, the censorship of *hiva kakala* is particularly significant because it appears to have been the first to institutionalise traditional forms of social regulation through designated censorial *punake* (composers) and *kau faiongoongo* (journalists) (Attorney General's Office, Tonga, 1916).

Move 2: Establishing a niche. Despite offering valuable insights into censorship, these works pay insufficient attention to its foundations in Tongan counterparts such as *tapui* (prohibition), *fakatonutonu* (social correction), and *tāngata'i* (disciplining), which are orally practised in formal cultural settings, particularly through *fakapangai* (see Glossary). These traditional forms are important because they serve as mechanisms for preventing and addressing breaches of the *toputapu* and *mana* associated with inherent 'eiki and *tu'a* relational statuses.

Move 3: Occupying the niche. To resolve this gap, this study introduces the foundational cultural principles of toputapu and mana. Churchward (1959) defines toputapu as “sacred, holy” (p. 497). In Tongan culture, anything toputapu is associated with the relational identities of ‘eiki (superior) and tu‘a (subordinate). For example, the body of the tuofefine is toputapu to the tuonga‘ane; therefore, she is ‘eiki in relation to her tuonga‘ane, while the tuonga‘ane is tu‘a in relation to her. This example is significant because it demonstrates the integral role of tapui, fakatonutonu, and tāngata‘i within traditional Tongan cultural censorship protocols as mechanisms for preventing and addressing breaches of toputapu. Churchward (1959) defines mana as “supernatural” or “miraculous” (p. 329). He also associates mana with a threat or curse pronounced against an individual, resulting in misfortune or harm. In the present study, mana is further conceptualised as the cultural power associated with ‘eiki status that can invoke mala (misfortune) through talatuki (curse).

1.4.1 Toputapu and mana as the foundations of faka‘apa‘apa and fatongia. The significance of introducing toputapu and mana to address the gap identified above is that these foundational cultural principles provide a basis for examining their principal cultural embodiments, thereby assisting our understanding of the censorship of hiva kakala. They are manifested through the practices of faka‘apa‘apa (respect) and fatongia (obligation). These practices are not isolated; rather, they operate mutually and reciprocally through the practice of fetauhi‘aki (reciprocity). Upholding this reciprocal practice harmonises and sustains the nofo ‘a kāinga, whereas failure to uphold it constitutes a breach that is culturally believed to invite mala, particularly where heightened toputapu and mana are involved. This is particularly evident in the relationship between a mehekitanga (paternal aunt) and her sister-in-law, where fetauhi‘aki is expected to be carefully maintained. The mehekitanga is culturally believed to possess the mana to inflict supernatural harm, including causing her sister-in-law to miscarry through a curse if she is discontent with her (Douaire-Marsaudon, 1996). As Douaire-Marsaudon (1996) explains:

“The *mehekitanga* can provoke the death of the newly born nephews or curse her pregnant brother's wife and cause her to miscarry” (p. 139).

1.4.2 Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model and the conceptual gap in fatongia. The concepts and principles presented above are conceptualised in this study as the Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model (FRM). The FRM provides a coherent conceptual framework for understanding how toputapu and mana are manifested through faka‘apa‘apa and fatongia, and how these reciprocal practices are maintained through fetauhi‘aki to sustain the nofo ‘a kāinga. Throughout the remainder of this thesis, the FRM serves as the principal analytical framework for explaining the cultural foundations of hiva kakala censorship.

However, because the conceptual structure of fatongia has not been adequately addressed in the existing literature, it requires further clarification before the operation of the FRM can be fully explained. The following CARS Moves identify this conceptual gap and introduce the terminology proposed in this study to address it.

Move 1: Establishing a territory. Investigating the concept of fatongia helps illuminate the hiva kakala censorship process. Fatongia is widely defined in the literature as duty or obligation and has traditionally been associated with obedience and sacrifice (Latukefu, 1980). Tofua‘ipangai (2016), however, offers an etymological interpretation of fatongia as comprising two components: fa and tongia. He argues that fa refers to pandanus and that tongia denotes the “fragrance” emanating from a “ripe pandanus fruit” (p. 61). From a linguistic perspective, this interpretation is problematic on two grounds. First, the Tongan word for pandanus is fā, with a macron marking vowel length, rather than fa; the two forms are phonologically and semantically distinct. Second, no established Tongan usage of tongia is known to denote fragrance. Churchward (1959) instead defines tongia as replacing or taking the place of another.

Move 2: Establishing a niche. While these works offer valuable insights into the concept of fatongia, they give limited attention to fatongia as a complement to faka‘apa‘apa and to its corresponding forms of veitapui and veitokai. Veitapui is the faka‘apa‘apa associated with toputapu and mana between tuofefine (sisters and female cousins) and tuonga‘ane (brothers and male cousins). For example, they are traditionally prohibited from living in the same house once they reach adolescence. Veitokai, by contrast, refers to the reciprocal faka‘apa‘apa grounded in toputapu that governs relationships throughout the wider nofo ‘a kāinga, particularly among those whose relationships are not governed by veitapui. Maintaining veitapui and veitokai entails corresponding forms of fatongia; however, unlike these named forms of faka‘apa‘apa, their respective fatongia have not been given equivalent conceptual identities. For example, a tuonga‘ane traditionally presented fuatapu (first fruits) to his tuofefine, while the tuofefine reciprocated by presenting him with indigenous offerings such as perfumes. This process enacts faka‘apa‘apa, specified as veitapui within the tuofefine–tuonga‘ane relationship, and fatongia through the reciprocal exchange of cultural gifts; however, the corresponding fatongia has not been similarly specified.

This gap is significant for two reasons. First, it highlights missing knowledge that may either have been lost through cultural change over time or never have been formally identified and named. Second, it reveals that fatongia is grounded in the same toputapu and mana that underpin veitapui and veitokai. This is further reflected in the saying, *‘Oku tu‘a e sinó kae ‘eiki e fatongiá* (The body is subordinate, but the obligation is superior). For example, in Tongan culture, a younger brother is

subordinate to his elder brother. However, if the younger becomes a church minister, the elder accords him the honour due to an ‘eiki because the fatongia of the ministry takes precedence over their ordinary familial relationship.

Move 3: Occupying a niche. Addressing this lacuna, this study introduces veingatapu or feveingatapu‘aki as the counterpart of veitapui or feveitapui‘aki, and veingatae or feveingatae‘aki as the counterpart of veitokai or feveitokai‘aki. Veingatapu is a newly coined term formed by combining and adapting the phonological elements of fatongia and veitapui, whereas veingatae is similarly formed from veitokai and ngatae (vaha‘angatae), a figurative expression for fatongia. This conceptual standardisation serves two important purposes. First, it brings to the fore significant dimensions of fatongia that have long been overlooked in the literature. Second, it provides a clear conceptual framework for understanding fatongia in its entirety.

1.4.2.1 Representative cultural practices of veingatapu. The table below presents representative cultural practices associated with veingatapu, encompassing tangible offerings that form part of a tuonga‘ane’s fatongia to his tuofefine, mehekitanga, or fahu. The tuonga‘ane and his household provide these fatongia and are also subject to the exercise of these cultural practices. These practices arise from the system of fetauhi‘aki and derive their cultural significance from heightened toputapu and mana.

Fatongia toputapu reserved for tuofefine, mehekitanga, or fahu	Descriptions
Polopolo ‘o e fuatapu	The ceremonial presentation of the first fruits, which are designated as sacred or taboo.
‘Inasi mu‘a	The first and typically largest portion of an item shared among family members, such as food.
Toli e ‘akau tu‘u matafale	The act of harvesting parts or whole of plants growing directly in front of a house.
Hu‘i pale	The act of detaching a monetary prize or reward attached to an individual’s body during a cultural performance or entertainment.
Kai fono or kai e kongia ‘eiki	The act of eating a portion of food regarded as superior such as the head of a fish or the back of a pig, or taking a share of food (fono) distributed during a kava ceremony.
Lea ho lea‘anga / fa‘iteliha ‘anga	The act of speaking freely, including in a derogatory manner, about one’s maternal uncle or members of his household.
Tā ho tā‘anga	The act of physically striking an individual whom one is culturally permitted to strike, most commonly the maternal uncle or members of his household.
Pā mata	The culturally sanctioned practice in which an individual is permitted to slap another person’s face.
Nofo mu‘a	The act of occupying the front seat or position at an event.

1.4.3 ‘Eiki–Tu‘a Inherent and Constitutional Relational Identity Model (ETICRIM).

Building on the preceding discussion of toputapu and mana, this study introduces the ETICRIM to explain how these principles operate through ‘eiki–tu‘a relational identities within Tongan social structure. The model serves as the analytical lens for distinguishing two forms of ‘eiki (superior) tu‘a (subordinate) identity: inherent relational identity and constitutional relational identity. Inherent relational identity is inherited through birth: ‘eiki (superior status) through the maternal line and tu‘a (subordinate status) through the paternal line, regardless of whether an individual is a commoner, noble, or monarch. This identity is binary and complementary because, although an individual occupies a tu‘a position in relation to the paternal line, the same individual simultaneously occupies an ‘eiki position in relation to the maternal line. Constitutional relational identity, by contrast, derives from the constitutional social hierarchy and is determined by constitutionally recognised rights, offices, and statuses of the nobles, royals and the monarch. Unlike inherent relational identity, constitutional relational identity is contingent upon the constitutional system through which these rights and statuses are established and recognised. The constitutional rights and statuses of nobles, royals, and the monarch are therefore contingent upon their recognition under the constitutional system, whereas their inherent ‘eiki–tu‘a relational identities derive from birth and remain independent of constitutional recognition (see Section 4.5.1.3).

1.4.3.1 *Reconceptualising Tonga's social hierarchies.* The distinction established by the ETRCIM provides the basis for reconceptualising Tonga's social hierarchies as two coexisting systems: the newly proposed kāinga–‘ulumotu‘a–mehekitanga (fahu) (KUM) relational hierarchy, structured through inherent relational identity, and the kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i (KHT) constitutional social hierarchy, structured through constitutional relational identity. The distinction between these hierarchies is particularly evident in the operation of fetauhi‘aki. Within the KUM, a tuonga‘ane accords faka‘apa‘apa and performs fatongia to his tuofefine as an inherited cultural obligation arising from their inherent relational positions. Within the KHT, by contrast, people accord faka‘apa‘apa and perform fatongia to a noble in recognition of their constitutional relationship to him as the holder of the estate on which they live. However, those within the KHT hierarchy also observe fetauhi‘aki according to their inherent ‘eiki–tu‘a relational identities and cultural birthrights, distinct from their constitutional ‘eiki–tu‘a identities. The introduction of the KUM challenges the long-standing view that the KHT hierarchy alone constitutes the foundation of Tonga's social structure. This view is problematic because some Tongan villages and islands, as well as Tongan diasporic communities, have no resident noble, chief, or monarch through whom the KHT operates, yet continue to organise their social relationships through the KUM hierarchy. The ETRCIM therefore enables this study to distinguish the relational bases of these forms of fetauhi‘aki

and explain how both shaped the cultural principles applied in the censorship of hiva kakala.

1.5 Hiva kakala (Kakala songs)

Move 1: Establishing a territory. Understanding the conceptual foundations of hiva kakala is central to this study because it is the principal genre in which heliaki is created, refined, and evaluated. Previous scholarship has described hiva kakala as love songs, sweet songs, songs of flowers, topical songs, and dance songs (Moyle, 1976; Kaeppler, 1989; McLean, 1978; Helu, 2012; Kava, 2015). Other scholars trace hiva kakala to earlier song categories, including laukakala (songs about flowers), laumātanga (songs about historical places or scenic locations), laukaveinga (songs concerning celestial bodies), and laufungavaka (songs associated with social hierarchy) (Churchward, 1959; Helu, 2012).

Move 2: Establishing a niche. While these studies provide valuable historical and descriptive accounts, they offer competing definitions of hiva kakala, indicating a lack of scholarly consensus regarding the conceptual basis of the name kakala. This lack of conceptual clarity has hindered a systematic understanding of the genre and its relationship to heliaki, particularly because no coherent framework has been developed to explain why these songs are designated kakala. As Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) and Bourdieu (1991) argue, naming is not merely descriptive but constitutive of meaning. Accordingly, without a systematic explanation of why the genre is designated kakala, its literary identity and relationship to heliaki remain conceptually uncertain.

Move 3: Occupying the niche. To respond to this gap, this study reconceptualises hiva kakala as a genre fundamentally organised around heliaki. Drawing on the Semantic–Figurative Continuum (Section 1.1), it argues that kakala functions not merely as a literal reference to plant parts but as a source of imagery through its intrinsic qualities, sensory appeal, and cultural associations. Within this framework, literal referents become heliaki (imagery), are realised as lea heliaki (figurative language), and may subsequently be classified as particular lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech) according to the linguistic and literary principles governing their expression. This reconceptualisation provides a conceptual basis for understanding the composition, interpretation, and censorship of hiva kakala.

1.5.1 Illustrating hiva kakala as songs of heliaki. To illustrate this reconceptualisation, two compositions by Queen Sālote Tupou III, widely regarded as Tonga's greatest punake (Helu, 2012), are briefly introduced. These examples indicate that hiva kakala extend beyond their conventional association with flowers or botanical imagery and foreshadow the broader argument developed throughout this thesis that the genre is fundamentally organised around heliaki. The reconceptualisation of hiva kakala as songs of the heliaki system is developed and substantiated in Chapter 5.

The first example is drawn from Queen Sālote's composition about her half-sister, Princess 'Elisiva Fusipala Tauki'onetuku. The composition appears to have been written after the Queen sent her a mākonī (Marconi) message, possibly while the Princess was studying in Melbourne, Australia. In one of the verses, the Queen employs six neologised calques as heliaki: misiteli (mystery), pasinoti (passionate), leniteti (lightened), mākonī (Marconi), levasimoni (Marconi receiver), and piliote'anga (period). These expressions are neither botanical references nor parts of flowers, despite the composition being universally recognised as a hiva kakala (Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019). Instead, they draw on technological, communicative, and conceptual referents whose semantic qualities are evocatively activated as heliaki within the composition. Their collective use demonstrates that heliaki in hiva kakala is not confined to botanical imagery and illustrates the genre's capacity to accommodate new semantic domains through lexical innovation. The English rendering of levasimoni as "Marconi receiver" is an interpretive translation proposed by this researcher. The verse is reproduced verbatim below for illustration purposes:

Tala 'e he kukuvalu 'i he tohi	The kukuvalu expresses in the letter
Kei misiteli pe te'eki 'ilo'i	The mystery remains to be known
Ka fakapapau leva 'o pasinoti	If the heart's passion is confirmed
Leniteti 'o e 'uhila 'i he mākonī	Let lightning lend the telegram speed
Ke mea'i tonu 'e he levasimoni	So the Marconi receiver would truly know
Kuo 'ai 'a e 'ofa ni 'i he mo'oni	That this love is sincere
Si'i 'ainga 'o e 'ofa kuo 'ikai ke 'osi	The vessel of my love knows no depth
Ko e piliote'anga 'o si'ete holi	That's where my desire ends

The second example further demonstrates that earlier song categories, such as a laumātanga, a laukaveinga, or a laulaumanu, may be understood as sources or domains of imagery within hiva kakala, rather than necessarily as independent genres. This is illustrated by Hiva Afā 'a Vaea, which begins with laumatangi (singing about the wind) before incorporating laumātanga through references to historical places such as Kolongatata and Faka'osikato, and laulaumanu through imagery associated with taungapeka, manusiu, and talatā. Remarkably, the only explicit floral reference in the composition is salusalu, which appears in the sixth line of the second verse. Yet the composition is recognised as a hiva kakala rather than a laumatangi, laumātanga, or laulaumanu song. This suggests that these categories identify particular imagery domains activated within a composition, whereas hiva kakala denotes the broader literary genre organised around the creation and deployment of heliaki.

He sika ‘a hema fakahihifo
 Louloua‘a e matangitō
 Kolongatata ne fakauō
 ‘O falala ‘i Faka‘osikato

The wind shifted, a western gale
 And promised ruin on its trail
 Kolongatata gathered, swift and low
 For shelter in Faka‘osikato.

1.6 Heliaki (Imagery).

Move 1: Establishing a territory. Existing scholarship presents divergent interpretations of heliaki. Some scholars regard it as a uniquely Tongan concept that resists precise definition (Veikoso, 2023; Kaeppler, 1993), while others equate it with the broader English tradition of figurative language (Latukefu, 1980; Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019). Others describe heliaki as a form of indirect or layered expression requiring specialist cultural knowledge for interpretation (Kaeppler, 1990, p. 231), whereas some translate it more specifically as metaphor (Kakala, 2022; Veikoso, 2023).

Move 2: Establishing a niche. While these interpretations provide valuable insights, they do not adequately explain the linguistic and literary principles governing metaphor or clarify its relationship to the broader organisation of figurative language. Two observations illustrate this limitation.

(a) Figure-of-speech principle. Halliday's (1994) systemic functional framework demonstrates that metaphorical meaning may be realised not only lexically but also through grammatical structure. One common pattern is the copular construction, in which a linking verb such as *is* establishes an identifying relationship between entities from different semantic domains. In *The snow is a white blanket*, for example, the copular construction links *snow* with *a white blanket*, enabling the figurative identification.

(b) Tenor–vehicle theory. Richards' (1936) tenor–vehicle theory further explains metaphor by distinguishing the tenor (the subject being described) from the vehicle (the figurative image through which it is understood). In *The snow is a white blanket*, *snow* functions as the tenor and *white blanket* as the vehicle. The metaphorical imagery is therefore carried by the vehicle *white blanket*, while the complete sentence constitutes the figurative expression in which that imagery is realised.

These observations suggest that prevailing interpretations of heliaki remain substantially grounded in the lexical meaning of metaphor and therefore lack the theoretical and contextual depth necessary to explain how figurative meaning is generated, recognised, and systematically classified.

Move 3: Occupying a niche. Addressing this limitation, the study proposes the Semantic–

Figurative Continuum Model (SFCM) (see Section 1.1), comprising literal language (lea ‘ilongofua) → imagery, symbolism, or figuration (heliaki) → figurative language (lea heliaki) → figures of speech (lea ‘o e heliaki). The SFCM explains the progression from literal meaning to specific figurative classification and establishes that heliaki must first be identified before lea heliaki can be recognised and subsequently classified as a particular lea ‘o e heliaki (see Section 1.1). This sequence demonstrates that metaphor constitutes only one form of lea ‘o e heliaki and therefore cannot adequately represent the broader heliaki system. Moreover, heliaki should be recognised as a technical literary concept and understood through rigorous scholarly definition rather than reduced to lexical equivalents, such as “metaphor,” provided in dictionaries.

1.7 Westernisation in Tonga

Move 1: Establishing a territory. Understanding how Tonga has negotiated foreign cultural influences is essential to this study because these processes notably shaped both hiva kakala and its censorship. Westernisation has been the principal source of external influence since sustained contact with the West. Fonua (2020) defines Westernisation as the adoption of Western cultural values and ideologies that influence or replace indigenous beliefs, practices, and ways of knowing. In Tonga, Christianity, formal education, and new systems of governance transformed social, political, and ideological structures (Vuki, 1995). However, rather than simply displacing indigenous culture, these influences have been continually negotiated and adapted, enabling Tongan cultural values to be sustained and reinterpreted across generations (Kalavite, 2024).

Move 2: Establishing a niche. Existing scholarship provides important insights into Westernisation and cultural change in Tonga. However, it lacks a coherent Tongan-centred framework for analysing how foreign cultural, linguistic, and artistic elements were selected, adapted, transformed, and integrated into Tongan cultural systems. Consequently, the processes through which these influences shaped hiva kakala and informed its censorship have not been systematically explained.

Move 3: Occupying a niche. This study therefore develops the Toafesiama Cultural Integration Framework (TCIF), a Tongan-centred analytical model grounded in the Tupunga Ola framework. The TCIF explains how foreign cultural, linguistic, and artistic elements enter, interact with, and become integrated into Tongan cultural systems. Rather than viewing Westernisation as a process of cultural replacement, it provides a systematic basis for analysing the linguistic, literary, and musical transformations examined in this study.

1.7.1 The Toafesiama Cultural Integration Framework. The term Toafesiama, coined in this study, is a neologism transliterated from the expression Tongan foreignism. It combines toa (from

Tongan) and fesiamā (from foreignism). The Toafesiamā Cultural Integration Framework (TCIF) introduces two newly coined sub-frameworks of cultural integration: tokalatani, transliterated from Tongan acculturation by combining to (from Tongan) and kalatani (from acculturation), which examines how foreign elements are adapted through existing Tongan linguistic and cultural resources while preserving Tongan cultural meanings. Tasimalani, by contrast, transliterated from Tongan assimilation by combining ta (from Tongan) and simalani (from assimilation), examines how foreign-derived forms are incorporated and normalised within Tongan linguistic and cultural forms are incorporated and normalised within Tongan linguistic and cultural systems.

The primary purpose of the Toafesiamā framework is to identify the integration of foreign influences, particularly those introduced through Western culture, by applying an acculturation and assimilation assessment process. This framework facilitates the study's examination of how pioneering *punake* transformed these foreign influences and determines whether the resulting adaptations are best understood as transculturation, transliteration, or translation, among others. The Toafesiamā also provides an analytical framework for examining the terminology discussed throughout this study by drawing on approaches such as deconstruction, etymological analysis, morphological analysis, lexical analysis, reconceptualisation, and redefinition and so forth. These include using glossing, whereby a Tongan term is retained and accompanied by a parenthetical explanation, translation, or commentary, as applied to *veitapui*; coining new Tongan terms through the integration of closely related concepts, as demonstrated by *veingatapu* from *veitapui* and *fatongia*, and *veingatae* from *veitokai* and *vaha'angatae*. The following section presents one of the most significant instances of transculturation of *hiva kakala* by pioneering *punake* Afuha'amango.

1.7.2 Toafesiamā through musical and lyrical transculturation. Afuha'amango's *Pōngia 'a e Loto* is examined through the Toafesiamā as a representative example of transculturation. The composition adapts the 1913 British popular song *The Sunshine of Your Smile*, with music by Lilian Ray and lyrics by Leonard Cooke (see Appendix C). Rather than reproducing the English original, Afuha'amango reworked both its music and lyrics through a process of musical and lyrical transculturation, blending English and Tongan elements to produce a composition that is culturally authentic and poetically appropriate within the Tongan context.

The lyrical adaptation demonstrates this process. The English lines, "Give me a smile, the love-light in your eyes; / Life could not hold a sweeter paradise," are rendered as *Ko ho'o ngaahi malimali mai / Ko hoku palataisi 'uluaki*. Rather than translating the lines word for word, Afuha'amango preserves their semantic and emotional intent through concise Tongan expression and *heliaki*. A more literal rendering would be excessively long for the notated rhythm and lack the poetic economy required

of hiva kakala. His version therefore demonstrates selective adaptation in which the underlying concept is retained while its linguistic and literary expression is reconstructed through Tongan compositional conventions. The chorus is reproduced verbatim below for illustration:

Ko ho‘o ngaahi malimali mai	Give me a smile, the love-light in your eyes
Ko hoku palataisi ‘uluaki	Life could not hold a sweeter paradise
Ko e hila tu‘o taha ‘a ho fofonga	Give me the right to love you all the while
Ko ia pe ‘a e lolo hoku vaifakanonga	My world for ever, the sunshine of your smile.

Musically, Afuha‘amango simplified the harmonic structure of the original English version by removing its modulations (see the musical score in Appendix C; see also Anau, 2016) and adopting a more direct progression of related keys and chords. This rearrangement reflects a distinctly Tongan musical aesthetic, characterised by restrained harmonic movement between closely related chords and keys, a feature commonly found in traditional chant such as in me‘etu‘upaki performance.

1.7.3 Language and terminology. Consistent with the Toafesiama framework, this thesis employs a number of Tongan transliterations and newly standardised terms for English academic concepts where established Tongan equivalents are unavailable, inconsistent, or have yet to be developed. This practice extends beyond the body of the thesis to the chapter titles themselves, introducing transliterations such as Sepitā (Chapter), ‘Ilotakisoni (Introduction), Tisikāsoni (Discussion), and Konikulūsoni (Conclusion). These terms are proposed as scholarly transliterations and are used consistently throughout the thesis.

The adoption of these forms represents a practical application of the Toafesiama Cultural Integration Framework. It reflects the position taken in this study that the systematic transliteration and adaptation of foreign words have long been an accepted process in the historical development of lea faka-Tonga. From the arrival of Christianity onwards, missionaries and later Tongan scholars and public in general continue to enrich the language by introducing and adapting numerous foreign lexical items to express new religious, educational, scientific, technological, and administrative concepts. As demonstrated throughout this thesis, the same process is evident in hiva kakala, where pioneering punake creatively transliterated and adapted English words into Tongan literary expression.

This study argues that the increasing prevalence of English code-switching in contemporary Tongan speech is partly attributable to the absence of systematic processes and responsible institutions for developing, standardising, and disseminating Tongan equivalents for modern concepts. This tendency is further reinforced by the status of English as Tonga’s second language, which makes the

bilingual switching readily accessible and increasingly normalised in everyday conversation. Accordingly, the transliterations used throughout this thesis should be understood as practical applications of the Toafesiama Framework, reflecting a key dimension of the *hiva kakala* censorship guidelines that permitted transliteration within the genre.

1.8 Fa‘u (Composition) Quality

Move 1: Establishing a territory. Understanding the qualities that contribute to the composition and performance of *hiva kakala* is central to this study. Previous scholarship has examined Tongan musical quality from several perspectives, including traditional instruments, lyrical texts, singing styles, and dance. Shumway (1981) describes the lyrics of *lakalaka* as "a profound expression of Tongan sensibilities" (p. 469), while Kaeppler (1967) characterises Tongan dance movements as "graceful and intricate, deriving their distinctive character" (p. 160). Moyle (1993) discusses the *fakahēhē* style of singing as vocal ornamentation, and Churchward (1959) defines it as singing "with improvised variations or flourishes rather than strictly following the written score" (p. 42). Two concepts consistently associated with evaluating Tongan songs and performances are *mālie* (appreciative response) and *māfana* (emotional engagement), which Manu‘atu (2000) describes as "inseparable" (p. 77).

Move 2: Establishing a niche. While these studies provide valuable insights into Tongan music and performance, they devote limited attention to the literary and compositional principles that shape the artistic quality of *hiva kakala*. In particular, they do not systematically explain how *heliaki*, *lea ‘o e heliaki*, vocal performance, musical structure, and other compositional techniques interact to produce songs that are *mālie* and *fakamāfana* (heartfelt).

Move 3: Occupying a niche. This study addresses this gap by developing a broader framework for understanding *mālie* and *fakamāfana* as culturally grounded evaluative principles through which the artistic effectiveness of *hiva kakala* can be more systematically understood. These qualities are co-created through the interaction of multiple compositional techniques, including the effective application of the *heliaki* system, the standardisation and skilful use of *lea ‘o e heliaki* (figures of speech), and the strategic use of song hooks (*fakama‘unga*).

1.8.1 Mālie as an evaluative principle. At this introductory stage, the study provides an initial outline of its reconceptualisation of *mālie* as the principal evaluative principle through which the artistic effectiveness of *hiva kakala* may be assessed. Drawing on the researcher's background in journalism, this study proposes an analytical parallel between news values and *mālie*. Just as news values provide journalists with criteria for assessing the newsworthiness of events (Cable, 2018; Harcup & O'Neill,

2017; Hermida, 2014), *mālie* may likewise be understood as an evaluative principle through which the artistic effectiveness of *hiva kakala* is assessed. The following four questions represent conceptual indicators of newsworthiness. A story that satisfactorily answers one or more of these questions is generally regarded as newsworthy:

Is it new?

Is it unusual?

Is it interesting or significant?

Is it about people?

Building on these journalistic questions, this study argues that they provide an appropriate heuristic framework for evaluating *mālie*-worthiness. The potential application of this framework is illustrated below through one of Queen Sālote Tupou III's most celebrated neologisms.

1.8.1.1 Illustrating *mālie*-worthiness: *Palatiniume ‘o Ha‘a Ma‘afu*. An illustration of *mālie*-worthiness can be found in Queen Sālote Tupou III's *Takafalu* lakalaka, composed in honour of her eldest son, King Taufa‘āhau Tupou IV. In this composition, the Queen coined the neologism *Palatiniume ‘o Ha‘a Ma‘afu* (The Platinum of Ha‘a Ma‘afu), (see Section 5.2.2.2), transforming the culturally recognised qualities of platinum into *heliaki* representing her eldest son's unprecedented inheritance of both the Tu‘i Tonga and Tu‘i Kanokupolu royal bloodlines through the union of his parents. Viewed through the proposed news-value criteria, a literal statement such as King Taufa‘āhau was from Ha‘a Ma‘afu possesses limited artistic distinction. As a widely known fact, it is neither new, significant, nor unusual and therefore offers little intrinsic interest, although it concerns an important person. By contrast, Queen Sālote transformed this factual statement into *heliaki* through the expression “*Palatiniume ‘o Ha‘a Ma‘afu*” (Wood-Ellem, 2019, p. 260), creating a neologism that is new, unusual, significant, and centred on a prominent individual. Consequently, the expression satisfies the proposed dimensions of *mālie*-worthiness (see Section 5.9.1.1).

The text of the *Takafalu* lakalaka is reproduced verbatim below for illustration:

Hoto ‘ofa he ‘aho fakamanatu	My heart is full on this day of remembrance
He Palatiniume ‘o Ha‘a Ma‘afu	Of the Platinum of Ha‘a Ma‘afu
Fāhina ‘o e Loto Neiafu	White pandanus of Central Neiafu
‘Oku fotu ‘i he Langi Tu‘oteau	Looming in the Langi Tu‘oteau

1.9 The royal establishment of TBC

Move 1: Establishing a Territory. Understanding the royal initiative behind the establishment of the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) is essential to this study because it provided the institutional setting in which hiva kakala censorship was developed and implemented. The station was established under the premiership of Prince Taufa'āhau, who later ascended the throne as King Taufa'āhau Tupou IV, during the reign of Queen Sālote Tupou III. At the time, Tonga operated under the constitutional monarchy established in 1875, within which the monarch exercised extensive executive authority until the democratic reforms of 2010. It has long been subject to criticism for its pro-monarchical news coverage and practices of self-censorship (Public Media Alliance, n.d.; Lewis, 2011).

Move 2: Establishing a niche. While these studies provide valuable insights into criticisms of the TBC's pro-monarchical orientation and practices of self-censorship, they do not explain these practices within the Tongan cultural institution of mā'imoa. Traditionally, projects, institutions, and initiatives established by the monarch or members of the royal family are regarded as mā'imoa and are culturally expected to be protected and upheld without challenge. Consequently, the significance of mā'imoa has remained largely absent from explanations of the TBC's institutional role and its approach to hiva kakala censorship.

Move 3: Occupying a niche. To answer this gap, the present study highlights Queen Sālote Tupou III's artistic philosophy in guiding the development of hiva kakala and its censorship. Rather than rigidly adhering to constitutional status distinctions, her approach consistently privileged the effective use of kakala and heliaki as the principal literary foundations of the genre. The study further demonstrates that this approach reflected the broader operation of the complementary 'eiki-tu'a relational binary, which extends across kakai, hou'eiki, and tu'i within the nofo 'a kāinga, providing a new perspective on the cultural principles underlying the TBC's censorship practices.

1.10 Punake (Composer)

Move 1: Establishing a territory. Understanding the role and characteristics of the punake is essential to this study. Traditionally, a punake has been defined as a composer who writes lyrics, sets them to music, and choreographs dance performances (Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019). Dawson (2016) further describes punake as "a special class of orators and poets" (p. 3) engaged in musical and lyrical composition. Different categories of punake also exist, including the punake hua hiva, who initiates the singing of a song.

Move 2: Establishing a niche. While these perspectives provide valuable insights, insufficient scholarly attention has been paid to the punake's exceptional dedication and sacrifice, through which sustained, disciplined, and often under-recognised labour enables the production of high-profile artistic works (Brook, O'Brien, & Taylor, 2020; Mackenzie & McKinlay, 2020). Such achievements are not solely products of creativity or talent but are also the outcome of prolonged commitment, persistence, and endurance over time (Bilton, Eikhof, & Gilmore, 2020; Luckman & Taylor, 2024).

Move 3: Occupying a niche. This study addresses these gaps by making two principal contributions. First, it introduces the concept of poetic licence into Tongan scholarship as a framework for understanding the creative freedom exercised by punake to depart from factual realities, linguistic conventions, and established compositional practices in pursuit of artistic, rhetorical, and aesthetic effects (Culler, 2015). Second, it develops a systematic understanding of punake compositional practice by demonstrating how literary creativity, disciplined revision, and sustained personal commitment contribute to the production of high-quality hiva kakala.

1.11 Faiongoongo (Journalist).

Move 1: Establishing a territory. Exploring the concept of faiongoongo is essential to understand more about their involvement in the song censorship. Churchward (1959) defines faiongoongo as “reporter or newspaper correspondence” (p.22). The word faiongoongo can be deconstructed into fai and ongoongo. Fai means to do. Churchward also translated ongoongo into English as “news or report or reputation” (p.395). In current Tongan usage, faiongoongo conventionally denotes journalists, whereas ongoongo refers to news. Contemporary scholarship views journalists not merely as producers of news but as professionals whose identity is formed through specialised training, occupational norms, and ethical commitments that distinguish journalism from other forms of communication (Hanitzsch et al., 2019).

Move 2: Establishing a niche. While the preceding discussion provides useful insights into faiongoongo and ongoongo and their relationship to journalism and news, it gives insufficient attention to their broader cultural scope. Existing scholarship largely interprets faiongoongo through the institutional lens of modern journalism, overlooking its wider communicative functions, including talafekau (messenger) and fekau (message). Consequently, faiongoongo and ongoongo have yet to be systematically examined to determine whether they are conceptually aligned with the modern notions of journalism and news. The available evidence suggests that they are not, despite the introduction of Western journalism to Tonga in the nineteenth century.

Move 3: Occupying a niche. This study addresses these limitations by synthesising English journalistic principles and practices—including news writing models, reporting styles, professional techniques, editorial guidelines, and ethical frameworks—with the Tongan concepts of *ongoongo* and *faiongoongo*, thereby developing a more culturally grounded framework for understanding journalism in the Tongan context. It further identifies two complementary dimensions of the relationship between journalists and *punake*: although their communicative roles converge in important respects, they also diverge in fundamental ways, particularly regarding the relationship between poetic licence and journalistic commitments to factual accuracy.

1.12 Tongan Society

Contemporary Tongan society constitutes an evolving hybrid of indigenous and Western cultural traditions, a process conceptualised in this study as Westernisation in Tonga. This hybrid environment provides the broader social and cultural context within which the *heliaki* system, *hiva kakala*, and their censorship have developed. Although Tongan society continues to be grounded in indigenous institutions such as the *nofo* ‘a *kāinga* (clans' way of living) and *fatungamotu‘a* (existing traditions), these institutions have undergone significant transformation over time. Such changes are evident in Tongan ways of life, lifestyles, and cultural practices, which have been increasingly shaped by Western cultural influences while continuing to retain important indigenous values and traditions. One of the most significant outcomes of Western integration in Tonga has been the long-standing establishment of English as the compulsory language of communication in many secondary schools. It was also adopted as an official language of government administration and communication.

The first sustained contact with Europeans during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, followed by the establishment of Christian missions and Western-style education, transformed almost every aspect of Tongan society (Asad, 1993; Thomas, 1991; Jolly, 1992). Among the most significant developments were the widespread adoption of Christianity, the establishment of a constitutional monarchy under King George Tupou I, the introduction of formal education, and the gradual development of democracy, which culminated in the constitutional reforms of 2010. These reforms marked the beginning of Tonga's transition towards a modern constitutional state while incorporating many aspects of Western civilisation. The process of Westernisation gained considerable momentum with the support of Tupou I, whose consolidation of political authority following his defeat of Tu‘i Tonga Laufilitonga enabled him to implement far-reaching religious, political, educational, and legal reforms.

While these historical and contemporary developments provide the cultural setting within Tonga,

the post-contact period also created opportunities for increasing numbers of Tongans to migrate overseas. Beginning in the 1950s, Tongans progressively sought permanent residence in countries such as New Zealand, Australia, and the United States, giving rise to a substantial Tongan diaspora. Today, there are approximately 300,000 Tongans worldwide, with around 70 per cent residing outside the Kingdom of Tonga. The Tongan diaspora comprises approximately 33,000 people in Australia (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, n.d.), 97,824 in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2023), and 67,221 in the United States (The United States–Tonga Relationship, n.d.), compared with a resident population of only 100,179 in Tonga (Tonga Statistics, 2021). Collectively, these figures indicate that approximately 200,000 more Tongans live overseas than in their homeland, underscoring the demographic significance of the Tongan diaspora. The demographic predominance of the diaspora highlights the importance of understanding how Tongan cultural practices, including *heliaki*, *hiva kakala*, and the principles governing their appropriate use, continue to be maintained, adapted, and transmitted beyond the Kingdom of Tonga.

1.13 Personal and professional genesis

This thesis was inspired by my professional experiences as a teacher for over 12 years in Tongan government schools before relocating with my family to New Zealand and becoming a journalist for about 20 years. These roles, combined with my background as a composer and musician, provide the foundation for this research. The primary aim was twofold: to contribute my practical insights as a journalist and composer to the academic discourse, and to deepen my understanding by interrogating the nature of professionalism within these fields. A central focus of this inquiry is censorship, a significant challenge shared by journalism and songcraft. These professional experiences also exposed me to the tensions between creative expression, cultural expectations, and professional responsibility, prompting deeper questions about the principles that govern appropriate communication in Tongan society. Together, they shaped the intellectual trajectory of this study and informed the interdisciplinary perspective through which its research questions are examined.

It was only through undertaking this research that I recognised a broader convergence between my work as a teacher, journalist, and composer. Although these professions appear distinct, each is fundamentally concerned with communicating ideas in ways that are engaging, meaningful, culturally appropriate, and memorable. Whether teaching a lesson, writing a news story, or composing a *hiva kakala*, success depends on selecting language and modes of expression that connect effectively with the intended audience. This shared communicative purpose ultimately led me to examine the cultural principles governing appropriate expression in Tongan society. More importantly, this thesis is intended to serve as the cornerstone of a broader programme of scholarly books and educational resources on *heliaki*, *hiva kakala*, journalism, Tongan language and literature, teaching, and song composition,

through which its theoretical insights, methodological innovations, and practical applications can be further developed and disseminated.

1.14 Scope of the Study

As the first comprehensive investigation of the censorship of hiva kakala in Tonga, this study establishes new conceptual, analytical, and theoretical foundations for understanding the literary, linguistic, cultural, and relational principles that informed its development, composition, and censorship. It achieves this by redefining, standardising, contextualising, and reconceptualising key concepts and analytical frameworks. Central to this contribution is the reconceptualisation of kakala and heliaki as complementary literary constructs, in which kakala is understood as a product of a progressive process realised through the heliaki system (see Section 1.1). This new interpretation provides a conceptual basis for understanding the criteria and underlying cultural principles that informed the censorship of hiva kakala during the period under investigation.

The study further highlights the significant influence of Western culture on the development of hiva kakala, demonstrating how its interaction with indigenous Tongan traditions contributed to the emergence of the genre. This cultural integration gave rise to a rich repository of literary, linguistic, and musical skills and techniques, reflecting the exceptional creativity and intellectual sophistication of the pioneering punake. The research also expands current understandings of the professional roles of the faiongoongo (journalist) and punake (composer). It further clarifies the distinct skills involved in songcraft and musical composition, examines Queen Sālote Tupou III's influence on the development and censorship of hiva kakala, and explains the cultural, literary, and relational principles that guided censorial practice. Collectively, these contributions establish new conceptual foundations for future scholarship on Tongan language, literature, journalism, music, and cultural studies.

1.15 Defining the research boundaries

This study is confined to the censorship of hiva kakala broadcast by Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) Radio from the 1960s to the early 2000s. It focuses specifically on the cultural, literary, linguistic, and relational principles that informed the censorship process, rather than on legal, political, or constitutional approaches to censorship. Although the findings have broader implications for Tongan language, literature, journalism, and cultural studies, the analysis remains grounded in the historical and cultural context of TBC radio and the hiva kakala tradition.

For the purposes of this study, censorship is defined as a mechanism of cultural moderation

exercised through the structures of fatungamotu‘a (existing traditions) and nofo ‘a kāinga (see Appendix A) to monitor and regulate the appropriateness of language and expression. Unlike the predominantly Western conception of censorship, which has largely centred on restricting publication, this study recontextualises censorship within the traditions of Tongan orality, where it is intrinsically linked to the cultural principles of fetauhi‘aki. Consistent with this perspective, TBC radio—the institution responsible for censoring hiva kakala—is conceptualised as a mā‘imoa (see Glossary; see also Section 1.9), a cultural construct that helps explain the institution's enduring pro-monarchical orientation.

One limitation of this study lies in its reliance on the normative framework of the newly developed Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model (FRM) (see Section 1.4.2). Although the model provides a systematic account of reciprocal relationships founded on fetauhi‘aki, it may not fully capture the contemporary practice of fakafaingofua—the pragmatic relaxation of certain cultural protocols in response to changing social circumstances. Consequently, some traditional observances of fetauhi‘aki are no longer maintained with the same degree of strictness, particularly within urban and diasporic Tongan communities.

1.16 Thesis overview

To guide the reader through the progression of the research, a brief overview of the thesis structure is presented below.

Chapter 2: Literature Review. This chapter reviews the literature relevant to *hiva kakala*, censorship, *heliaki*, *punake*, journalism, and Westernisation in Tonga. It identifies the principal conceptual and empirical gaps in existing scholarship and establishes the theoretical foundations upon which the study is developed.

Chapter 3: Methodology. This chapter outlines the qualitative and interpretive research design adopted for the study. It describes the research paradigm, theoretical frameworks, data collection methods, participant selection, document analysis, analytical procedures, ethical considerations, and strategies employed to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

Chapter 4: Findings. This chapter presents the findings in relation to the research question and sub-research questions. Organised according to the key areas of inquiry addressed by the study, it reports the evidence generated from participant interviews and documentary sources, together with unexpected findings that emerged during the research process.

Chapter 5: Discussion. This chapter interprets and analyses the findings in relation to the research

questions, theoretical frameworks, and relevant literature. It explains the study's principal conceptual, empirical, and theoretical contributions and examines their implications for understanding *hiva kakala*, censorship, heliaki, and the roles of punake and faiongoongo.

Chapter 6: Conclusions. This chapter synthesises the principal conclusions of the study and explains how the research addresses the research problem, research question, and sub-research questions. It highlights the study's contributions to knowledge, acknowledges its limitations, and provides recommendations for future research.

Sepitā 2: Lītelaviu (Literature Review)

2.1 Introduction

This literature review critically examines scholarship relevant to the censorship of hiva kakala to establish the scholarly context of the study and identify the gaps addressed by the research. This purpose is consistent with Hart's (1998) view that a literature review establishes the context for research, while Boote and Beile (2005) further emphasise its role in identifying gaps in existing knowledge and justifying the need for new research. As an influential cultural medium, hiva kakala extends beyond entertainment to shape social relationships and cultural values. Its capacity both to enrich communities and, depending on its context and use, to cause emotional, behavioural, interpersonal, and cultural harm helps explain why societies have sought to regulate and censor it (Merriam, 1964; Silverman et al., 2020). Accordingly, the review progresses from the broader literature on censorship and the social functions of music to scholarship on hiva kakala, heliaki, and Tongan traditions.

2.1.1 Research Questions (RQs):

RQ: Why were hiva kakala required to be composed in accordance with the heliaki system and moderated by journalists and censorial punake before they could be broadcast on Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio from the 1960s until the early 2000s?

Sub-Research Questions (SRQs):

1. To what extent did the involvement of the late Queen Sālote Tupou III, as a reformer of the hiva kakala genre, influence Tongan understandings of the composition and regulation of hiva kakala?
2. Were the censorship guidelines established to enhance the quality of hiva kakala, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of royals and chiefs over commoners?
3. Did the involvement of censorial punake and journalists undermine the authenticity of the hiva kakala genre, or did it contribute to its preservation and enhancement?

Guided by the Tupunga Ola theoretical approach, the related scholarly arguments reviewed in this chapter are treated as tupunga (causes). They are identified through the critical comparison and evaluation of existing scholarship under each topic, examining their strengths, limitations, and implications for further

research. This approach aligns with the view that a literature review should move beyond summarising previous studies to critically synthesise existing knowledge, identify unresolved issues, and establish the basis for an original research contribution (Snyder, 2024; Okoli, 2023). Within the Tupunga Ola framework, the interaction of these scholarly arguments gives rise to ola (effects), manifested as the unresolved research gaps identified in the literature. These gaps, in turn, provide the rationale for the present study, which seeks to generate new theoretical and empirical knowledge in response to those identified effects.

2.2. Censorship

Understanding the concept of censorship is fundamental to the present review because it provides the conceptual foundation for examining the moderation of hiva kakala. The following discussion first reviews broader perspectives on censorship. It then examines scholarship on its application within the Tongan context, thereby establishing the basis for analysing the cultural principles that governed hiva kakala censorship.

2.2.1 Conceptualising censorship. Censorship is broadly associated with the restriction or suppression of information, ideas, and artistic expression by governments, institutions, or other powerful groups (Al-Jarqi, 2015; Grenier, 2023; Knox, 2023). George (2024) similarly conceptualises it as the regulation of speech and expression deemed objectionable, harmful, politically threatening, or contrary to prevailing social and moral norms. The concept derives from the Roman censor, whose functions included assessing citizens and regulating public morals, while the Latin *censere* means “to estimate or assess” (Anastaplo, 2020; Molz, 1990, as cited in Steele, 2018). The operation and interpretation of censorship also vary across cultural and institutional contexts. Chiari (2019), for example, demonstrates that material criticised or expurgated in Catholic societies could be praised in Protestant contexts, while Simons and Strovsky (2006) describe “journalistic censorship” as occurring where journalists' roles are shaped by cultural traditions (p. 190).

These perspectives indicate that censorship cannot be adequately examined apart from the cultural values and institutional practices through which expression is evaluated. Despite this recognition, the literature has paid little attention to how censorship operates within the Tongan context. In particular, culturally grounded practices such as *tāngata* (to censure or discipline), *tapui* (to ban), and *fakatonutonu* (to correct) remain largely unexplored as mechanisms through which public expression has been regulated. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates how the principles of *toputapu* and *mana* underpin *fetauhi‘aki* and, in turn, explain the cultural rationale underlying the censorship of hiva kakala within the *nofo ‘a kāinga* system.

2.2.2 Censorship and cultural protocol. While the preceding section conceptualised censorship in general terms, the present discussion examines how it was implemented within the Tongan context. Particular attention is given to the respective roles of government institutions, the monarchy, and customary authorities in regulating public expression during the years under study. Pond (1990) describes TBC journalists censoring songs by punake Kitone Mamata that protested against the Government by having them “not chosen to be broadcast” (p. 212). Similarly, Koloamatangi (2015) asserted that Pita Vi's song Aotearoa “was allowed airplay for a brief period before it was taken off the station's repertoire” because it “caused a lot of pain to too many people” (Kaniva Tonga News, 2015, May 23). TBC reinstated the song a few decades later, presumably because those affected by it no longer felt the same way. Beyond musical performance, censorship also extended to news reporting. Te Waha Nui (2022, June 9), for example, recounts that a journalist from the government newspaper The Tonga Chronicle was summoned to the royal palace after reporting details of King Tupou IV's planned royal flight, which the King believed could expose him to terrorist threats. Collectively, these accounts indicate that government censorship in Tonga extended beyond artistic expression to encompass politically and culturally sensitive information, reflecting broader concerns with protecting public order, social harmony, and the dignity of the monarchy.

Additionally, Moala (1994) asserts that Queen Sālote interceded with the matāpule of Ha'a Ngata (Ngata clan) during an event in Vava'u in 1932 through the traditional fakatonutonu (correcting) censorship. The matāpule had reprimanded Fevanga for allegedly violating kava-circle seating protocol. However, Queen Sālote intervened and granted him permanent authority to sit anywhere in the circle in recognition of his ancestors' role as the original architects of the kava ceremonial structure (Turner, 1986). Similarly, punake Malukava Kavamoefiafi, who was also a courtier, failed a song composed by the well-known punake Sir Sōfele Kakala during a singing competition. Malukava rejected the song because of two lyrical lines that he claimed offensively conveyed a *tala tau* (figuratively, a declaration of war) while criticising the traditions of the land (Richard Moyle, 2022). Malukava maintained that the lyrics violated cultural protocols by conveying the impression that the chief attendants Fakahāfua and Ma'ufualu were responsible for the tala-e-fonua (history of the land). He maintained that the tala-e-fonua was solely the responsibility of the King's two immediate matāpule, Lauaki and Motu'apuaka.

While the above studies document the involvement of broadcasters, journalists, the monarchy, and customary authorities in censorship, they do not explain the formal processes through which censorship decisions were reached or how consistency and fairness were maintained. The present study addresses this gap through research questions that examine these censorial roles and the cultural principles underlying their exercise of authority.

2.3 The hiva kakala genre

An examination of the identity of hiva kakala is fundamental to the present review because it establishes the cultural and literary context within which its censorship can be understood. The following discussion reviews scholarship on the genre's name, origins, purposes, and conceptual foundations before identifying the principal gaps addressed by the present study.

2.3.1 Conceptualising hiva kakala. Existing scholarship offers differing interpretations of the genre's name, purpose, and conceptual foundation. Churchward (1959) defines hiva as “song” and kakala as “sweet-smelling trees or plants bearing fragrant flowers of any kind” (p. 246). He equates hiva kakala with “love song” (p. 225) and compares it with sipi, a “love poem” or “sentimental poem” (p. 432). Helu (2012) similarly classifies hiva kakala texts as “love lyrics” (p. 49), arguing that they emerged from three earlier poetic traditions, including fakatangi (lamentation) and laumātanga (verbalising beautiful and historical places). Kaeppler (1967) contends that hiva kakala songs are “sweet songs” and were later composed for dancing (p. 287). Other scholars, however, offer broader definitions. Moyle (1993) labels hiva kakala “topical songs” (p. 401), while the kakala compositions of renowned punake Queen Sālote span love songs, lullabies (‘ūpē), hiva māvae (farewell songs), dance songs (hiva tau‘olunga and hiva lakalaka), and laments (tangi laulau) (Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019).

Although these studies illuminate the various names, meanings, and purposes attributed to hiva kakala, they reveal little consensus regarding the genre's conceptual foundation or even its accepted designation. This conceptual ambiguity leaves unresolved the question of what fundamentally defines hiva kakala as a distinct genre. The present study addresses this gap by examining the genre's origins, historical evolution, and literary development to establish a more coherent understanding of its identity.

2.3.2. Indigenous and introduced kakala. Existing scholarship generally classifies kakala into two principal categories: kakala ‘eiki (superior or chiefly kakala), commonly associated with chiefs and monarchs, and kakala vale or kakala tu‘a (subordinate or common kakala), associated with commoners (Helu, 2012; Taumoevalau, 2019; Veikoso, 2023) (see Section 1.1). Helu (2012) further argues that the cultural significance of kakala reflects the hierarchical organisation of “the members of the society” (p. 46). He contends that when kakala are arranged into a garland (kahoa) or ornamental girdle (sisi), they acquire particular value reflecting their ranked significance. Helu also maintains that foreign flowers, such as the “rose and lily”, are not kakala (p. 46), although he predicts that the passage of time may determine whether foreign plants eventually become recognised as such. Meanwhile, Queen Sālote's compositions make extensive use of non-indigenous yet highly prized flowers, including ‘ōketi and other introduced plants, to represent her husband, children, and grandchildren (see Section 1.1). The opening verse of ‘Ōketi, Queen

Sālote's love song composed in memory of her late Prince Consort, is reproduced verbatim below for illustration.

Si'i hengihengi ē kuo 'alu	Gone is that dawn
Kapakau ai si'ete manatu	On whose wings my memories cling
Ki he 'ōketi fisi e hahau	To the orchid bathed in morning dew
Tauleva ki he pā'angangalu	A treasured pendant hanging till the end of time

Similarly, renowned punake Moeaki Tākai composed the song 'Eni for Anne-Marie 'Ake (see Appendix I). In the opening verse, he employs chiefly kakala, including the orchid—the same flower Queen Sālote used to symbolise her husband in 'Ōketi—to represent the commoner Anne-Marie 'Ake.

The second verse of 'Eni by Moeaki Tākai is reproduced verbatim below for illustrative purposes:

Nusifaifio hono 'ōketi	Nusifaifio was adorned with orchids
Ne lufilifi'i mo fakalekesi	Veiled and tenderly cared for
Ka ta hifo ki Fanga Ufilei	Let us descend to Fanga 'Ufilei
Fānifo'anga fefine taukei	Where skilled maiden rode the surf

While Taumoefolau (2019) and Veikoso (2023) provide valuable insights into the cultural significance of indigenous kakala, the compositions of Tākai and Queen Sālote reveal a contrasting pattern in which introduced plant orchid is used to both a royal member and a commoner, warranting further investigation. Notably, Helu's (2012) proposition that the passage of time may alter perceptions of the indigeneity of kakala, allowing introduced plants to become accepted as kakala, is significant because it provides a possible explanation for the compositional practices of Queen Sālote and Tākai. In response to this lacuna, the present study examines how pioneering punake employed both indigenous and introduced kakala and other similar literary devices to enrich figurative expression in hiva kakala (see Section 1.1).

2.4 Heliaki (Imagery)

The concept of heliaki lies at the centre of hiva kakala composition and censorship. The following discussion critically examines the scholarly literature on heliaki to establish current understandings of its

meaning, origin, and interpretation. Through a critical synthesis of the literature, the review establishes the conceptual foundation of the study while identifying the principal gaps that provide the rationale for the research.

2.4.1 Conceptualising heliaki. Previous studies provide conflicting accounts of the definition of heliaki, despite its central role as a literary resource in the composition of high-quality hiva kakala and Tongan oratory. Consequently, its conceptual boundaries remain insufficiently defined in the existing literature. Churchward (1959) defines heliaki as a device for speaking “ironically or to say one thing and mean another” (p. 219). Similarly, Kaepler (2007) and Māhina (2010), argue that to use heliaki is to say one thing in terms of something else. Conversely, recent research tends to treat heliaki as an elusive phenomenon that is difficult to define. Veikoso (2023) describes lea heliaki as among “the most widely confused concepts among the academic community” (p. 8). Meanwhile, Latukefu (1980, p. 68), Taumoeolau (2012, p. 339), and Wood-Ellem (2004/2019, p. 45) examine English figures of speech, including “metaphor,” “simile,” “metonymy,” and “allusion,” as features of the Tongan heliaki system.

Although Kaepler (2007), Veikosi (2023), and Māhina (2010) conceptualise heliaki as a system of indirect language, the works of Latukefu (1980), Taumoeolau (2012), and Wood-Ellem (2004/2019) reveal an alternative interpretive tradition that explains heliaki through English figures of speech leaving a gap in the existing literature. Addressing this gap, the present study critically examines the etymological derivation of heliaki and its relationship to English concepts of imagery and figures of speech (see Section 1.6).

2.4.2 The challenge of systematising heliaki. While the preceding section examined Māhina's (2010) and Taumoeolau's (2019) broader conceptualisations of heliaki, their studies also appear to represent the first scholarly attempts to systematically classify the concept. Their classification frameworks therefore warrant separate consideration. Māhina (2010) identifies two types: qualitative, epiphoric heliaki and associative, metaphoric heliaki. He illustrates the first with examples such as la‘ā (sun) representing tu‘i (the monarch) and la‘ātō (sunset) symbolising mate (death). For the second type, he provides examples such as Tuku mo Failā (City of Sails) for Auckland and ‘Otumotu Anga‘ofa (Friendly Islands) for Tonga. In contrast, Taumoeolau (2019) proposes two alternative categories: “culture-specific heliaki and universal heliaki” (p. 107). According to Taumoeolau, universal heliaki refers to figurative expressions that can be understood across cultures without specific cultural knowledge.

The chorus of *Loka Siliva* is reproduced verbatim below for illustration:

‘Amusia pe ‘a e matangi na	The wind is envied
‘Oku ne angī fa‘iteliha	For its freedom to roam
Kae hopoate pe kita	While I remain a prisoner
He ‘ofa ‘oku loka siliva	With love bound by a silver lock

Despite their foundational contributions, Māhina’s and Taumoefolau’s divergent typologies—each comprising two categories organised according to different principles—demonstrate the continuing lack of scholarly consensus on the interpretation of heliaki. This represents a significant gap that has contributed to conceptual uncertainty, inconsistent classification, and the limited systematic development of heliaki studies. To close this loophole, the present study proposes the SFCM (see Sections 1.1; 5.3.1; 5.3.1.4; and 5.5.1), a comprehensive classificatory framework that systematically explains the relationship between literal language, imagery, symbolism, figuration, figurative language (lea heliaki), and figures of speech (lea ‘o e heliaki).

2.4.3 The misinterpretation of heliaki as metaphor. The literature presents conflicting interpretations of metaphor, particularly regarding its translation into Tongan as heliaki. Many such translations appear in English dictionaries. The Oxford Dictionary provides two meanings of metaphor. First, it defines metaphor as “a word or phrase ... applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable”. Second, it defines metaphor as “a thing regarded as representative or symbolic of something else”. Similarly, Māhina (2006/2010), Kaeppler (2007), Mafie‘o (2006), and Veikoso (2023) equate metaphor with heliaki and vice versa. In contrast, metaphor is widely classified as a figure of speech (Kuzu, 2023; Martinich, 2009) and as a literary device that departs from literal meaning (Regmi, 2014). While these studies reveal contrasting interpretations of heliaki and metaphor, the literature has paid insufficient attention to the principles governing the identification and operation of metaphor as a specific figure of speech. The following section examines these principles in greater detail.

2.4.3.1 Vehicle – tenor and grammatical rules. Zahid (2024) introduces the concepts of “vehicle” and “tenor” as a framework for identifying metaphors (p. 45). The interaction between these elements establishes the ground—the shared attribute or attributes that justify the metaphorical relationship. When such a relationship is established, the vehicle can be identified as metaphorical (Richards, 1939). For example, applying the tenor–vehicle framework to *Ko māmani ko ha siteisi*, or “The world is a stage”, identifies siteisi (stage) as the vehicle and therefore the metaphorical term. Similarly, grammatical constructions involving the verb to be (e.g., is and are) may serve as indicators of metaphorical expressions (Gupta & Reinhardt, 2023). For example, in *Ko e ‘ofa ko e moana loloto*, or “Love is a deep ocean”, *moana*

loloto (deep ocean) functions as the metaphorical vehicle within the construction.

This analysis identifies a conceptual inconsistency in the literature arising from the definition of *heliaki* as metaphor. Although Māhina (2010), Kaeppler (2007), Mafile‘o (2000), and Veikoso (2023) equate metaphor with *heliaki*, Kuzu (2023) and Martinich (2009) classify metaphor as a specific figure of speech characterised by the tenor–vehicle relationship and identifiable grammatical indicators. These defining characteristics indicate that metaphor occupies a more specific position within the system of figures of speech, thereby challenging its direct equivalence with *heliaki*. The present study addresses this gap by clarifying the relationship between *heliaki* (imagery), *lea heliaki* (figurative language), and *lea ‘o e heliaki* (figures of speech) (see Sections 1.1, Diagram One; 5.3.1; 5.3.1.4 and 5.5.1).

2.4.4 Misunderstanding of *hualela*. The current body of literature largely presents *lea heliaki*, or *heliaki*, as the opposite of *lea hangatonu* (direct language) or *hualela* (offensive joking), thereby appearing to treat the latter two as conceptually equivalent. Churchward (1959) defines *hua* as “jolly, jovial, friendly in manner, funny...” and, in relation to a boat, “to change from one tack to another” (p. 233). This nautical sense is further reflected in *fākahua*, meaning “to sail in a zigzag course, to turn alternately from one tack to another” and, figuratively, a sermon or other discourse that “wanders all over the place instead of going straight to the point” (Churchward, 1959, p. 47). A closely related form, *fakahua*, without the macron on the initial vowel, means “to joke or banter” (Churchward, 1959, p. 47). *Lela*, by contrast, refers to that which is “coarse, offensive, or such as to offend people or hurt their feelings...” (p. 290). Collectively, these related lexical meanings raise an important conceptual question concerning the function of *hua* in relation to *lela*: whether *hua* merely accompanies offensiveness or modifies and redirects its communicative effect away from direct offence.

Additionally, Pond (2010), Kaeppler (2007), Manu‘atu (2000), and Māhina (2010) argue that being plain and direct is considered disrespectful in formal Tongan contexts. Similarly, Veikoso (2023) describes *hualela* as “the most straight forward way of talk among Tongans” (p. 62) and often as “the opposite of *heliaki*” (p. 65). Churchward (1959), however, defines *hualela* as “to make offensive jokes, to be humorous in an offensive or vulgar way” (p. 233). In contrast, several English figures of speech, or *lea ‘o e heliaki*, correspond to forms of *hualela*, including dysphemism, double entendre, and innuendo. Prokhorova et al. (2019) interpret dysphemism as making “speech straightforward, harsh, or even offensive” (p. 504), while the Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.) defines double entendre as “a word or phrase open to two interpretations, one of which is usually risqué or indecent.”

Although previous studies generally position *hualela* as the opposite of *heliaki*, they do not

systematically examine its etymological structure or explain whether the modifying function of hua permits hualela to operate through figurative mechanisms within the broader heliaki system. This omission has contributed to continuing uncertainty over the conceptual status of hualela and its relationship to lea ‘o e heliaki. The present study addresses this gap by re-examining the etymology and communicative function of hualela, demonstrating that it operates through figurative devices within the heliaki system rather than existing outside it (see Sections 1.1, Diagram One; 5.3.1; 5.3.1.4 and 5.5.1).

2.5 Nofo ‘a kāinga system

The nofo ‘a kāinga system is central to the present review because it establishes the relational framework governing the social interactions and cultural practices that hiva kakala censorship sought to protect. The following discussion examines scholarly interpretations of its hierarchical organisation and identifies the principal gaps addressed by the present study.

2.5.1 Conceptualising the nofo ‘a kāinga system. Understanding the nofo ‘a kāinga cultural sphere is vital as it provides a necessary context for this investigation. Völkel (2016) describes nofo ‘a kāinga as an “overarching hierarchy” consisting of commoners, chiefs, and the king (p. 110). Völkel also contends that “there is a relative hierarchy within the extended family (kāinga)” (p. 110), which she characterises through the two categories of ‘eiki and tu‘a. Additionally, Kaeppler (2004/2019) identifies three key principles associated with the nofo ‘a kāinga: (i) the sister is superior to her brother; (ii) the paternal side is higher than the maternal side; and (iii) older siblings are superior to their younger counterparts. Similarly, Kalāvite (2010) argues that social hierarchy determines the organisation of kāinga (relatives) according to their respective “position” and relationships (p. 26).

Whereas Kaeppler and Kalāvite illuminate relational hierarchies within commoner, chiefly, and royal contexts, Völkel's identification of more complex social stratifications beyond the constitutional hierarchy provides a more convincing explanation of Tongan social organisation. Nevertheless, the relational principles governing these additional social stratifications remain unexplained in the existing literature. The present study addresses this gap through the proposed kāinga–‘ulumotu‘a–mehekitanga (fahu) classification (see Sections 1.4.2, 1.4.3, and 1.4.3.1).

2.5.2 Fetauhi‘aki (mutual relationship). Having established the relational structure of the nofo ‘a kāinga system, the review now turns to the principal cultural practice through which these relationships are maintained. As argued in the Introduction (see Section 1.4.2), the Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model (FRM) conceptualises fetauhi‘aki as the primary mechanism that sustains the nofo ‘a kāinga through the complementary practices of fefaka‘apa‘apa‘aki (mutual respect) and fefuafatongia‘aki (mutual obligation).

Accordingly, understanding the cultural rationale for hiva kakala censorship requires a critical examination not only of fetauhi‘aki (reciprocity) itself but also of these two reciprocal practices, which govern relationships across both the kāinga-‘ulumotu‘a-mehekitanga (fahu) relational stratification and the kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i constitutional hierarchy (see Section 1.4.3). The following subsections therefore review the literature on fetauhi‘aki, faka‘apa‘apa, and fatongia to establish the conceptual foundation for the present study's analysis.

2.5.2.1 Fetauhi‘aki. An examination of hiva kakala song censorship requires a critical review of the practice of fetauhi‘aki. Churchward (1959) defines fetauhi‘aki as “to look after each other” (p. 176). Similarly, Biersack (1982), Völkel (2024), and Kaeppler (2024) conceptualise fetauhi‘aki as a foundational practice of reciprocity through which Tongans mutually provide one another with valued goods and services. Although these arguments contribute to an understanding of fetauhi‘aki, they pay insufficient attention to its operation across the inherent ‘eiki–tu‘a relational binary within the newly proposed KUM relational stratification the KHT constitutional hierarchy through two principal relational mechanisms: fefaka‘apa‘apa‘aki (taboo-governed respect) and fefuafatongia‘aki (reciprocal obligation). The following two subsections critically examine these complementary practices.

2.5.2.1.1 Faka‘apa‘apa. The etymology and cultural meaning of faka‘apa‘apa have been interpreted variously in the existing literature. The term can be deconstructed into the causative prefix faka- and the root ‘apa‘apa, which denotes the two masters of ceremonies seated before the monarch during the fakapangai ceremony (see Appendix A). The transitive verbal form of faka‘apa‘apa, fefaka‘apa‘apa‘aki, which operationalises the practice of fetauhi‘aki, denotes the reciprocal enactment of homage, courtesy, and respect towards one another. Meanwhile, Churchward (1959) defines faka‘apa‘apa as “showing deference or respect, courteous” (p. 128). Scholars such as Mafale‘o (2016), Thaman (1987), and Fua (2007) further contend that faka‘apa‘apa encompasses specific dimensions of tapu that serve to delineate familial and relational boundaries. Gucake (2020), however, argues that the cultural connotations of faka‘apa‘apa are not coextensive with the English concept of respect. While these scholars provide important insights into faka‘apa‘apa, they pay insufficient attention to its two principal reciprocal forms: veitapui and veitokai. This omission limits understanding of the cultural and relational principles underlying kakala song censorship.

2.5.2.1.2 Fatongia. Churchward (1959) defines fatongia as “duty, obligation” (p. 143), while Latukefu (1980) defines it as “obligation” and argues that it contributes to the maintenance of existing traditions and cultural practices (p. 65). The transitive verbal form of fatongia, fefuafatongia‘aki, which operationalises the practice of fetauhi‘aki, denotes the enactment of mutual obligation. Tofua‘ipangai

(2011), however, offers a conflicting etymology for fatongia, deriving it from fa and tongia—referring to the scent of ripe pandanus fruit (see Section 1.4.2). While existing scholarship provides important lexical, cultural, and etymological interpretations of fatongia, it does not recognise the existence of two distinct, undocumented forms of fatongia that operate respectively through veitapui and veitokai. This omission represents a significant gap in the literature, which the present study addresses by conceptualising and standardising these two forms of fatongia for the first time (see Section 1.4).

2.5.2.1.3 Case study: Faka‘apa‘apa – veitapui and veitokai. Having reviewed the literature on fetauhi‘aki and its two principal relational mechanisms, fefaka‘apa‘apa‘aki and fefuafatongia‘aki, this subsection examines three documented hiva kakala case studies reported in the literature. These cases illustrate how the relational principles underpinning the nofo ‘a kāinga system were reflected in actual compositional and censorship contexts. They also provide an opportunity to evaluate how heliaki, veitapui, and veitokai have been represented in existing scholarship and to identify unresolved questions concerning the application of these relational principles during the evaluation of hiva kakala. Considered collectively, the cases reveal an important gap in the literature regarding the relationship between heliaki, relational positioning, and censorship decisions.

Renowned punake Sēmisi ‘Iongi (‘Iongi, 1972, as cited in Māhina, 1993) crafted the lyrical hook of a love song around the metonymic expression “a rainbow in a golden vessel” (p. 228). The expression employs the heliaki system through a metonymic figure of speech symbolising the vagina. Although Māhina confirmed, based on ‘Iongi's own account, that no romantic relationship existed between him and Queen Sālote, the imagery is nevertheless sexually suggestive and could be interpreted as provocative. Despite this, the song was approved for broadcast, apparently because of its skilful deployment of heliaki and the absence of any direct personal reference. Māhina further reports that ‘Iongi explained the song reflected his close friendship with Queen Sālote. The second verse of Vēsili Koulá is reproduced verbatim below for illustration:

Moto‘i ‘umata ‘i he vēsili koulá	Bud of a rainbow sets in a golden vessel
‘Akisesi ‘a e ‘ofá ni kei talamuka	The axis of this love is still blooming
‘Amusia ia ‘oku fahu ‘i natula	Blessed is who is fahu in nature
He koe mataika fai ki he pupu‘a	While I am hankering for fish in a blowhole

Similarly, in his song ‘Utufōmesi Siliva, renowned punake Huluholo Mo‘ungaloa employs heliaki in expressing his reflections following a beauty pageant in which two first cousins competed (Cullen, personal communication, July 24, 2024). Tupou ‘Ahome‘e Tuita won the title, while Kalapenia

Tupoumohefo Tupou Taumoepeau was named first runner-up. The song expresses dissatisfaction with Taumoepeau's placement. According to Mo'ungaloa, as conveyed through the composition, the result was perceived as unjust, and Taumoepeau was regarded as the rightful winner.

The genealogical relationship between Taumoepeau and Tuita is significant to the present review. Tuita occupies a superior ('eiki) relational position in relation to Taumoepeau, who occupies the complementary subordinate (tu'a) position, because Tuita's mother is the sister of Taumoepeau's father. Within the principles of fetauhi'aki, this 'eiki–tu'a relationship would ordinarily be governed by the obligations of veitokai and veitapui, raising questions about the cultural appropriateness of criticism directed from a tu'a towards an 'eiki relative. The song was nevertheless accepted for broadcast, with its skilful use of heliaki appearing to have been a decisive factor.

The Chorus of 'Utufōmesi Siliva by Mo'ungaloa is reproduced verbatim below for illustrative purposes.

Fungamahofā te u mate valelau	Fungamahufā, I will complain without end
ho'o uini kae poini 'a Pouvalu	You won the prize, though Pouvalu scored the highest
'Oku lekooti ki he pā'angangalu	It shall stand recorded for all time
'Isa kuo ake 'eku manatu	'Isa! I just recall
Ko e huli pe 'o e vaotamanu	All because she was a tender shoot of Tamanu bushes
Si'omau liku ko Valefanau	Our cliff-bound coast known as Valefanau

In contrast, a hiva kakala love song composed by the punake Tongotongo Liava'a (see Appendix J) lamenting the annulment of his son Joshua Tu'iono Liava'a's marriage to Princess Mele Siu'ilikutapu was temporarily banned despite its skilful use of heliaki. The prohibition appears to have stemmed from the perception that the composition constituted a protest against the King and the royal family. This outcome stands in contrast to the approval granted to the compositions of 'Iongi and Mo'ungaloa and raises further questions about the factors influencing censorship decisions. The second verse of 'Ise'isa² is reproduced verbatim below for illustration:

Peheange mai ko ha levaياتani	I wish I was a leviathan
Ke ma fe'ao moe nofo 'amanaki	So I could face the consequences

² 'Ise'isa should not be confused with *Aotearoa*, discussed in Section 4.5.1.4. Although both songs were composed in response to the annulment of Joshua Tu'iono Liava'a's marriage to Princess Mele Siu'ilikutapu, they are distinct compositions with different lyrics and compositional contexts.

Lulu e toafa mo e pelikani	The owl and pelican of the desert
Pō mo e ‘aho he inu mamahi	Endure suffering day and night
He‘ikai te u lava tu‘uaki	I cannot withstand it
Si‘eku ‘ofani kuo manava‘aki	As I now utter my broken love
Tuku pe ke u tangi na‘a lelu ai	Let me cry to ease the pain

These cases reveal the use of heliaki as a literary system for upholding fetauhi‘aki (see 1.4.2) in hiva kakala. Existing scholarship, however, does not explain the apparent inconsistencies whereby one composition was prohibited while others, despite employing comparable heliaki and raising similar potential breaches of fetauhi‘aki, were approved. The present study addresses this gap through the Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model (FRM) (see Section 1.4.2).

2.6 Punake

Reviewing the role of the punake and the various scholarly definitions of the term is of paramount importance to the present study. Analysis of the literature so far reveals that punake occupied multifaceted roles in the censorship of hiva kakala, serving both as composers and as censors. The following review examines how these roles have been understood and represented in the existing literature.

2.6.1 The role of punake. The current literature presents differing conceptions of the punake and its roles. Kailahi (2017) describes punake as “composers” who guarded their compositional techniques closely, employing lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech) to imbue their lyrics with vividness and emotional depth, thereby expressing what was “no‘o (tied) in their heart” (p.1). Similarly, Churchward (1959) and Shumway (1981) describe punake as a person who writes poems, lyrics and music, and choreographs songs. Additionally, punake Malukava Kavaefiafi described the composer’s commitment to their role as involving the renunciation of all distractions: “no bathing, no sleep, no food, no socialisation”—a state of total dedication encapsulated by “all the noes” (Moyle, 2022).

Beyond defining the punake, the literature also sheds light on the social and institutional backgrounds of those who served in censorial roles. The literature further indicates that censorial punake and composing punake frequently disagreed over censorship decisions affecting the latter's hiva kakala compositions (Moyle, 2022). The censorial punake were predominantly drawn from royalty, the nobility, and recognised cultural experts. Many were also royalist composers who produced laudatory hiva kakala

for the monarchy (Dee, 2019). For example, Kavaefiafi, who functioned as a censor, served as a punake for Queen Sālote (Moyle, 2022), while Tu‘ivakanō Polutele, a chiefly punake, held the same role for Prince Tungī Mailefihi, the Queen's husband (Dee, 2019). Likewise, Ve‘ehala, a noble of the realm, frequently chaired the TBC censorship committee (Fusimālohi, 1982).

While the above arguments provide valuable insights into the role of the punake and their involvement in the censorship of hiva kakala, no existing study critically examines the implications of punake serving simultaneously as composers and censors. Furthermore, existing scholarship has yet to examine the rights of composing punake when their works were subjected to censorship. The present study addresses these gaps by analysing the censorship guidelines alongside the principle of poetic licence (see Section 5.10.2) to examine how the rights of composing punake and artistic freedom were negotiated within the censorship process.

2.7 Kau faiongoongo (journalists)

This section examines the role of faiongoongo and its English counterpart, the journalist. This review is significant because it provides insight into why journalists were assigned the responsibility of censoring kakala songs at the TBC radio station. Such analysis is important as it may reveal whether this censorship contributed to enhancing the quality of kakala songs or, conversely, resulted in their deterioration.

2.7.1 The role of journalists and censorship. Etymology reveals that many Western concepts and terminologies, including the journalistic role, have roots in other countries. According to the online Oxford Learner’s Dictionary (n.d.), the word journalist derives from Latin origin word “diurnalis”, meaning “daily,” and entered “Old French as *jornel* and *journal*.” It also defines a journalist as “a person whose job is to collect and write news stories for newspapers, magazines, radio, television or online news sites.” Additionally, Black (2020) defines the role of a journalist as one “guided” by ethics.

Fusimalohi (1982) asserts that Tongan journalists’ duties included delivering the decisions of the king, chiefs and government to the people. As Western journalism principles became increasingly influential, there was a common “notion that Tonga’s media was tightly controlled, censored and occasionally directly gagged by the Government” (Lewis, 2011, p. 58). On the other hand, a New Zealand Herald article in 2003 based on a Tonga Government statement accused the Taimi ‘O Tonga newspaper of a lack of honesty in its reports. “This unprofessionalism has long robbed the people of Tonga of their right to correct, unbiased, and balanced information about the work of their Parliament” (New Zealand Herald, 2003, June 5). In 2007, the first certificate in formal training in media and journalism studies was

offered in Tonga (RNZ, 2007) but the media is still critiqued for a reliance on opinion over facts when it reports news (Kaniva Tonga, 2020).

2.7.2 The role of faiongoongo. Although existing scholarship clarifies the dynamics of journalism and censorship, the assertions from the New Zealand Herald and Kaniva Tonga highlight a more fundamental issue: the persistent concerns regarding professionalism within the Tongan journalistic context, which is central to this study. This analysis exposes a gap in the literature concerning the traditional role of the faiongoongo, the figure analogous to the modern journalist. This deficiency warrants scholarly attention, as it overlooks the distinctive traditional communication skills and mindset embodied in faiongoongo, which should be considered in the effective teaching of Western journalism. Addressing this gap is critical because it may clarify the specific function of journalists at TBC radio in the censorship of hiva kakala. The study therefore examines whether journalistic and broadcasting involvement undermined the authenticity of the traditional song genre or contributed to its preservation and enhancement. In doing so, it seeks to provide further insight into the relationship between hiva kakala censorship, media regulation, and the broader Tongan socio-cultural context. The following section examines Tongan traditional communication.

2.7.3 Modern journalism's influence. The relationship between Tonga's traditional oral communication and contemporary journalism provides a critical framework for investigating kakala song censorship. The Tonga Broadcasting Act 2016 formalised broadcast journalism and established a professional framework for news production in Tonga; yet the practice continues today to be shaped by the foundations of traditional communication. Kaeppler (1992) illustrates traditional Tongan communication through the use of heliaki or lea 'o e heliaki (figures of speech) in a historical exchange between King Momo and cultural architect Lo'au. The king's messenger conveyed Momo's proposal to marry Lo'au's daughter, Nua, by requesting "a seed yam" (p. 164). Lo'au responded that he had only "sprouted seed yam", implying through heliaki that his daughter was no longer a virgin—a significant cultural concern, as noted by Condevaux (2011). The king replied that even "sprouted" (p. 164), Nua was still desirable, giving rise to the proverb: "Fena pē ka ko Nua," (p. 164) meaning something used but still valued. Likewise, Philips (1991) argues that Tongan language is "allusive, indirect, metaphorical" (p. 380), while Grace, as cited in Taumoevalau (2012), asserts that "ways of talking reflect the culture" (p. 330). In contrast, Harrington (2003) and Waugh (2009) argue that journalists use direct language and focus more closely on the exact meaning of the words.

While Harrington and Waugh's argument that journalists should adhere to direct and literal language is well founded, the alignment of the assertions of Kaeppler, Philips, and Grace with the

conventions of *heliaki* and *lea 'o e heliaki* (figures of speech) reveals a distinctive feature of journalism in the Tongan context. This observation exposes the limited scholarly attention given to the established *heliaki* system and its role in the incorporation of Western journalistic practices. The present study addresses this gap by developing a culturally grounded framework that integrates the Tongan concept of *faiongoongo* with Western journalism and news writing, while preserving the functions of *lea heliaki* within Tongan communication.

2.8 Tonga Broadcasting Commission.

The Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) occupies a central place in the present review because it was the principal institution responsible for broadcasting and moderating *hiva kakala*. The following discussion examines its establishment, governance, and cultural position before considering the implications of its relationship with the monarchy and the censorship of *hiva kakala*.

2.8.1 Institutional and cultural foundations of the TBC. To understand the rationale for the strict pre-airplay controls on *kakala* songs, a thorough analysis of the TBC radio station is important. The radio was established on 4 July 1961 as a government project under the premiership of Prince Taufa'āhau (later King Tupou IV) and officially launched by his mother, Queen Sālote Tupou III (Fusimālohi, 1982). The government-controlled broadcaster has a board that comprises the Prime Minister and mostly Cabinet Ministers. The purpose of the station was to “inform, educate and entertain” the public on current affairs and news (Tonga Broadcasting Commission Act, 2016). Established with a single AM radio station, ZCO, the government-owned TBC later expanded to operate two free-to-air television channels, Television Tonga and Television Tonga 2; two commercial radio stations, Radio Tonga and Kool 90FM; and a 24-hour Radio Australia relay channel (Lewis, 2010). The law stipulates that the Cabinet has the power to ban any material broadcast by the station. The TBC has long faced criticism for its perceived anti-democratic stance and support for the monarchy (Kaniva Tonga News, 2017). In 2017, the Tongan Supreme Court dismissed an application for judicial review of the dismissal of TBC General Manager Nanise Fifita (RNZ, 2017).

While the existing literature provides insights into the TBC, no studies have illuminated that a project initiated by the monarchy and royal family is culturally and traditionally regarded as a *mā'imoa*. It is a cultural practice associated with a primary responsibility to safeguard the interests of the royal family. This represents a significant gap that has remained unaddressed. The present study addresses this gap through research questions that examine the fairness of the censorship guidelines and the TBC's involvement in their implementation.

2.9 The aesthetic quality of hiva kakala

The quality of hiva kakala extends beyond figurative language to encompass the broader aesthetic dimensions of composition and performance. While the preceding sections have reviewed the intrinsic qualities and literary features underpinning the genre, this section examines the scholarship on *mālie*, vocalisation, and instrumentation to identify gaps in understanding the aesthetic quality and censorship of hiva kakala.

2.9.1 The notion of *mālie*. The concept of *mālie* occupies an important place in Tongan aesthetic traditions, particularly in relation to song and performance. Churchward (1959) broadly defines *mālie* as "good, pleasing, interesting, advantageous, fortunate, helpful, fine, admirable, and commendable" (p. 324), illustrating its wide semantic range. Manu'atu and Kepa (2002) emphasise its relational significance, describing *mālie* as the "life force in Tongan relationships" (p. 15). Kaeppler (1971) further distinguishes *mālie* from Western conceptions of beauty, arguing that it arises through skilful performance and cultural resonance, generating *māfana*—an emotional warmth and exhilaration shared between performers and audiences (p. 177).

Although these studies establish the cultural importance of *mālie*, they leave important conceptual questions unresolved. In particular, the literature has yet to establish a consistent English equivalent or a systematic framework for explaining how *mālie* functions as an evaluative principle. Building on the Tupunga Ola (cause-and-effect) framework and the analytical parallel with news values introduced in the Introduction (Section 1.11), this study examines whether *mālie* is better understood through identifiable qualities and their effects than through a single English translation. This gap is directly relevant to the present investigation because it informs how censorship may have sought to enhance the quality of hiva kakala while also reinforcing royal and chiefly authority.

2.10 Vocalisation. Existing scholarship on vocal techniques provides an important context for investigating censorship in hiva kakala. The genre has been strongly influenced by Western hymns and popular music. Māhina (2010) describes hiva kakala as sung poetry shaped by Christian missionary traditions and hymn-like structures featuring verses and choruses. Leech-Wilkinson (2012) discusses the use of musical scores in Western musical traditions as a means of guiding performers' learning and execution. Similarly, Davidson (2024) conceptualises the musical score as an authoritative blueprint that integrates musical parts on aligned staves and provides performers with instructions ranging from notation to interpretation. Young (1993) and Leaver (2017) also discuss the use of major keys to evoke communal joy within Methodist musical traditions.

Collectively, this scholarship foregrounds the influence of Western musical techniques, notation, and stylistic conventions. However, considerably less attention has been given to Tongan practices of vocal improvisation, particularly fakahēhē and nikoniko‘i. Churchward (1959) identifies fakahēhē as a singing technique and defines nikoniko‘i as to “sing with improvised variations or flourishes without following the score” (p. 42). The limited examination of these practices leaves an important gap in understanding how Tongan vocal techniques contributed to the quality and evaluation of hiva kakala. This gap is relevant to the study's examination of the relationship between censorship, song quality, and the possible reinforcement of royal and chiefly authority. In addressing this gap, the study contributes to understanding vocalisation as a component of both the aesthetic development and regulatory evaluation of the genre.

2.11 Instrumentalisation. Existing literature on Tongan musical instrumentation provides a further context for investigating censorship within the hiva kakala tradition. Kammerer (2008) characterises hiva kakala as “sentimental”, combining Western harmonies with string-band instrumentation (p. 3). Similarly, Hebert (2008) describes the genre in terms of “improvised harmonies” and “guitar accompaniment” (p. 169), while Wood-Ellem (2004/2019) notes that hiva kakala may be performed a cappella or with various forms of instrumental accompaniment.

A notable trend in this scholarship is its emphasis on the adoption of Western musical styles, harmonies, and instruments. However, limited attention has been given to specific performative techniques, including guitar riffs, licks, runs, and fill-ins, and their contribution to the aesthetic quality of hiva kakala. This omission leaves underexplored an important dimension of the genre's musical development and its possible relevance to censorship and quality assessment. The present study addresses this gap by examining the relationship between censorship, song quality, and the possible reinforcement of royal and chiefly authority. In doing so, it contributes to understanding the role of instrumentation in the aesthetic development and regulatory evaluation of hiva kakala.

2.12 Conclusion.

The reviewed literature suggests that the censorship of hiva kakala was associated with safeguarding nofo ‘a kāinga and ensuring that song lyrics did not violate the fe‘ulu‘ufi ‘o e nofo, a close communal living structure characterised by culturally prescribed relationships and expectations of appropriate conduct. These relationships may be understood through the two coexisting relational structures conceptualised in the Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model: the inherent kUM relational stratification and the kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i constitutional hierarchy (see Section 1.4.3). However, the precise relationship

between these cultural expectations and the regulation of hiva kakala remains insufficiently explained. In particular, the literature has yet to establish how the heliaki system operated within these relational structures to shape the rationale for and practice of censorship.

This limitation reflects broader conceptual and analytical deficiencies in the existing scholarship. Robust definitions, systematic frameworks, and consistent analytical criteria remain underdeveloped across several interconnected areas, including the classification and figurative development of kakala, the conceptualisation of heliaki, the relational principles of fetauhi‘aki, the aesthetic evaluation of mālie and māfana, and the roles of punake (composers) and kau faiongoongo (journalists). Consequently, debates concerning the composition, evaluation, and censorship of hiva kakala have often lacked a coherent analytical basis for examining these phenomena collectively.

The literature review also reveals unresolved tensions in the application of censorship. Certain hiva kakala rich in heliaki and containing material potentially critical of, or compromising to, members of the royal or chiefly classes were publicly broadcast, while other compositions of a comparable nature were censored. Such inconsistencies raise questions concerning the criteria applied in censorship decisions and whether factors including the identity, relational or constitutional positioning, or perceived intent of the punake influenced the evaluation of compositions. These concerns are reinforced by criticism from members of the public and the punake community regarding the judging and approval criteria applied to hiva kakala. The literature therefore leaves unresolved whether censorship functioned principally to enhance the literary and aesthetic quality of the genre, preserve culturally prescribed relationships and conduct, or reinforce constitutional and political authority.

A further trend emerging from the reviewed literature is the substantial influence of Westernisation on the development of hiva kakala. Rather than indicating a simple displacement of Tongan expressive traditions, the literature points to a dynamic process of cultural and linguistic interaction through which the genre incorporated new musical, literary, and lexical resources. This is evident in the adoption of Western song structures and musical practices, the creation of neologisms, and the use of figurative expressions that can be analysed in relation to established systems of figures of speech. At the same time, although formal censorship was influenced by Western institutional practices, the literature indicates its compatibility with pre-existing Tongan practices of tapui, fakatonutonu, and tāngata‘i, which operated to protect toputapu (sacredness), mana, and the relational principles sustaining fatungamotu‘a.

Taken together, these gaps establish the need for a culturally grounded and systematic examination of hiva kakala censorship. The present study addresses this need by drawing together the

Semantic–Figurative Continuum, the Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model, and the Toafesiamā Framework to examine the relationships among the heliaki system, inherent and constitutional relational positioning, cultural and linguistic transformation, mālie, and censorship. In doing so, it investigates why hiva kakala were required to be composed in accordance with the heliaki system and moderated by censorial punake and kau faiongoongo before broadcast on TBC radio from the 1960s to the early 2000s.

Sepitā 3: Metotolosia (Methodology)

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework employed to investigate the censorship of hiva kakala. It examines a culturally and conceptually complex phenomenon involving kakala, heliaki, foreign cultural influence, and the roles of punake and journalists in the pre-broadcast censorship of the song genre. Investigating these interconnected dimensions required a methodological approach capable of systematically analysing the phenomenon within its cultural, literary, and historical context. This requirement aligns with indigenous methodological scholarship emphasising the importance of locating research within the cultural knowledge, values, and worldviews of the communities being studied (Smith, 2012; Vaioleti, 2006; Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). Consequently, this study develops a Tongan-centred methodological design that draws on an indigenous Tongan concept and a complementary Western philosophical analogy to investigate the research problem and address the conceptual gaps identified in the preceding chapters.

In response to the methodological requirements, this study introduces the newly developed Tupunga Ola framework as its principal theoretical approach. It provides a cause-and-effect perspective for investigating the censorship of hiva kakala. The study also develops four complementary analytical frameworks: the Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model (FRM) (see Section 1.4), the ‘Eiki – Tu‘a Inherent and Constitutional Relational Identity Model (ETICRIM) (see Section 1.4.3), the Semantic–Figurative Continuum Model (SFCM) (see Section 1.1; Diagram One), and the Toafesiamā Cultural Integration Framework (TCIF) (see Section 1.7). Collectively, these complementary frameworks provide a coherent, culturally grounded analytical foundation for addressing the research questions.

The remainder of this chapter begins by outlining the study's ontological and epistemological positions, which provide the philosophical foundation for the research. It then explains the overall research design, followed by the procedures for participant selection and data collection. The chapter concludes by describing the analytical methods used to examine the data and demonstrates how these methodological components collectively operationalise the Tupunga Ola framework and its complementary analytical frameworks.

3.2 Research Questions (RQs).

RQ: Why were hiva kakala required to be composed in accordance with the heliaki system and moderated

by journalists and censorial punake before they could be broadcast on Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio from the 1960s until the early 2000s?

Sub-Research Questions (SRQs):

1. To what extent did the involvement of the late Queen Sālote Tupou III, as a reformer of the hiva kakala genre, influence Tongan understandings of the composition and regulation of hiva kakala?
2. Were the censorship guidelines established to enhance the quality of hiva kakala, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of royals and chiefs over commoners?
3. Did the involvement of censorial punake and journalists undermine the authenticity of the hiva kakala genre, or did it contribute to its preservation and enhancement?

3.3. Research paradigm and design.

The research was originally designed around 'Ilaiū's (2018) Refractive Approach as its principal methodological framework for centring Tongan epistemologies, complemented by Talanoa (Halapua, 2022), which established the philosophical and practical foundation for the study. However, the cultural analysis and conceptual requirements that emerged during the research ultimately led to the development of two complementary Tongan-centred frameworks: Tupunga Ola and Veitalatala. Drawing on (Silverman, 2020; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), these frameworks provide the conceptual and methodological foundations of the study while remaining compatible with established qualitative research principles. The following sections explain the development of these frameworks and their relationship to the established approaches that informed the study.

3.3.1 A Tongan-centred paradigm: Tupunga Ola and veitalatala. This study adopts a Tongan-centred methodological paradigm comprising two complementary frameworks. Tupunga Ola provides the overarching theoretical and analytical framework that guides the study. Complementing this framework, Veitalatala functions as the principal approach to data generation and collaborative meaning-making.

3.3.1.1 Tupunga Ola is an indigenous theoretical approach. The development of Tupunga Ola was inspired by several Tongan philosophical principles, including the proverb *Ka tonu e kamatá*, 'e

faingofua 'a e toengá (If the beginning is right, the rest will follow easily). This emphasises the importance of establishing a sound foundation, recognising that the success of what follows depends on the quality of its beginning. Guided by this principle, the present study sought to develop an indigenous theoretical approach capable of providing a coherent and culturally grounded foundation for the research. The result was Tupunga Ola, a theoretical approach designed to examine cultural phenomena through the relationship between their origins, development, and outcomes.

As Tupunga Ola has not previously been systematically conceptualised within academic scholarship, this study draws on the Western principle of cause and effect as its closest analytical equivalent through which the framework can be articulated and examined. In contemporary scholarship, cause and effect is understood as a causal process in which one event or condition (the cause) gives rise to a corresponding outcome (the effect), providing a systematic framework for identifying, analysing, and interpreting causal relationships (Hadavand, 2025; Patomäki, 2019). Tupunga Ola provides the overarching philosophical and analytical structure of the study and guided the development of its models, conceptual standardisations, research approaches, and Tongan coinages. These innovations emerged through its causal emphasis on identifying the origins, development, functions, and effects of the cultural, linguistic, and literary phenomena examined.

3.3.1.1 Etymological foundation of Tupunga Ola. To clarify the conceptual basis of Tupunga Ola, it is first necessary to examine the etymological meanings of its two constituent terms, *tupunga* and *ola*. Etymologically, *tupunga* denotes “origin, source, or cause” (Churchward, 1959, p. 513). Churchward further illustrates its meaning with the example: “‘Oku tupunga ‘eku ‘itá ko ‘ene loi” (p. 513), which translates as: My anger (the effect, *ola*) is caused by his lying (the cause, *tupunga*). *Tupu‘anga* is a variant of *tupunga*, meaning “place, where, or reason why, something grows or originates, source [...]” (Churchward, 1959, p. 514). By contrast, *ola* denotes the result or effect. Churchward (1959) also defines *ola* variously as “to succeed or be successful” (p. 153, def. 1), “to show signs of recovery” (def. 2), a regal synonym for *ulo* (“to give light”) (def. 3), and the “product” of a sum calculation.

The etymological analysis clarifies why the name Tupunga Ola appropriately captures the theory's emphasis on the relationship between origins (*tupunga*) and outcomes (*ola*). This linguistic foundation reinforces its suitability as the organising theoretical framework for the present study. It provides a systematic means of examining, evaluating, and explaining the underlying reasons for the censorship of *hiva kakala* within Tonga's predominantly Westernised cultural context. Drawing on this framework, the study investigates how and why *hiva kakala* require the appropriate application of

heliaki and kakala to satisfy the censorship standards applied by journalists and censorial punake at TBC radio.

3.3.1.1.2 Why Tupunga Ola is useful to this study. Tupunga Ola is particularly useful to this study because, as a Tongan conceptual framework, it enables the researcher to reason within a Tongan epistemological perspective, thereby illuminating previously overlooked impacts, outcomes, and relationships, while generating new insights, solutions, and recommendations. Informed by the causal frameworks of Bunge (1997) and of Pawson and Tilley (1997), which emphasise identifying the underlying mechanisms linking causes and effects, Tupunga Ola facilitates a deeper and more nuanced understanding of phenomena than simple statistical association. This causal orientation is particularly relevant to hiva kakala censorship because it enables the researcher to identify overlooked processes, relationships, and nuances that have limited scholarly understanding of its cultural imperatives. Its principal strength lies in grounding causal inquiry within the Tongan concepts of tupunga and ola, thereby providing a culturally grounded analytical purpose and methodological confidence. Drawing on its causal orientation, Tupunga Ola guided the development of the study's conceptual models, standardisations, research approaches, and Tongan coinages by focusing analytical attention on the origins, development, functions, and effects of the phenomena examined.

3.3.1.1.3 Tupunga Ola as an Organising Framework. Beyond informing the development of the study's conceptual and analytical frameworks, Tupunga Ola also provides the organisational structure for the presentation and interpretation of the findings. Accordingly, Chapter Four presents the findings as tupunga (causes), while Chapter Five examines their corresponding ola (effects). This organisation ensures that each identified cause is systematically established before its corresponding effects are examined, thereby maintaining a clear distinction between the presentation of empirical findings and their interpretation. Such an approach is consistent with established qualitative research principles that advocate the logical and systematic organisation of findings prior to their interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Miles et al. (2020) likewise argue that the systematic organisation of qualitative findings enhances the transparency and coherence of the research process. Silverman (2020) further contends that a clear and structured presentation of findings strengthens the credibility of qualitative research by making the relationship between evidence and interpretation explicit.

3.3.2 Talanoa framework approach. The principle at the heart of a Talanoa approach is that it emphasises informality in meetings or interviews to foster a more genuine and relaxed environment (Halapua, 2022; Vaiioleti, 2015; Latu, 2019). An informal environment helps participants feel at ease, encouraging open and honest dialogue. Dr Sitiveni Halapua (2022), who first introduced these

indigenous approaches to academic research, argues that as a researcher, one's duty is "always to try to understand where and when" issues lie "within diverse cultures of living in various language communities" (p. 120). He emphasises talking "without concealment", asserting that "tala" means "telling of a story" while "noa ... means without concealment" (p. 25). Accordingly, open dialogue constitutes a central component of the methodological approach adopted in this study.

3.3.2.1 Limitations of the talanoa approach. However, given the specific objectives of this research, which involve understanding Tongan cultural practices such as fufū me'a (the practice of concealing skills or knowledge to prevent others from learning or plagiarising) (Kailahi, 2010) and me'a fakafāмили (matters considered belonging only to members of the family), it became evident this approach alone was insufficient. The voluntary nature of participation in a Talanoa approach may encourage participants to withhold culturally sensitive information, even when such information is important to the research. The study's focus on sensitive topics—including Queen Sālote Tupou III, royal families, and objectionable material in kakala songs—makes this especially significant. This context naturally discourages open public discourse and predisposes participants to be reticent unless pressed for details. Moreover, during the course of this research, the researcher began to question the lexical implications of noa within the term Talanoa. Churchward (1959) defines noa through meanings including "of no value or importance, worthless, unimportant, causeless, meaningless, aimless, and futile" (p. 379). Although these lexical meanings do not necessarily define Talanoa as a methodological practice, they prompted the researcher to consider whether the term adequately reflected the purposefulness and analytical direction required by the present study. The research therefore required a methodological approach that embedded purposefulness, reciprocity, and direction at its core.

3.3.3 Refractive framework approach. The refractive-research approach was developed by Tongan scholar Dr Siaosi 'Ilaiū (2018). He employed the Refractive Approach in his exploration of paradigm shifts within ancient Tongan kingship traditions. This innovative approach, inspired by the scientific concept of light refraction, serves as a lens through which to elucidate and trace the origins of cultural connections to Tongan principles and customs ('Ilaiū, 2018). The aim was to analyse cultural phenomena in detail, determining whether they were of Tongan origin or introduced from outside. This process enabled the researcher to draw grounded conclusions for the study. Abawi (2012) argues that "Refractive phenomenology builds on hermeneutic phenomenological foundations through the use of interpretive filters taking individual depictions of lived experience and viewing, reflecting, redirecting and channelling these through a series of filters and reductive lenses until the 'Essence of the phenomenon has been brought into view" (p.141).

3.3.3.1 Limitations of refractive framework. Although the Refractive Approach offers a robust theoretical foundation for analysing cultural and historical shifts—and may hold value for this research—it ultimately remains insufficient for addressing its core complexities. This limitation stems from the fact that the term refractive has not yet been meaningfully contextualised or theoretically reconfigured within the Tongan conceptual framework (see Toafesiama Cultural Integration Framework (TCIF), see Section 1.7). The challenges of Tonganising the concept, together with the need for an approach more closely aligned with the conceptual and analytical requirements of this study, led to the development of a new culturally grounded approach, as outlined in the following section.

3.3.4 Veitalatala approach. A morphological analysis of the term Veitalatala identifies three components: vei, tala, and tala. According to Churchward (1959), vei is a “reciprocal” prefix denoting interaction between two people or things (p. 537). Tala means to tell, while talatala means to “tell tales on or about” (Churchward, 1959, p.448). Talatala also refers to a consultation with “doctor” (Churchward 1959, p. 448). These meanings establish consultation and reciprocity as the principal methodological features of Veitalatala. Consultation involves a two-way process of seeking and discussing views, while reciprocity entails mutual exchange between participants. Together, these principles structure the interview as a collaborative process through which information is clarified, interpreted, and understood by both the participant and the researcher.

Situated within the causal analysis of the Tupunga Ola framework and the study’s qualitative approach, Veitalatala provides a culturally grounded method suited to the in-depth and nuanced exploration required by this research. This aligns with Patton (2015), who emphasises that culturally grounded research frameworks enable researchers to interpret complex social phenomena in ways that reflect the values, traditions, and worldviews of the communities being studied. Veitalatala facilitates in-depth conversational interviews with knowledge-holders, including kau punake (composers) and kau faiongoongo (journalists), while ensuring that knowledge is co-created through interaction that respects Tongan protocols of dialogue and social relationships. By centring Tongan epistemologies within the research process, Veitalatala strengthens the cultural legitimacy, methodological rigour, and practical relevance of the study.

Drawing on Machi and McEvoy (2016), Ridley (2012), and Levy and Ellis (2006), this process also supports the study’s contribution to knowledge by enabling underexplored issues to emerge through culturally appropriate inquiry. Veitalatala and Tupunga Ola therefore provide complementary methodological foundations for analysing kakala song censorship, the use of lea heliaki, and the relationships between them.

3.4 Research Philosophy

A clearly defined research philosophy is fundamental to scholarly inquiry, as it establishes the core assumptions guiding the research design. Crotty (1998) argues that it systematically shapes the formulation of the research question, the selection of the methodological approach, the strategies for data collection, analysis, and the interpretation of findings. It focuses on key elements of ontology, epistemology and axiology. A clearly articulated philosophy is therefore essential for methodological coherence and rigour, ensuring that the resulting knowledge claims are built upon examined, rather than implicit, biases (Englander, 2020).

3.4.1 Ontology. This study adopts a constructivist ontological stance, which posits that reality—including that of censorship—is socially constructed through shared meanings, cultural traditions, and institutional practices (Gergen, 1999; Latour, 2005). In the Tongan context, the censorship of hiva kakala by journalists and censorial punake developed to ensure the appropriate use of the heliaki and kakala systems, thereby upholding the nofo ‘a kāinga. Reflecting the Tupunga Ola approach, this study argues that the censorship of hiva kakala was not merely a form of political control, but a process of cultural moderation grounded in the reciprocal relationships conceptualised by the Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model (FRM) (see Section 1.4.2).

The FRM conceptualises the nofo ‘a kāinga as a broader relational order encompassing two coexisting social structures of the ETICRIM: the newly proposed kāinga–‘ulumotu‘a–mehekitanga (fahu) relational stratification and the kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i constitutional hierarchy. Within this broader order, members are required to observe practices of fetauhi‘aki (reciprocity), encompassing fefaka‘apa‘apa‘aki (reciprocal respect) and fefuafatongia‘aki (reciprocal obligation), according to their respective relational and hierarchical positioning. The operation of the ETICRIM can be illustrated through the relational arrangements surrounding an individual's marriage. Preparations for the celebration are traditionally divided between two relational groups: his paternal side, through which he holds a tu‘a (subordinate) position, and his maternal side, through which he holds an ‘eiki (superior) position. The practice of fa‘ē huki—the individual upon whose lap the bridegroom sits—is provided by the maternal side, whereas those seated beside the newly married couple at the dining table are normally designated from the paternal side.

The following illustration demonstrates how the study operationalises its constructivist ontology by interpreting a cultural text through the Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model (FRM). This ontological perspective is reflected in the relational structure embedded within the heliaki employed by Queen Sālote in lullabies composed for her fānau (children) and makapuna (grandchildren). This is evident,

for example, in the hiva kakala composed for her second son, Prince Tuku‘aho titled Fakana‘ana‘a ‘o Viliami Tuku‘aho. In this lullaby, the Queen uses the “sun” as the highest celestial heliaki—imagery culturally reserved for the monarchy and, in this case, referring to herself as the prince's mother. Conversely, she uses a “comet” as a lower-ranked celestial heliaki to refer to her husband (Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019, p. 206). The song's remaining heliaki predominantly allude to beauty and historical places associated with the ancestral locations of both the maternal and paternal families. Through this technique, the Queen symbolically acknowledges the respective ‘eiki and tu‘a relational positioning of the Prince's maternal and paternal lines and their corresponding roles of fetauhi‘aki.

‘Ofa he tavake tā mafua	How I love this sustenance-seeking tropic bird
Na‘e fakahifo ‘e he la‘ā	That was born by the sun
‘O tamai ki he fetu‘ufuka	And fathered by the comet
Kaloafu Tonga pe ‘i ke puna	Oh fly Kaloafu Tonga
‘O ‘omi e mahu ‘o e fonua	Bring the affluence of the land
‘O tu‘ula ‘i he Futu ko Vuna	Then perch at the Futu ko Vuna
Pea mo e huni ko Vaiola	And the Huni called Vaiola

This illustration demonstrates how linguistic and literary meanings, cultural worldviews, and relational values are understood as socially constructed realities through which the purposes of hiva kakala censorship are interpreted. Rather than merely establishing a philosophical foundation for the study, this ontological position engages directly with the distinctive Tongan social reality represented by the FRM and informs the epistemological processes through which that reality is interpreted. Accordingly, the study adopts the position that the reciprocal relationships conceptualised in the FRM constitute a distinctive social reality. Consequently, the methodological design and theoretical frameworks employed in this study arise directly from this understanding, recognising the relational system as the cultural context through which hiva kakala censorship is investigated and interpreted.

3.4.2 Ontology of the Toafesiama integration approach. The Toafesiama Framework (see Section 1.7) extends this constructivist ontological position by recognising that multiple cultural realities coexist and interact in the censorship of hiva kakala. Rather than re-presenting the framework itself, the following discussion illustrates how its ontological assumptions inform the study's understanding of the cultural realities within which hiva kakala censorship developed and operated. Accordingly, the framework enables the study to conceptualise the censorship of hiva kakala as a culturally integrated phenomenon, in which Western influences are understood not as external forces operating independently of Tongan traditions but as components of a broader process of cultural

adaptation and integration.

As a Tongan scholar, I recognise my embeddedness within the dual cultural realities surrounding *hiva kakala* censorship, where Western concepts of censorship, journalism, and songcraft interact with enduring Tongan traditions. This ontological position informs the qualitative analysis of participant interviews by enabling the study to examine how censors, *punake* (composers), and *kau faiongoongo* (journalists) understood, negotiated, resisted, or enforced censorship within these intersecting cultural realities. Consistent with this perspective, and drawing on Foucault (1977), censorship is interpreted not merely as an exercise of institutional power but also as a relational mechanism that sustains reciprocal social obligations and responsibilities, a function that this study conceptualises through the Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model.

3.4.3 Axiology. This study adopts an explicit axiological stance by recognising that the investigation of *hiva kakala* censorship is inherently value-laden and that the researcher's cultural, ethical, and professional values inevitably shape how the phenomenon is understood and interpreted. Within this context, axiology addresses the researcher's values, ethical considerations, and the inherently value-laden nature of the inquiry itself. Following Lincoln and Guba's (1985) axiological framework, this study explicitly acknowledges that the researcher's values influence how the research topic, question, and problem are investigated and interpreted. As a Tongan *hiva kakala* composer, educator, and journalist, my work is guided by a tripartite purpose: to educate, empower, and entertain. These values are central to the purpose of this research; however, measures have been taken to ensure that they do not introduce undue bias or allow personal interests to compromise the integrity of the investigation.

My axiological stance is grounded in a truth-seeking principle cultivated through my background in journalism, education, and songcraft. This foundation prioritises enlightenment, knowledge-sharing, and the rigorous dissemination of valuable information. It also underpins my intention that this research serve as a meaningful resource for the people of Tonga and a wider interested audience. Through the Tupunga Ola (cause-and-effect) framework, the study approaches the censorship of *hiva kakala* as a phenomenon requiring examination of the values and cultural principles from which its practices and effects emerged. Central to this inquiry are the values embodied in the Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model (FRM) (see Section 1.4.2), which conceptualises the reciprocal relationships underpinning the broader *nofo ‘a kāinga* and distinguishes two coexisting relational structures: the newly proposed *kāinga-‘ulumotu‘a-mehekitanga* (fahu) relational stratification and the *kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i* constitutional social hierarchy.

Axiologically, this commitment to examining Tongan relational values led the study to critically reassess earlier scholarly interpretations that privilege the kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i hierarchy as Tonga's “overarching social hierarchy” (Völkel, 2015, p. 110; see also Appendices B, B1, and D). Rather than denying the existence of this constitutional social hierarchy, the study questions whether it alone adequately explains Tongan social and relational organisation. The FRM proposes that the constitutional social hierarchy coexists with the newly proposed kāinga-‘ulumotu‘a-mehekitanga distinguished by the ETICRI (see Section 1.4.3).

Rather than relying solely on abstract philosophical definitions, this study illustrates its axiological stance through selected examples drawn from Tongan cultural life. These illustrations, informed by the Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model (FRM), are not presented as empirical evidence to validate the model or to advance substantive theoretical claims. Instead, they demonstrate how the study interprets Tongan cultural practices through an axiological lens, making explicit the values that underpin the methodological approach adopted throughout the research.

3.4.3.1 I 'Eiki - Tu'a Inherent and Constitutional Relational Identity Model: an axiological view. The following illustration examines the ETICRIM to demonstrate the axiological perspective through which this study interprets the cultural values underpinning the censorship of hiva kakala. As with the preceding methodological illustrations, its purpose is not to establish a substantive theoretical claim but to make explicit the value-based perspective through which the subsequent analysis is conducted. This provides methodological transparency and enables readers to understand and critically evaluate the interpretive lens adopted throughout the study. The research explores the inherent ‘eiki–tu‘a relational binary as a cultural value system through which core principles such as fetauhi‘aki (reciprocal maintenance of relationships) (see Section 1.4.2) underpin the censorship of hiva kakala. This cultural value is foregrounded because it constitutes the principal cultural and ethical principles through which the censorship of hiva kakala was understood, justified, and practised by journalists and censorial punake. As such, it provides the primary axiological lens through which this study interprets the rationale and practice of censorship.

The maintenance of fetauhi‘aki operates at two distinct levels within the classification of Tongan society, although only one has been explicitly recognised in the existing literature. In Tonga, the kakai (commoners)–hou‘eiki (chiefs and nobles)–tu‘i (monarch) class system is widely regarded as the mainstream social hierarchy. This literature also gives the impression that nobles and the monarch are exclusively ‘eiki (superior), whereas commoners are entirely tu‘a (subordinate). However, this study argues that such a characterisation is oversimplified because, alongside the kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i

hierarchy, all members of Tongan society are simultaneously governed by the inherent ETICRIM (see Section 1.4.3). Consequently, neither commoners, nobles, nor the sovereign are exclusively ‘eiki or tu‘a; instead, these identities are determined by the particular paternal or maternal relationship through which individuals are culturally positioned (see Section 5.7.1.1).

For example, when the current Crown Prince Tupouto‘a ascends the throne, the internal hierarchy of the royal household will continue to reflect this inherent relational structure of his ‘eiki and tu‘a statuses. In cultural family *kātoanga* (celebration) in relation to Tupouto‘a’s children, for instance, the role of ‘ulumotu‘a (patriarchal head of the clan), according to the traditions, will be occupied by the current Prince Tungī Mailefihi, because, his father, Noble Mā‘atu, was the elder brother of His Majesty King Tupou VI, the Crown Prince's father. The *mehekitanga* or *fahu* position will be held by Princess Pilolevu Tuita, the King's only sister. This illustration demonstrates that the inherent ‘eiki–tu‘a relational binary is the defining principle of Tongan social stratification and that no individual or social group exists as exclusively ‘eiki or exclusively tu‘a.

The significance of the preceding examples and discussion lies in what they reveal about the axiological position established in this study. This stance explicitly recognises the cultural and ethical values embodied in *fetauhi‘aki* through the inherent ‘eiki–tu‘a relational structure. It also reflects my commitment as the researcher to recognising that all individuals within the *kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i* constitutional social hierarchy simultaneously hold inherent ‘eiki and tu‘a relational statuses, a distinction that has been insufficiently acknowledged in existing understandings of Tongan social organisation. Rather than distorting knowledge, this value-based perspective contributes productively to its generation and interpretation. Accordingly, these examples not only illustrate the values embedded within Tongan culture but also demonstrate how the study's axiological position informs its conception, interpretation, and conduct.

3.4.4 Epistemology. This study adopts an interpretivist epistemological stance, which posits that knowledge is co-created through interactions with participants and their lived experiences (Hiller, 2016; Alharahsheh, 2020). This epistemological stance is particularly suited to exploring the nuanced and context-specific nature of censorship of Tongan songs, as well as the application of *heliaki* (figures of speech) within this cultural and artistic domain. The interpretivist framework is predicated on the understanding that censorship is a socially constructed concept with divergent meanings across different groups. These can range from a lawyer’s focus on legal suppression to an indigenous elder’s concern for cultural harmony and a journalist's perception of a publishing ban. Consequently, this research engages directly with participants involved in the *kakala* song tradition and control to capture this

spectrum of interpretations, thereby achieving a more comprehensive and authentic account of what kakala song censorship entails.

The study's interpretivist epistemology is operationalised through the Tupunga Ola approach to tracing origins, together with the Toafesiamā Framework and the Fetāuhi'aki Relational Model (FRM) (see Sections 1.4 and 1.7). These complementary frameworks strengthen the credibility and legitimacy of the analysis by enabling the study to interpret how participants understood the purposes of censorship and the role of lea heliaki in negotiating, challenging, and, at times, transcending its restrictions. Through this epistemological lens, knowledge is understood as emerging from the interpretation of culturally situated experiences rather than from objective observation alone.

To ground this philosophical position in a concrete example, this study draws on the reinterpretation of hualela (see Sections 2.4.3 and 5.4.2), a Tongan expressive concept traditionally understood as the opposite of heliaki and commonly associated with literal or offensive language. This example is presented not to establish a substantive theoretical claim but to demonstrate how knowledge in this study was generated through the interpretation and synthesis of participant accounts, linguistic evidence, cultural context, and existing scholarship. Whereas the existing literature has generally treated hualela as the direct opposite of heliaki, this study integrates participant perspectives, linguistic evidence, cultural context, and the Toafesiamā Framework to show that hualela performs a broader communicative function than previously recognised. The resulting reinterpretation demonstrates that knowledge was not simply collected but co-constructed through the interaction of participants' lived experiences, cultural traditions, and the researcher's interpretive analysis.

3.5 Methodological approach

This study adopts a qualitative methodological approach because it is well suited to investigating the complex cultural, literary, and relational processes underpinning the moderation of hiva kakala. Rather than merely describing the outcomes of censorship, it examines the underlying mechanisms and tacit social processes through which these practices were understood, implemented, and negotiated within Tongan society. By exploring the lived experiences of cultural knowledge holders alongside the norms governing hiva kakala, the study investigates the interactions, language, and values that sustain these practices and maintain social order. This qualitative approach provides a nuanced understanding that extends beyond description to generate culturally grounded concepts and theoretical insights into the safeguarding of hiva kakala. It also ensures that the perspectives of Tongan composers, journalists, and cultural knowledge holders remain central to the analysis.

3.5.1 Interpretivist qualitative framework. This study adopts an interpretivist qualitative

framework because it seeks to understand the culturally embedded meanings, experiences, and relationships that shaped the censorship of hiva kakala. Interpretivism recognises that reality is socially constructed through the meanings individuals and communities assign to their experiences. Accordingly, this study examines participants' understandings of heliaki, the roles of kau faiongoongo (journalists) and punake (composers) in the censorship process, and their relationship to the nofo 'a kāinga and the reciprocal principles conceptualised in the Fetauhi'aki Relational Model (see Section 1.4.2).

A qualitative approach was therefore adopted to explore these culturally situated perspectives through semi-structured interviews conducted using the Veitalatala framework. The resulting non-numerical data comprised interview transcripts, field notes, and song lyrics, which were analysed through the Tupunga Ola framework in relation to the study's research questions to identify recurring patterns, causal relationships, and culturally significant concepts. Consistent with qualitative inquiry, this approach enabled an in-depth examination of the social, historical, and linguistic contexts that shaped participants' experiences and interpretations of hiva kakala censorship (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015; Riessman, 2008; Silverman, 2020).

The interpretivist framework was operationalised through the Tupunga Ola (cause-and-effect) approach, which provided the principal analytical lens for investigating the factors and processes underlying hiva kakala censorship. Rather than describing participants' experiences in isolation, Tupunga Ola systematically examined the causal relationships that gave rise to these experiences and the cultural mechanisms through which they were sustained. This approach aligned with the study's aim of explaining not only what participants experienced but also why those experiences occurred within the broader cultural structures represented by the Fetauhi'aki Relational Model and the Toafesiamā Framework (see Introduction, Section 1.10).

3.5.2. Researcher reflexivity. Reflexivity was employed throughout this study to acknowledge how my background and prior understandings could influence data interpretation. As a former teacher, journalist, composer, and musician with extensive experience of Tongan language and hiva kakala, I approached the research as an insider. While this position facilitated culturally informed interpretations and rapport with participants, it also required continual awareness to ensure personal assumptions did not predetermine findings.

Although the initial plan was to consult cultural experts, I encountered a scarcity of scholars with the specific expertise required for my topics—save for my chosen participants. To address this limitation, I grounded my analysis in experiential knowledge and drew comparative insights from the wider body of English-language scholarship. To mitigate potential bias, I employed two key strategies: first, I

maintained a reflexivity journal to document my evolving interpretations; second, I drew on Veitalatala records—dialogic discussions with these culturally knowledgeable participants—to critically examine and refine my interpretations.

I also sought disconfirming evidence, noting instances where censorship reflected community norms rather than my preliminary assumptions. This process proved especially important when interpreting culturally sensitive topics, including sexuality through *lea heliaki* and the distribution of social power. By grounding interpretations in participant accounts, documentary evidence, and cultural consultation, reflexivity enhanced the study's credibility, confirmability, and trustworthiness.

3.5.3 Data collection process. Data were collected through online archival research and semi-structured interviews. Archival materials, including songs and media texts related to publication and censorship, were accessed from the Tongan public domain. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with purposively selected elite participants—two *punake* (Tongan poets/composers) and three journalists with deep knowledge of the topic. Participants were contacted via email, social media, and phone, and were provided with an information sheet and consent form in accordance with AUT's ethics guidelines. Interviews were conducted in Tongan, recorded via voice or video call, and later transcribed for analysis. One participant, who was hospitalised, consented to the use of a previous interview for this research.

3.5.3.1 Participants. The participants included three experienced Tongan journalists and two renowned *kakala* song *punake*. Two of the journalists had worked at the Tonga Broadcasting Commission radio station during the 1970s and 1980s and were directly involved in the censorship of songs. In accordance with ethical research protocols and upon the advice of my supervisors, all participants were de-identified and are assigned the pseudonyms Tupunga-1 through Tupunga-5. The researcher has been familiar with these research ideas for many years and knows people involved in those cultural areas who are expert holders of knowledge. The researcher knew the participants well and interviewed them face-to-face, via email, or through social media messaging and phone calls. The introductory email sent to each participants explained the thesis and research topic as well as the value of their participation in it. It invited them to read the participant information form and sign consent forms as part of AUT's ethics requirements. The participants were clearly informed about the interview with them and all information they provided would be recorded either by video calling or voice recording to be later transcribed and used for analysis for the thesis.

3.5.3.2 Procedure. This section outlines the exact steps taken to conduct the study, ensuring that the research process is transparent and systematic. Participants were told the interview took an hour to

cover their personal experiences in the kakala songs genre and their censorship. They were told that the study was designed to investigate and record their experiences with the research questions. Three journalists and two punake were interviewed each for about an hour. The researcher explained the topic is: Culture Class and Community: The application of heliaki (figures of speech) in Tongan songs and the roles of journalists and censorial punake in their censorship between the 1960s and the early 2000s. The research question was then put forward and explained – Why did traditional hiva kakala songs have to be composed according to lea heliaki moderated by journalists and censorial punake if composing punake (composers) wanted these songs to be broadcast on public radio from the 1960s until the early 2000s? I explained to each interviewee in their respective interview period that they could be asked about 10 questions all together. All interviews were either voice or zoom recorded so the data could later be coded. All participants were told the interview would be conducted in Tongan in which they all agreed. Some of them wanted to see indicative questions before the main interview.

3.5.4 Data sources. The archival and textual data for this research were collected from a combination of online academic databases and authoritative published works, selected for their cultural reliability and relevance to kakala songs and Tongan communicative traditions. Primary sources included digitised Tongan newspapers, oral history transcripts, and song collections accessed through AUT Library, Google Scholar, and targeted searches. Key published works such as *The Art of Talanoa* (Halapua, 2022), *On Tongan Poetry* (Helu, 2012), and *Songs and Poems of Queen Sālote* (2019), provided foundational examples of lea heliaki and its role in kakala songs, while historical texts like *Tonga Islands* (1991) and *Ko e Tohi Himi ‘a e Siasi Uēsiliaana* (1996) contextualised the religious and political influences on song censorship. These sources were prioritized based on the expertise of their authors—such as Tongan scholars like Professor Futa Helu and linguistic expert Dr. Melenaita Taumoeofolau—and their alignment with Indigenous epistemologies, thereby ensuring that the study reflects Tongan voices and minimizes the risk of Western misinterpretation.

To prepare the dataset for analysis, the recorded audio files were played on a mobile device equipped with playback and navigation features, including play, stop, and a slider for precise forward and backward movement. These functionalities facilitated repeated listening during the transcription process. Upon completion, the transcriptions were transmitted via email to ensure convenient mobile access, while the researcher conducted systematic analysis on a laptop, cataloguing the lyrics according to thematic categories, historical periods, and censorship status. Collaborative translation, informed by archived studies from Tongan linguists, safeguarded the cultural integrity of neologisms—such as the allegorical term Tonganised as *alekōlia*—by preserving phonetic authenticity and accommodating contested interpretations. This methodological approach aligns with the *Tupunga Ola* theoretical

framework, which conceptualises lyrics and neologisms as dynamic cultural heirlooms rather than static textual artefacts.

3.5.5 Thematic data analysis. The interview data were analysed using a hybrid thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns relevant to the research questions. Initial analysis identified recurring concepts such as tapu, senisasipi, heliaki, faka‘apa‘apa, kakala ‘eiki, kakala vale, and fatungamotu‘a. These recurring patterns were subsequently interpreted through the Tupunga Ola framework, which applies a causal perspective to examine their relationships, meanings, and cultural significance within Tongan society.

3.6 Ensuring Rigour

Methodological rigour underpins the credibility, dependability, and trustworthiness of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Accordingly, this study ensured rigour through methodological consistency, reflexivity, triangulation, thick description, and systematic documentation, as outlined below.

3.6.1 Reliability. To ensure reliability, this study maintained methodological consistency by grounding the research process in the causal orientation of the Tupunga Ola framework while systematically generating and interpreting data through Veitalatala, a culturally grounded dialogic approach. Standardised semi-structured interview protocols and consistent analytical procedures were employed throughout the study to minimise subjective bias and ensure that findings emerged systematically from participants' shared narratives rather than isolated interpretations. Transparency was further strengthened through systematic documentation of the research process, including interview records, transcription, coding, and analytical decisions, thereby providing a clear audit trail for the development of the findings. Additionally, the study sought to enhance transferability by providing thick descriptions of the research context, participants, and analytical processes, enabling readers to assess the potential applicability of the findings and the conceptual frameworks developed in this study to other contexts.

3.6.2 Credibility. Credibility refers to the extent to which qualitative findings faithfully represent participants' lived experiences and perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, credibility was strengthened through the continual refinement of interpretations and analytical frameworks as the research progressed, ensuring that the findings developed into a coherent and logically consistent response to the research questions. Although member checking is widely recognised as an important strategy for enhancing credibility, it was not feasible because participant availability

became severely constrained following the interviews. Two participants resided in the United States, one of whom was bedridden; one participant passed away in 2023; one was located in Tonga; and one was based in Auckland but had substantial work commitments.

Credibility was therefore strengthened through two complementary strategies. First, thick description (Geertz, 1973) was employed by presenting detailed contextual narratives and extensive verbatim quotations, enabling readers to evaluate the relationship between the evidence and the interpretations. Second, data triangulation was undertaken by comparing interview data with previous interviews involving the participants that had been broadcast on TBC radio and archived on YouTube. The convergence of evidence across these sources strengthened the credibility and confirmability of the findings.

3.6.3 Confirmability. Confirmability refers to the extent to which the findings are grounded in participants' accounts and the research context rather than the researcher's biases or predispositions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In the absence of member checking (see Section 3.6.2), confirmability was strengthened through transparency, systematic documentation, and reflexive analysis. A comprehensive audit trail was maintained throughout the study to document the progression from raw interview data and field notes through coding, thematic development, and final analytical interpretations, ensuring that the analytical process remained transparent and traceable. Confirmability was further enhanced through the reflexive practices outlined in Section 3.5.2, including maintaining a reflexivity journal and using Veitalatala discussions with culturally knowledgeable participants to critically examine and refine interpretations. Together, these strategies strengthened the confirmability, credibility, and overall trustworthiness of the study.

3.7 Ethics

The Ethics section serves as a foundational element of the research methodology, crucial for establishing the project's integrity, credibility, and moral responsibility. The study received formal ethical approval from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (Reference: 23/172). In accordance with this approval, the section outlines the specific procedures implemented to conduct the research in a morally defensible manner, with a principal focus on protecting participant rights, dignity, and welfare. The safeguarding of individuals was therefore a paramount concern throughout the research process.

3.7.1 Informed consent and confidentiality. This research adhered to the ethical protocol approved by AUT. All participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the study and provided informed

consent. Although participants also consented to being identified in the thesis, pseudonyms (Tupunga-1 to Tupunga-5) were used throughout following supervisory advice to provide an additional level of confidentiality. Nevertheless, because the study involved a small group of highly recognised cultural experts and discusses well-known compositions and professional activities, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed in every instance.

Participants were contacted by telephone, email, or social media messaging. Introductory communications explained the purpose of the study, the research topic, and the significance of their participation, and invited them to read the Participant Information Sheet and sign the consent form required under AUT's ethics procedures. Participants were informed that the interviews would be audio- or video-recorded, transcribed, and analysed for the purposes of the thesis. They were also advised of their right to withdraw from the study, although withdrawal of their data might not be possible once data analysis had commenced. Interviews proceeded only after signed consent forms had been received.

3.8 Methodological Limitations

The conduct of this study was subject to practical and methodological constraints that affected access to historical materials and the data-collection process. These limitations primarily concerned the availability of archival records and the resources required to conduct fieldwork in Tonga. The following subsection outlines these constraints and the measures taken to manage their effects on the research process.

3.8.1 Resource constraints. Access to historical records of *hiva kakala* presented a significant challenge, as some materials relevant to the study were geographically inaccessible or unavailable through online archives. Existing documentary sources also required careful critical interpretation because some studies applied external conceptual frameworks to Tongan expressive traditions. Consequently, documentary evidence was interpreted alongside participant accounts and the culturally grounded analytical frameworks developed in this study.

Financial constraints also limited extended fieldwork in Tonga and the United States, where two participants were located, resulting in some interviews being conducted remotely. Although this reduced opportunities for face-to-face rapport-building, online interviews enabled the inclusion of geographically dispersed participants while preserving the breadth of perspectives required for the study. These measures minimised the effects of archival and resource constraints while maintaining methodological rigour and cultural accountability within the Tupunga Ola framework.

Sepitā 4: Fanitangi (Findings)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study's findings, organised around the research problem, the primary research question, and its three subsidiary research questions. Guided by the indigenous frameworks of Tupunga Ola and Veitalatala (see Section 3.3), the findings are organised through complementary approaches of causal sequencing and dialogical inquiry. Tupunga Ola provides the overarching framework for organising evidence relating to the emergence, development, and regulation of hiva kakala, while Veitalatala provides the dialogical structure through which participants' perspectives are presented, compared, and synthesised.

Accordingly, the findings are presented as tupunga (causes), thereby providing the foundation for the ola (effects) discussed in Chapter Five. This organisation ensures that each identified cause is systematically established before its corresponding effects are examined, maintaining a clear distinction between the presentation of empirical findings and their subsequent interpretation. Such an approach is consistent with established qualitative research principles that advocate presenting findings in a logical and systematic sequence before interpreting their significance (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Miles et al., 2020; Silverman, 2020).

The findings are presented in relation to the following research questions:

4.1.1 Research Questions:

RQ: Why were hiva kakala required to be composed in accordance with the heliaki system and moderated by journalists and censorial punake before they could be broadcast on Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio from the 1960s until the early 2000s?

Sub-Research Questions (SRQs):

1. To what extent did the involvement of the late Queen Sālote Tupou III, as a reformer of the hiva kakala genre, influence Tongan understandings of the composition and regulation of hiva kakala?
2. Were the censorship guidelines established to enhance the quality of hiva kakala, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of royals and chiefs over commoners?

3. Did the involvement of censorial punake and journalists undermine the authenticity of the hiva kakala genre, or did it contribute to its preservation and enhancement?

The evidence presented in this chapter provides the empirical foundation for the analyses developed in the subsequent discussion. The findings draw on semi-structured interviews conducted with five participants to document their perspectives on the censorship of hiva kakala: two experienced punake with more than 50 years of composing hiva kakala; two former veteran TBC radio journalists directly involved in, and familiar with, censorship practices; and one veteran journalist whose expertise in journalistic principles provided additional insights into the role of journalism in hiva kakala censorship. The findings are presented in relation to the research questions to reflect the principal patterns that emerged from the participants' accounts and the study's analytical process. Within each research question, the principal causal findings are supported by more specific analytical findings derived from the participants' accounts. Each finding is supported by illustrative examples and participant evidence to provide a transparent account of the empirical basis underpinning the subsequent discussion.

Although the participants consented to being identified by name in this thesis, supervisory advice recommended that they be de-identified to provide an additional level of privacy and confidentiality. Nevertheless, because this research examines the highly specialised field of hiva kakala censorship and draws on the experiences of a small number of individuals who occupied prominent roles within that process in Tonga, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed. Readers familiar with the hiva kakala community may recognise some participants through their professional roles, lived experiences, or the events they describe. Accordingly, participants are referred to throughout this chapter by pseudonyms based on the word Tupunga, meaning origin, source, or cause, and identified as Tupunga-1, Tupunga-2, Tupunga-3, and so forth. The term reflects their role as the principal sources of the knowledge and lived experience informing this study while allowing their contributions to be evaluated on their own merits.

4.2 Findings relating to the Primary Research Question

RQ: Why were hiva kakala required to be composed in accordance with the heliaki system and moderated by journalists and censorial punake before they could be broadcast on Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio from the 1960s until the early 2000s?

4.2.1 Tupunga (Cause): Curating nofo ‘a kāinga values. The findings indicate that the principal purpose of hiva kakala censorship was to ensure that song lyrics remained culturally

appropriate and upheld the relational principles and values of fetauhi‘aki that sustain the nofo ‘a kāinga (clans' way of living), as conceptualised in the FRM. Participants explained that this process was initiated by Queen Sālote Tupou III to prepare a catalogue of approved songs for broadcast prior to the official launch of the radio station in July 1961. She was assisted by punake and cultural experts including Noble Ve‘ehala Leilua, Mānoa Havea, Malukava Kavamoe fiafi and Taimani Fotu. The findings further indicate that censors evaluated song lyrics, particularly their use of heliaki, as an essential literary criterion during the screening process.

4.2.1.1 Heliaki as the defining feature of hiva kakala. The analysis further revealed that hiva kakala is a musical genre that requires the use of heliaki (imagery), lea heliaki (figurative language), or lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech) (see Section 1.1). As participant Tupunga-3, a former TBC broadcaster and journalist, explained, kakala is “hiva ‘oku heliaki” (songs that are lyrically figurative), further grounding the definition of the genre in lived cultural understanding. He also made the important observation that "no one has yet studied and standardised" the heliaki system. Tupunga-3 stated

Hiva kakala is a genre of figurative songs that employs floral imagery (kakala) and other natural motifs, though kakala remains the predominant imagery. These songs are lyrically poetic, designed to represent a specific phenomenon or purpose central to the composer’s intention. It was developed as a distinct genre separate from traditional forms like hiva usu, faiva, lakalaka, ma‘ulu‘ulu, and me‘etu‘upaki, hiva kakala experienced a period of significant popularity. (personal communication, 3 April 2024)

His association of figurative language with kakala songs is supported by Tupunga-1, whose explanation of the song-screening process mandating the use of heliaki reinforces this view. She stated:

Songs must be closely examined. First, the lyrics were inspected. Their context must be honorific and figurative, and they don’t have to use names. They only use symbols and heliaki, like flowers or types of birds for names ... It worked, was well organised and was in order. (personal communication, 20 February 2024).

Another participant, Tupunga-2, argued kakala and other group dance songs possess structural and content-based heliaki which represent social boundaries by clearly articulating the fatongia (cultural obligation) of the people to the chiefs. She said kakala songs must be written to reflect the cultural identification of knowing one’s social boundary (‘ilo‘i hoto ngata‘anga). She said this Tongan identity is demonstrated through the recognition of societal borders, which encompasses feveitokai‘aki (a form of mutual respect distinct from feveitapui‘aki; see Glossary), respect for chiefs, peers, and family, and

the observance of specific familial duties such as those owed to the mehekitanga (father's sister). As she explained:

Our lakalaka group dances and traditional Tongan songs serve as a reinforcement of our social boundaries and hierarchies, reminding us of our duty to honour the chiefs and royalty. I contend that our hiva kakala should continue to be subject to moderation to ensure they consistently reflect these values. The diminishing quality of our songs these days adversely affects our collective prestige and, by extension, contributes to the erosion of the cultural identities of the fonua (land). (Tupunga-2, personal communication, April 27, 2023).

4.2.1.2 Heliaki upholds fetauhi'aki. The interview data indicate that the application of heliaki was assessed through the reciprocal principles of fetauhi'aki, particularly veitapui and veitokai, when determining whether hiva kakala were suitable for broadcast (see Introduction, Section 1.4.2; see also Glossary). As former journalist and censor Tupunga-1 explained:

I recall when I was still working at the TBC radio station, one of the songs performed by the Ha'ape 'O Tali'eva band was prohibited and it was labelled [in the station library] as "banned". I forgot the name of the song, but it is something like Lupe (Dove). I often listened to it, but it wasn't allowed to be broadcast. And I can tell there was something objectionable in the content. There are things in that song to which people with veitapui and in nofo 'a kāinga should not listen. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

Tupunga-3 also emphasised the importance of employing heliaki in kakala songs in ways that ensured the songs abided by taufatungamotu'a (contemporary traditions) and shielded feuluulufi 'o e nofo (closeness of presence of people who are bound by respect guided taboos) guidelines.

The way people live is bound by laws, rules and taufatungamotu'a. So that I do not swear because of the feuluulufi of the way people live, taboo associated with the people of the opposite sex living together, for example. The thing is, songs should not be composed to incite violence in people like what Adolf Hitler of Germany did when he urged musicians to write music to encourage soldiers to become violent and kill people. (Tupunga-3, personal communication, 3 April 2024).

4.2.1.3 Transition from censorial punake to journalists. Responsibility for implementing these cultural and literary standards was initially entrusted to prominent censorial punake affiliated with the royal household, who served as the principal gatekeepers responsible for assessing the appropriate use of heliaki and ensuring that hiva kakala conformed to the relational principles of fetauhi'aki. However, after the funding allocated for the censorship committee was exhausted, this responsibility was transferred to trained TBC journalists toward the end of 2000. Tupunga-1 was the first journalist to undertake this censorial role at the radio station. She explained:

There was a committee for censorship, established by Her Majesty Queen Sālote Tupou III. I learned this from Ve‘ehala Leilua. Auditioning processes were held where composers were required to come to the palace to present exactly three of their songs. These were performed for the secretaries and Her Majesty herself, who would then decide which composers were to be summoned. So, there was her committee, which was called the audition committee. Ve‘ehala then became the person responsible for the songs. And he was the authority on the language at the time before I became involved. His role was to correct everything related to the Tongan language and languages used in the compositions. It was the same for the kakala used in songs for dance, for both traditional Tongan dances and newly composed songs. And later, after the Queen died, the committee became one that had to audition every single new song. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

4.3 Findings relating to Sub-Research Question One

SRQ One: To what extent did the involvement of the late Queen Sālote Tupou III, as a reformer of the hiva kakala genre, influence Tongan understandings of the composition and regulation of hiva kakala?

4.3.1. Tupunga (Cause): Royal reform and the shaping of public interest. The evidence indicated a broad consensus among participants that Queen Sālote made a significant contribution to the development and artistic refinement of the hiva kakala genre. She was regarded as a true punake who upheld the integrity of her compositional role by drawing on her own artistic abilities while treating fellow punake equitably. The findings further indicated that she actively sought expert assistance with her compositions. Significantly, while members of her cultural court, including matāpule and punake, at times sought to use hiva kakala to elevate royal status and prestige, the Queen occasionally intervened to prioritise the artistic and compositional integrity of the genre over such hierarchical considerations.

4.3.1.1 *Queen Sālote advocated for integrity and punake excellence.* The broader finding presented in Section 4.3.1 is further illustrated by Queen Sālote's insistence that hiva kakala be judged on artistic merit rather than constitutional status. Tupunga-2 illustrated this by recounting an incident in which the Queen and a censor disagreed while judging a song. The Queen defended both the punake and his composition, whereas the censor insisted on enforcing the hierarchical application of kakala in her favour. According to Tupunga-2, during the review process, both the song and its punake (a commoner) were questioned by censor Taimani Fotu. The participant explained that the lyrics included the royally associated

flowers heilala and langakali. Fotu asked the punake why he had used heilala as heliaki. The punake reportedly replied that he had chosen it to symbolise his sweetheart. Fotu immediately lectured him, insisting that heilala was reserved exclusively for the Queen. He instructed the punake to use flowers associated with commoners, such as loumo‘osipo (a type of weed classified as *Mimosa pudica*). The Queen, however, intervened and instructed Fotu to allow its use because it referred to the punake's lover. Fotu nevertheless maintained that permitting it would establish an inappropriate precedent for future punake. According to the participant, the Queen did not challenge Fotu's decision, apparently out of respect for his responsibility as a censor.

During the interview, Tupunga-2 emphasised a key distinction: the Queen intervened to support the punake's use of heliaki, whereas the censor's role was to uphold the cultural protocols governing the hierarchical use of kakala. He justified the censorship by arguing that punake should compose and structure hiva kakala in ways that reflect and reinforce the nofo ‘a kāinga (the extended family as a close-knit community), ensuring that people understand their vā (relationships), faka‘apa‘apa (respect governed by culturally prescribed taboos), and fatongia (cultural obligations), as conceptualised in the Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model (see Section 1.4.2). Tupunga-2 stated:

"Hiva kakala should be censored to make sure the vā, faka‘apa‘apa, and fatongia are nurtured accordingly" (Tupunga-2, personal communication, April 27, 2023).

The findings also indicated that the Queen sought assistance from experts in composing her songs, particularly in setting the lyrics to music. As participant Tupunga-1 explained in recounting his interview with the Queen's lead singer and guitarist, Lavaka Kefu:

Lavaka, the Queen's lead singer in her Fuiva ‘O Fangatapu acoustic band, stated that the Queen played the piano when introducing new songs. For instance, when introducing the song Leiola, the Queen instructed him to set the music for the chorus while she composed the music for the verses. Lavaka also told me, the Queen's two sons—King Tāufa‘āhau and Prince Tu‘ipelehake—along with Prince Tu‘ipelehake's wife, Princess Melenaite, were instrumental in assisting the Queen with her compositions. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024).

4.3.1.2 Queen Sālote's enduring literary legacy. Reflecting the broader contribution identified in the preceding section, participants observed that Queen Sālote's artistic legacy continues to shape the hiva kakala genre through the enduring literary sophistication and evocative power of her compositions. The

findings further revealed that her music continues to be replicated in both scholarly work and contemporary performance. As Tupunga-5, a veteran publisher, journalist, broadcaster, and radio music host, explained, the Queen's coinage of the term Loka Siliva (Silver Lock) in one of her enchanting love songs exemplifies this enduring influence. He asserted that her compositions continue to resonate deeply with Tongans in contemporary society, evoking profound emotion and connection. According to Tupunga-5, they represent an original form of Tongan communication that strikes the mind and touches the heart with immense impact, making them a highly effective mode of expression. Tupunga-5 explained:

I hosted a radio programme every week, and I played Queen Sālote's hiva kakala and often interviewed people on those songs about their meanings. The Queen's love songs Loka Siliva was one of the most popular songs. Its lyrics were figuratively deep and mālie. (Tupunga-5, personal communication, December 13, 2024).

The Queen also served as a muse for her contemporaries and later composers, who frequently composed hiva kakala to commemorate her legacy. Tupunga-3 (personal communication, April 2, 2024) explained that the renowned punake Peni Tutu'ila emulated the Queen's distinctive compositional style in Hā'ele ki Pilitānia, a tribute to Queen Sālote during her visit to England for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, illustrating her enduring artistic influence.

The first verse is reproduced verbatim below for illustration:

Angiangi mai	Let the Funga Siumalaki wind arise
'A e Funga Siumalaki	To carry my love to the Dove in the Palace
Ke fakaa'u 'a e 'ofa ni	The Dove of Tonga, which soaring over the globe
Ki he lupe he palasi	Arriving at Windsor for the royal celebration

Additionally, Tupunga-2 (personal communication, April 27, 2023) observed that Queen Sālote's songcraft demonstrated a recurring thematic focus on love. Although the Queen composed songs on diverse subjects, the participant regarded her most notable works as those dedicated to her late husband, Prince Tungī Mailefihi, through which she expressed her personal love. Tupunga-2 further explained that, as a punake, she frequently emulated the Queen's lyrical techniques for expressing love and consequently composed numerous love songs dedicated to her own loved ones.

4.4 Findings relating to Sub-Research Question Two

SRQ Two: Were the censorship guidelines established to enhance the quality of hiva kakala, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of royals and chiefs over commoners?

4.4.1 Tupunga (Cause): Heliaki, quality, and royal authority. The findings suggested that the employment of heliaki in hiva kakala was inconsistent. According to the participants, the skilful use of heliaki served as a principal measure of a punake's artistic excellence. Despite this, most participants perceived a recurring disconnect between censors' decisions and the principles those decisions were intended to uphold. They argued that the rejection of certain songs reflected reductive bias or insufficient understanding on the part of some censors, disproportionately favouring the chiefly and royal classes. While participants generally agreed that heliaki should acknowledge social and cultural distinctions within Tongan society, they also maintained that punake should have the artistic freedom to depart from established conventions.

4.4.1.1 Reinforcing royal prestige through heliaki. Tupunga-2 recounted a personal encounter with Queen Sālote, who encouraged her after what the Queen reportedly regarded as a significant breakthrough in her development as a young punake. During the encounter, the Queen instructed her in hiva kakala composition and the use of heliaki, particularly the technique of making references to historically significant places. As Tupunga-2 stated:

The Queen advised me to learn how to compose songs that exalt and honour the royal household, and that narrate and recount the Kingdom's beauty spots and lands. Composing is a tedious process. A song is not drafted just once but must be redrafted repeatedly until I am satisfied with it. (Tupunga-2, personal communication, April 27, 2023).

The comment articulates the depth and meaning of heliaki. As Tupunga-3 said, heliaki represents facts and ideas designed to be ingrained deeply and memorably in the heart. He said:

Some people may think that for us to heliaki we are telling lies. We are exaggerating things. But heliaki transform realities and ingrain them in the heart and they are more deeply felt than languages that are direct and frank. So kakala songs symbolised realities or topics somebody is talking about, but he meant something else defined by Tongans. (Tupunga-3, personal communication, 13 December 2023).

4.4.1.2 Literary innovation through heliaki. Literary innovation in hiva kakala, as reflected in the songs submitted for broadcast during the study period, was identified in the findings as a distinctive feature that enriched and advanced the genre. Punake Sēmisi 'Iongi made a pioneering contribution by devising a new literary technique. According to one of the participants, 'Iongi described this innovation

as a filler that enabled him to overcome creative blocks when he was unable to find an appropriate word for the second line of the second verse of his well-known song Hala Vuna. He eventually coined the term *fenukesi*. According to Tupunga-1, a senior broadcaster and censor at TBC radio, when asked about its meaning, ‘Iongi explained that the word was nonsensical—a neologism created solely as a filler to resolve the lyrical challenge he had encountered during composition. Tupunga-1 explained:

“The term *fenukesi* was an open-ended expression, allowing people to interpret and assign meaning based on their own perspectives. This illustrates the importance of using *heliaki*, a key criterion outlined in the censorship guidelines.” (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

The verse is reproduced verbatim below for illustration (see Appendix I for full verses).

‘Evenuei ko Hala Tupou Lahi	Hala Tupou Lahi the Avenue
Fenukesi ki he Vunga Moe Ahi	Fenukesi to the Vunga and Ahi (plants)
Pōngia ‘i he Fasimoeafi	Dazzled at Fasimoeafi
Hengihengi pea matala masani	It perfectly appears early morning

Tupunga-1 also elaborated on why personal names in *hiva kakala* must be replaced with *heliaki*. As she explained:

The personal names were prohibited because the way we live is closely interconnected and individuals are widely known to one another. For example, a lyric for a woman such as “Haitelenisia, I love you” was banned for being too direct. According to the guidelines, names must be symbolically represented, rather than explicitly stated. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February, 20, 2024).

Analysis of the data also showed some songs may have been banned for their use of *heliaki* had the main censor failed to seek his co-censor’s second opinion. As Tupunga-1 explained:

A censor expressed concern, suggesting that a term, *tololosa*, should be censored, and sought my opinion. I explained that *tololosa* was adapted from the Stations of the Cross and was not a personal name—thus not in violation of the censorship guidelines. I further clarified that the term functioned as a form of *heliaki*, symbolically representing the punake’s life journey through hardship. Upon hearing my explanation, the censor accepted the interpretation, and the *heliaki* was preserved. But that is the significance of *heliaki*. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

4.4.1.3 *Mālie as a criterion of hiva kakala*. Consistent with the broader emphasis on enhancing the quality of *hiva kakala*, participants indicated that the censorship guidelines were also

intended to promote mālie (the quality of being interesting or captivating; see Sections 1.11 and 5.3.1.6) and the overall worthiness of compositions, qualities regarded as defining characteristics of the genre's appeal. Tupunga-2 explained that understanding the meaning of heliaki enhanced the mālie of a composition. She further observed that contemporary hiva kakala are generally of lower quality and lack these essential literary and cultural elements when compared with those broadcast during the period under investigation. As she explained:

It would be interesting to find out the literal meaning behind the heliaki. It is tasty, making our hiva kakala songs interesting. But contemporary hiva kakala are plain-spoken in all respects. Some songs were a bit disrespectful. The young composers were free to choose what language they wanted to use. But in my view, censorship of the hiva kakala should be restored. (Tupunga-2, personal communication, April 27, 2022)

Other participants also described the concept of mālie, using various terms and expressions. Tupunga-3 (personal communication, April 2, 2024) contextualised mālie by highlighting its emotional and psychological impact on listeners, saying they “were designed based on our ongo (feeling) and mahino fakaTonga (Tongan worldview) written by Tongan people”.

Additionally, Tupunga-1 explained that the banjo is a distinctive instrument that enhances the mālie quality of hiva kakala. It is prominently featured in songs that are well-composed, charming and skilfully performed. As she explained:

The song Leiola, by the Fuiva ‘o Fangatapu, accompanied by a banjo, was exceptionally mālie. Its instrumentation and performance style deeply moved the public, evoking feelings of loto māfana (warm-heartedness) and fiefia (excitement). Petelō specifically mentioned several acoustic bands, including Manule‘o Ongo Halavaha‘akolo, Ha‘ape ‘o Tali‘eva, Peau Ma‘a Funga Faka‘ala, Fā‘onelua, as well a cappella group such as ZCO o loto Nuku‘alofa, Helepeku, and Fuekafa. She stated that the songs performed by these bands and singing groups were uniquely mālie and well-composed. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

4.4.1.4 Inconsistent censorship led punake to stop recording. Providing a practical illustration of the broader tensions surrounding the application of heliaki and censorship, participants described instances in which inconsistent censorship decisions discouraged established punake from continuing to record with TBC radio. Tupunga-4, recognised as one of Tonga's leading punake, expressed confusion over TBC radio's decision to ban his songs because they mentioned personal names. He noted that although the songs were prohibited from broadcast, they remained available for purchase through

the station's music outlet. Frustrated by this inconsistency, he eventually stopped recording with TBC. He stated:

They asked me why I stopped recording my songs with them. I told them that the radio banned my songs which used people's names. As a result, I had to find another place to record my songs because my customers wanted their children's names included in their songs I composed. (Tupunga-4, personal communication, December 11, 2023).

4.4.1.5 Declining quality of contemporary hiva kakala. The participants broadly agreed that the quality of contemporary hiva kakala has declined compared with songs composed, screened, and broadcast during the period under investigation. They attributed this decline, in part, to the absence of oversight by renowned censorial punake. Tupunga-3 described the quality of contemporary hiva kakala as “deteriorating” (personal communication, April 2, 2024). Similarly, Tupunga-2 argued that “listening to current hiva kakala is disappointing, as the songs are shallow” (personal communication, April 27, 2024), while Tupunga-1 maintained that songs recorded during the study period exhibited far greater poetic quality (personal communication, February 20, 2024).

Contemporary kakala songs have experienced a marked decline in both lyrical and musical quality. This decline is partly attributable to the incorporation of Western musical elements and lyrical styles, which have often failed to assimilate into a culturally coherent or contextually appropriate Tongan framework. This is a departure from the traditional kakala techniques, which were characterized by fakamatāpule (complex lyrical structures) and faka‘ei‘eiki (the use of honorific language). Furthermore, the problem is exacerbated by modern production techniques, where songs are frequently overwhelmed by digital instrumentation. Lyrically, there is a notable lack of depth, with many compositions relying on clichés, repetitive phrases, and generic expressions that offer little insight or originality. (Tupunga-3, personal communication, April 2, 2024)

He also expressed concern about the lack of songcraft and musical production skills among contemporary punake, as well as their limited control over the quality of their compositions.

Some of them, particularly those in the diaspora, do not speak or understand Tongan fluently. As a result, they tend to think in English and compose in Tongan within that context, which often leads to grammatical inaccuracies and structurally weak linguistic expressions. (Tupunga-3, personal communication, April 2, 2024)

Tupunga-3 acknowledged with appreciation that New Zealand has incorporated Tongan dance and performing arts into its national curriculum.

It is timely to consider integrating Tongan pop songs into classroom teaching. These

songs should be studied, practiced, and performed with professional guidance, grounded in analytical approaches to compositions by renowned punake such as Queen Sālote and Peni Tutu‘ila. This process could potentially lead to the emergence of a new song genre, provided that it evolves within a meaningful and insightful structural framework. (Tupunga-3, personal communication, April 2, 2024)

4.5 Findings relating to Sub-Research Question Three

SRQ Three: Did the involvement of censorial punake and journalists undermine the authenticity of the hiva kakala genre, or did it contribute to its preservation and enhancement?

4.5.1 Tupunga (Cause): Preservation and tensions in TBC censorship. According to the participants, the involvement of censorial punake and journalists contributed substantially to the preservation and enhancement of hiva kakala through the application of established literary and cultural standards during the censorship process. At the same time, participants identified persistent tensions arising from the implementation of these standards, particularly regarding the criteria used to determine whether songs were suitable for broadcast. While well-structured compositions were generally approved and commended, some punake challenged decisions rejecting their works. They maintained that their own expertise in songcraft surpassed that of the censors and consequently dismissed the feedback they received. Nevertheless, the censors adhered to the official guidelines while remaining willing to discuss disputed decisions with composers.

4.5.1.1 Censorial education and the impact of Western musicality. One important mechanism through which censorial punake and journalists preserved and enhanced hiva kakala was the application of censorship guidelines governing musical, literary, and cultural standards. Participants explained that these guidelines prescribed specific musical features, aesthetic expectations, and lyrical conventions intended to safeguard the genre. They were generally regarded as an important means of maintaining its literary and musical quality. As Tupunga-3 explained:

It was advantageous since it helped punake compose their songs better in context and music. Establishing such controls for punake is beneficial, as they provide guidance and help maintain compositional standards. (Tupunga-3, personal communication, April 2, 2024).

Illustrating how these standards were applied in practice, the findings further revealed that censors approved hiva kakala incorporating lyrical and musical elements adapted from Western music and literary traditions. They also indicated that censors educated and consulted with punake when

compositions failed to comply with the established guidelines. If these discussions did not resolve the issues, the songs were subsequently prohibited from broadcast. As Tupunga-1 explained:

A number of songs were permanently banned from broadcasting. This was a common occurrence, applied even to compositions deemed humorous or artistically substandard. The screening process evaluated songs based on their melodic sense, lyrics, and meaning, as well as their relationship to melody and harmony. Ve‘ehala also at one stage ensured that men sang the male vocal harmony while women sang the female vocal harmony. This was an attempt to guarantee that the music was performed naturally, in accordance with the typical ranges of the human voice. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024).

The participant also revealed a crucial insight during the interview, confirming that the loss of traditional Tongan harmonisation in hiva kakala was due to Western music influence. As she explained:

Professor Futa Helu told me during an interview that traditional Tongan music was characterised by a three-part harmonic structure: a lead vocal, sung by what is now known as tenor and then alto, and a bass part. This tradition was subsequently abandoned under the influence of Western [Palangi] hymnody, which introduced the four-part harmonic style prevalent today. The renowned punake Feka Malupō composed the song Pehe Ange Mai ‘Oku kei Pongipongi. Its tune was adapted from the Free Wesleyan Church hymn Monu e ka ko ha Monu, which is a Tongan translation of What a Friend We Have in Jesus hymn. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

Analysis of the data indicated censors approved the use of English-based Tongan neologisms in kakala, an advancement in the lyrical aspects of the songs. This is illustrated by Tupunga-1’s account of the censorship process:

The first thing was to examine to ensure the language was honorific and perfectly Tongan. Foreign languages were not encouraged. Punake Semisi ‘Iongi, whom Professor Futa Helu talked about in an interview with me, he was an intelligent punake and was well-educated. When he realised that the topic he was composing about had insufficient words to choose from, he resorted to history. Like words in his Tau Fakatangane ki he Mafi song, he Tonganised kolope for the globe and ‘ekueta for equator. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024).

Additionally, Tupunga-1 explained that the guidelines were applied flexibly and that Ve‘ehala Leilua, Chair of the Censorship Committee, was open to discussing any concerns punake had about censorship decisions. She recalled that Ve‘ehala made minor grammatical revisions to a song composed by the renowned punake Sēmisi ‘Iongi, after which it was approved for broadcast. According to Tupunga-1, ‘Iongi accepted the revisions without objection. The song, Fāfā ki Tahi ‘a e Fohe Lahi ‘o Titilupe Fane Tupou Vava‘u, was subsequently broadcast. The participant explained:

It was an open discussion process, and Ve‘ehala allowed the punake to respond to the

Committee's decisions. At some points, he edited and corrected the hiva kakala. One song was Fāfā ki Tahī 'a e Fohe Lahī 'o Titilupe Fane Tupou Vava'u. It was composed by Sēmisi 'Iongi. 'Iongi used some Fijian languages. Ve'ehala edited the grammar of the lyrics. It was understood that Iongi had reasons behind the language, but Ve'ehala wanted to correct something similar to the pronoun he in English and changed it to you, for instance. It was just minor corrections. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024).

4.5.1.2 Distrust toward censorship decision-making processes. Although censors sought to guide and consult with punake during the evaluation process, the findings revealed that the involvement of broadcasters and journalists occasionally generated distrust in the censorship decision-making process. Some punake perceived decisions rejecting their songs as lacking informed or defensible judgement. Reflecting on his experience as a former TBC broadcaster, Tupunga-3 described the frustration experienced by some composers. He recalled that the renowned punake Nau Saimone frequently clashed with censors when asked to revise his songs, arguing that he understood composition better than they did. As both a writer and journalist, Tupunga-3 sympathised with Saimone's position, maintaining that, from an artistic perspective, no one should control an artist's work. As he explained, "It is the artist's work, and that's how they expressed their own opinions. You do not have to control how they present their opinion" (personal communication, April 2, 2024).

At the same time, Tupunga-3 acknowledged the opposing perspective by invoking the adage, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder." He interpreted this to mean that the value of art depends not on its creator alone, but also on how it is perceived by its audience. Accordingly, he argued that censorship guidelines should be developed through extensive consultation and dialogue to produce a framework capable of accommodating diverse aesthetic perspectives.

4.5.1.3 Challenges surrounding royal references. Illustrating the distrust surrounding certain censorship decisions, Tupunga-2 recounted that she refused to accept Censorship Committee Chair Noble Ve'ehala's request to change the word 'afioga, as well as the title of her song Heimataura, as a condition for its approval for broadcast (see Appendix K for the full versions). The song commemorated a tragic period in her life following her daughter's marriage to Prince Fatafehi 'Alaivahamama'o Tuku'aho, the son of King Taufa'āhau Tupou IV and grandson of Queen Sālote Tupou III. According to Tupunga-2, the marriage provoked public criticism of both her and her daughter for bringing embarrassment upon the royal family. As a consequence, the Prince lost his royal title and privileges after breaching the constitutional prohibition against marrying a commoner.

Tupunga-2 explained that she stood by her composition and challenged Ve'ehala's demand,

resulting in the song being banned from broadcast. She stated that Ve‘ehala believed she had used the term ‘afiona, a royal honorific referring to the King. However, she maintained that the word was ‘afioga, the Samoan name of a fale (house) at the residence in Hawai‘i where the Prince and her daughter lived. Some time later, at the request of Prince ‘Aho‘eitu—the youngest brother of Prince Fatafehi and now King Tupou VI—she agreed to make a single amendment so that he could dub a copy of the song. Accordingly, she changed the title from Heimataura to Lose Hina ‘o Kahala, while retaining the word ‘afioga unchanged. The first verse is reproduced verbatim below for illustrative purposes.

Si‘i Losehina ‘o Kahala	My dearest White Rose of Kahala
Ke ke ‘ilo‘ia mai e faingata‘a	If you could see the burden I now bear
Ko hai ha to‘a ‘e tu‘u tokotaha	A crushing debt no single soul can bear
He ‘ofa ni kuo hoko ko e mala	My love has become a curse

4.5.1.4 Managing Emotional Impact. Further demonstrating the practical challenges faced by TBC in balancing artistic quality with cultural sensitivity, Tupunga-1 revealed during the interview that the song *Aotearoa* was temporarily withdrawn from broadcast following a complaint from a member of the public. The song, composed by Pita Vī, lamented King Tupou IV's annulment of the marriage between his niece, Princess Mele Siu‘ilikutapu, and Joshua Tu‘iono Liava‘a, a commoner and Tongan Police detective in New Zealand. Tupunga-1 explained that although the song was lyrically well composed, its emotional impact was distressing to some listeners because of the implications it conveyed about the circumstances surrounding the annulment. She noted that TBC later reinstated the song after the perceived sensitivity of the issue had diminished. The first verse is reproduced verbatim below for illustrative purposes (see Appendix J for the full version). For clarity, Fangatapu in the verse refers to the seafront of the Royal Palace in Nuku‘alofa.

A verse from *Aotearoa*³, attributed to Pita Vī, is reproduced verbatim below for illustration.

Angiangi mai mu‘a si‘i tokelau	Let the north wind drift ashore
Tālolo hono ‘ea ‘i he Fangatapu	And find its rest at Fangatapu seashore
‘A si‘ete faka‘ānaua ki he kuo ‘alu	My soul still yearns for days now past

³ The authorship of *Aotearoa* has been disputed. Members of Tongotongo Liava‘a's family have maintained that Tongotongo composed the song. This study notes that the copy produced by the family during Tu‘iono Liava‘a's funeral in Auckland closely resembles the version attributed to Pita Vī, although there are clear differences in lyricisation, textual arrangement, and the number of verses. One possible explanation is that Tongotongo's original composition was subsequently edited by Pita Vī, a collaborative practice that was not uncommon among *punake*. According to one contemporary source, *Aotearoa* was recognised from the outset as a composition by Pita Vī and was recorded by the Fōfō‘anga Club.

Ki he ‘ofa lōtolu kuo tō tau

For a love that fell—too pure to last

Moreover, Tupunga-3 observed that the song *Līsita*, which was composed as an apology following a murder, was banned to avoid causing the victim’s family further distress. The song was eventually aired years later. The last verse is duplicated exactly below to provide an example. For clarity, within the stanza, *Līsita* was the victim’s eldest daughter. See (Appendix K) for full verses:

A verse from *Līsita* is reproduced verbatim below for illustration.

Kāleli e ‘isa! kuo fasi e malu	Kāleli, ‘isa! the sun begins to fall
Langa‘i mamahi si‘ete fie ‘aonga atu	Each time I try to help, the sorrow returns
Fakapō! he paea kuo hoko ‘o tatau	Fakapō! What an orphaned state has befallen us both
Si‘ete mo‘ui tōngia ‘ou fie ‘aonga atu	My life has changed; let me help if I can
Lisita ‘ofa ke monū ‘a si‘ete hu taupe atu	Dearest <i>Līsita</i> , may you accept this humble plea

4.5.1.5 Differentiated support for junior and senior punake. By insisting on standing by their *hiva kakala* compositions after they had been rejected, believing that the censors' decisions were wrong, the findings indicated that the censorship process eventually distinguished between two groups of punake: junior and senior composers. A participant explained that censors were often accused of favouring senior punake while treating junior punake unfairly. As Tupunga-3 noted, Censorship Chairman Ve‘ehala maintained that the standards were intended to bring out the best in punake, ensuring that *hiva kakala* were composed to the highest possible standard. As Tupunga-3 explained:

The young punake in particular complained that the Censorship Committee preferred the senior punake over them. But Ve‘ehala argued that composing skills must be upgraded. It was not something that we just collected any type of firewood (a figurative expression for doing things with lack of care). Don’t just collect stalks and midrib of coconut leaves and things like that. That’s Ve‘ehala’s figurative response to the young punake. He said if you collect firewood, collect casuarina wood so the ‘umu can be cooked. (Tupunga-3, personal communication, April 2, 2024)

Tupunga-1 also said the Government wanted the radio station to preserve cultural values and virtues in *hiva kakala*. She recounted a song by the Ha‘ape ‘o Tali‘eva acoustic band, which was banned because it breached the guidelines for *veitapui* (see Appendix).

I often listened to it, but it wasn't allowed to be broadcast. And I can tell there was something objectionable in the content. There are things in that song to which people should not listen, the *veitapui*, people living as *kāinga* and family. (Tupunga-1, personal communication, February 20, 2024)

Furthermore, the participant noted that songs which failed an initial audition were given opportunities to be revised and were permitted to be re-auditioned at a later date.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the principal findings derived from the participant interviews. The findings revealed broad support for the censorship of *hiva kakala* as a means of safeguarding culturally prescribed relationships and conduct within the *nofo 'a kāinga* while enhancing the literary and musical quality of compositions. As outlined in Section 4.2.1, the findings indicated that censorship formed an important component of TBC radio's approach to ensuring the cultural and artistic appropriateness of *hiva kakala*. Participants further explained that censors were expected to evaluate the appropriate use of the *heliaki* system as a central criterion during the screening process.

The findings also highlighted Queen Sālote's outstanding contribution to the *hiva kakala* genre, identifying her as one of Tonga's most distinguished *punake*. As presented in Section 4.3.1, her compositions demonstrated exceptional cultural and literary sophistication and continue to be studied, reinterpreted, and performed in both academic and public contexts. The findings further reflected her intuitive compositional ability, her willingness to seek expert assistance, and her encouragement of the artistic creativity of fellow *punake*. At the same time, her interaction with Tupunga-2 demonstrated her recognition of the *kakai-hou'eiki-tu'i* constitutional hierarchy and its corresponding relational expectations. She reminded the participant of the *fatongia* of *kakai* to *fakahōifua* (to please and honour) royalty and emphasised the importance of portraying the beauty of the *fonua* as a rich source of *heliaki* in *hiva kakala* composition.

The findings further showed that censorship was widely regarded as an important mechanism for maintaining the quality of *hiva kakala* while protecting *fatungamotu'a* and the relational principles sustaining the *nofo 'a kāinga* from culturally inappropriate lyrical content. At the same time, participants identified tensions arising from the implementation of censorship. As discussed in Section 4.4.1, censorship decisions concerning a number of compositions were challenged by *punake*. In some instances, these disagreements resulted in revisions and subsequent approval, whereas in others composers rejected the censors' judgements or ceased recording with TBC.

Overall, the findings indicate that censorship contributed to monitoring the appropriate application of the heliaki system and preserving the literary and musical standards of hiva kakala. From the 1960s until the early 2000s, TBC radio played a central role in regulating, preserving, and enhancing this distinctive Tongan song tradition. Although tensions occasionally arose between punake and censors, participants generally considered the cultural and artistic benefits of censorship to outweigh its disadvantages. The following chapter interprets these findings in relation to the existing literature and the study's theoretical frameworks, demonstrating how they contribute to the reconceptualisation of heliaki, hiva kakala, and Tongan literary theory.

Sepitā 5: Tisikāsoni (Discussion)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter interprets the findings presented in Chapter 4 in relation to the primary research question and subsidiary research questions. The discussion is guided principally by the Tupunga Ola theoretical approach, through which the findings presented as Tupunga (Causes) in Chapter 4 are examined in terms of their Ola (Effects). Where relevant, these interpretations are critically examined in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapters 1 and 2 as well as other pertinent scholarship. This chapter also draws on several frameworks developed in this study, including the Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model (FRM), Toafesiamā Framework, ‘Eiki–Tu‘a Inherent and Constitutional Relational Identity Model (ETICRIM), and Semantic–Figurative Continuum Model (SFCM). These frameworks provide points of reference for examining the causal and literary significance, relevance, implications, and contributions of the findings (see Sections 1.1, Diagram One; 1.4.2 and 3.3.4.1). Consequently, this investigation into the censorship of hiva kakala resulted in the standardisation and reconceptualisation of fundamental Tongan cultural concepts. These include the newly proposed kāinga–‘ulumotu‘a–mehekitanga (fahu) relational stratification, in addition to the traditional kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i constitutional social hierarchy, as well as a systematic clarification of the heliaki system and the cultural principles underpinning its operation, as presented in this discussion (see Section 1.4.3.1).

Among these contributions is the argument that the inherent ‘eiki–tu‘a relational identity (see Section 1.4.1.1) operates as the fundamental classificatory principle through which Tongan cultural entities are systematically understood and organised. It therefore forms the conceptual pivot around which the heliaki system is organised. As a result, this discussion standardises and classifies more than 30 forms of lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech) through a framework that distinguishes heliaki (imagery, symbolism, or figuration), lea heliaki (figurative language), and lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech). This approach challenges prevailing interpretations of heliaki, including those centred on concealment, obscurity, and metaphor. The discussion also contributes by standardising the roles of punake and faiongoongo, establishing a coherent framework of responsibilities, functions, and professional expectations suited to contemporary Tongan society while remaining compatible with internationally recognised standards.

5.1.1 Research Question (RQ):

RQ: Why were hiva kakala required to be composed in accordance with the heliaki system and moderated by journalists and censorial punake before they could be broadcast on Tonga

Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio from the 1960s until the early 2000s?

Sub-Research Questions (SRQs):

1. To what extent did the involvement of the late Queen Sālote Tupou III, as a reformer of the hiva kakala genre, influence Tongan understandings of the composition and regulation of hiva kakala?
2. Were the censorship guidelines established to enhance the quality of hiva kakala, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of royals and chiefs over commoners?
3. Did the involvement of censorial punake and journalists undermine the authenticity of the hiva kakala genre, or did it contribute to its preservation and enhancement?

The remainder of this chapter is organised around these research questions, with each major section presented as an Ola (Effect). As every Ola arises from a corresponding Tupunga (Cause), each section examines the effects arising from the Tupunga findings presented in Chapter 4 and derived through the analysis and synthesis of participants' interviews. Each Ola introduction outlines the interrelated dimensions that collectively address the corresponding research question. The sections that follow discuss these dimensions in turn.

5.2 Ola (Effects): Beyond kakala, the expansion of the semantic–figurative system

Primary RQ: *Why were hiva kakala required to be composed in accordance with the heliaki system and moderated by journalists and censorial punake before they could be broadcast on Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio from the 1960s until the early 2000s?*

Drawing on the Tupunga Ola framework, this section discusses the kakala dimension of the research question on the basis that an understanding of hiva kakala censorship first requires an appreciation of kakala itself. As the fundamental forms and conceptual foundations of kakala have already been introduced in the Introduction chapter (see Section 1.1; Diagram One), this section extends that discussion by examining the evolving cultural and environmental contexts that have shaped kakala in both Tonga and Tongan diasporic communities. It further discusses how these developments have influenced the composition, interpretation, and continuing evolution of hiva kakala.

5.2.1 The diversification of heliaki beyond botanical referents. The findings indicate that pioneering punake (composers) progressively expanded the figurative repertoire of hiva kakala beyond its original reliance on kakala. The significance of this finding lies in demonstrating that kakala

represented only the earliest of many figurative literary devices employed to enrich the genre. It suggests that during its formative stage, the figurative resources of punake were largely confined to indigenous kakala. At that time, the range of plants, material technologies, and associated vocabulary available in Tongan society was considerably narrower than it became following later regional and European contacts (Campbell, 2015; Clark, 2004; Kirch, 2000). As cultural contact and environmental change introduced new referents, the literary resources available to punake expanded accordingly. This may explain why various scholars have described hiva kakala as love songs, sweet songs, or songs of flowers (Helu, 2012; Kaeppler, 1993; Māhina, 2005). These descriptions appear to reflect successive stages in the genre's literary evolution, during which its figurative repertoire remained largely limited to plant-based referents before expanding through Western contact and the introduction of new material, technological, and linguistic resources, to the point where songs without floral imagery were nevertheless recognised as hiva kakala.

This early limitation of the genre's figurative repertoire largely to plant-based referents may also explain the extensive semantic expansion of kakala, as punake drew increasingly on variations of the concept within a relatively unchanged botanical environment. This is evident in figurative nominal variations such as kakala mo'onia (true kakala), kakala tapu (tabooed kakala), kakala tukuloto'i (cherished kakala), kakala fisifisimu'a (outstanding kakala), kakala tauleva (hung kakala), and kakala li'ekina (abandoned kakala). As Tonga's environment, vocabulary, and cultural contacts expanded, punake increasingly adapted literary devices such as heliaki from non-botanical referents. This transition is particularly evident in the compositions of Queen Sālote, who transliterated expressions such as *palatiniume* (from *platinum*), *laifepeleta* (from *lifebelt*), *Nepituno* (from *Neptune*), and *polominate* (from *promenade*). The same practice is evident among other contemporary punake and was later reflected in Huluholo Mo'ungaloa's *Utufōmesi Siliva* (from *Silver Foam Cliff*) and Sēmisi 'Iongi's *Vēsili Koula* (from *Golden Vessel*). 'Iongi also coined the nonce word fenukesi as a filler when he was unable to find a suitable word to complete a line (see Section 4.4.1.2). These developments demonstrate a significant transition in the literary evolution of hiva kakala, from an early reliance predominantly on kakala as a source of figurative expression to the increasing use of introduced botanical and non-botanical referents to construct heliaki.

5.2.1.1 From fragrance to aesthetics: Diasporic adaptation of kakala. A key implication of the preceding finding is that the evolution of kakala took another form within Tongan diasporic communities. To understand these adaptations, it is first necessary to examine the traditional ranking of kakala, which provides the cultural foundation for interpreting subsequent diasporic developments. Helu (2012) identifies fragrance as the primary basis for the traditional categorisation of kakala. Accordingly,

he ranks heilala, fā kula, and falahola highest, followed by mapa, langakali, kukuvalu, and pipi, while classifying fā hina, sialetafa, and fatai as kakala vale (p. 46). Helu further argues that this hierarchy also extends to methods of stringing. Thus, heilala woven as tuitu‘u is regarded as ‘eiki whereas the same flower arranged as pito‘ingalau occupies a comparatively lower position in the hierarchy. The prestige associated with these flowers was further reinforced by their mythical and cultural associations, which elevated their status within the traditional kakala hierarchy. However, this variability is illustrated by punake Tu‘imala Kaho, who identified nukonuka, tuitui, pipi, ahi, mohokoi, and maile as kakala ‘eiki (Latu, 2018), indicating that the classification of prestigious kakala was not uniformly defined.

Viewed against this traditional framework, further inquiry undertaken for this study indicates that the ranking of kakala has been substantially reconfigured within contemporary Tongan diasporic communities, largely owing to the unavailability of indigenous Tongan plants. This shift represents not merely a response to the absence of indigenous kakala, but also a departure from the traditional basis on which they were ranked (F. Hafoka, personal communication, 20 October 2023). As a result, visual aesthetics increasingly take precedence over the traditional emphasis on indigenous fragrance (‘alaha ‘o e kakalá) and botanical hierarchy. According to Hafoka, despite the absence of indigenous kakala, the traditional forms and patterns of Tongan garlands, festoons, and ornamental girdles have been consciously preserved. This transformation provides the foundation for understanding the subsequent adaptations examined in the following section.

5.2.1.2 Differentiating hiva kakala from emerging contemporary song genres. The transformation outlined above provides a useful context for examining how a similar shift has occurred in contemporary hiva kakala, as compositions increasingly depart from the genre’s established traditions. In particular, there is evidence of a diminishing trend in the literary sophistication and compositional mastery that characterised the pioneering punake and their hiva kakala. Many contemporary songs lack formal structure, relying instead on the repetition of short English or Tongan phrases with limited figurative, thematic, or literary development. A notable example is the recent hit ‘Ouana by Tongan reggae singer Josh Tātofi. The title is adapted from the colloquial expression ‘oua (don’t), which is commonly used in playful banter when someone is about to do something amusing or delightfully bold. Through popular usage, the expression evolved into the humorous form ‘Ouana, illustrating how contemporary literal expressions can develop into new sources of heliaki (see Section 5.5.1).

The ‘Ouana song is especially popular among younger audiences and has been widely replicated by other singers and bands. Since it was uploaded to YouTube in October 2023, it had attracted more than 11 million views by June 2026, an exceptional figure for a song performed by a Tongan artist within

such a relatively short period (Tatofi, 2023). Its popularity, together with its departure from the traditional style of hiva kakala, is significant. It suggests that one of the fundamental strengths of traditional hiva kakala lies in the flexibility of its heliaki literary system, which has enabled the genre to continue developing without relying exclusively on kakala or any other single figurative resource, despite kakala giving the genre its original name. This is evident in the title ‘Ouana, which is a type of lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech) known as palakasi (paragoge)—the addition of a sound or syllable to the end of a word. Palakasi is a subtype of the broader figure of speech known as metaplasm (see Section 5.5.1). In this case, the expression is formed by extending ‘oua with the additional syllable -na, creating ‘Ouana. This type of heliaki is commonly used to add emphasis, enhance musicality, or imitate the fluidity of vocal delivery. An excerpt from the lyrics of ‘Ouana is reproduced verbatim below for illustrative purposes.

Darling you ta‘ahine
 I was wondering pe kuo ke si‘i fēfē
 What is on your mind
 I am just waiting for you
 To tell me baby
 Ki‘i hila mai pe kiate au
 So I know I am not on your mind
 Pea ‘utu mai ke fonu ‘eku ipu
 Ke u ongo‘i one more time
 Si‘oku ‘ofa ‘anga fakangalongata‘a
 Si‘o fofonga malimali
 ‘Oka ‘Oka Lau Hani
 Si‘i ‘oiaue ta‘ahine
 Ko au eni te u vale
 Ki‘i loi mai pe
 My love ‘ouana si‘eku pele

The use of the term ‘Ouana as a heliaki reflects an important compositional convention of the hiva kakala genre. It also parallels another type of metaplasm employed by Queen Sālote in her Hiva ‘o Tāone, namely apocope (‘akiope) (see Section 5.5.1). This is further demonstrated in the works of pioneering punake, who drew on an increasingly diverse range of heliaki sources reflecting these figurative characteristics, including jewellery, gemstones, celestial bodies, fish, birds, and newly coined figurative expressions. The ‘Ouana song's use of both English and Tongan lyrics also reflects a

compositional practice evident in the early development of hiva kakala.

Despite these continuities and its widespread popularity among younger audiences, the song is comparatively superficial, lacking the depth of thought, sustained figurative development, and creative ingenuity that characterised the works of pioneering hiva kakala punake. This apparent paradox between declining literary quality and growing popularity warrants further scholarly investigation. It is therefore recommended that future research examine the compositional evolution of hiva kakala in order to establish evidence-based guidelines for revitalising and reinstating its defining literary traditions and compositional standards. Where contemporary styles, such as the ‘Ouana song, differ substantially from hiva kakala, they should be formally recognised as distinct genres on the basis of clear linguistic, literary, musical, and cultural evidence.

5.3 Ola (Effects): Evolution and fragmentation of figures of speech

RQ: Why were hiva kakala required to be composed in accordance with the heliaki system and moderated by journalists and censorial punake before they could be broadcast on Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio from the 1960s until the early 2000s?

Building on the Tupunga Ola framework, this section interprets the ola (effects) associated with the heliaki dimension of the research question on the basis that an understanding of hiva kakala censorship founded on heliaki first requires an understanding of heliaki itself. As the fundamental forms and conceptual foundations of heliaki have already been introduced in the Introduction (see Sections 1.1 and 1.6), this section extends that discussion by examining the etymology of heliaki, its conceptual refinement through engagement with the English figurative system, and the development of the first systematic framework of heliaki, comprising more than 30 standardised lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech).

5.3.1 From fragmentation to systematisation. The findings indicate that heliaki functions in ways analogous to the English figurative language system. This discovery is important because it enabled this study to recognise the dispersion of constituent elements corresponding to the English figures of speech system throughout Tongan literature. For example, simile, metaphor, personification, metonymy, euphemism, allegory, and allusion, among others, have all been identified as forms of heliaki (Latukefu, 1980; Taumoevalau, 2012; Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019; Mahina, 2003). However, these elements have remained largely isolated and have yet to be formally integrated into a coherent and systematic heliaki framework. Consequently, this study synthesises these fragmented treatments into a unified account while extending the existing literature through the identification and systematic

classification of more than 30 figures of speech (lea ‘o e heliaki) within the heliaki system (see Section 5.5.1). In doing so, it addresses the conceptual gap identified in the Literature Review by providing the first systematic classification of lea ‘o e heliaki within the broader heliaki system.

5.3.1.1 Etymological reassessment of heliaki. The standardisation of the heliaki system underscores the importance of a transparent etymological analysis for establishing its conceptual foundations. As a result, this study revisits the etymological origins of heliaki, beginning with Churchward's (1959) definition of heliaki as “to speak ironically, or to say one thing and mean another” (p. 219). Subsequent scholarship appears to have progressively broadened this definition to emphasise indirectness, concealment, layered meanings, metaphor, and interpretive difficulty (Kaepler, 1993; Helu, 1999; Māhina, 2003; Veikoso, 2023). However, when assessed against the Semantic–Figurative Continuum Model (SFCM) (see Section 1.1; Diagram One), these interpretations reveal two conceptual limitations in how heliaki is understood. First, such characteristics are more accurately understood as organising principles of particular lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech), such as irony, allegory, and euphemism, rather than as defining characteristics of heliaki itself (see Section 5.5.1). Second, they do not adequately account for heliaki as the broader semantic–figurative process through which the three characteristics of literal expressions (see Section 1.1, Diagram One) are activated.

From a morphological perspective, this study proposes that heliaki may have developed from a now-obsolete lexical form, hypothesised here as *heleaki*. Evidence from Tongan, consistent with studies of lexical obsolescence and lexical loss (Tichý, 2018), suggests that obsolete lexical forms may be replaced over time by later variants. This is illustrated by Churchward's (1959) recording of ‘āfia as the original Tongan term for a funeral wake, whereas contemporary media overwhelmingly use ‘aofia, a distinct word meaning to defend or to cover. This erroneous substitution has become conventionalised through widespread usage, suggesting that similar lexical change may also explain the development of *heliaki* from *heleaki*.

Further support for this hypothesis comes from the morphology of heliaki. The word comprises the lexical element *heli* and the suffix *-aki*. In Tongan, *-aki* commonly extends or modifies the meaning of the lexical base. For example, *mate* (to die or dead) becomes *mateaki* (to remain loyal or to be prepared to die for), while *‘ulu* (head) becomes *‘uluaki* (first), illustrating how the suffix generates related but semantically extended meanings. Unlike these examples, however, there is no recognised indigenous Tongan lexical item *heli*, apart from its use as a borrowing or adaptation of the English word *hell*. Nonetheless, given that semantic and phonological change is an established feature of Tongan lexical evolution, it is plausible that *heli* represents a phonological variant of *hele*, from which *heliaki*

may have developed. Churchward (1959) defines *hele* as denying something one has actually done. However, *hele* also carries the sense of playfully attempting to deceive or trick someone. When the deception is recognised, a common response is: *‘Oua te ke fie hele mai ē!* (“Don’t try to trick me!”).

This proposal is consistent with lexical patterns elsewhere in Tongan, where vowel alternation occurs between closely related lexical forms that retain corresponding meanings. Examples include the word pairs *fohi* (to remove skin or rind) and *fehi* (to prise open and detach), *fasi* (to break internally or become fractured) and *fesi* (to break a stick or rod), *felāuaki* (to exchange various opinions) and *feliuaki* (to turn around or become different), and *fetokai* (to punch each other) and *fetakai* (to struggle with one another). Comparable patterns of lexical extension are also evident in related forms such as *fehi*, from which *fehi’a* (to hate) and *fehi’anekina* (to dislike greatly) are derived. Accordingly, this study posits that *hele* or *heleaki*, together with Churchward’s (1959) definition of *heliaki*, may reflect an earlier stage in the conceptual development of *heliaki*. At that stage, *heleaki* or *heliaki* appears to have referred primarily to the descriptive use of words appealing to the human senses to create persuasive, vivid mental imagery and evoke deep emotional responses. This interpretation lends further support to the reconceptualised definition of the *heliaki* system proposed in this study, which conceptualises it in a manner analogous to the English figurative system (see Sections 5.3.1.3 and 1.1).

5.3.1.2 The Semantic–Figurative Continuum Model (SFCM). Building on the preceding etymological reassessment, this section illustrates how the reconceptualised *heliaki* process operates through the analytical application of the Semantic–Figurative Continuum Model (SFCM) (see Section 1.1). It demonstrates how the intrinsic qualities of a literal expression and their sensory appeal motivate its use as *heliaki* through association with a cultural object, consistent with the etymological evolution outlined above. Using *la’ā* (sun) as an illustration, it traces the transformation of a literal expression into *heliaki* (imagery, symbolism, or figuration), *lea heliaki* (figurative language), and ultimately *lea ‘o e heliaki* (figures of speech). In doing so, it demonstrates the sequential operation of the Tongan *heliaki* system and clarifies how *heliaki* is progressively constructed through its constituent stages.

Lea ‘ilongofua (literal language). At the literal level, *la’ā* denotes the physical sun, as in *‘Oku ulo e la’aá* (The sun shines). Here, the phrase *ulo e la’aá* expresses the literal meaning of *la’ā*. According to the SFCM, the identification of *heliaki* begins with three guiding questions and their corresponding answers: *Why does the potential figurative object matter?* (its intrinsic qualities); *How do those qualities operate?* (through their sensory appeal); and *On what grounds do those qualities acquire figurative meaning?* (their cultural associations). The following stage demonstrates how these intrinsic qualities, sensory appeal, and cultural associations transform *la’ā* from a literal expression into *heliaki* (imagery, symbolism, or figuration).

Heliaki (imagery, symbolism, or figuration). At the heliaki level, the three aspects identified above—intrinsic qualities, sensory appeal, and cultural associations—are brought together to establish the imagery (heliaki) represented by la‘ā. Its intrinsic qualities include being a source of light, power, inaccessibility, universal dependence, and centrality. Its sensory appeal includes the visual experience of brightness, warmth, and the daily observation of sunrise and sunset. Its cultural associations include life, authority, leadership, vitality, and, in appropriate contexts, the King as a culturally recognised symbol of supreme authority. When these characteristics of la‘ā are deliberately used to describe something else, such as the king, the expression is no longer understood in its literal sense but instead functions as heliaki (imagery). The next stage demonstrates how la‘ā as imagery is expanded into diverse forms of lea heliaki, each making the intended figurative meaning more explicit.

Lea heliaki (figurative language). Building on the heliaki established in the preceding stage, la‘ā as imagery develops into diverse forms of lea heliaki, through which the symbolised action, object, or person is made explicit. These include la‘ā ‘o Tonga (literally, “the sun of Tonga”; figuratively and culturally understood, “the King of Tonga”); la‘ā hopo (literally, “the sun rises”; figuratively understood, “the King is present”); kei tu‘u e la‘ā (literally, “the sun still stands”; figuratively understood, “remains healthy”); kuo tāitō e la‘ā (literally, “the sun is approaching sunset”; figuratively and culturally understood, “he or she is ageing”); and tō e la‘ā or la‘ā kuo ungafonuá (literally, “the sun sets”; figuratively and culturally understood, “an important person dies”). Although each expression originates from the same heliaki, each develops a distinct figurative meaning by drawing on particular intrinsic qualities, sensory appeal, or cultural associations of la‘ā. The following final stage demonstrates how these forms of lea heliaki are incorporated into complete figurative ideas, enabling them to be identified and classified as particular forms of lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech).

Lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech). As the final stage of the SFCM, the diverse forms of lea heliaki (figurative language) developed from la‘ā as heliaki (imagery, symbolism, or figuration) are realised as complete figurative ideas. Their incorporation into meaningful sentences at this stage also enables the underlying heliaki to be classified according to the governing literary principle of lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech) (see Section 5.5.1). For example, the phrase la‘ā ‘o Tonga may be incorporated into the complete sentence Tapu mo e La‘ā ‘o Tonga (Taboo to the Sun of Tonga). This serves two purposes. First, it communicates a complete figurative meaning. Second, it reveals the governing figurative principles (see Section 5.5.1) that enable the expression to be classified as a particular form of lea ‘o e heliaki, as demonstrated in the following examples.

Applications of the SFCM. The following examples further illustrate the SFCM by showing how the same lea ‘ilongofua (literal expression) la‘ā may activate different intrinsic qualities, sensory appeal, or cultural associations according to context and communicative intent. These variations generate different heliaki (imagery,

symbolism, or figuration), develop into *lea heliaki* (figurative language), and are ultimately classified as different *lea ‘o e heliaki* (figures of speech). Although *la‘ā* is used here for illustration, the same process applies to any *lea ‘ilongofua*, which can generate comparable figurative outcomes when interpreted through the SFCM.

Example 1: Metonymy. Metonymy is a form of *lea ‘o e heliaki* in which one entity is represented by another that is closely associated with it. The expression *Tapu mo e la‘ā ‘o Tonga* (“Taboo to the Sun of Tonga”) employs *la‘ā* as *heliaki* (imagery) for the King. Because *la‘ā* represents the sovereign through an established cultural association, the expression is classified as metonymy. Notably, *Tapu mo e la‘ā ‘o Tonga* illustrates all three developmental stages of the SFCM derived from the same literal expression, *la‘ā*. At the *heliaki* stage, *la‘ā* functions as imagery; at the *lea heliaki* stage, *la‘ā ‘o Tonga* develops that imagery into a figurative expression; and at the *lea ‘o e heliaki* stage, the cultural association between *la‘ā* and the King determines its classification as metonymy (see Section 5.5.1). The following example demonstrates how the same *heliaki* may develop into a different form of *lea ‘o e heliaki*.

Example 2: Personification. Personification is a form of *lea ‘o e heliaki* that attributes human qualities, actions, or agency to non-human entities or abstract concepts. In *Kuo hiki ‘e he la‘ā ‘ene mohé* (“The sun has lifted his or her sleep”), the increasing heat of *la‘ā* is personified as performing the human action of *hiki*. Here, the intrinsic quality of *la‘ā* to emit heat and the corresponding sensory experience of increasing warmth establish *la‘ā* as *heliaki* (imagery). Through the culturally recognised association of *hiki*, the expression is classified as personification (see Section 5.5.1). In addition to metonymy and personification, the same *heliaki* of *la‘ā* may also be realised through metaphor, simile, hyperbole, apostrophe, symbolism, synecdoche, and irony.

5.3.1.3 A revised definition of *heliaki*. Drawing on the lexical, etymological, and contextual analyses presented above, this study reconceptualises *heliaki* as a dynamic literary system that operates through the SFCM. Within this system, the intrinsic qualities, sensory appeal, and cultural associations of literal expressions are activated to generate *heliaki* (imagery, symbolism, or figuration). The resulting *heliaki* then develops into *lea heliaki* (figurative language) and is ultimately realised through specific *lea ‘o e heliaki* (figures of speech). The *heliaki* system, or *heliaki*, is therefore defined as the use of imagery, symbolism, or figuration to create vivid mental representations, enhance the aesthetic and persuasive quality of communication, and evoke emotional responses. This definition aligns with the figurative character of Tongan literary expression, which serves to distinguish the relational positions of *‘eiki* (superior) and *tu‘a* (subordinate). Consequently, through the SFCM, this study argues that the prevailing understanding of *heliaki* as hidden, indirect, metaphorical, or characterised by saying one thing while meaning another is insufficient as its defining characterisation. The present study demonstrates that these characteristics represent only one dimension of the broader *heliaki* system, which is reconceptualised and newly defined through the proposed framework. Finally, this study recommends reconsidering the characterisation of

heliaki as merely hidden meaning. From an artistic perspective, this interpretation may not fully account for the communicative purpose of figurative expression, which generally seeks to engage an audience rather than make meaning inaccessible.

Notably, the term *heliaki* is used in two senses. In its narrow sense, it denotes imagery, symbolism, or figuration. In its broad sense, it denotes the literary system within which these are developed into *lea heliaki* (figurative language) and realised as *lea ‘o e heliaki* (figures of speech). Unlike English, which lexicalises the related forms of figurative representation—imagery, symbolism, or figuration—as separate literary concepts, Tongan uses the single term *heliaki* to denote each of these concepts as well as the broader literary system within which they operate. However, they may be transliterated as synonyms for *heliaki*, such as *‘imiseli* (imagery), *simipolīsimi* (symbolism), and *fikalōsoni* (figuration).

5.3.1.4 *Heliaki and misconceptions concerning Tongan language classification.* One important implication of the revised definition of *heliaki* is that it exposes a long-standing misconception concerning the classification of the Tongan language. Traditionally, Tongan has been classified according to the *kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i* (commoner–noble–monarch) hierarchy, reflecting the kingdom's constitutional social structure (see Section 3.4.3.1). The tripartite classification assumes, and thereby generalises, that commoners consistently use subordinate language (*lea ki he tu‘a* or *lea ‘a e tu‘a*) when referring to themselves, chiefly language (*lea fakahouhou‘eiki*) when addressing nobles and members of the royal household, and regal language when addressing the King. The examples below illustrate the traditional tripartite classification of the Tongan language that was published in linguistic references and widely taught in schools.

For example:

<i>Kakai</i>	<i>Hou‘eiki</i>	<i>Tu‘i</i>	<i>English</i>
<i>‘alu</i>	<i>me‘a</i>	<i>hā‘ele</i>	go
<i>mohe</i>	<i>toka</i>	<i>tōfā</i>	sleep

However, the analysis demonstrates that these assumptions do not accurately reflect how the Tongan language is structured and used in everyday Tongan life, and that the traditional classification is incomplete, increasingly outdated, and does not adequately account for the principles governing Tongan linguistic interaction. First, the traditional tripartite classification describes only the upward direction of speech (commoner → noble → monarch) but fails to account for the complementary or binary dimension of linguistic interaction between members of each level in the hierarchy. Second, it fails to recognise that speakers, whether commoners, nobles, or members of the royal family, must linguistically use *lea ki he tu‘a* (subordinate or *heliaki* language) when addressing or referring to a relational superior, regardless of their own constitutional or social status, particularly in contexts where that

superior relative is being honoured or ceremonially approached. Third, the documented *kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i* language stratification is now largely outdated, with most of its forms no longer functioning as the principal mode of linguistic interaction. Fourth, the traditional tripartite classification fails to recognise that the linguistic system most appropriately accommodating all three constitutional levels is *lea heliaki*, or the *heliaki* system (see Section 5.5.1). These limitations are illustrated by the following examples.

In July 2026, Lord Fakatulolo, one of the King’s nobles, publicly thanked Princess ‘Eliana and Princess Sālote on Facebook for the gifts they presented on the occasion of his birthday. His statement provides a classic example of how the *heliaki* system functions as an integral and key component of the Tongan language classification. The following is part of what he wrote:

“Me'a mai pē Ongo Tamaiki Pilinisesí mo e talamonū ki he [birthday] 'o e veve ko kita. Tulou atu Pilinisesi 'Eliana. Tulou Atu Pilinisesi Sālote. Kae fakamālō atu 'i he koloa kuó mo faka'inasi'aki 'a ho'omo va‘a fefié ni⁴.” (Fakatulolo, 2026).

A literal translation reads:

"The two Princesses came to offer birthday wishes to this piece of rubbish. Excuse me, Princess ‘Eliana. Excuse me, Princess Sālote. I thank you for the gifts you have graciously shared with your piece of firewood."

The expressions *veve* (rubbish) and *va‘a fefie* (piece of firewood) are used by Fakatulolo as figurative substitutes for himself. Rather than referring to "my birthday," he describes it as "the birthday of this piece of rubbish," and instead of referring to himself as their noble—that is, a noble serving the royal household—he thanks the Princesses for the gifts they have bestowed upon "your piece of firewood." These self-deprecating expressions were deliberately selected because, within the Tongan hierarchical classification of cultural entities (see Section 5.6.1.2), a speaker addressing a superior relative is regarded as *tu‘a* in that relational context, regardless of whether the speaker is a noble, royal, or monarch. By using self-derogatory expressions to minimise his own importance and convey humility, Fakatulolo correspondingly magnified the honour and prestige associated with the Princesses’ visit. When considered through the SFCM, these expressions function as *lea ‘o e heliaki*, comparable to figures of speech such as *palatōkasi* (paradox), *litotesi* (litotes), and *‘anetisi* (antithesis), among others. They create a vivid, persuasive, and memorable effect through the deliberate juxtaposition of the highest and

⁴ The quotation has been reproduced with minor grammatical, orthographic, and punctuation corrections for readability. These editorial changes do not affect the meaning or intent of the original post.

lowest positions within the relational hierarchy (see Section 5.5.1).

This example demonstrates how the ‘eiki–tu‘a classificatory principle used to stratify and rank Tongan relational and constitutional social hierarchies functions as a heliaki device, generating figurative meaning and heightened expressive effects through the deliberate contrast between ‘eiki (superior) and tu‘a (subordinate). Despite this widespread practice, there are no known accounts that thoroughly and coherently explain these figurative uses of language in a way that reflects their everyday patterns and standards of use. Consequently, the traditional and increasingly outdated kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i language classification continues to create the misleading impression that it represents how the Tongan language operates, when it does not adequately reflect its actual patterns of use.

Lord Fakatulolo’s short passage therefore provides an important illustration of the broader finding that lea heliaki has become the principal linguistic form through which contemporary Tongan language use can be more accurately understood and classified. It demonstrates three important points. First, the language employed by commoners, nobles, and royals when addressing their superiors is characteristically lea heliaki. Second, such expressions are not confined to documented lexical inventories but can be created spontaneously from the speaker's own figurative repertoire. For example, Lord Fakatulolo uses *veve* and *va‘a fefie* as lea heliaki to refer to himself. He could equally have employed other figurative expressions, such as *hili‘anga kulo* (place where cooking pots are placed) or *lepo ‘umu* (strung leaves used to cover an earth oven), depending on the relational context and the figurative expression he considered most appropriate at the time of speaking. It is therefore recommended that future research critically re-examine the legitimacy of the traditional kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i language classification in light of the findings of this study. Such research should develop a revised model of Tongan language classification grounded in the ETICRIM (see Section 1.4.3) and the heliaki system (see Section 5.5.1).

5.4 Ola (Effects): Reconceptualising hualela within the heliaki system

Primary RQ: *Why were hiva kakala required to be composed in accordance with the heliaki system and moderated by journalists and censorial punake before they could be broadcast on Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio from the 1960s until the early 2000s?*

Situated within the Tupunga Ola framework, this discussion addresses the why dimension of the primary research question by examining the effects (ola) arising from the findings presented in the Findings chapter. In doing so, it revisits one of the principal conceptual gaps identified in the Literature Review: the relationship between hualela and heliaki. Although the findings support the prevailing view that hualela is the opposite of heliaki, further etymological, morphological, and figurative analyses

demonstrate that this interpretation is incorrect and requires reconsideration.

5.4.1 Resolving the contradiction between hualela and heliaki. The findings reinforce the longstanding view that hualela is the opposite of heliaki. This finding is notable because it suggests that one of the conceptual principles informing the censorship of hiva kakala may have rested on a persistent misunderstanding of the meaning and function of hualela. Features of hualela identified in the literature as contrasting with heliaki include directness, bluntness, offensiveness, and vulgarity (Mahina, 2003; Manu‘atu, 2000; Veikoso, 2023). However, analysis through the SFCM (see Section 1.1, Diagram One) demonstrates that these characteristics describe the communicative effect or rhetorical function of a figurative expression rather than placing hualela outside the heliaki system. Accordingly, hualela is more appropriately understood as a form of lea ‘o e heliaki, comparable to English figures of speech such as euphemism, dysphemism, innuendo, and double entendre (see Section 5.5.1). This conclusion is further supported by Churchward's (1959) recognition of the humorous dimension of hualela, which he defines as “to make offensive jokes, to be humorous in an offensive or vulgar way” (p. 233). A lexical deconstruction of hualela into hua (humorous) and lela (offensive) reveals two interacting meanings that transform the interpretation of a literal expression, a defining characteristic of lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech) (see Section 5.5.1). Taken together, these findings suggest that hualela has often been conflated with lela, the lexical element that denotes offensiveness, coarseness, or causing offence (Churchward, 1959). The following section examines two documented examples that provide further evidence that hualela functions as a form of lea ‘o e heliaki.

5.4.1.1 Explicit hualela: a communicative disclaimer. Although the prevailing definition of hualela portrays it as offensive and vulgar, its heliaki nature enables it to function as a culturally acceptable communicative strategy in appropriate contexts. This interpretation is illustrated by Rev. Siupeli Taliai's radio analysis of the Free Wesleyan Hymn 566, *Sīsū Fotu ‘i he Toko Mano*. The hymn draws on the biblical Song of Songs, a text regarded in some traditions as inappropriate because of its candid romantic and sexual imagery (Rabinowitz, 2013). This sensitivity provides important context for Taliai's use of hualela as a disclaimer. While explaining the hymn on radio FM 87.5, he asked the host for permission to “hualela” so that the explicit physical imagery, erotic desire, and depictions of love he was about to analyse could be made clearer to listeners. In Taliai's usage, hualela permitted him to explain the sensitive imagery more vividly and explicitly, thereby clarifying and intensifying its communicative impact.

5.4.1.2 Implicit hualela: an expressive practice. Whereas the preceding example illustrates hualela through an explicit communicative disclaimer, an implicit form is evident in many hiva kakala.

In *Matangi Ka Tonga Pea Tokelau*, Queen Sālote employs lea hangatonu or lea ‘ilongofua (literal expressions) that, under the prevailing definition of hualela, could be regarded as offensive or vulgar. The Queen composed the love song for her Prince Consort, Tungī Mailefihi. This study, however, interprets such direct expressions as a form of lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech) that do not constitute offensiveness or vulgarity under the veitapui protocol (see Section 1.4.1.1). This is because the direct expressions are consistently interwoven with heliaki language throughout the song. In addition, the song never explicitly identifies her husband by name.

In verse three, the Queen writes directly: *Ko hoku lotó ni tapu ke u loi* (This heart of mine cannot lie) and *Ko e fua ‘eku ‘ofa mo ‘oni* (Because this is the consequence of my true love). Later, she states: *He ‘ofá ni kuo paea tokotaha* (My love is now neglected and all alone). These directly understandable expressions operate alongside accompanying lea heliaki, including the metonymic references to Tufunua and Hala Kakala, which evoke places historically associated with her late husband rather than naming him directly. In this instance, hualela is realised through the contextual moderation of direct expression by heliaki, allowing explicit emotional meaning to coexist with the culturally expected figurative character of hiva kakala. This interpretation also supports the study’s finding that the avoidance of direct personal names in hiva kakala, where appropriate heliaki could be employed instead, constituted one of the requirements of the TBC radio censorship process. This distinction reinforces the argument that hualela should be understood not as the opposite of heliaki, but as one of the expressive forms through which lea ‘o e heliaki is realised.

5.5 Ola (Effects): Classification of lea ‘o e heliaki (figures of speech)

Primary RQ: *Why were hiva kakala required to be composed in accordance with the heliaki system and moderated by journalists and censorial punake before they could be broadcast on Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio from the 1960s until the early 2000s?*

Analysed through the Tupunga Ola framework, this discussion addresses the heliaki dimension of the primary research question by examining the effects (ola) arising from the findings presented in the previous chapter. A principal outcome of this study is the reconceptualisation of heliaki as a dynamic literary system and semantic–figurative framework. This section therefore proposes a systematic framework comprising more than 30 forms of lea ‘o e heliaki, demonstrating how the Semantic–Figurative Continuum Model (SFCM) developed in this study provides a conceptual basis for identifying and classifying figurative language within the heliaki system.

5.5.1 Lea ‘o e heliaki. The findings indicate the need to standardise the heliaki system. Such standardisation provides a coherent framework for understanding how heliaki operates systematically, making the literary significance and distinctive features of this specialised language register more readily understandable. Although the lea ‘o e heliaki presented below are organised into two groups for analytical clarity, both derive from and express the same underlying principle of heliaki and therefore represent heliaki meaning in its broader sense. The first group comprises forms primarily used to distinguish the complementary positions of tu‘a (subordinate) and ‘eiki (superior) within the two relational hierarchies of kāinga–‘ulumotu‘a–mehekitanga (fahu) and kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i. The second group comprises forms that largely serve the aesthetic and expressive dimensions of the heliaki system, enhancing the vividness, elegance, and emotional impact of communication.

Group One: Evocative Representation

1. simile (similī) compares one thing with another of a different kind to make a description more vivid or emphatic, commonly using *like* or *as*; their Tongan equivalents include *hangē* and *‘atā*. For example, “*as brave as a lion*.” A *similī* appears in Queen Sālote's lament *Tangi ‘a Tu‘ifua ‘ia ‘Alaivahamama ‘o*:

Te ‘ofa he anga ‘o ‘ete tamá	How my heart grieves for my child.
Ne hangē ko ‘Ufia-mo-Latá	Like clouds of ‘Ufia and Lata drifting by

Here, *hangē* (“like”) marks the comparison as *similī*.

2. metaphor (metafoa) applies a word or expression to something to which it is not literally applicable, creating a direct figurative comparison without the comparative markers of *similī* (see Section 1.6). For example, “*Sione is a lion*.” In *Manule‘o Ongo ‘O e Hala Vaha‘akoló, punake Talo Lakepa Fulivai* employs *laione* (lion) and *‘ikale* (eagle) metaphorically:

Ko e ‘ahó ni te u laione ai	Today I shall be a lion
Te u ‘ikale ‘i he ‘ataá ni	I shall be an eagle in the airspace

Fulivai represents himself as an accomplished *punake* by assuming the qualities and associations of these powerful creatures.

3. personification (penifāsoni) attributes human qualities, feelings, actions, or agency to non-human entities. For example, “*The sun smiles down on us*.” In Queen Sālote’s *Angi Mai Si‘i Matangi*, the wind is personified through the human action of *fafana* (whispering):

Malu efiafi he angi iki	The evening wind drifts softly
O fafana he Hala Paini	Whispers along the pine-lined road

The attribution of *fafana* to the wind gives it human agency, classifying the expression as

personification.

4. alliteration (‘alatesoni) is the repetition of the same initial consonant sound in two or more closely positioned words, as in “*good grief*.” In Tongan, *mate mohe* (“dead sleep”) exemplifies ‘alatesoni through the repeated initial *m* sound.

5. allusion (‘alasiona) indirectly refers to a familiar person, place, event, story, or culturally recognised association. For example, “That was his Waterloo” alludes to Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo to denote a person’s decisive defeat or greatest weakness. In Tongan, *Tau toki vete pe mei Velata* functions as ‘alasiona, meaning that the final decision will determine the winner. The expression alludes to King Taufa‘āhau’s victory at Velata in Ha‘apai, which marked his triumph over Tu‘i Tonga Laufilitonga.

6. double entendre (tenitalia) uses an expression to convey two meanings, typically an apparent primary meaning and a secondary implied meaning. For example, “*She gave him a meaningful look*” can carry a secondary suggestive meaning. In Tongan, *kuo lava ho lotó* exemplifies *tenitalia*. Literally, the expression means that a person has accomplished their objective, while its secondary meaning implies that the objective was achieved at the expense of others.

7. assonance (‘asonasi) is the repetition of similar vowel sounds in closely positioned words, as in “*friends till the end*.” In Queen Sālote's *Lea ‘a e Toa*, the repeated vowel sounds in *tali* and *matali* exemplify ‘asonasi:

‘Oiauē! Ko e ngalu ‘e fasi

Alas! The wave is about to break

Ta‘ahine tali ke matali

Maiden, brace for the breaking tide

The repeated vowel sounds in *tali* and *matali* create the assonance.

8. innuendo (‘ineto) indirectly hints at a critical, inappropriate, or suggestive meaning without stating it explicitly. For example, “He's very creative with his expenses” may imply dishonesty. The Tongan expression *Kai lelei e kāinga lotú he ‘ahó ni* (“The congregation will eat well today”) exemplifies ‘ineto. On the surface, the expression suggests that the congregation will receive a spiritually nourishing sermon; its implied meaning, however, mocks the preacher by questioning their ability or qualification to deliver the sermon without stating the criticism directly.

9. euphemism (‘efemasi) replaces a harsh, direct, or culturally sensitive expression with a milder or more socially appropriate one. For example, “passed away” may replace “died.” In Tongan, *folauhola* (“absconded on a voyage”) functions as ‘efemasi for *mate* (died), as in *Kuo folauhola hoku tokouá* (“My brother has absconded on a voyage”), softening the direct reference to death. The same

principle also applies in specialised *kakai* and *tu'a* language within the inherent 'eiki–*tu'a* relational binary and the two inherent and constitutional social hierarchies (see Section 1.4.3). For example, *koe* (you) at the *kakai* level is replaced by *feitu'una* (literally, “that place where you are”) when addressing the sovereign, avoiding direct personal reference.

10. irony ('ailoni) uses words, expressions, or situations to convey a meaning contrary to, or incongruous with, their apparent or literal meaning. For example, “a lifeguard who cannot swim.” In Tongan, *ko ha taha fakahaofi mo'ui 'oku 'ikai lava 'o kakau* exemplifies 'ailoni through the contradiction between the person's role and inability to perform its essential function.

11. metonymy (metonimea) substitutes the name of one thing with another that is closely associated with it. For example, the Crown represents the British monarchy. In Tongan, *kalauni* (Crown) functions as metonimea for the king through their established association. Metonymy is the broadest category of substitution through association, from which synecdoche (substitution through part–whole association) and antonomasia (substitution between proper names and titles or epithets) are distinguished.

12. synecdoche (sinetoka) uses a part of something to represent the whole. For example, “Nice wheels!” uses wheels to represent a car. In Tongan, *nima vaivai* (“weak hand”) is a sinetoka referring to a poor person, using *nima* (hand), a part of the person, to represent their impoverished circumstances.

13. antonomasia ('atenosia) uses a proper name to designate a member of a class, as in a Solomon for a wise ruler, or substitutes an epithet or title for a proper name, as in the Bard for Shakespeare. A Tongan example of 'atenosia is *Lopa 'Aione (Iron Rope)*, an epithet associated with King George Tupou I. Unlike metonymy and synecdoche, antonomasia is specifically distinguished by the substitution of proper names with descriptive titles, epithets, or representative names, or vice versa.

14. hypallage (haipelesia) transfers an attribute from the person or thing to which it logically belongs to an associated expression. For example, “I had a wonderful day” attributes wonderful to the day rather than to the speaker's experience. In Queen Sālote's lament for her half-sister, Princess 'Elisiva Fusipala Tauki'onetuku, 'O veteki si'oku loto falé (“Demolishing the centre of my pitiful house”) exemplifies haipelesia by attributing the devastation to the fale rather than to the Queen and her family.

15. litotes (litotesi) or antenantiosis ('ateniosi) uses understatement or negation to affirm or emphasise a positive meaning. For example, “That wasn't half bad” uses negation to convey that something was good. A Tongan counterpart is *lea faka 'aki 'akimui*, exemplified by 'ikai ha me'a 'e ma'u (“there is nothing to give”), uttered while presenting food, meat, or another gift. The same principle is reflected in the specialised *kakai* and *tu'a* language used within both the inherent ETICRIM, where

understatement and self-deprecation function as expressions of respect and humility.

16. aposiopesis (‘*apasipesi*’) occurs when a speaker deliberately breaks off an expression before completing it, often creating tension, anticipation, or implied meaning. For example, “Get out, or else—”. In Tongan, *Longo ho ngutu na ‘á ku—* (“Silence your mouth before I—”) exemplifies ‘*apasipesi*, as the unfinished expression leaves the threatened action unstated but implied.

17. aporia (‘*apolia*’) expresses doubt or uncertainty, often to provoke thought or emphasise complexity. It may be genuine or rhetorical, encouraging reflection by questioning what appears obvious. For example, “I do not know where to begin in expressing my gratitude.” The Tongan expression *‘Ikai ke u ‘ilo pe te u tu ‘u mei fē ke fai ha fakamālō* (“I do not know where to begin in expressing my gratitude”) exemplifies ‘*apolia* through the speaker's expressed uncertainty.

18. circumlocution (*sekamilōkani*) is the use of an unnecessarily large number of words to express an idea, often in an indirect, roundabout, or evasive manner. For example, instead of saying, “I'm hungry”, one might say, “My stomach is making its needs known, and I find myself craving something to satisfy my appetite.” A comparable example in Tongan is *Kuo fai e ki ‘i tō lalo* (literally, I have become a little low), which is used instead of the more direct expression *‘Oku ou fiekaia* (I am hungry). This indirect expression therefore illustrates *sekamilōkani*.

19. hyperbole (“*haipōlī*”) is deliberate exaggeration not intended to be interpreted literally, as in “I've told you a million times.” In Queen Sālote's *lakalaka* Maile, the expression *Te u puke ‘a e matangi Tongá* (“I will seize the southern wind”) exemplifies *haipōlī*:

Te u puke ‘a e matangi Tongá I will seize the southern wind

Ke ‘oua ‘e folau ha vaká That no vessel may set sail

The impossible act of physically seizing the wind creates the exaggeration.

20. dysphemism (*tisifeamasi*) replaces a neutral or acceptable expression with a harsher, more offensive, or blunt one, often to convey anger, contempt, disgust, or humour. For example, “croaked” may replace “died.” In Tongan, ‘*ukaka* used in place of *mate* (died) exemplifies *tisifeamasi* by expressing death in a deliberately harsher or more derogatory manner. Dysphemism is type of *hualela* (see Section 5.4.1).

Group Two: Aesthetic Expression

21. antithesis (‘*anetisi*’) places contrasting or opposing ideas in parallel, as in “*hot and cold*.” In Queen Sālote's *Hiva Afā* ‘*a Vaeá*, *faingata ‘a* (difficult) and *faingofua* (easy) form an ‘*anetisi*:

Ka faingata‘a pe faingofua

Be it difficult or be it easy

Ha‘apai tu‘u ho‘o kāimu‘a

Ha‘apai stand in your fearless way

The juxtaposition of *faingata‘a* and *faingofua* emphasises the contrast between difficulty and ease.

22. oxymoron (‘okesiloni) combines closely positioned words or ideas with contradictory or opposing meanings, as in “*old news*.” The Tongan expression *fakaongotuli* exemplifies ‘okesiloni by combining *fakaongo* (to listen) with *tuli* (deaf), juxtaposing the act of listening with the inability to hear.

23. pleonasm (pelenomasi) uses more words than necessary to convey a meaning, often for emphasis. For example, “*I saw it with my own eyes*” is pleonastic because *saw* already implies the use of the eyes. In Tongan, *sio ‘a e mata* (“the eye sees”) exemplifies *pelenomasi* because *sio* (to see) already implies the use of the eyes. The expression appears in the proverb *Sio ‘a e mata kae hoka e tala* (“The eye sees while the telling stabs”).

24. tautology (tautolosia) repeats the same or closely similar meaning within an expression. For example, “*I’m imagining it in my mind*.” In Queen Sālote’s hiva kakala Toli Fisi, *Fotu mai hā mai* exemplifies *tautolosia*: *fotu mai* means to become visible, while *hā mai* similarly means to appear or show up. The repetition reinforces the same underlying meaning.

25. chiasmus (kasemasi) reverses the grammatical or lexical arrangement of words or ideas in a subsequent phrase, creating a crosswise or mirror-like structure. For example, “*Foul is fair, and fair is foul*.” In the song *Si‘oto Losalio* by Hala Touliki band, *ko au koe, ko koe au* (“I am you, you are me”) exemplifies *kasemasi* through the reversed arrangement of *au* and *koe*.

26. epanalepsis (‘epenasesi) repeats a word or expression at both the beginning and end of the same clause or sentence, with intervening words. For example, “*Nothing is worse than doing nothing*.” In Free Wesleyan Church hymn No. 507, *Ha‘u ‘a e fie ha‘u* exemplifies ‘epenasesi. Although epanalepsis and antanaclasis both involve repetition, they differ in the position and function of the repeated word.

27. anagram (‘anakalami) rearranges the letters of a word or expression to form another word or expression. For example, *listen* can be rearranged as *silent*. In Tongan, *fokihi* and *hikofi* exemplify ‘anakalami through the rearrangement of the same letters. *Fokihi* means to turn over or around, whereas *hikofi* means to pick up or seize quickly.

28. malapropism (malapesima) is the mistaken substitution of a word with a similar-sounding one, sometimes employed deliberately for humorous or stylistic effect. For example, “*He is the pineapple of politeness*” substitutes *pineapple* for *pinnacle*. In his song ‘*Oupeni Pasifiki*, *punake* Nau Saimone employs *malapesima* in *Likuvakatā foki ki he‘ene lua*, a deliberate distortion of the proverb

Foki e kulī ki he'ene lua (“The dog returns to its vomit”). The altered wording evokes the familiar proverb while producing a humorous and stylistic effect.

29. enallage (‘enalasia) is the intentional substitution of one grammatical or linguistic form for another to achieve a particular stylistic or expressive effect. For example, “We was ready” substitutes *was* for the grammatically expected *were*, creating a deliberate departure from subject–verb agreement. Similarly, in Queen Sālote’s *Maile* lakalaka, the lyric “Vātau‘anga e fine toli” substitutes the singular subject *fine* (“young woman”) for the grammatically expected plural subject *kau* *fe’fine*. This constitutes ‘enalasia because *vātau* ordinarily requires a plural subject, yet it is intentionally paired with a singular subject for poetic effect.

30. anthimeria (‘anatomela) is the substitution of one part of speech for another, such as using a noun as a verb, an adjective as a noun, or a verb as a noun. For example, the noun *book* functions as a verb in “*Book a flight.*” In Tongan, *Te ma pasi atu pē ke vave* (“We will bus so that it will be quick”) exemplifies ‘anatomela by using the noun *pasi* (bus) as a verb.

31. hendiadys (henitesi) expresses a single idea through two words joined by *and* (*mo e* in Tongan). For example, “*nice and warm*” conveys the single idea of *nicely warm*. In Tongan, *manatu mo e ‘ofa*, rather than *manatu ‘ofa*, exemplifies *henitesi*.

32. metaplasm (metāpalasia) refers to the intentional alteration of a word’s spelling or pronunciation—typically for metrical effect, stylistic flair, or informal tone—by adding, omitting, or transposing sounds or syllables. It comprises seven principal forms: prosthesis (polotefisi), epenthesis (‘epenitesi), paragoge (palakasi), aphaeresis (‘afalesisi), syncope (sinikope), apocope (‘akiope), and metathesis (matetāsisi). A Tongan example of polotefisi is *fakalaulaukau* for *laukau*. Epenthesis (‘epenitesi), is the insertion of a sound or syllable within a word, as in the nonstandard pronunciation *ath-e-lete* for *athlete*. A Tongan example of ‘epenitesi is *fakaeongo* for *fakaongo*. Paragoge (palakasi), the addition of a sound or syllable at the end of a word, as in *drownded* for *drowned*. A Tongan example of palakasi is *ongona* for *ongo*. Aphaeresis (‘afalesisi), is the omission of a sound or syllable from the beginning of a word, as in *’cause* for *because*. A Tongan example of ‘afalesisi is *fakatangi* for *tangi*. Syncope (sinikope), is the omission of a sound or syllable from the middle of a word, as in *ne’er* for *never*. A Tongan example of sinikope is *naku* for *na’á ku*. Apocope (‘akiope), is the omission of a sound or syllable from the end of a word, as in *goin’* for *going*. A Tongan example of ‘akiope is widely used in *hiva kakala*. For example, in Queen Sālote’s *Hiva ‘o Tāoné*, the final line of the chorus reads *He mausa e kakala hingoa*. When sung, performers intentionally omit the final vowel *a* in *hingoa*, pronouncing it as *hingo* to maintain rhythmic and phonetic balance. Metathesis (matetāsisi), the transposition of sounds or syllables within a word, as in *aks* for *ask*. A Tongan example of matetāsisi

is faha‘i for fa‘ahi.

5.5.1.1 Fakama‘unga as an indigenous compositional technique. The standardisation of these lea ‘o e heliaki is significant not only because it brings previously dispersed figurative forms into a coherent system, but also because it provides a clearer foundation for examining other ways in which heliaki may function to create vivid, evocative, and memorable expressions. The analysis revealed a recurring compositional practice in which particular forms of heliaki are deliberately given prominence to attract attention and enhance memorability within a song. To conceptualise and systematise this previously unlabelled practice, this study proposes fakama‘unga as an indigenous compositional concept. Churchward (1959) defines fakama‘unga as the Tongan equivalent of the chorus or refrain. More fundamentally, however, he defines it as a place where one habitually reached or a point of satisfaction. This etymological meaning provides a compelling conceptual basis for understanding why pioneering punake appear to have employed fakama‘unga as a literary device, positioning a single heliaki expression as the principal point of literary, aesthetic, and emotional impact within a composition. The fakama‘unga technique is exemplified by Queen Sālote's use of Loka Siliva, Sēmisi ‘Tongi's Vēsili Koula, and Huluholo Mo‘ungaloa's ‘Utufōmesi Siliva. In each case, the novelty, elegance, and distinctive phonological qualities of the fakama‘unga immediately attract listeners' attention and contribute significantly to the mālie of the song. Put simply, these fakama‘unga expressions become the memorable anchors of the composition, remaining in the listener's memory even when other elements are forgotten.

For further illustration, Queen Sālote, in particular, frequently employed heliaki-based fakama‘unga through two related placements: first, by using a distinctive heliaki as the song title; and second, by placing the same heliaki within the composition, particularly in a verse or chorus. In her love song *Katinia*, composed for her husband Prince Tungī Mailefihi, *Katinia* functions as the title and reappears as the opening word of the first verse: *Katinia Si‘oto Sei Manakoa* (“*Katinia*, my cherished sei”). A similar compositional pattern is evident in her renowned love songs ‘Ōketi, Leiola, and Loka Siliva, although the placement of the hook within each composition varies. These examples demonstrate how heliaki can function as a fakama‘unga through the strategic pairing of titling and lyrical placement, capturing attention and strengthening memorability.

The title and first verse of *Katinia* are reproduced verbatim below for clarification:

Katinia

Katinia si‘oto sei manakoa	Katinia my cherished sei
‘Alaha kapui ai ‘a si‘ete ‘ofa	The fragrance enfolds this love of mine
Hā sino mai ho‘o tō‘onga	Your ways are etched upon my heart
Kae vaifā ‘a lo‘ifofonga	While tears stream down my face
‘Oiauē! ‘Oiau! Lau pe ā ‘e au	Ah me! Ah me! Little did I dream
Lau tokua ‘e au ko ha ‘ātunga lau	Little did I know it would come to this

5.5.1.2 Fakama‘unga and Western Lyrical-Hook Formation. To determine whether an analytical equivalent exists beyond the Tongan tradition, the present study extends the discussion to Western songwriting scholarship, where the lyrical hook represents a closely comparable compositional technique. This comparison leads to the conceptualisation of the technique as fakama‘unga lyrical-hook formation. The term lyrical hook is borrowed from Western songwriting studies, where it denotes a strategically positioned lyrical device that captures attention and enhances memorability (Burns, 1987; Byron & O'Regan, 2022). Here, it functions as an analytical equivalent rather than a source concept, describing a compositional technique identified through the analysis of hiva kakala and grounded in the operation of the heliaki system.

Building on the concept of fakama‘unga, this study proposes a standardised terminology for distinguishing different forms of compositional emphasis. Accordingly, the terms fakama‘unga lea, fakama‘unga fasi, and fakama‘unga me‘alea are used to refer respectively to lyrical, melodic, and instrumental hooks. A comparable principle also operates in news writing, where news hooks foreground newsworthy information to attract readers' attention (Yopp, McAdams, & Thornburg, 2010). Accordingly, future research should expand on this finding by investigating the use of fakama‘unga across different forms of Tongan composition and communication, including poetry, oratory, journalism, and contemporary music, to determine its broader applicability as an indigenous compositional principle.

5.5.1.3 Poetic syntax and excessive heliaki in hiva kakala. A further contribution arising from the proposed classification of lea ‘o e heliaki is a new basis for interpreting the longstanding observation that many songs failed the censorship process because of poor composition. This finding also enables a reassessment of scholarly criticism that some punake employ heliaki ineffectively or excessively. Such criticism has circulated for decades, including at the highest levels of Tongan academia. Professor Futa Helu argued that many contemporary hiva kakala had become overloaded with heliaki, rendering the compositions artless. Helu consistently advocated the principle of *fo ‘i me ‘a pē ‘e taha* (one thing only), encouraging punake to centre their composition on a single dominant literary device (I. F. Helu, personal communication, April 2004). Helu often illustrated this proposition with examples from Queen Sālote's

songs, such as ‘Ōketi, as the only figurative expression that stood out, in which the flower serves as a figurative representation of her Prince Consort, Tungī Mailefihi.

One contemporary punake whose works consistently exhibit this style is Rev. Dr Siotame Havea. His hiva kakala are well structured, lyrically rhythmic, and display precise word choice. Nevertheless, their apparent excessive use of heliaki may become counterproductive by overwhelming the compositional focus of the work. This interpretation is consistent with Quintilian's (c. AD 95/2001) view that rhetorical ornament should strengthen the effectiveness of a composition rather than overshadow or obscure it.

A verse from Havea's Ongo Kaliloa is reproduced verbatim below to illustrate this point.

Neongo ‘a e veitalatala ka kuo kite fakafonua mo‘unga
Utupoto he niu lalango mo ha ‘atofanga ke ke fakau‘a
Tupe ne ‘aufuatō kuo ‘i Nafualu ‘a e vungakoto
Tu‘u ‘a e lotu mo e ako ko e vaa‘ivaka kuo fakatouato

English interpretive translation:

Though the discussion continued, it visibly stood like a mountain.
Utupoto set upon the coconut lalango and ‘atofanga to begin with.
The devoted tupe; the vungakoto already at Nafualu.
Education and religion stand, a dual source of richness.

The translation is not intended to provide a precise poetic equivalent in English. Rather, it is designed to convey the general sense of the verse for English readers while illustrating the extent to which its dense use of heliaki and specialised literary vocabulary resists immediate comprehension and straightforward translation. The verse brings together numerous culturally specific and highly figurative expressions, including utupoto (the main cross-pieces of timber in a roof of Tongan fale), lalango (the roof joist), ‘atofanga (the point at which roof thatching is joined), vungakoto (a wooden step or block supporting a mast), tupe (a disc made from coconut shell), and veitalatala (poetic dialogue). The expression kite fakafonua mo‘unga describes something that appears close and easily attainable yet is difficult to reach. Fakau‘a literally refers to the glottal stop, or the symbol placed before a vowel, figuratively representing a point of beginning or commencement. Vaa‘ivaka literally means the space between two boats, while fakatouato figuratively denotes a dual or paired source. It is therefore

recommended that future research further investigate the concept of fakama‘unga as an indigenous compositional principle by examining its relationship to various forms of musical, lyrical, melodic, instrumental, news, and teaching hooks. Such studies could also investigate whether hiva kakala characterised by an extensive use of heliaki and other literary devices represent a continuation of, or a shift from, the genre's established compositional tradition.

5.6 Ola (Effects): Reconceptualising hiva kakala as a heliaki song genre.

Primary RQ: *Why were hiva kakala required to be composed in accordance with the heliaki system and moderated by journalists and censorial punake before they could be broadcast on Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio from the 1960s until the early 2000s?*

Informed by the Tupunga Ola framework, this section explores the hiva kakala dimension of the research question in relation to the ola (effects) arising from the tupunga (causal findings) presented in the Findings chapter. The Introduction (Section 1.5) established the nature and defining characteristics of hiva kakala and identified a significant gap in the literature. This section addresses that gap by examining the genre's historical origins and tracing its development through Christian hymnody and the English figurative language system. Such an understanding provides an important foundation for explaining the development of hiva kakala and the literary and cultural structures that ultimately informed its censorship.

5.6.1 The origin of the hiva kakala genre. The findings establish that pioneering punake adapted the melodies of Christian hymns as the musical setting for hiva kakala. This analysis notes that they also adopted the acrostic literary device, among others, as an integral compositional feature. Acrostic has a long tradition in classical and medieval literature and continues to attract scholarly attention (Evans, 2023). It has since become a widely used literary device among punake of hiva kakala. Renowned punake Feke Tutu‘ila Malupō used these English techniques in his enduringly popular hiva kakala *Peheange Mai ‘Oku Kei Pongipongi*. It was composed for a young woman named Pakileata (Latu, 2015) but Malupō used the first four letters of her name, PAKI, as the acrostic for the song. According to one of the participants, the melody was adapted from the well-known Methodist hymn *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* also translated into Tongan as *Monū e ka ko ha monū* (see Section 4.5.1.1). This is similar in style to punake Afuha‘amango’s transculturation of *Pōngia ‘a e Lotó* from the English song *The Sunshine of Your Smile* (see Section 1.7.2). These examples not only demonstrate the incorporation of the English language and concepts into hiva kakala but also mark a clear point of cultural encounter between the Tongan and English literary traditions, something not found in pre-contact Tongan songs (Helu, 2012).

Monū e ka ko ha monū
 ‘Etau ma‘u ha ‘eiki ‘ofa
 ‘Oku tali ‘etau lotu
 Kau he‘etau me‘a kotoa
 ‘Oku ai hatau mamahi
 Fakahā ki he ‘Otua
 ‘Alu atu ‘o tekaki
 Te Ne kau ‘i hono fua

What a Friend we have in Jesus,
 All our sins and griefs to bear!
 What a privilege to carry
 Everything to God in prayer!
 O what peace we often forfeit,
 O what needless pain we bear,
 All because we do not carry
 Everything to God in prayer!

The four verses of Paki are reproduced verbatim below to illustrate how the acrostic PAKI, taken from the name Pakileata, is formed from the initial letters of each verse.

Pehe ange mai ‘oku kei pongipongi
 Ke u tuli e mafua si‘oku loto ni
 Mafuli e Kaniva pea u ‘ilo‘i
 Kuo launoa si‘ete toe holi

Were it still dawn
 So I could pursue the desires of my heart
 As the milky way turns, I realise
 That the yearning of my heart is in vain

Amusia mu‘a si‘a uini ua
 Mo e ‘ea haufano ‘i ‘olunga
 Angi e Tonga anga e lulunga
 Ne‘ine‘i hala ‘ete faka‘uto‘uta

Oh blessed second wind
 And the cool breeze from above
 South wind blows, westerly wind blows,
 No wonder my discernment was mistaken

Kulukona kumi mai pe ‘oku ‘i fe
 ‘E te fika ‘uluaki ‘i he kolope
 Ne u siutaka peá u toki ‘ilo‘i
 Ko hoto me‘ite ngalu tuku koe ‘i onopooni

Kulukona, search for
 My first choice on the globe
 I have flown afar and discovered
 That you are my last consolation of modern times.

‘Isa si‘ete faka‘amu ‘o ka efiafi
 Ki he ‘ete nusi mo ‘ete lolo na‘ati
 ‘Ahopanilolo ‘oku ne ‘alaha ai
 Fangufangumohe kae māvaetangi

Alas I long as the sun sets
 For my nusi and my scented oil
 ‘Ahopanilolo from where its fragrance emanates
 Awakens me to a heart-rending departure.

5.6.1.1 Christian hymnody and the expansion of heliaki in hiva kakala. Building on Malupoo's and Afuha‘amango's works, this study argues that pioneering punake also drew extensively on the

English figurative language system and literary devices embodied in Christian hymns and Western songs. They integrated these literary resources into hiva kakala with remarkable sophistication, expanding and refining the indigenous heliaki system. For illustration, this section examines how an English hymn was transculturated through imagery and figurative expressions that were later reflected in hiva kakala. Rock of Ages, translated into Tongan as *Ava ‘o e Makatu‘u*, preserves the hymn's central theme while reconstructing its imagery and figurative language through Tongan lexical and literary conventions. Ava denotes an opening and evokes the wound pierced in Jesus's body on the cross, while makatu‘u denotes a rock standing firmly in the ground and figuratively refers to a steadfast person. Significantly, rather than translating Rock of Ages literally as *Maka ‘o e Ngaahi Kuongá*, the Tongan translation instead employs Makatu‘u (steadfast rock). Although both makatu‘u and maka ‘o e ngaahi kuongá figuratively refer to Jesus, the Tongan rendering is distinctive in its phonetic flow, lyrical appeal, and evocative imagery, demonstrating the literary skill of early missionary translators. Viewed through the Toafesiama Framework, this translation demonstrates how an external literary form was transculturally adapted into Tongan expressive practice, contributing significantly to the expansion and refinement of the indigenous heliaki system and undoubtedly influencing hiva kakala composers. The first verse of *Ava ‘o e Makatu‘u* is reproduced verbatim below for illustration:

Ava ‘o e makatu‘u	Rock of Ages, cleft for me
Tuku ke u hūfanga atu	Let me hide myself in Thee
Kae tolona ‘a e tautea	Let the water and the blood
Faito‘o ho fu‘u lavea	From Thy riven side which flowed
‘I he vai mo e ta‘ata‘a	Be of sin the double cure
Tafe mei ho vakavaka	Save me from its guilt and power

A similar process is evident in Queen Sālote's compositions. In Takafalu, she neologised palatiniume, adapted from the English platinum, to symbolise her eldest son, King Taufa‘āhau Tupou IV. Historically, platinum was used in early metric artefacts, including metre and kilogram standards, because of its durability and resistance to corrosion. The imagery therefore draws not merely on platinum as a material but on its associated qualities of rarity, purity, and enduring value (see Section 1.8.1). Much as *Rock of Ages* employs the image of an immovable rock to symbolise spiritual steadfastness, Queen Sālote employed platinum to portray her son as a uniquely precious figure in whom the Tu‘i Kanokupolu lineage, through Queen Sālote, and the Tu‘i Ha‘atakalaua lineage, through her Prince Consort Tungī Mailefihi, were united by blood, reflecting the continuing legacy of the Tu‘i Tonga /Tu‘i Ha‘a Takalaua and symbolising dynastic reconciliation, national harmony, and continuity (see Section 1.12).

This comparison further suggests that hiva kakala did not merely adopt new English literary devices but substantially expanded the expressive capacity of the indigenous heliaki system. Compared with the surviving pre-Christian-contact songs documented by Helu (2012), which predominantly recount nature, island geography, fish, trees, and food, hiva kakala demonstrates a more systematic and sophisticated use of heliaki to express abstract ideas, human qualities, and complex emotional states. The analysis supports this study's interpretation that hiva kakala developed more systematic and expansive applications of heliaki that echo the sophistication, richness, and nuance of English compositions and poetry. To further develop this area of research, future studies should continue examining the alignment between the heliaki and English figurative language system and consider how the well-organised structures of the latter can be used to further systematise, develop, and expand the heliaki system.

5.6.1.2 The ‘Eiki–Tu‘a classification as a principle. The foregoing figurative interpretations of hiva kakala also provide a basis for examining the wider indigenous principles that shape the genre. One such principle is the ‘eiki (superior status) and tu‘a (subordinate status) or ‘eiki–tu‘a classification, which defines the stratification of cultural entities that punake draw upon as literary devices and sources of heliaki in their compositions. This is important because this study argues that the inherent ‘eiki–tu‘a relational binary constitutes the central organising framework of the two hierarchical social systems that structure the Tongan society (see Sections 1.4.3 and 3.4.3.1). Beyond these two social hierarchies, the ‘eiki–tu‘a classificatory principle extends across other cultural domains, two of which are presented here for illustration: me‘akai (food) and tu‘unga (positions or status). Within the domain of me‘akai, for example, portions of a whole pig are hierarchically differentiated: the loin and ham (tu‘a, referring here to the back of the pig and not to tu‘a as the complementary subordinate status) are regarded as ‘eiki while the remaining portions occupy progressively lower positions within the tu‘a category. Fish are similarly classified, with the head occupying the superior position. Yams are likewise stratified according to rank, with kahokaho recognised as ‘eiki and other varieties as tu‘a. Comparable classifications also occur among birds, where lupe (dove) and tavake (a species of seabird) are regarded as ‘eiki, while other species are tu‘a. Fruits are similarly differentiated, with the first fruits accorded ‘eiki status and the remainder classified as tu‘a (see Section 1.4.2.1).

The same classificatory principle also extends from material culture to positions and, more broadly, social organisation. In faiva (performances), for example, the central vāhenga positions are regarded as ‘eiki because they command the greatest visual prominence, while the remaining positions are comparatively tu‘a, with only ‘eiki members of the performing group occupying the central positions.

Similar principles govern cultural rights of speech and other forms of social organisation. This is reflected in the dismissive saying, *‘Alu ‘o lea he kolo ho‘o fa‘e‘e* (“Go and speak in your mother's village”), which is typically invoked during a dispute to remind a person occupying the subordinate (tu‘a) position that the cultural right to participate in decision-making belongs to their ‘eiki. At the same time, it acknowledges that the same individual occupies a superior (‘eiki) position among their maternal relatives, where they possess the corresponding cultural rights (see *lea ho lea ‘anga*, Section 1.4.2.1).

Together, these illustrations demonstrate that the inherent ‘eiki–tu‘a relational binary constitutes the fundamental classificatory principle through which the nofo ‘a kāinga and its cultural entities are organised and understood. Consistent with the SFCM (see Section 1.1), this principle operates in the classification of objects or literal expressions according to their intrinsic qualities, sensory appeal, and cultural associations. The underlying logic is that the qualities of objects are ranked from the finest to the lowest according to the degree to which they appeal to the human senses. These differentiated qualities enable cultural entities to be classified as ‘eiki or tu‘a, while the same binary principle structures relational positions within the nofo ‘a kāinga. Importantly, this classificatory principle is governed primarily by the inherent ‘eiki–tu‘a relational binary rather than solely by the constitutional principle that organises the kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i social hierarchy. Because hiva kakala is a genre whose lyrics, despite evolving through various cultural and musical changes, have consistently sought to uphold the practice of fetauhi‘aki (see Section 1.4.2), these classificatory principles have become fundamental to the punake's creative use of heliaki.

5.6.1.3 Contesting the standardisation of kakala. Tracing the origin and development of hiva kakala exposes a previously unrecognised tension between competing interpretations of how kakala should be classified and applied in composition, shedding new light on the genre's underlying classificatory principles. This tension raises important questions about the censorship guidelines that prescribed the use of kakala according to indigenous stratified conventions and the extent to which they constrained the creative freedom of the punake. As presented in Section 4.3.1.1, censor Taimani Fotu reprimanded a commoner punake and objected to his use of kakala ‘eiki such as *helilala* and *langakali* to symbolise his sweetheart, arguing that such kakala were culturally reserved for Queen Sālote. The Queen, who chaired the censorial panel, intervened in support of the punake's deployment of heliaki. Fotu argued that permitting the punake to use kakala ‘eiki would set an inappropriate precedent for future compositions. According to a participant (see Section 4.3.1.1) although the Queen supported the punake's deployment of heliaki, she did not overrule Fotu's decision, and the composition was returned for revision.

This exchange highlights the fundamentally different principles that Queen Sālote and Fotu

applied to the classification and use of kakala in hiva kakala. It also raises the question of whether applying the ‘eiki–tu‘a classification of kakala to hiva kakala represented a widely accepted cultural convention or a more limited interpretation advanced by particular practitioners such as Fotu. This question is particularly relevant because the compositions of renowned punake, including Queen Sālote, provide substantial evidence that kakala was applied in ways that do not consistently align with such a classification. The Queen uses non-stratified and foreign kakala such as ‘Ōketi, Katinia and Leiola to represent her Prince Consort Tungī Mailefihi, while celebrated punake Moeaki Tākai also used ‘Ōketi to represent a commoner (see Section 5.8.1). These master punake also employed a wide range of figurative expressions that have yet to be formally classified, including precious metals and stones such as koula (gold), siliva (silver), ‘emalata (emerald), and sāfaia (sapphire), as well as aesthetically valued introduced kakala (see Sections 5.2.2.2 and 5.8.1). These examples indicate that applying the hierarchical classification of kakala in hiva kakala to align with the kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i constitutional social hierarchy (see Section 1.4.3) was not a consistently observed compositional principle. Rather, the evidence suggests that this interpretation was selectively advanced by particular practitioners to uphold and reinforce royal prestige.

5.7 Ola (Effects): Explaining Queen Sālote's contribution to hiva kakala

SRQ1: *To what extent did the involvement of the late Queen Sālote Tupou III, as a reformer of the hiva kakala genre, influence Tongan understandings of the composition and regulation of hiva kakala?*

Through the lens of the Tupunga Ola framework, this section considers the ola (effects) arising from the tupunga (causal findings) that bear directly on this research question. It discusses the findings presented in Chapter 4 concerning Queen Sālote's cultural authority in the development and regulation of hiva kakala. In particular, it examines how her reform of the genre, compositional practices, and artistic judgements shaped expectations of the appropriate use of heliaki and influenced the genre's subsequent development.

5.7.1 Queen Sālote’s contribution through politics. The findings identify Queen Sālote as an outstanding composer of hiva kakala, whose literary genius is reflected in her mastery of human emotions, her creative expansion of the Tongan lexicon through emblematic and visionary expressions, and the enduring appeal of her compositions. The significance of this finding lies in demonstrating that, while many of Queen Sālote's compositions expressed her deep personal love for her Prince Consort and family members, commemorated significant milestones, or took the form of lullabies, they also served as vehicles through which she articulated her political vision and aspirations. One example is found in her two lakalaka

compositions, Maile and Kalauni (Crown), both composed for her eldest son, Prince Taufa‘āhau, as he departed overseas for holidays and schooling. The second line of Kalauni reads: *‘Oku fakamalu ‘a Lalo mo ‘Uta*. The primary source, Songs and Poetry of Queen Sālote, translates this as “That gives shade to Lalo and ‘Uta” (Wood-Ellem, 2004/2019, p. 267), interpreting fakamalu as “to give shelter.”

The first verse of Kalauni is reproduced verbatim below for illustration purposes:

Tapu mo e Kalauni e fonua	My deference to the Crown of the country
‘Oku fakamalu ‘a Lalo mo ‘Uta	The umbrella of Lalo and ‘Uta
Laukau‘anga e Tonga ki tu‘a	The pride of Tonga to the outside world
‘I he ai e taufatungamotu‘a	For it holds the lore of the land

This study, however, proposes an alternative interpretation that may be more appropriate to the cultural and literary context. In Tongan, fakamalu carries two important meanings: it denotes an umbrella and is also the regal term for the monarch's hat (Churchward, 1959). A closer examination of the Queen's use of fakamalu suggests that she may have drawn on the broader English meaning of umbrella as “a protecting force or influence” (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.), rather than merely its literal function of providing physical shade.

The second composition is Maile Lomipeau Fika 3, also composed by Queen Sālote for Prince Taufa‘āhau. In the opening line of this lakalaka, the Queen pays tribute to Ha‘a Moheofo, referring to the Tu‘i Kanokupolu line through which she reigned. She also honours Ha‘a Siulangapō, the lineage descending from Siulangapō, the fourth Tu‘i Ha‘a Takalaua, from which her Prince Consort, Tungī Mailefihi, and consequently their son Prince Taufa‘āhau, traced their descent. The following two lines are of particular significance to the heliaki system, as they demonstrate how the Queen expressed her ideas symbolically rather than directly by employing the imagery of la‘ā (sun) and huelo (rays), an approach that appears to reflect English literary practice and subsequently became a prominent feature of hiva kakala.

The first four lines are reproduced verbatim below for illustration:

Tapu ange mo Ha‘a Moheofo	By leave of Ha‘a Moheofo
Pea mo e Ha‘a Siulangapō	And Ha‘a Siulangapō
Mo e kātoa ‘o e hueló	And all of the rays
Hotau la‘aá na te‘eki tō	Of our sun that has yet to set

As established in Section 5.6.1.1, the systematic use of imagery and figurative language was not evident in the surviving pre-contact Tongan poetry and songs described by Helu (2012). By contrast, Queen Sālote's deployment of the sun and its rays closely parallels their use in English poetry and literature, where solar imagery has long symbolised kingship and supreme authority (Schrickx, 1951). A comparable association is evident in the political symbolism of Louis XIV, who deliberately adopted the sun as the emblem of his divine sovereignty and political legitimacy (McClure, 2006).

Notably, the Queen employed the heliaki of fakamalu, drawing on the English concept of the umbrella as a protecting force, together with the imagery of the la‘ā (sun) and its huelo (rays), long associated with supreme political authority and legitimacy, to portray Prince Taufa‘āhau as the symbolic embodiment of her political vision. As the first royal heir to carry the combined blood of the Tu‘i Kanokupolu, the defunct Tu‘i Tonga, and the Tu‘i Ha‘a Takalaua dynasties (see Section 1.12), Prince Taufa‘āhau symbolically embodied Queen Sālote's vision of dynastic and national unity. He also represented a source of maternal pride for the Queen, whose son's combined royal bloodlines strengthened the genealogical significance of his future succession to the throne. This analysis expands current understandings of Queen Sālote by portraying her as a composer whose artistic vision reflected a profound political consciousness. It reflects her political outlook which was shaped by the aftermath of her great-great-grandfather King George Tupou I's Revolution, the royal persecution of the Methodist Church, in whose subsequent reconciliation she played an instrumental role, and the civil unrest during the reign of her father, King George Tupou II, which culminated in Britain assuming control of Tonga's internal affairs.

5.8 Ola (Effects): The hiva kakala censorship process

SRQ2: Were the censorship guidelines established to enhance the quality of hiva kakala, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of royals and chiefs over commoners?

Guided by the Tupunga Ola framework, this section examines the ola (effects) arising from the tupunga (causal findings) presented in Chapter 4 as they relate to this subsidiary research question. It focuses specifically on the censorship guideline dimension of the research question. In particular, it examines the tensions surrounding the implementation of these guidelines, the role of mālie and artistic quality in the censorship process, and the extent to which the guidelines balanced cultural preservation with the creative rights of punake.

5.8.1 Censorship guidelines generate tensions. The tension between Queen Sālote and Fotu examined in Section 5.6.1.3 was not an isolated disagreement but provides evidence of a broader divergence between the standards applied by censors and composing punake during the pre-broadcast screening of songs. Building on these findings, this study interprets these tensions as reflecting two distinct standards in the application of heliaki: one shaped by the censors' individual discretion and the other by the creative freedom of composing punake. This interpretation provides a basis for examining three case studies that illustrate these competing standards.

Case Study 1: Moeaki Tākai's 'Eni song. A case study introduced in the Literature Review and Introduction chapters is further examined here to demonstrate how the contested classification and application of kakala conflicted with the compositional practices of distinguished punake. In his song, acrosticised with the name 'Eni and widely known as the 'Eni song, the punake Moeaki Tākai (Māsila) employed three kakala 'eiki—nusifaifio, a prestigious garland; nukonuka, a fragrant plant; and 'ōketi, a flower associated with royalty—to represent Annie Marie ('Eni), a commoner (see Section 5.2.1.1; see also Appendix B). 'Ōketi (orchid) is particularly significant for assessing the censorship guidelines for several reasons. First, its use demonstrates that Queen Sālote employed introduced flowers to symbolise members of the royal family, contrary to the literature that presents kakala as comprising only indigenous plant parts (see Section 1.1). Second, according to cultural protocol, anything used symbolically by the Queen in her capacity as monarch should be recognised as mā'imoa (see Section 1.9, Move 2), and its symbolic use could not ordinarily be replicated by others. Finally, despite its designation as mā'imoa, 'ōketi was also used by Tākai to represent a commoner. The 'Eni song also explicitly identified Annie Marie ('Eni), a commoner, by name, contrasting with another finding that some punake avoided recording songs at TBC because they had been told that the use of personal names was prohibited.

Case Study 2: 'Utufōmesi Siliva song. The second case study, introduced in the Literature Review, illustrates how the heliaki system elevated a potentially harsh, blunt, or offensive intention into a culturally and artistically appropriate expression that satisfied the censorship standards for broadcast. Huluholo Mo'ungaloa's song challenged the result of a Miss Heilala pageant in which Kalapenia Tupoumoheofo Tupou Taumoepeau was placed first runner-up to her first cousin, Tupou 'Ahome'e Tuita. Taumoepeau occupied a tu'a (subordinate) position relative to Tuita, whose mother was the sister of Taumoepeau's father (Cullen, personal communication, July 24, 2024). The composition could therefore be regarded as crossing the fetauhi'aki expectations of fefaka'apa'apa and feveitokai'aki (see Section 1.4.1.1). However, Mo'ungaloa conveyed the complaint, rejection of the pageant result, and poetic condemnation through sophisticated and nuanced heliaki and other poetic devices. Despite the potentially

contentious nature of its underlying message, the song satisfied the censorship standards and was approved for broadcast by TBC.

Case Study 3: Aotearoa and 'Ise'isa songs. The final case study examines the songs 'Ise'isa and Aotearoa (see Sections 2.2.1, 2.5.1.1.3, and 4.5.1.4), both of which were composed following King Taufa'āhau Tupou IV's annulment of Tu'iono Liava'a's marriage to Princess Mele Siu'ilikutapu. Both songs were composed as laments and complaints in response to the royal ultimatum. Despite their skilful use of heliaki and their avoidance of explicit references that identified or directly targeted individuals, the findings showed that both songs were temporarily banned from broadcast. According to one of the participants the Aotearoa⁵ was initially approved for broadcast before being withdrawn following complaints from members of the public. By contrast, the available evidence showed only that 'Ise'isa was banned and later reinstated, with no record indicating whether its initial ban followed the same process as Aotearoa. Nevertheless, evidence shows that both songs were eventually reinstated for broadcast only after sufficient time had elapsed to reduce their potential to cause distress to those who had objected to them.

Conclusion: Collectively, the three case studies reveal a complex and sometimes contradictory application of the censorship guidelines, raising questions about the extent to which they promoted literary excellence, cultural appropriateness, and social sensitivity, or were used to reinforce chiefly and royal authority. The temporary prohibition of 'Ise'isa and Aotearoa, followed by their later approval for broadcast, suggests that censorship in these cases functioned primarily as a mechanism for managing cultural timing and emotional sensitivity rather than as a permanent means of protecting chiefly or royal authority. This interpretation, however, leaves unresolved a more fundamental question: if heliaki was regarded as the principal criterion for broadcast approval, why were compositions that satisfied this literary standard still subject to prohibition? Rather than yielding a straightforward right-or-wrong conclusion, these cases raise the possibility that heliaki was not, in itself, the ultimate standard of approval, but operated within a broader censorial framework in which the protection of chiefly and royal prestige could also influence decisions.

At the same time, the approval of Mo'ungaloa's composition provides an important counterpoint,

⁵ The 'Ise'isa song was composed by Tongotongo Liava'a and recorded by his acoustic group, Uipi 'o e Halamaumau Koula. The authorship of *Aotearoa*, however, appears to reflect the contributions of two punake. One version, comprising four verses and a chorus, was set to music, recorded by the Fōfō'anga Club, and is attributed to Pita Vi. Another version, revealed during Tu'iono Liava'a's funeral in Auckland, contains substantially similar lyrics but consists of approximately six verses and is attributed to Tongotongo Liava'a. The available evidence suggests that after 'Ise'isa was prohibited from broadcast, Tongotongo composed *Aotearoa* and entrusted it to the Fōfō'anga Club in the hope that it would be approved for broadcast. It further appears that Pita Vi subsequently adapted the composition, edited the lyrics, and set it to music for recording by the club.

demonstrating that the censorship guidelines did not prohibit criticism of culturally sensitive matters *per se*. Rather, they encouraged such criticism to be expressed through skilful *heliaki* that transformed potentially harsh or offensive meanings into culturally appropriate and aesthetically pleasing forms. Nevertheless, one aspect of this case leaves room for doubt: both Tuita and Taumoepeau belonged to the highest echelon of Tongan chiefly society. Their respective parents, Taumoepeau's father and Tuita's mother, were first half-cousins of King Tupou IV, who had annulled Liava'a's marriage to Princess Melenaita Siu'ilikutapu. Given these close royal connections, the subject matter of 'Utufōmesi Siliva could therefore be regarded as carrying a level of cultural and chiefly sensitivity comparable to that of 'Ise'isa and Aotearoa.

A similar ambiguity emerges from the approval of Tākai's composition. On the one hand, its approval suggests that the censorship guidelines were applied with sufficient flexibility to allow *kakala* deemed 'eiki to represent a commoner when doing so enhanced the literary and aesthetic quality of the composition. Rather than treating *kakala* 'eiki as an inviolable symbol of chiefly or royal exclusivity, the decision suggests that censors recognised its legitimate artistic function within *heliaki*. On the other hand, this interpretation is difficult to reconcile with TBC's temporary prohibition of Tu'imala Kaho's *Lose Hina* 'o Kahala and its requirement that both the song title and one of its lyrics be changed (see Section 4.5.1.3) following concerns that the composition might agitate the King. The contradiction is further highlighted by the earlier incident in which Queen Sālote challenged censor Taimani Fotu for reprimanding a commoner *punake* for using *kakala* 'eiki (see Section 4.3.1.1).

Taken together, the evidence demonstrates that the censorship guidelines served multiple, and at times competing, functions. While they promoted literary quality and cultural appropriateness, they were also applied to protect royal prestige and uphold the dignity of the monarchy when compositions were perceived to challenge royal interests (see Sections 4.3.1.1 and 4.5.1.3). In such instances, the political application of the guidelines conflicted with TBC's stated objective of fostering literary excellence, as compositional excellence necessarily depends, at least in part, on the creative autonomy of *punake*. Furthermore, the application of *heliaki* was not always consistent. In particular, the findings challenge the proposition that skilful *heliaki* alone was sufficient to secure broadcast approval: 'Utufōmesi Siliva was approved, whereas 'Ise'isa and Aotearoa were temporarily prohibited despite their equally sophisticated use of *heliaki*. In sum, while these case studies reveal instances in which some censors applied the guidelines in ways that served political interests, the works of Queen Sālote and other master *punake* reaffirm that the enduring literary strength of *hiva kakala* derives from artistic excellence enabled by the creative freedom of the *punake*.

5.9 Ola (Effects): Musicality and performance in hiva kakala.

SRQ2: *Were the censorship guidelines established to enhance the quality of hiva kakala, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of royals and chiefs over commoners?*

Applying the Tupunga Ola framework, this section evaluates the ola (effects) arising from the tupunga (causal findings) presented in Chapter 4 in relation to this subsidiary research question. It focuses on the musical and performative dimensions of the subsidiary research question to determine whether the censorship process was intended primarily to enhance the quality of hiva kakala or to serve political purposes. Specifically, it examines how censorship extended beyond lyrics and heliaki to encompass melody, instrumentation, vocal performance, and musical presentation.

5.9.1 Instrumentalisation and artistic enhancement. The findings indicate that TBC required hiva kakala to demonstrate a high standard of instrumentation, vocalisation, and performance as a condition for broadcast. Unlike the censorship guidelines governing figurative language and cultural relationships, these musical criteria bore no relation to the social status of composers or performers. Instead, they were applied uniformly across compositions, demonstrating that the censorship process extended beyond regulating politically or culturally sensitive content to promoting artistic excellence. The significance of this finding is that it provides evidence that the censorship guidelines were also established to enhance the overall quality of hiva kakala.

In light of these findings, this study contributes to the literature by identifying and documenting distinctive Tongan instrumental practices that have received little scholarly attention in the existing literature. These practices were identified through the researcher's analysis of the hiva kakala recordings rather than from the participant findings. Among the most distinctive of these practices was Kī ‘a Lavaká (Lavaka's key or tune), a lead-guitar style named after the band's lead guitarist, Lavaka Kefu, the lead singer and guitarist for Queen Sālote's acoustic band Fuiva ‘o Fangatapu. It employed the non-standard F–C–F–A–D–F tuning and was commonly associated with the tonic keys of D or E-flat, differing from the standard E–A–D–G–B–E tuning. Another widely used guitar tuning was Kī Helepelu, also known as Kī Penisiō (banjo tune), so named because Tongans used the same tuning for both the guitar and the banjo. Adapted from the international key of G, this tuning developed into a recognisably Tongan instrumental practice in which the six guitar strings are tuned to G–C–D–G–B–D. These lead guitar tunings resulted in exceptional hiva kakala guitar and banjo fills, riffs, licks, and runs, which were particularly prominent and rarely heard in the instrumental traditions of other cultures.

Despite their continuing influence, these guitar-playing styles and techniques have not been formalised through chord charts or instructional notation. Instead, they have been transmitted largely through oral and aural tradition, with guitarists learning and reproducing the tunings and performance techniques by ear according to established musical practice. Consequently, these specialised tunings and lead-guitar techniques represent an important yet poorly documented body of Tongan musical knowledge. Although this study documents only two guitar tunings, it recognises the existence of numerous other guitar and ‘ukulele tunings and performance techniques that remain undocumented in the scholarly literature. Future research should therefore investigate and systematically document these traditions to preserve this important body of Tongan musical knowledge and advance understanding of the historical development of hiva kakala instrumental practice.

5.9.1.1 *Mālie and māfana as audience responses.* One significant ola (effect) arising from the findings on musicality and performance is the central role of mālie and māfana as audience responses to the artistic effectiveness of hiva kakala. This finding provides the empirical basis for extending the reconceptualisation of these concepts introduced in Section 1.8.1. Specifically, contrary to prevailing definitions, mālie and māfana (or fakamāfana) are not confined to responses elicited by what is interesting or significant, nor are they exclusively associated with positive experiences. Rather, both may arise from positive or negative events, provided those events evoke sufficiently strong evaluative or emotional responses. For example, the expression fo‘i mālie (an impressive defeat), referring to a loss in which the losing individual or team nevertheless performed exceptionally well, demonstrates that mālie functions as an evaluative response to excellence irrespective of the outcome. Likewise, the idiomatic expression me‘apango mālie (an interesting misfortune) illustrates that an unfortunate event may nevertheless be regarded as noteworthy or remarkable despite its undesirable outcome.

Whereas mālie evaluates the perceived literary or artistic effectiveness of an expression or performance, māfana—or its transitive form fakamāfana denotes the heightened emotional intensity generated by that evaluation. This broader meaning is reflected in apologetic and figurative expressions such as *Kuó u kole fakamolemole atu he fu‘u māfana ‘eku leá pea iku ‘o tō ki tu‘a* (I apologise for becoming very māfana (warm) while speaking and ending up using inappropriate language), in which māfana describes a sudden intensification of negative emotion that results in inappropriate language. Conversely, in the expression *Ne māfana ‘a e kāinga ‘o lī e \$1,000* (The kāinga became māfana (warm) and donated \$1,000), māfana denotes an intensified positive emotional state that inspired generosity. Māfana is therefore not inherently positive or negative; rather, it signifies a heightened state of emotional intensity, the expression and consequences of which depend on the context in which it arises.

5.10 Ola (Effects): Composers and journalists' roles

SRQ3: *Did the involvement of censorial punake and journalists undermine the authenticity of the hiva kakala genre, or did it contribute to its preservation and enhancement?*

Framed by the Tupunga Ola framework, this section discusses the ola (effects) arising from the tupunga (causal findings) presented in Chapter 4 that address this subsidiary research question. It focuses on the institutional and professional dimensions of the involvement of censorial punake and journalists to determine whether their participation undermined the authenticity of hiva kakala or contributed to its preservation and enhancement. Specifically, it examines their respective roles in evaluating compositions, safeguarding cultural and artistic standards, and mediating tensions between creative freedom and cultural expectations.

5.10.1 Journalists and punake: convergence and professional tension. The findings indicate that, towards the end of the 1990s, journalists (faiongoongo) were trained to assume the censorial responsibilities previously undertaken by specialist punake following budgetary constraints at TBC. Analysis of this development reveals two important dimensions. First, by assuming responsibilities traditionally performed by punake, journalists came to occupy a communicative role that converged with that of punake, highlighting important functional parallels between the two professions. Second, this convergence also exposed an inherent tension. Whereas punake exercise creative licence to depart from factual accuracy in pursuit of literary and aesthetic effect, journalists are professionally bound to uphold factual accuracy and objectivity in news reporting. The coexistence of these contrasting communicative principles raises important questions about how journalists negotiated these dual responsibilities within the censorship process.

Beyond the convergence of communicative roles, the findings also expose a broader conceptual issue concerning the relationship between the Tongan concepts of faiongoongo and ongoongo (see Section 1.11) and their Western counterparts. This conceptual difference is illustrated by TBC radio's attempt to censor the MV Ashika song by demanding that the composer remove lyrics criticising the government. The disputed lyrics describe the Tongan Government as purchasing a coffin, a metonymy (see Section 5.5.1) for the unseaworthy vessel that subsequently sank and claimed the lives of 74 people (Transport Accident Investigation Commission, 2010). The composer Tali Folau Kinikini refused to make the requested changes saying his song was already receiving a large number of shares and views on YouTube (T. Kinikini, personal communication, 27 July 2023).

This shows a clear shift in the role of faiongoongo from protecting the freedom of expression to

protecting the government which owns the radio. This departure from the professional ideals of journalism is further reflected in the numerous defamation actions brought against Ko e Kele'a and Taimi 'o Tonga, in which the Supreme Court criticised the newspapers for presenting allegations and opinions as though they were established facts (e.g., Laucala Tapueluelu et al. v. Samiu Vaipulu, 2015). These examples suggest that elements of faiongoongo continue to operate in ways that diverge from internationally recognised journalistic standards, reinforcing the need to distinguish more clearly between the culturally embedded functions of faiongoongo, which remain without journalistic standardisation, and the professional principles of Western journalism that Tonga has pursued for many years.

Based on these findings, this study recommends that Tonga National University (TNU) and the Tonga Media Council (TMC) collaborate to develop a standardised conceptual framework for journalism. The framework should align faiongoongo with the professional principles of Western journalism and ongoongo with internationally recognised standards of news writing, media ethics, and media law. To achieve this, it should reorient the prevailing professional mindset of local journalists and news organisations in two fundamental respects. The first is to educate journalists to transition from identifying themselves as journalists while continuing to think as faiongoongo. The second is to educate journalists to shift from claiming to report factual news while producing ongoongo in which verified facts are not clearly distinguished from allegations and opinions.

A key component of this initiative should be the development of a journalism curriculum, *Foundations of Journalism: Principles, Ethics, and News Writing*, incorporating core topics such as the nature and purpose of news, news values, newsworthiness and selection criteria, media codes of ethics, the distinction between facts, allegations, and opinions, news writing using the inverted pyramid structure, and the construction of effective news leads (hooks). In relation to the censorship of hiva kakala and the involvement of faiongoongo, the curriculum should also address the professional moderation of songs for broadcast, guided by principles of fairness, transparency, and consistency. The involvement of journalists in moderating songs was not inherently incompatible with professional journalism, as journalists and other media professionals routinely perform gatekeeping functions by assessing and selecting content for dissemination (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009; Bonini & Gandini, 2019). However, such moderation must be governed by clearly defined and professionally recognised editorial standards rather than personal preferences, unstandardised cultural judgements, or political interests.

5.10.2 Poetic licence and compositional freedom. Analysis of the data revealed that, although some participants supported the censorship process, they nevertheless disagreed with censors when

some of their songs were rejected. This finding is important because it reflects a fundamental aspect of the compositional philosophy of renowned punake. Queen Sālote, in particular, demonstrated that creative departures from conventional standards could be culturally legitimate when they enhanced the literary and artistic quality of hiva kakala. This interpretation reinforces the view that the hiva kakala censorship guidelines were not always applied consistently or equitably across compositions. One example is Tu‘imala Kaho's *Lose Hina ‘o Kahala*, which Ve‘ehala rejected on the grounds that the word *afioga* in one verse constituted a complaint directed at the King. However, Tu‘imala maintained that *afioga* was the Samoan word for *fale* (house), and the song itself was a strong example of *heliaki*. By contrast, *‘Utufōmesi Siliva*, whose figurative complaints appeared to breach *veitokai* between two chiefly cousins, was approved for broadcast.

The contrasting decisions and disputes arising from the inconsistent application of the censorship guidelines warrant further examination from a theoretical perspective. One useful comparative framework through which they may be understood is the international concept of poetic licence. Drawing on Perloff (1990) and Molde (2020), this concept recognises the legitimate creative freedom of composers to depart from established conventions in order to enhance the literary or expressive quality of a composition. Within the Tongan context, this licence permits composers to exercise creative freedom beyond literal, linguistic, or conventional accuracy in order to achieve aesthetic, rhetorical, and emotional effects, while remaining subject to the cultural expectations governing *heliaki*, *fetauhi‘aki*, and the *nofo ‘a kāinga*. Accordingly, poetic licence provides an important conceptual framework for understanding how punake negotiate the balance between artistic freedom and cultural responsibility.

The relevance of this contribution lies in providing a coherent framework for understanding creativity, innovation, and changing cultural norms through the concept of poetic licence. It also sheds light on the diverse responses to the hiva kakala censorship process, ranging from disagreements, disputes, and inconsistencies to support and praise. It is therefore recommended that future research build upon this framework by examining the operation of poetic licence across Tongan literary traditions, particularly its relationship with the *heliaki* system, compositional innovation, censorship, and the cultural moderation of creative expression in both oral and written genres. Such research would not only test and refine the proposed framework but also contribute to the development of a more systematic theory of Tongan literary creativity and aesthetic practice.

5.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter interpreted the findings through the Tupunga Ola theoretical approach, supported by

the Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model, the Toafesiama Framework, and the Semantic–Figurative Continuum. The discussion demonstrated that hiva kakala censorship functioned not merely as a mechanism for regulating lyrical content but as a broader process of cultural and artistic moderation that sustained fetauhi‘aki, the reciprocal relationships underpinning the nofo ‘a kāinga, and promoted the appropriate application of heliaki within Tongan expressive practice. Viewed through the FRM, these relationships operate across the inherent ‘eiki–tu‘a relational binary and the kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i constitutional hierarchy. The findings revealed that Queen Sālote Tupou III, censorial punake, journalists, and the Tonga Broadcasting Commission collectively shaped the development, regulation, and broadcast standards of hiva kakala.

The discussion further showed that censorship was influenced by compositional, relational, and socio-political considerations. While censorship often enhanced song quality and contributed to the preservation and development of hiva kakala, cases such as ‘Ise‘isa indicate that contextual factors, including relationships with the royal family, could influence regulatory outcomes. The chapter also established heliaki as the central organising principle of hiva kakala composition and proposed its reconceptualisation as a semantic–figurative system comparable in scope to, but culturally distinct from, the English figurative language system. In doing so, the study introduced a standardised taxonomy of lea ‘o e heliaki and demonstrated how Western influences were selectively adapted into Tongan songcraft without necessarily diminishing indigenous authenticity. Overall, the chapter demonstrated that hiva kakala censorship functioned as a culturally grounded process of moderation that preserved relational values, regulated artistic expression, and contributed to the refinement of Tongan literary and musical traditions.

Sepitā 6: Konikulūsoni (Conclusion)

6.1 Introduction

Scholars such as Thomson and Kamler (2014) and Carter (2020) argue that the concluding chapter is where a study's original contribution to knowledge is made explicit and its significance demonstrated. It addresses the “so what?” question by synthesising the principal findings, demonstrating how the research questions have been answered, articulating the study's contribution to scholarship, and identifying implications, limitations, and directions for future research. Guided principally by the Tupunga Ola theoretical approach, this study developed a coherent analytical framework for examining the censorship of hiva kakala. Its causal orientation enabled a systematic investigation of the genre's origins, development, functions, revealing cultural, linguistic, literary, musical, and relational dimensions that had previously received limited scholarly attention. Consequently, the study has generated significant findings and discoveries, challenged prevailing interpretations, reconceptualised key concepts, developed new theoretical frameworks, standardised terminology, and redefined important aspects of Tongan language, literature, and cultural practice, thereby making original contributions to knowledge.

6.2 Principal conclusions

This study has concluded that hiva kakala (kakala songs) were censored for the following principal reasons:

1. To ensure that hiva kakala lyrics conformed to the principles of fetauhi‘aki (see Section 1.4.2), which are grounded in toputapu and mana, through which the nofo ‘a kāinga is sustained. These principles are structured through the inherent ‘eiki–tu‘a relational binary (see Section 1.4.3), which provides the organising basis for both the kāinga–‘ulumotu‘a–mehekitanga (fahu) relational hierarchy and the kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i constitutional social hierarchy.

2. To moderate cultural change by ensuring that foreign and Western influences incorporated into hiva kakala remained culturally integrated and consistent with Tongan values, traditions, and literary conventions.

3. To oversee the application of the heliaki system as a defining literary feature of hiva kakala, ensuring its cultural appropriateness and mālie.

4. To monitor hiva kakala lyrics for culturally inappropriate or publicly objectionable content while upholding the principle of cultural classification (see Section 1.4.3).

5. To preserve the dignity and public standing of the monarchy and chiefly institutions by applying the censorship guidelines in politically sensitive circumstances, thereby protecting chiefly and

royal prestige.

6.3 Summary of Key Findings

Research Question (RQ)

Why were hiva kakala required to be composed in accordance with the heliaki system and moderated by journalists and censorial punake before they could be broadcast on Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio from the 1960s until the early 2000s?

- The findings indicate that hiva kakala was subject to censorship to ensure that song lyrics contained no objectionable or culturally inappropriate material that might contravene the nofo ‘a kāinga and its associated values.
- Participant interviews demonstrated that Queen Sālote Tupou III and members of her Tongan Traditions Committee (TTC) initiated the scrutiny of hiva kakala compositions for broadcast on Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) radio.
- Analysis of the data revealed that hiva kakala is a musical genre fundamentally defined by the heliaki system, comparable to imagery, symbolism, or figuration, together with its subsequent components of figurative language and figures of speech in English (see Section 1.1; see also Section 5.3.2.3).

Sub-Research Question One

To what extent did the involvement of the late Queen Sālote Tupou III, as a reformer of the hiva kakala genre, influence Tongan understandings of the composition and regulation of hiva kakala?

- The findings revealed a strong participant consensus that Queen Sālote's involvement in hiva kakala, together with her close association with Tonga's leading musicians and punake, served as a catalyst for the genre's popularity and development.
- Participants consistently described Queen Sālote's compositions as exhibiting exceptional literary sophistication and evocative power, qualities that continue to shape understandings of excellence in hiva kakala composition.

Sub-Research Question Two

Were the censorship guidelines established to enhance the quality of hiva kakala, or were they used as a political tool to reinforce the power of royals and chiefs over commoners?

- The findings indicate that the censorship guidelines primarily reinforced the cultural principles underpinning the Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model (FRM) by ensuring that hiva kakala appropriately reflected the relational expectations of the nofo ‘a kāinga (Section 1.4.2).
- Participant interviews demonstrated that the censorship process contributed significantly to the

development of the genre by encouraging the use of sophisticated and, in many cases, previously undocumented forms of heliaki.

- The findings further revealed that the guidelines promoted the mālie values of hiva kakala by enhancing their literary, linguistic, musical, and artistic quality (see Section 1.11.1).
- Although participants generally supported the role of censorship in safeguarding heliaki and the cultural values embedded within hiva kakala, some considered its application to have been inconsistent on particular occasions.

Sub-Research Question Three

Did the involvement of censorial punake and journalists undermine the authenticity of the hiva kakala genre, or did it contribute to its preservation and enhancement?

- The analysis indicated that the involvement of censorial punake and journalists occasionally generated tensions within the censorship process, as some punake regarded decisions to reject or amend their compositions as lacking sufficiently rigorous or transparent justification.
- The findings indicated that some punake had experienced suppression of their artistic freedom in composing their songs by some censorial punake.
- Nevertheless, the findings demonstrated that the censorship guidelines were principally intended to preserve and enhance the quality of hiva kakala by establishing standards for musical, literary, aesthetic, and lyrical composition.
- The findings also revealed that censorial punake played an important role in preserving and advancing the genre by providing constructive feedback and mentoring emerging punake in the development of their compositional skills.

6.4 Contributions to Knowledge

This thesis makes numerous original contributions to knowledge that are developed throughout the preceding chapters. Given their breadth and interconnectedness, it is neither practical nor necessary to restate every conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and empirical contribution in this concluding chapter. Instead, this section synthesises the study's principal contributions, demonstrating how they address the research gaps identified in the Introduction and Literature Review concerning Tongan cultural relationality, language and literature, hiva kakala, censorship, and translation. Collectively, these contributions advance understanding of Tongan knowledge systems while establishing new theoretical, methodological, conceptual, and analytical foundations for future scholarship.

The contributions presented below extend beyond the immediate investigation of hiva kakala censorship to establish a coherent Tongan-centred body of knowledge for understanding the composition,

interpretation, moderation, and cultural significance of hiva kakala and the broader heliaki tradition. They are organised into three interrelated categories: Theoretical and Methodological Contributions, Conceptual Contributions, and Scholarly Contributions. Together, these contributions demonstrate the study's original contribution to knowledge and provide a foundation for future research across Tongan language, literature, communication, journalism, and cultural studies.

6.4.1 Theoretical and methodological contributions. The first theoretical and methodological contribution is the Tupunga Ola approach, which provides the principal theoretical framework of the study. By conceptualising research through causal relationships between tupunga (cause or origin) and ola (effect or outcome), the framework offers a culturally grounded method for examining how and why the censorship of hiva kakala developed within Tonga's changing social, political, religious, and linguistic environment. In doing so, it demonstrates the value of indigenous Tongan epistemology as a rigorous analytical approach compatible with established qualitative research methodologies.

The second contribution is the Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model (FRM), which reconceptualises fetauhi‘aki as the organising principle governing the reciprocal relationships that sustain the nofo ‘a kāinga. The model demonstrates how fefaka‘apa‘apa‘aki (mutual respect) and fefuafatongia‘aki (reciprocal obligations) operate through the interconnected principles of toputapu and mana, thereby providing a systematic explanation of the cultural foundations upon which the censorship of hiva kakala was largely based.

The third contribution is the Toafesiamā Cultural Integration Framework (TCIF), which explains how indigenous Tongan cultural traditions have interacted with Christianity, Western education, foreign musical traditions, journalism, and modern communication practices. Rather than treating Western influence solely as a process of cultural replacement, the framework demonstrates how Tongan culture selectively adapted and integrated external influences while maintaining its own cultural identity.

The fourth contribution is Veitalatala, which complements the preceding frameworks by providing a culturally grounded interpretive approach for analysing meaning through dialogue, interaction, and contextual understanding. Together with Tupunga Ola, the FRM, and the TCIF, it strengthens the methodological foundation for conducting culturally responsive research within Tongan contexts.

6.4.2 Conceptual contributions. Building upon these theoretical foundations, the study develops several original conceptual models that significantly advance scholarly understanding of Tongan literary

expression. The first is the Semantic–Figurative Continuum Model (SFCM), which provides the first systematic explanation of how literal language develops into heliaki, lea heliaki, and ultimately lea ‘o e heliaki. By demonstrating that figurative meaning develops progressively through the activation of the intrinsic qualities, sensory appeal, and cultural associations of literal expressions, the continuum reconceptualises the relationship between literal and figurative language within Tongan communication and establishes a coherent analytical framework for understanding the operation of heliaki.

The second conceptual contribution is the 'Eiki - Tu'a Inherent and Constitutional Relational Identity Model (ETICRIM). The second conceptual contribution is the 'Eiki–Tu‘a Inherent and Constitutional Relational Identity Model (ETICRIM). Although the ‘eiki–tu‘a relationship has long existed within Tongan society, this study is the first to develop it as a systematic analytical model for understanding relational identity within the nofo ‘a kāinga. The model distinguishes the inherent kāinga–‘ulumotu‘a–mehekitanga (fahu) relational stratification from the kakai–hou‘eiki–tu‘i constitutional social hierarchy, demonstrating that relational status is determined not solely by social rank but also by kinship, genealogy, and cultural context. The model provides a new explanation for the operation of fetauhi‘aki, artistic equality, censorship practices, and the reciprocal expectations governing Tongan social relationships.

The third conceptual contribution is the mālie-worthiness framework, which adapts established theories of news values to develop a systematic approach for evaluating the artistic quality of hiva kakala. By identifying the characteristics that contribute to perceptions of mālie, the framework provides an original means of explaining how literary excellence, cultural appropriateness, and audience evaluation intersect within Tongan artistic traditions.

6.4.3 Scholarly contributions. The study also makes several substantive scholarly contributions that significantly expand existing knowledge of heliaki and hiva kakala. Foremost among these is the reconceptualisation of heliaki as an integrated semantic–figurative system rather than merely a form of indirect speech, hidden meaning, or metaphor. The study demonstrates that heliaki operates as a comprehensive figurative language system through which the inherent qualities of literal expressions generate imagery, symbolism, or figuration that subsequently develop into lea heliaki and are realised through specific forms of lea ‘o e heliaki. This reconceptualisation substantially extends prevailing definitions and provides a more comprehensive explanation of the operation of figurative language in Tongan communication.

Building upon this reconceptualisation, the study presents the first systematic classification and

standardisation of more than 30 forms of lea ‘o e heliaki. While individual figures of speech had previously been identified in the literature, they had remained conceptually fragmented. This study integrates those observations into a coherent analytical framework that clarifies their relationship to the broader heliaki system and provides a foundation for future linguistic and literary research.

The study further reconceptualises the related concepts of hualela, mālie, and māfana. It demonstrates that hualela is more appropriately understood as a form of lea ‘o e heliaki rather than the opposite of heliaki, while mālie is reconceptualised as an evaluative response to artistic effectiveness and māfana as an intensified emotional response generated by effective literary expression. Together, these reconceptualisations provide a more coherent explanation of the relationship between figurative language, aesthetic evaluation, emotional response, and censorship.

Finally, the study offers a new historical explanation for the development of hiva kakala. It argues that the genre evolved through the creative adaptation of Christian hymnody and the English figurative language system, which Tongan punake integrated with remarkable sophistication into indigenous literary traditions. Rather than representing simple imitation, this process expanded and refined the heliaki system, contributing to the emergence of hiva kakala as a distinctive Tongan literary genre characterised by exceptional figurative richness and artistic innovation. Collectively, these contributions establish a comprehensive Tongan-centred body of knowledge that extends existing scholarship on heliaki, hiva kakala, Tongan literary studies, journalism, communication, and cultural studies. More broadly, they demonstrate that hiva kakala constitutes a rich repository of linguistic, literary, artistic, and cultural knowledge whose intellectual significance extends well beyond the scope of this study and warrants continued scholarly investigation.

6.5 Implications (Practical)

The findings of this study have significant implications for the teaching, cultural moderation, and artistic development of hiva kakala. They demonstrate the need for systematic education and training to strengthen compositional practice, cultural understanding, and literary competence. Accordingly, educational authorities should consider developing standardised curricula for secondary and tertiary institutions, with introductory learning incorporated progressively at primary and intermediate levels. Such curricula should integrate five interrelated areas—hiva kakala, punake, cultural moderation and censorship, journalism, liliu lea and lea ‘o e heliaki—drawing on the conceptual frameworks, classifications, and educational approaches developed in this study. Policymakers and relevant cultural and educational authorities should collaborate to incorporate these research-informed approaches into

appropriate educational and professional programmes.

6.6 Study Limitations

Despite its contributions, this study is subject to limitations that may affect the transferability of its findings and the extent to which they represent all perspectives on *hiva kakala* censorship. In particular, the study focused on a culturally and historically specific Tongan practice and drew on the perspectives of five participants, whose responses may also have been influenced by cultural sensitivities surrounding the monarchy and *hiva kakala*. The following sections discuss these limitations in relation to transferability and potential social desirability bias.

6.6.1 Scope and transferability. This study examined the censorship of a single Tongan song genre within a specific historical and cultural context and drew on the perspectives of five participants. Accordingly, the findings should not be interpreted as representing all *punake*, journalists, or perspectives on *hiva kakala* censorship, nor should they be generalised to other cultural or institutional contexts. The purpose of this qualitative study, however, was not statistical generalisation but to provide an in-depth understanding of the cultural, relational, literary, and journalistic factors that shaped the censorship of *hiva kakala*. Although context-specific, the study provides sufficient detail concerning its research context and analytical processes to enable readers and future researchers to assess the transferability of its findings to comparable cultural, linguistic, literary, or artistic settings. The frameworks developed in this study may likewise be tested, refined, or adapted through future research in other contexts. A further consideration affecting the transferability of the findings is the potential for social desirability bias, which is discussed in the following section.

6.6.2 Social desirability bias. A further limitation concerns the potential for social desirability bias, whereby participants may have moderated their responses according to culturally accepted expectations rather than expressing more critical perspectives. This risk was particularly relevant given the historical involvement of the royal family in the composition and promotion of *hiva kakala* and the cultural significance attached to *mā'imoa*—royal initiatives, projects, and actions—such as the establishment of the Tonga Broadcasting Commission radio service. Such contexts may encourage heightened *tauhi vā* and discourage direct criticism of the sovereign and the royal family. Consequently, participants' respect for the monarchy may have influenced the extent to which they critically discussed the political dimensions of *hiva kakala* censorship.

To mitigate this limitation, the research design incorporated counterbalancing questions intended to encourage alternative and more critical interpretations. For example, participants were asked whether censorship had been used to promote the status quo. The study also supplemented participants' accounts with comparative analyses of

contrasting censorship cases, including Tongotongo Liava'a's *'Ise 'isa*, 'Iongi's *Vēsili Koula*, and Mo'ungaloa's *'Utufōmesi Siliva* (see Section 5.6.3). These additional analyses enabled the study to evaluate participants' perspectives against historical evidence and identify inconsistencies in censorship practices. Although these strategies strengthened the interpretation of the findings and created opportunities for critical reflection, the possibility that cultural expectations influenced some participants' responses cannot be entirely ruled out.

6.7 Recommendations for future research.

This study identifies several avenues for future research arising from its findings and conceptual frameworks. Future research should further examine the development of heliaki through the Semantic–Figurative Continuum Model (SFCM) and test its application across Tongan literary, linguistic, and communicative contexts beyond hiva kakala. The reconceptualisation of hiva kakala as songs of the heliaki system also opens important avenues for examining the genre as an integrated compositional and performative form. In particular, future studies may investigate fakalea (lyricalisation), fakafasi (setting lyrics to music), and fakahaka (choreographing songs for performance) as interconnected processes in the creation and artistic realisation of hiva kakala. Particular attention should be given to fakahaka, as choreography constitutes an essential performative dimension of the genre through which lyrical imagery, meaning, emotion, and māfana may be visually interpreted and communicated. Such research could contribute to the development of systematic and professionally grounded approaches to hiva kakala composition, musicalisation, and choreography while further clarifying how heliaki operates across lyrical, musical, and embodied forms of expression.

Future studies may extend the application of the Tupunga Ola and Veitalatala approaches to other Tongan linguistic, literary, cultural, and communication contexts. Tupunga Ola provides a cause-and-effect approach for tracing the origins, development, and consequences of phenomena, while Veitalatala provides a culturally grounded framework for formal scholarly dialogue. Their application beyond hiva kakala censorship may further test their analytical value and contribute to the continuing indigenisation of research and education in Pacific contexts (Fua, 2023). Future research should also evaluate the application of the Semantic–Figurative Continuum and the systematic classification of lea 'o e heliaki in Tongan language teaching, curriculum development, and digital learning environments.

Subsequent studies should also investigate the perspectives of contemporary punake and kau faiongoongo on the historical censorship of hiva kakala and assess whether the cultural principles underlying this practice remain relevant to contemporary song composition. Of particular importance is the transformation of content moderation through digital technologies and social media. Further studies

could examine how artificial intelligence and platform-based moderation systems identify, restrict, or flag culturally sensitive content and whether such systems can recognise Tongan concepts of heliaki, tapu, mana, and relational appropriateness.

Further research is also required into the relationship between tapu and mana as foundational principles of the Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model (FRM) and their interaction with the Toafesiama Framework. While the FRM conceptualises the reciprocal relationships through which fatungamotu‘a is maintained, the Toafesiama Framework explains how external linguistic and cultural influences are negotiated, adapted, and incorporated into Tongan culture and language. Examining the interaction between these frameworks may provide deeper insight into how Tongan society preserves relational and cultural values while accommodating cultural and linguistic change.

Finally, future studies should examine fakafaingofua (doing things in simpler or less demanding ways) as a pragmatic process through which certain cultural observances associated with tapu and mana may be relaxed or modified. This is particularly relevant within urban and diasporic Tongan communities, where some traditional practices are no longer observed with the same degree of strictness. Investigating fakafaingofua may clarify how the nofo ‘a kāinga adapts to changing social environments without necessarily abandoning the relational principles of fetauhi‘aki. Collectively, these research directions would extend the conceptual frameworks developed in this study and deepen understanding of the continuing transformation of Tongan language, culture, artistic expression, and cultural moderation.

6.8 Final statement

This study concludes that the censorship of hiva kakala reveals a complex body of Tongan linguistic, literary, relational, and cultural knowledge that extends far beyond the regulation of songs. The findings demonstrate that hiva kakala constitute a significant repository of Tongan expressive knowledge and that their former censorship functioned principally as a process of cultural moderation concerned with heliaki, tapu, mana, relational appropriateness, cultural change, and artistic quality. Through the Semantic–Figurative Continuum, the Fetauhi‘aki Relational Model, and the Toafesiama Framework, this study has sought to provide systematic conceptual foundations for understanding these interconnected dimensions.

These findings also bring to mind Winston Churchill's observation that “the empires of the future are the empires of the mind.” Viewed in this light, Queen Sālote's contribution to the development and moderation of hiva kakala represents an enduring intellectual, literary, and artistic legacy. Her

compositional practices, together with those of pioneering punake, demonstrate how Tongan expressive traditions preserved their cultural foundations while creatively engaging with linguistic, literary, and musical change. The resulting hiva kakala repertoire therefore represents not merely a collection of songs, but a repository of Tongan linguistic innovation, literary achievement, cultural knowledge, relational philosophy, and artistic thought.

Ultimately, this study reconceptualises hiva kakala as songs of the heliaki system and heliaki as a culturally embedded semantic–figurative system through which meaning, qualities, experiences, and emotions are vividly and evocatively represented. In doing so, it establishes heliaki as one of the principal literary and expressive systems of lea faka-Tonga and identifies kakala as one of its most important semantic and figurative resources. Together, they provide a deeper understanding of how Tongan language and expressive traditions preserve cultural knowledge while continuing to adapt, innovate, and flourish. It is hoped that the concepts, frameworks, and findings advanced in this thesis will provide a foundation for future scholars, educators, punake, kau faiongoongo, and cultural practitioners to further investigate, teach, develop, and sustain Tongan and wider Pacific linguistic and literary traditions.

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Kolosalei (Glossary)

‘eiki

1. A relational status of inherent superiority within the nofo ‘a kāinga, arising from culturally prescribed relationships and associated fatongia. It is traditionally associated with positions such as the tuofefine (sister), mehekitanga (father's sister), tamai (father), and tamaiki lalahi (older siblings and cousins), whose status commands reciprocal faka‘apa‘apa and corresponding obligations.
2. A formal title denoting honour, chiefly rank, or nobility, including members of the royal family.

‘eiki-tu‘a

1. A relational binary comprising ‘eiki (the inherently superior relational position) and tu‘a (the complementary subordinate relational position). An individual holds an ‘eiki position within their maternal line while simultaneously holding a tu‘a position within their paternal line. The binary applies to commoners, nobles, members of the royal family, and monarchs in relation to their relational superiors.
2. The principle that delineates the structure of Tongan kinship and nofo ‘a kāinga, defining culturally prescribed relationships of fetauhi‘aki underpinned by the practices of faka‘apa‘apa and fatongia.

faka‘apa‘apa

1. A form of respect expressed through adherence to specific cultural taboos and avoidance practices (see veitapui and veitokai).
2. The Tongan concept of respect, broadly corresponding to the English term respect. Variant: fefaka‘apa‘apa‘aki

fakapangai

A formal kava circle and its integral cultural activities, including ceremonial presentations and the exchange of speeches.

fanitangi

A term adapted from the English word finding, referring to the key results, patterns, or insights derived from data analysis in a study. It highlights what the research reveals in relation to its aims or objectives.

fatongia

1. A prescribed course of action grounded in moral and cultural duty. It denotes a responsibility that is relationally and socially binding, often limiting individual freedom of choice in order to fulfil obligations to others within the cultural framework.
2. An obligation grounded in taboo-based practices and values, maintained through kinship ties such as those between tuofefine and tuonga‘ane, or mehekitanga and ‘ulumotu‘a (see also: veingatapu and veingatae). Variant: fefuafatongia‘aki

fatungamotu‘a

It denotes the lore of the land, encompassing existing or contemporary traditions. Also referred to as taufatungamotu‘a e fonua or fatungamotu‘a e fonua.

fetauhi‘aki

The reciprocal and mutual sustenance of faka‘apa‘apa (respect governed by culturally prescribed taboos) and fatongia (obligations governed by culturally prescribed taboos). This principle governs the reciprocal exchange of respect and obligations within Tongan social relationships. See also: veitapunga, veingatae, veitapui, and veitokai.

feuluulufi

A culturally sensitive situation where individuals bound by veitapui and veitokai are present together. It highlights the delicate and respectful nature of interactions in such settings. This concept is often expressed in the saying: ‘Oku feuluulufi e nofó, which can be understood as the gathering is culturally fragile. In this context, the presence of closely related individuals—especially those connected by blood and bound by these traditional protocols—requires heightened awareness of behaviour.

heliaki

Imagery, symbolism, or figuration in Tongan discourse. It denotes the descriptive or symbolic qualities of words, expressions, or other communicative forms that evoke vivid mental images and convey culturally meaningful associations. It constitutes the underlying imagery from which *lea heliaki* (figurative language) and *lea 'o e heliaki* (figures of speech) develop. *Lea heliaki* refers to the general use of figurative language, whereas *lea 'o e heliaki* denotes specific types or figures of speech, such as metaphor, simile, personification, or hyperbole.

hingoa

It literally means name. In its cultural sense, however, it refers to names formally bestowed by monarchs, chiefs, or community leaders upon individuals. A recipient of such a *hingoa* is described as *kuo fakanofu hono hingoa*, meaning he has been formally bestowed a cultural name.

'ilotakisoni

A term adapted from the English phrase introduction referring to the opening section of a study that outlines the purpose, context, and direction of the research, providing readers with an understanding of what the study aims to explore and why it is significant.

lītelaviu

A term adapted from the English phrase literature review, referring to the section of a study that explores and evaluates existing research, theories, and published works related to the topic, demonstrating how the current study is grounded in and contributes to established knowledge.

kāinga

Relatives or extended family. In contemporary usage, the term does not necessarily imply blood relations; rather, it may indicate social connection through shared residence or affiliation, such as living on a government or noble's estate or belonging to the same church community. For example, *kāinga lotu* denotes a congregation, while *kāinga Tofoa* may refer to relatives from the town of Tofoa as well as their friends and neighbours who are not related to them by blood.

kakala

1. Plant parts, particularly those valued for their fragrance, beauty, or other natural qualities, but also including those that are ordinary or non-fragrant.
2. Figuratively, people, objects, or ideas represented through imagery derived from the intrinsic qualities and sensory appeal of botanical *kakala*.

konikulūsoni

A term adapted from the English word conclusion referring to the closing section of a study that brings together the main findings, emphasizes their overall meaning, and highlights the final insights or implications drawn from the research.

koniteni

A term adapted from the English word content referring to the meaningful ideas, messages, or information conveyed through any form of communication, created to inform, engage, or influence an audience.

mana

A supernatural force or occurrence believed to manifest when members of the *nofo* 'a *kāinga* who hold 'eiki (superior) status bewitch or curse another member after feeling wronged or disappointed. The act of cursing is commonly referred to as *talatuki'i* (to curse), and when the curse takes effect as intended, it is said to demonstrate the *mana* of the person casting the spell.

mehekitanga

The father's sisters, culturally ranked by seniority, with the eldest sister holding the primary entitlement to cultural roles associated with *fahu* or 'eiki *maama* (worldly superiority) over her brothers and their households. In the eldest sister's absence or following her death, the next in rank assumes this role.

metotolosia

A term adapted from the English word methodology referring to the structured approach and procedures a researcher uses to collect, analyse, and interpret data in order to address the study's objectives and ensure the validity of its results.

nofo ‘a kāinga	The structure and organisation of the extended family and its closely connected community, which may include villagers, churches, schools, and other social units.
tapu	Prohibitions or restrictions rooted in cultural and spiritual beliefs that govern behaviour and social interactions.
tisikāsoni	Refers to the section of a study where the findings are interpreted and explained, linking the results to the research questions, existing knowledge, and the broader significance of the study.
toputapu	Something sacred or holy, set apart, or worthy of deep respect and honour. Although commonly associated with a god or religion, in Tongan culture it also refers to the bodies of those bound by veitapui and veitokai who are regarded as ‘eiki (of superior status), where a challenge against them may invoke a curse upon the person responsible.
tu‘a	1. Lower or subordinate in rank, power, or importance; the complementary relational position to ‘eiki (superior), as a person who occupies a tu‘a position through the paternal line simultaneously holds an ‘eiki status through the maternal line. 2. The back or rear of a person or object. 3. The back portion of a pig, including the loin, which holds the highest rank in traditional food distribution. 4. A commoner within the constitutional social hierarchy comprising kakai (commoners), hou‘eiki (nobility), and tu‘i (monarch).
tuofefine	A female sibling or female cousin in relation to her brother or male cousin.
tuonga‘ane	A male sibling or male cousin in relation to his sister or female cousin.
veingatae	A newly coined term by this researcher, referring to the reciprocal interactions of fatongia (obligations) as structured and bound by the practice of veitokai.
veitapui	The culturally prescribed respect observed between brothers and sisters, as well as cousins of the opposite sex, characterised by strict adherence to specific taboos. These taboos regulate behaviour and interaction, ensuring the maintenance of respect and appropriate social boundaries. Such prohibitions include refraining from disrespectful speech, including swearing or inappropriate language, in each other’s presence. Beginning in the teenage years, boys are expected to maintain physical distance from girls, avoiding unnecessary closeness. Modesty in dress is also required; for example, boys are not permitted to be shirtless in the presence of girls.
veitokai	Forms of respect other than veitapui observed among immediate members of the nofo ‘a kāinga, based on mutual obligations of deference and care. For example, younger siblings are expected to obey their elder brothers, while the elders, in turn, are obliged to protect and support their younger siblings whenever necessary. Variant: feveitokai‘aki.
veingatapu	A term coined by this researcher, referring to the reciprocal interactions of fatongia (obligations) grounded in veitapui. It denotes a more stringent and elevated form of reciprocal fatongia than veingatae, characterised by stronger expectations of respect, obligation and fetauhi‘aki.

Appendix A

Aotearoa

(for composer, see footnote page 75)

Angiangi mai mu'a si'i tokelau
tālolo hono 'ea 'i he fangatapu
'a si'ete faka'anaua e kuo 'alu
Si'a 'ofa lotolu kuo to tau

Fiu fifili ka kuo 'ikai pe
he talite felutēni kuo movete
pea mo'oni si'i lau 'a e fepale
ko e tonuhia 'a faiekina pe

Langa e masila mo e tau'a'alo
hūngalu opea 'i he vaha mama'o
nofo hopoate 'i he po'uli mo e 'aho
tufakanga 'ape 'o kita ma'ulalo

Aotearoa mo e pupunga taiamoni
ne te fili loto keu teunga'aki
'a e meesi 'oku fakahevani
ko e 'ekelesia 'o e ta'ehamai

Tōfā mu'a kuo te si'i he
Si'a maheni kuo lau miniti pe
tuku ke u tauleva 'o tapu vete
ko e fo'ui 'o e tu'a ko e mamahi pe

'Ise 'isa by Tongotongo Liava'a

Ise'isa he ta kuo o'o
Feohi mo 'ofa ta koe fakapo
Hahamu si'eku 'ofa moe manako
Teu toki mate pea 'e ngalo
Tangi e loto ni ka kuo te'ia
'Ene mahino kuo vetekina
Si'ete 'ofani koe mala ki a kita

Peheange mai koha levaiaiani
Ke ma fe'ao moe nofo 'amanaki
Lulu e toafa mo e pelikani
Po moe 'aho he inu mamahi
He'ikai te u lava tu'uaki
Si'ete 'ofa ni kou manava'aki
Tuku pe keu tangi na'a lelu ai

'Ete faka'amu koha me'a 'e lava
Ke ma vaeua si'oto tufakanga
Tuku ai a keu fua tokotaha
'Oi seuke 'ete 'osikiavelenga
Ha mo'ui kuo kainikavea
He kumi fonua moe hehenga
Ha mo'ui 'oku nofo 'i lelenga

Ta'e'alo'aloa hoto loto vale
Ko si'oto fa'itoka ka te munoa pe
Ta ko hoto mala kau 'afungi pe
He koe 'inasi ia 'o me'avale
Tofa teine ta fai'aki e
Kau inu e mamahi ifo moe mate
Felutēni e 'ofa kuo hopoate

Appendix B

‘Eni by Moeaki Tākai

Efiāfi ka ta mohe a ‘Eni
Ka ta langa ‘eva kei hengihengi
Tolia he nukonuka ke ke tu‘u sei
Motufihivalu hao mapalei

Nusifaifio hono ‘oketi
Ne lufilifi ‘i mo fakalekesi
Ka ta hifo ki fanga ‘ufilei
Fanifo‘anga fefine taukei

Laka ke ta o ki he heke ‘o ‘eva
Ke ta selue mo ‘ai‘ai lea
He ko e fefine ‘o e vai ko lelea
Kulukulu tangi e mapu‘avaea

‘Isa hoto pule‘oto ‘oloveti
Lipeni ‘i tu‘a ki falelei
Laukau he ko e fine pele‘i
‘Ikai ha taha te ne toe ‘eke‘i

‘Utufōmesi Siliva by Huluholo Mo‘ungaloa

Ne mana fatulisi ‘a tonga kotoa
polotikaasi mei he minaleti koula
ko e ‘evalusio e ‘atomi koula
ko e tunameni e siale lini he oma

Piutau e ngaahi kakala ‘iloa
holo mo e ‘efinanga ki he hingoa
kae falanaki ‘a e taungapeka
he vuna e ‘utufomesi siliva

Funga mahofa te u mate vale lau
ho‘o uini kae poini ‘a pouvalu
‘isa kuo ake ‘eku manatu
ko e huli pe ‘o e vatamanu

Ne u televisone he satelaite
ki fa‘onelua mo e tongi‘one
‘a si‘o kofu kapikapi mata‘itofe
mo ho tekiteki silave‘i tavake

‘Isa neu visone he‘eku mohe
‘o sio he ngoue fataki ki papilone
matala‘i‘akau ‘oku taha pe
ne paki‘i mei he fala ‘o setane

Halavuna by Sēmisi ‘Iongi

Halavuna ‘oku tapa sio‘ata
Fetaulaki ‘anga ia e folauvaka
Loka nunu ai e pou ‘umata
Sia‘a hina mo ‘ene katokakala

Teki puna si‘ete tavakeoma
‘o Nakita pea te fakanonoa
Faka‘amu ‘a e Tokelau Tonga
Ke potatala ‘i loto nuku‘alofa

‘Evenui ko Hala Tupou Lahi
Fenukesi ki he Vunga Moe Ahi
Pongia ‘i he Fasimoeafi
Hengihengi pea matala masani

Tulituli mai mu‘a ke ta o
O ‘eva ‘i he halavaha‘akolo
Tu‘u si‘i ke ta fakafanongo
Fuifui oku kapa ‘i moheofo

Lisita by Toloa Filimoeahala Snr

Teu tangi he matangi si‘ene tonga
Kene fkhoko mu‘a si‘eku ‘ofa
Ki he Makahilitaha moe Houmatetefa
Tulou kateu lea pe mu‘a ke ha

‘Oi he taufa ‘ene to ‘o taulofu‘u
To ‘o po‘uli ‘o hange ha kakapu
‘One va‘etu‘ua hota maheni fklotu
Taputafoki teu kofesio mou vete atu

Kae liukava ‘ae mo‘uini ‘o toe fkfo‘ou
‘Esi ‘o hina tu‘u a ‘o fkfolau
Kihe halalulunga ‘a si‘ete mooihu
Peheange e to ‘o hange ha hahau

Teu lau ‘ae kolosi ko si‘oto koeli
He ko ‘eku tautapa ki ha‘o ngaahi meesi
Kaleli e‘isa kuofasi e malu
Langa‘i mamahi si‘ete fie‘aonga atu
Fkpo he paea kuo hoko ‘o tatau
Si‘ete mo‘ui tongia ‘ou fieha atu
Lisita ‘ofa ke monu ‘a si‘ete hu taupe atu

Pongia 'a e loto

Tu'imala Kaho

Words by Afuha'amango

Music by Lilian Ray

Tongan Tune
 ① = F ④ = F
 ② = D ⑤ = C
 ③ = A ⑥ = F

Moderately Slow ♩ = 100

s.guit.

1
 'O KU FA KA 'A U KE PO NGIA 'A E

2
 2 0 2 0 2 2 0 3 2 4

4
 LO TO 1 HE 'A MA NA KI KAE

5
 2 5 3 2 3 2 3 4 2

7
 TU A I 'A 'E NE HO KO KAE KE HE

8
 3 2 2 5 3 2 5 5 2 7 6

10
 PE SI VO LE 'O KE U FA NO NGO

11
 7 5 2 4 2 3 2 3 2 3 3

13
 NE O NGO 'A E LA KU MA KA KI HE LO

14
 2 2 3 0 3 2 2 2 0 3 2 0 3 3

16
 LO TO KO HO VO NGAA HI

17
 2 4 6 7 6 7 5 7 5 5 5

19 MA LI MA LI MAI KO HO KU

TAB 8 8 7 5 3 0 4 4
9 9 7 7 4 - 4 4

22 PA LA TAI SI 'U LU A KI

TAB 4 7 7 6 6 7 6 6
4 5 7 5 5 9 5 5

25 KOE HII LA TU 'O TA HA 'A HO FO

TAB 7 6 7 5 5 3 3 4 7 5
7 5 8 7 5 4 3 3 8 7

28 FO NGA KO IA PE 'AE LO LO

TAB 3 3 2 2 2 7 2
3 4 3 3 3 5 3

31 KO HO KU VAI 32 FA KA 33 NO NGA

TAB (3) 2 2 5 2 3 5 2 2 3 3 3 3
(3) 3 3 7 2 3 7 4 4 4 4 4 4