

How does the next generation of Pacific diaspora from blended backgrounds
construct and maintain their identities through the spaces they inhabit?

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Dedication

This thesis is proudly dedicated to my grandparents,

Simati Kalati,

Keke Autagavaia,

David Bishun Lal Kumar &

Chann Lal Kumar

who are no longer with me, though your legacy lives on in all that I do.

Abstract

How does the next generation of Pacific diaspora from ‘blended backgrounds’ construct and maintain their identities through the spaces they inhabit?

The aim of this research is to highlight the importance of space in relation to identity for Pacific diasporic communities in Auckland, specifically looking at the identities of blended backgrounds of ethnicity, culture and race.

It examines possible ways of thinking about the Pacific concept of *vā* (between-ness, non-empty and relational space; see Wendt, 1996) to create possibilities of space. Aspects that will be further pursued in the thesis, within the broad concept of *vā*, are: *Lala-Vā*; stirring the *vā* (Refiti, 2008b), qualities of relational space (Wendt, 1996), location and diaspora, and Pacific traditions, knowledges and cultures.

Studio methods will utilise various approaches to photographic documentation, experimental approaches, and collaborative practices from the participant interviews. The collaborative practice is informed by the research methods, which include *talanoa* (oral communication), thus allowing me to draw on different knowledge systems and concepts, and design and make reference to Pacific traditions, knowledges, and cultures.

Further to this investigation, I will design an intervention for the community in order to display and create spaces of blended identity and multiculturalism. The relational space created in this proposed project is aimed at all cultures, religions and members in the community; it will be a space for those who may feel disconnected from their own Pacific identity in the diaspora. In this project, I will align myself with standpoint epistemologies, which emphasise the diversity and

situatedness of knowledges. Indeed, Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo (2001) hold that any knowing is always a knowing from a certain perspective, and that this perspective needs to be made explicit.

The term ‘blended backgrounds’ I refer to in my research is significant, because it will be an increasingly common background to the next generation of Pacific diasporic youth. In the past, diaspora meant leaving the homeland forever; it has gone from being associated specifically with the Jewish community to being a term used to describe dispersed communities within a period of migration.

Diaspora is an interesting concept because of the evolution of identity for Pacific peoples in the Aotearoa/New Zealand context, especially against the backdrop of ongoing links to the ‘homeland’, which is often reflected in one’s ‘space’. The growth of these Pacific communities in New Zealand over coming decades means that the politics of place and identity will become more significant, and will add to the complexity of culturally diverse societies in a globalised world.

This thesis will also focus on deconstructing the between-ness of space at the intersection of design, blended identity and diaspora.

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Flowchart

Flowchart 1: Structure of the journey

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.

Benita Sharon Simati Kumar

2016

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‘E lē mafaia e tagata leni mea, a’e mafaia mea uma e le Atua!’

(Mataio 19:26)

‘With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible!’

(Matthew 19:26)

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Preface

The subject of this thesis came about in a conversation years ago with my mentors at the time Dr Rachael Ka'ai- Mahuta and Professor Tania Ka'ai. We spoke about our experiences of our blended Pacific ethnicities, and what this meant to us individually growing up in Aotearoa/New Zealand; we spoke of many difficulties having to justify our sense of belonging and cultural identity here and afar in the Pacific islands, but most importantly, we spoke about the significance of maintaining our identity within the spaces we call home. It is important to state here that it was not the physical home and the architectural spaces that were of interest to me, but rather the objects that adorn those spaces in the diaspora that I was interested in documenting and researching, for example fine mats, tapa cloth, leis, photos, books, and woven baskets. These objects were of interest because they raised questions about relevance and significance for blended Pacific peoples in Aotearoa/ New Zealand. The question I asked myself was, 'is there a significant research project here and how could it fit within the scope of a thesis that is based on practice-led research?'

The use of Sāmoan Language

Throughout this thesis, I have adopted the words 'Pākehā', 'Pālagi' and 'Western' as terms referring to peoples and cultures of European descent, and societies heavily influenced by and connected to Europe. I have also used a capital 'I' for Indigenous to give it status alongside terms such as 'Western'.

I am of Sāmoan descent. Sāmoan terms are used throughout this thesis. However, these terms represent cultural concepts and practices found throughout Polynesia and in some cases, the wider Pacific region. The use of Sāmoan language is a way of honouring the language and the positioning of fa'aSāmoa epistemological frameworks as the guided ways of knowing in the thesis. Sāmoan words are not italicised throughout the thesis, as the language is not adjacent to the study. However, direct quotes from the research participants have been indented and italicised in order to illustrate the participant voice.

It is important to note that there are many terms for the Sāmoan concepts mentioned and used throughout this thesis. Where necessary, the words are unpacked and analysed, although most of the Sāmoan words used throughout are translated into a common English equivalent. Macrons and glottal stops are used in the main body of text.

Additionally, other Indigenous languages used within the body of text are also italicised; the languages are not adjacent to the study, but this is to mark that they are not Sāmoan 'words'.

A note on the scope of the research

It is important to note that all of the participants, that is the interviewees, were female. This was not initially the intention, however, it is a product of the research process. Added to that are the cultural implications of me being a young, Sāmoan woman conducting the research. Therefore, the data reflects a uniquely female perspective based on the experiences of my participants.

Intellectual Property

The researcher retains copyright for all images and artwork presented as part of this thesis, apart from the following images that are the intellectual property of others listed below in the order that they appear in the thesis:

Figure 5: Rose, S. (2009) 'Ha'amonga 'a Maui, Retrieved 27/07/14, from https://www.flickr.com/photos/sarah_rose/3374123463/

Figure 6: Lewis. (Lewis, 2010, p. 1) *Pacific Ocean*, Retrieved 24/02/14, from <http://www.geocurrents.info/geopolitics/cultural-disparity-and-political-solidarity-in-the-melanesian-island-world>

Ethics approval and consent

This research received approval from the AUT University Ethics Committee (AUTEK) on 13 November 2013, for a period of three years until 13 November 2016.

Ethics Approval Number 13/318

All research was conducted in keeping with the rules, regulations and guidelines of the approval. The recordings and transcripts have been stored in an archive within Te Ara Poutama, which is specifically used for this purpose and it is accessible by the Associate Dean Postgraduate. The consent forms from each participant are kept with the researcher and stored away safely.

CHAPTER ONE

Research that takes the nature of practice as its central focus is called 'practice-based' or 'practice-led' research. It is carried out by practitioners, such as artists, designers, curators, writers, musicians, teachers and others, often, but not necessarily, within doctoral research programmes. This kind of research has given rise to new concepts and methods in the generation of original knowledge (Candy, 2006, p. 2).

Introduction

I must acknowledge that this creative, practice-led thesis is not conducted in the field of Art and Design. Although my background is grounded within Art and Design, specifically Spatial Design, this research has been creatively incorporated within Te Ara Poutama, Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Development. I have based the research in this faculty as Te Ara Poutama at the Auckland University of Technology (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) is more than a learning space, it is a community. It encompasses the idea of *whakapakari* - which means to discover, evolve and grow. I wanted my research to evolve within a community of Indigenous knowledge and discover new means of understanding.

A culturally located thesis

This practice-based exegesis considers the potential that the Sāmoan concept of *vā* has to create communities of belonging in the diaspora. This thesis draws consciously on Sāmoan epistemological beliefs. These combine both the subject and the methodology of the investigation. This is important because the thesis does not suggest Sāmoan culture is the subject of study inside a Western academic paradigm, but rather, it positions Sāmoan ways of knowing and researching at the core of the thesis itself (Toluta'u, 2015b, p. 3). Western ways of knowing within the academy are often dominant. However, it is important to realise that Indigenous researchers increasingly challenge this assumption. In her thesis, 'Veitalatala: Mātanga 'oe Talanoa', Talita Kiume Toluta'u quotes an extract from Hannah Arendts' 1958 book *The Human Condition*. Toluta'u's recognition of Arendts' extract for her thesis assisted my research by helping me understand the importance of culturally-defined perspectives in a worldview:

As distinguished from this "objectivity," whose only basis is money as a common denominator for the fulfilment of all needs, the reality of the public realm relies on the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives and aspects in which the common world presents itself and for which no common measurement or denominator can ever be devised. For though the common world is the common meeting ground of all, those who are present have different locations in it, and the location of one can no more coincide with the location of another than the location of two objects. Being seen and being heard by others derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position. This is the meaning of public life, compared to which even the richest and most satisfying family life can offer only the prolongation or multiplication of one's own position with its attending aspects and perspectives. The subjectivity of privacy can be prolonged and multiplied in a family, it can even become so strong that its weight is felt in the public realm;

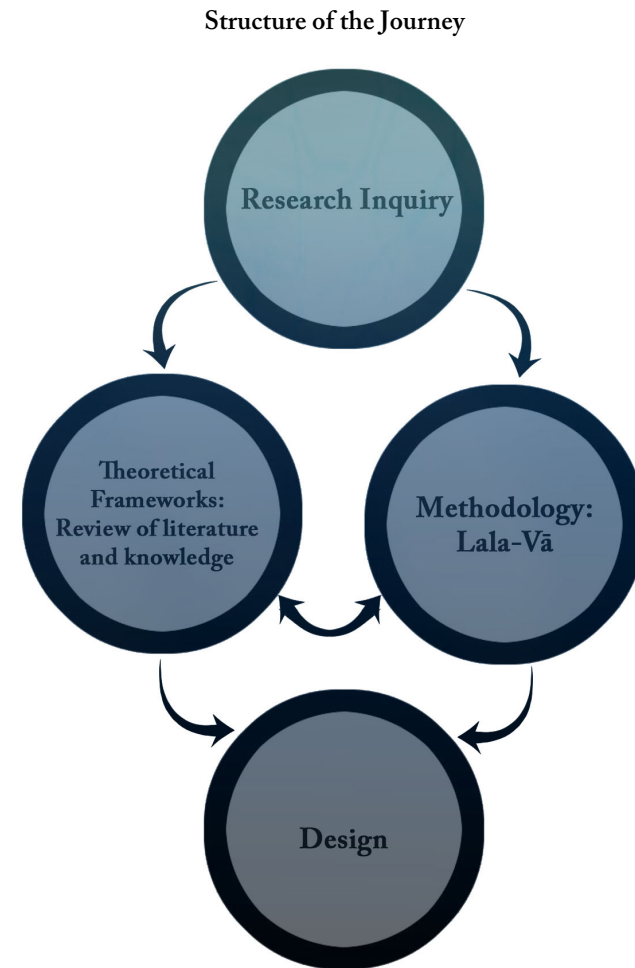
but this family “world” can never replace the reality rising out of the sum total of aspects presented by one object to a multitude of spectators. Only where things can be seen by many in a variety of aspects without changing their identity, so that those who are gathered around them know they see sameness in utter diversity, can worldly reality truly and reliably appear (Arendt, 2013, p. 57).

The knowledge collected from contemporary Indigenous scholars has formed a significant proportion of the theoretical frameworks in this exegesis, therefore it is also important to acknowledge and adhere to the voices and knowledges in the diasporic community, which was drawn from the six women of blended Pacific backgrounds who consented to being interviewed for this project.

Exegesis structure

The Concise English Dictionary defines the word exegesis as to interpret, guide or lead (Soanes & Stevenson, 2008). This derives from the Greek *exegeisthau*. In this exegesis I hope to clearly guide the reader through my critical interpretation of the research pertaining to the project.

The flowchart (right of page) reflects the journey of the researcher through the research process, that is the structure and order of research employed in this project. The research inquiry brings forth the review of existing literature, knowledge and the design of the methodology Lala-Vā. Together the theoretical frameworks and the methodology are incorporated to inform the design resolution to the research inquiry. The research is guided by my own analysis and reflection upon the concept of vā



Flowchart1: Structure of the journey

This exegesis is presented in six chapters. This chapter has presented an introduction, and positions the research by placing the present investigation in the context of my previous work. This chapter outlines the contemporary artistic context in which this exegesis exists. It also presents in detail, the methods employed in the first phase of the research, and the use of traditional knowledge to form the Lala-Vā Model as an Indigenous framework. The content of the remaining five chapters is follows:

Chapter Two presents the literature review for the study. Drawing on international literature, five sections are explored in relation to space, identity, ethnicity, and the materiality and processes. This section also presents statistical as well as social information from Aotearoa/New Zealand Pacific diaspora to set the context and cultural ideologies that influence this research.

Chapter Three presents the findings from the research participants in relation to the research question, including the recurring themes from the participants' stories. As part of the exegesis, this section presents selected photographic documentation of living spaces from the interviews. It then discusses the findings from the participant stories in relation to the literature and the research questions.

Chapter Four presents the methodology of Lala-Vā to approach the research design. Archival research, current museum displays, participation and documentation, and experimentation are the sections that are explored within this

methodology. Lalava and lalaga- the two different kinds of traditional practice used to address the research question- are outlined here as well as the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches.

Chapter Five critically unpacks significant concepts. These include vā, materiality and processes, lalaga, lalava, lines of location, blended backgrounds, imagery and colour and experiments underpinning the research design (archival website).

Chapter Six concludes the exegesis. It begins with a review of the main ideas, and offers contributions to the field of knowledge and further research.

Position of research

This section locates the thesis project in two realms of practice. The first is the existing creative work of my research and the second is the practice among Indigenous artists who have worked with the concept of *vā*.

Positioning the researcher

In this section, it is important for me to locate the place where my cultural identity originates from, and secondly, to highlight the significance of my identity within my design practice. I was born and raised in New Zealand and I am of Sāmoan and Fijian Indian descent. I have always felt a strong sense of belonging to my Indigenous Sāmoan culture, which has been nurtured and mediated through my Sāmoan mother and our Sāmoan Church community in South Auckland. However, like many other New Zealand-born Pacific Islanders, I grew up struggling with my blended identity.

Growing up, I perceived the Sāmoan/Pālagi blend as more positive than the Sāmoan/Fijian Indian blend. At primary school, I would introduce myself and my ethnicity and the teacher would reply: 'Oh you're just another fruit salad'. In my head I would respond; 'No! I'm not a mixed tin of fruit'. But what other ways might I have been described? Half-caste? Mixed breed? Or the popular Sāmoan term *afakasi* (half-caste)? I knew who I was, but defining my ethnicity in relation to my identity was another obstacle.

I was brought up with a strong sense of Sāmoan identity, but was confused and baffled when asked about my Fijian Indian identity. Unlike my brother and sisters, I was told I looked more Indian. Growing up, I took offence when told I looked more Indian because I perceived this to be a negative attack on my appearance. Yes, I may have looked Indian in their eyes but I was Sāmoan, why could they not see that? It had played such a negative role in my life that I was almost ashamed at times to tell people I was half Fijian Indian. Having grown up with a non-existent Fijian Indian culture and being tested by my peers as to how Sāmoan I was, I struggled with my identity.

Looking back on my childhood, I recall all of the mixed emotions that I experienced whilst growing up and discovering who I was. I experienced both the positive and negative attitudes within society. As an adult, I am writing what I think is significant commentary about blended identity for Pacific youth living in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Yes, I am Sāmoan. Yes, I am Fijian Indian. And today I am very proud of my blended identity. There are more and more people in this world born and raised with blended identities that have to constantly negotiate their identity in terms of ethnicity and place. This research speaks to them.

Why are we constantly pressured to identify ourselves and where we belong? Are we as a society celebrating and acknowledging our cultural differences? What is it that we hold on to and surround ourselves with that remind us of home and culture?

What are the spatial environments that comfort us and put us in context in terms of who we are and where our ancestors come from?

My practice and background is within Spatial Design. I am interested in the diasporic spatial environments of blended Pacific identities in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Part of the initial process for this research has been to analyse and discuss the theoretical framework of a Sāmoan concept known as *vā*. This has allowed for a more self-reflective practice, and has given me the opportunity to review this work through a deeper Pacific cultural awareness. This self-reflective phase is located within the methodology where I will discuss the significance of my design processes and how they are reflective of the theoretical framework.

Forerunners

During most of my undergraduate tertiary studies, I did not have any interest in Pacific theory or design, but in my final year as an undergraduate, I came across this term, '*vā*'. Albert Wendt (1996) explains that, '*vā* is the space between, the between-ness, not empty space, not space that separates but space that relates, that holds separate entities and things together in the Unity-that-is-All' (p.1). For me, Wendt's beautiful and poetic description captured the essence of this term in a post-colonial global context, but it also raised questions regarding its meaning in relation to my design practice.

In 2009, in my final year of undergraduate study, a studio paper entitled *Paradise – Life's a Beach* (or, All the World's on Show) written by Dr Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul

marked the beginning of a long, thought-provoking relationship with the concept of *vā*. The studio project', located at the *Tropical Islands Resort* dome in Germany, assessed strategies and scripts used to depict, suggest or simulate Paradise.

My project (Fig.1) was an exploration of *lalava* (lashing) and how this created my own view of the *vā*, the *vā* being the relationships that consistently define and redefine themselves in the space between two cultures. The *vā* consists of relationships between people and things (e.g. tropical island tourists and the *fale* (house) Sāmoa), unspoken expectations and obligations between tourists and their environment.

The key element of the design was based on the deconstruction and architectural form of the *fale* Sāmoa. Each piece was different and carried its own individual meaning in relation to where it was placed within a *fale*. Each piece had been lashed, bound, bleached, tied, dyed, smoothed and constructed as if they too were part of a *fale*.

Placing these deconstructed forms around the *Tropical Islands Resort* dome, meant that they were displaced, and in turn this replicated the notion of unfolding the *lalava*, and creating an intervention of interest and awareness. When following the path of these displaced forms, one already becomes part of the *vā* that I had created leading to the *fale* inside the dome. One then needed to manoeuvre their way through the *vā* to discover the true beauty within this displaced Sāmoan *fale*.

What became apparent in this studio paper, was that the intervention I designed was both complex and difficult to understand as it was in reference to Sāmoan culture and understanding of? Its complex origins of connections. The vā in this project did not have a straight forward meaning, but was highly significant in terms of understanding spatial relationships. It was not to be seen as a vacant space nor as a space that needed to be filled. It was a space of woven connections; a duality of substance and respect.

In 2010, I had become so influenced by the potential of vā, that I enrolled in an Honours year to further pursue this concept in my practice. In this project (Fig.2), I drew on my own experiences of a Sāmoan burial ceremony. I proposed to activate the vā within the context of a diasporic Sāmoan community in Auckland, and examined possible ways of thinking about between-ness, non-empty space, and relationships (Wendt, 1996) to create a communal space of belonging. The Honours exegesis explored ways of visualising the relational spaces that the vā creates through the experience of Sāmoan customary spatial practices and rituals. The design outcome was an architectural form created from the process of 'stirring the vā', again the process of Lala-Vā, stirring the relationships within space, testing the potential of vā through the various methods of experimentation, drawing, lashing and folding.

An important question guiding this Honours research was how Pacific perspectives on fonua, moana and tagata (relationships between land, sea and people) can activate culturally responsive architecture in a diasporic environment.

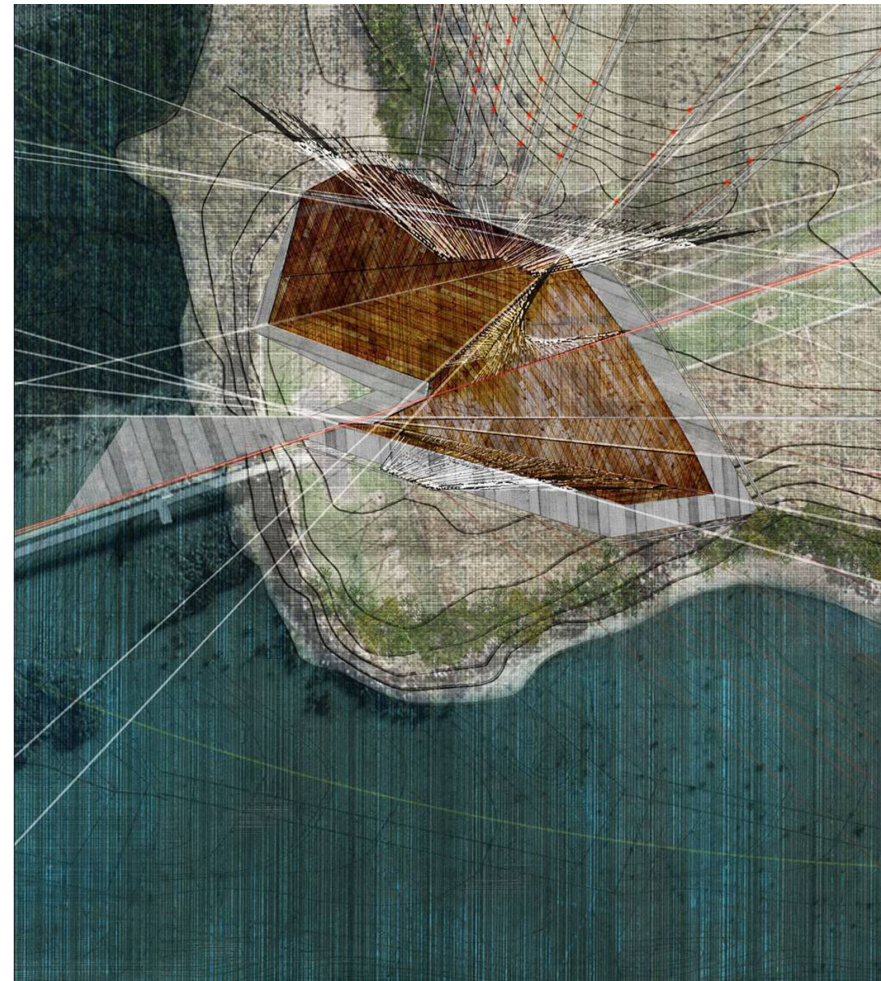


Figure 2: Simati, B. (2010). *Fale vā site plan*. [Photoshop drawing]

The success and praise from supervisors in my Honours year led me to further test the potential of vā in a Master's degree in 2011. The project (Fig.3) examined the associations and ancestral connections of 'ie tōga (fine mats) within Sāmoan communities. It explored the relationships created through the exchange of historical 'ie tōga, making visible their place in the vā and how they activate it by presenting to us our past, present, and future

The design proposal was the creation of a space of display arising from the processes of lalaga (weaving) and lalava (lashing). According to Albert Refiti (2010, personal communication), 'stirring the vā' is a literal translation of Lala-Vā, lashing. In this case, the combinations (lalaga/ lalava/ vā) lead to a stirring and reconnecting of the relationships within diasporic space. The Masters thesis resulted in a proposed intervention within the South Auckland community. This intervention was a celebration and display of archived and family owned 'ie tōga. The function of the display enhanced the vā relations within the community by engaging people and 'ie tōga. The vā was acknowledged in the presence and participation of the community.

It was during these projects (Honours and Masters) that I developed the process of Lala-Vā as a methodology of practice. This concept given to me by my supervisor at the time, Dr Albert Refiti, was something new. I then took it upon myself to develop and adapt this to my own creative practice research in an effort to find a more culturally relevant way to design for my Sāmoan diaspora community.

In both these projects the concept of vā and the methodology of Lala-Vā were the driving forces in my practice as a spatial designer. Lala-Vā respectfully and creatively captured the cultural element necessary to communicate and relate to the Sāmoan diaspora. At the end of these projects I began to reconsider the potential of vā as something more than a Sāmoan concept, to something that could be adapted and communicated to a much wider Pacific community. I became interested in the possibilities it could have for Pacific diaspora communities. However, when contemplating the complex cultural, ethnic and historical intersections of these communities, I realised that this would not be a simple task.

Reflecting on both projects, I thought about Sāmoan fa'alavelave (ceremonial and other family obligations), because I found it personally difficult to understand the significance of the cultural ceremonies that took place. For example, at my Aunty's funeral, a si'i (ceremonial exchange of gifts) took place at her home. My role specifically was to carry out feau (business, errand, task, message). Within this role I had to know my place within the vā relations that emerged out of the ceremony. This experience raised some questions for me. What did this experience mean to me culturally? Without fully understanding the meaning and significance of this ceremony, how might I carry on these traditions? What was the true value of the 'ie tōga?

Experiencing these cultural practices was fulfilling. The amount of effort put into the event was immense; the large quantities of food prepared, the value of gifts presented, and the importance of the orators reciting each exchange played a



SAVINGS UNIT

FOOD STALLS

PACIFIC BUSINESS

PACIFIC MAMA'S

MAKING STATE PERFORMANCE

HEALTHY LIVING - LIFE PERFORMANCE

FRESH PRODUCE

PACIFIC HAND CRAFT

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Perspective 1 Otara site: Celebration of 'Ie Toga 'Our Mea Sina'



Perspective 2 Parade display of 'Ie Toga

Figure 3: Simati, B. (2011). *Celebration of 'Ie Toga Perspective*. [Photoshop drawing]

significant role to the traditional ceremony. But would I carry on these traditions if I had the choice? How do we, as the next generation, view these cultural ceremonies as 'blended' diaspora? How do we carry out the traditions? I do not want to necessarily propose change, but I do want to explore and understand different views and perspectives from those people of blended backgrounds. How could my skills as a designer explore new methods of valuing 'blended' Pacific culture in Aotearoa? I felt the exploration and conceptualising of the term *vā* had something to offer spatially to this community.

This project looks at Pacific diaspora communities in Auckland, specifically, those of blended cultural and ethnic identities. Aspects I have pursued further in my thesis project within the broad concept of *vā* are Lala-Vā, qualities of relational space, location and diaspora, Pacific traditions, and Pacific knowledges and cultures. These parts will be explored through notions of display or exhibition interventions, which discover how we encounter spaces that serve to put something on show or view (Kirshenblatt- Gimblett, 2000). Important aspects to research are how people perceive such spaces and what cultural issues arise from them. The processes of the research will be informed by the notion of Lala-Vā as 'stirring the *vā*', literally meaning stirring the relationships within space and testing the potential of changing the *vā* through various methods of experimentation.

Significance of Exegesis

My exegesis is significant in many ways. First, it contributes to our Indigenous understanding of spatiality, particularly with regard to the Sāmoan/Pacific concept

of *vā*. Second, my research takes a vastly different approach from previous scholarly writings on *vā* which have been explored in this exegesis. For example, I explore and examine how the concept of *vā* can inform design, rather than focussing only on its function and role in society. In addition, I use a methodology of Lala-Vā, a model of both Sāmoan and Pacific values and beliefs, as a portal to weave in my artistic practice which is unique in Indigenous literature. The creative practice based on this research employs a variety of images to express, document and represent the lives of blended diaspora participants. Lastly, my exegesis develops and promotes a blended Pacific research approach and adds to our overall understanding of Pacific peoples living abroad.

Toluta'u (2015) suggests that Pacific research developed out of a movement that was among a number of Pacific Indigenous scholars and researchers (p.14). It is research that is informed by and rooted within Pacific knowledges, worldviews, understandings, practices & beliefs. Pacific research encompasses active contribution of Pacific people, and is significant and available to their needs and ambitions. Therefore, like Toluta'u, this PhD thesis can be seen as the development of a continuing concern with finding culturally responsive ways of nurturing Pacific culture in the diaspora. As a blended New Zealand-born half Sāmoan, half Fijian Indian person I have increasingly become interested in how the complex Sāmoan concept of '*vā*' can transform communities and our spatial relations with one another. As such, the research seeks to uplift Pacific ways of knowing in the realm of Art and Design.

Positioning the research

This project may be seen as residing in the framework of other Sāmoan/Pacific artists who deal with the concept of vā in their individual practice. In positioning the project it is important to acknowledge these artists and understand their conception of vā in relation to their practice.

Working in the space between: Pacific artists in Aotearoa/New Zealand

Although there is a useful body of material relating to recent approaches to Indigenous identity art, this exegesis is concerned specifically with those related to the artistic potential of cultural space and expressive identities. Thus, this section in my exegesis explores Pacific artists through the work of Graeme Whimps' (2009) article *Working in the Space between: Pacific artists in Aotearoa/ New Zealand*. This article is relevant as Whimp surveys the work of ten visual artists of Pacific descent who have been practicing in Aotearoa/New Zealand for the last two decades. He explores the extent to which they have been influenced by essentialist and pluralist impulses. The artists that he profiled are outlined below:

Fatu Feu'u

- Pacific Islander/New Zealand artist
- Insistent about his personal devotion to the fa'aSāmoa,
- His practice references to propose something more complex than the simple reproduction of Sāmoan culture.
- He refers to culture as a backbone, and argues that it 'can be recreated and shaped to the demands of our society' (Feu'u, 1995, p. 67)

Ani O'Neill

- Cook Island and *papa'a* (European) artists
- 'Drawn and celebrated her inspiration from Rarotongan heritage while at the same time acknowledges her urban Polynesian status' (R. Stevenson, L., 1996, pp. 65-66).
- Discriminately selecting from elements of their heritage in order to start their place in contemporary art practice

John Ioane

- Sāmoan artist
- He explains his concept as a blend of the traditional and modern that lies at the heart of contemporary Pacific art practice
- Has increasingly focused on the creation of space as something more than a physical manifestation, referring instead to 'a space within' where magic can take place
- For me, magic transcends human fiction: culture, language, religion, gender issues, science etc . . . even spirituality as we know it. . . . 'The performance part of my installation is part of the equation to the whole, trying to create a space for magic to occur' (Vercoe 2002, pp. 205-206).

Lily Laita

- Sāmoan, Māori, and Pākehā artist

- Chooses to encode her works with Pacific motifs less explicitly (Vercoe 2002, p. 203).
- The *vā* a Sāmoan concept of space has been a recurring theme in Laita's work (Vercoe 2002, pp. 204-205)
- The drive between worlds and realities is demonstrated in her 1989 painting *Pari'aka*
- It is in three parts. On the left is my father, my father's grandfather, Aitui Ta'avao [a member of the Mau movement] and the Mau. That represents the Sāmoan side. On the right is Te Whiti and Tohu, the houses. I'm in the middle, with my arms out. I'm touching both worlds (Mallon & Pereira, 1997, p. 55)

John Pule

- Niuean artist
- Body of work draws on Niuean hiapo (barkcloth). His artistic work, particularly paintings have often but illusorily associated with 'tradition.'
- Iconography is what Pule states is his own personal creation, acknowledging the importance of drawing on hiapo as a means by which to recreate the knowledge lost in migration (Cochrane, 2001, p. 119; K. Stevenson, 1996, p. 65)
- Upon his practice, whether taking from the palagi or the Niuean culture, Pule ultimately feels that he does not really belong in either:

Michel Tuffery

- Rarotongan, Sāmoan, Tahitian, and Aotearoa/New Zealand pālagi artist
- Tuffery viewed his fa'aSāmoa roots in his early years with shame and hatred, although his attitude began to change on his first visit to Sāmoa. Of that experience, he has related different responses.

Andy Leleisi'uao

- New Zealand born Sāmoan artist
- Locates himself in a Sāmoan community in Aotearoa/New Zealand
- Feels an equal right to criticize his own culture through his art, such as presenting domestic violence in his paintings
- Like Tuffery, clarifies his identity, community, and location produced by his specific blend of heritage and birthplace
- The fundamental understanding, we harbour together is that we were not born in Sāmoa. It is this dislocation and displacement that separates us from Sāmoan-born artists and New Zealand-born pālagi artists. We differ in context and content, in that we use our Sāmoan heritage as a source of inspiration to negotiate out identity, culture and art (Whimp, 2009, p. 15)

Niki Hastings-McFall

- Sāmoan pālagi artist

- Recognised that she has often felt fraudulent about being described as a Pacific artist because of how others view her afakasi identity (Pereira, 2002, p. 43).
- There is a distinctive conflict between notions of hybridity and a complex expression of identity in Niki Hastings-McFall's self-representation (Whimp, 2009, p. 15)
- Hastings- McFall has commented on the nature of the cultural space in which she locates herself
- It's a really freeway to be, it's a really positive side of being in the liminal space, being in-between, where you're not one and not the other and you're never going to belong anywhere ever, fully, properly. But at the same time the positive side is that you can take that and take that, and mix them up and do something else, that's the really good thing (Pereira, 2002, p. 43)

Graham Fletcher

- Sāmoan artist
- Fletcher's concern with complex space is further demonstrated in his *Quarantine* series (2000)
- Symbolically exposing his audience to the kinds of European diseases that harmfully affected Pacific peoples during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the paintings in the series portrayed various kinds of viruses as seen under a microscope (Whimp, 2009, p. 16)

Jim Vivieaere

- Cook Island artist
- It was only until Vivieaere meet fellow artist Fatu Feu'u that he began posturing in an 'Islander' identity (Mallon & Pereira, 1997, p. 131).
- Vivieaere's rejection of Polynesian essentialism has been highlighted by his view of Pacific imagery as something to be used freely by *all* artists.
- His artistic works and exhibitions inherited ambivalent relationship with Polynesia, to which he feels that Pacific identity is as much imposed as inherited. He further explains this in his statement:
- 'My involvement as an artist in New Zealand is very much dependant on the politics of being Polynesian. It's not so much about the identity polemic of, who am I? But rather validating the role of the Pacific Islander who enters an institutionalised energy field with little else spare the name part of his or her Island whereabouts, and/or the pigmentation of his or her skin' (Whimp, 2009, pp. 16-17)

The 1994 *Bottled Ocean: Contemporary Polynesian Artists*, curated by Vivieaere, was an exhibition for Polynesian artists based in Aotearoa/New Zealand. His aim was to gather a community of artists that could use the gallery as a platform to express concerns over their blurred identities. The exhibition was for the artists to achieve unity through the tidal pull of an ocean (the Pacific), through inspiration in their

creativity rather than the constraints in their cultural origins, to in turn, provide an originating provenance rather than a present location (Vivieaere, 1994).

Feu'u's re-creation and shaping, O'Neill's springboard and catapulting, Ioane's platform and springboarding, Laita's alternative encoding, Pule's recreation (not rediscovery) of lost knowledge, Tuffery's creation of a new culture in a new place, Leleisi'uao's negotiation, Hasting-McFall's liminal space, Fletcher's camouflage, and Vivieaere's creativity over constraint (Whimp, 2009, p. 18) all express a rejection of simple cultural reproductions and an embracing of contemporary technologies and identities (Hall, Morley, & Chen, 1996, p. 448)

At the same time, the commonality that is acknowledged by the artists is demonstrated and conceptualised by the flow of the Pacific Ocean, to which they remain connected in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This is further expressed by their shared experience and negotiation of the significance of birth or residence in the Pacific (Stevenson, 2000; Whimp, 2009).

Whimp (2009) argues that the variety of references to such space are representative of the Pacific Island identities and the spaces they inhabit. For example, the gap between cultures, a space within, a third space, the space to which things are brought back, a different context, and the liminal space in turn give rise to a variety of parallel characterisations, such as interface, limen, and vā (Whimp, 2009, p. 19), in my view none of which express or describe Pacific artistic identity. He conceptualises the term 'interstitiality' as the space between that Pacific Island

artists inhabit. The term 'interstitiality' was developed in the 1920s by Frederic Thrasher, who devised the word to describe the geography of spaces in which gangs emerged; the interstices of 'the more settled, more stable, and better organized portions of the city' (Thrasher & Short, 1963, p. 20). French sociolinguist Louis-Jean Calvet (Calvet) later transferred the term 'interstitiality' from the geographical to the social, stating; seeing the interstitial as a place of cultural passage, transition, and as a space in which to claim identity in a variety of forms (Calvet, 1994, pp. 28-29).

Calvet viewed that the space was a threshold of cultural differences where the individual would articulate their identity. Furthermore, he states; These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself (Calvet, 1994, pp. 1-2).

As valid and constructive Whimp's term 'interstitiality' may be, I disagree with it as it is a foreign term used to describe the cultural space these Pacific artists negotiate between practice and their identity. I feel that Whimp fails to see the authenticity and dismisses the concept of vā far too easily. For me, vā encapsulates far more than a space between. Instead, it challenges the artists to negotiate between their identity and practice, while forcing them to constantly define and redefine the space they inhabit as artists in the diaspora.

Each artist in Whimp's survey is significant in the context of my exegesis because of the variety of concepts positioned by commentators and the artists themselves to describe space in the diaspora, such as balance, blending, duality, synthesis, fusion, hybridity, liminality, interface, creolisation, and vā (Whimp, 2009). Individually, the Pacific artists question their individual identity against the backdrop of the society they live in. They individually develop unique identity art that honours their culture and individuality, but they also ask us, as Pacific diaspora, to look beyond tradition to alternative ways of re-employing culture, so that we might see and describe the uniqueness in more evocative ways.

In this section I have positioned my research as part of an incremental progression in my design practice and ongoing reflection on blended Pacific cultural identity. This project is a move away from concerns of rejection of Pacific identity in the diaspora to embracing these identities through these very spaces of balance, blending, duality, synthesis, fusion, hybridity, liminality, interface, creolisation, and vā. In addition, this project proposes to seek participants of blended identities from the Pacific diaspora community in Auckland and Wellington, to foster the proposal of a design concept. As an extension, the proposal aims to uplift Pacific identities from blended backgrounds and position these inside Sāmoan epistemological frameworks. Having discussed the significance of positioning this research, it is useful to examine the research methods employed in the first phase of research.

Research Methodology

Methods employed in first phase of the research

Several methods were employed in this phase include of the research which was underpinned by Sāmoan cultural practices. This included:

- Respectful introduction
- Interviewing techniques
- Consultation with Indigenous scholars
- Gathering peer review as the research progressed

Respectful introduction

It was important that the participants felt comfortable with my research. Although the project was accompanied by formal AUT ethics protocols, the research required something more culturally appropriate than simply informed consent. I greeted the participants in the Sāmoan custom by showing respect. The act of courtesy must be shown at all times when communicating with an elder, especially somebody who considers you to be a stranger. The tone of my voice as the researcher and the way I presented myself were important because the participants must feel comfortable while in my presence and not intimidated by my words, actions and/or gestures. The participants needed to feel at ease with the aims and proposed outcomes of the project and they also needed to feel comfortable with me photo-documenting their personal spaces.

Interviewing the participants

I recorded all audio data on my personal Iphone 6s, and used a Canon EOS 650D for photo documentation. When approaching the participants in their homes or other locations, I was mindful that for most, this experience was probably new and, at first, potentially intimidating (Toluta'u, 2015a). Therefore, I designed the interview so that the participants could speak freely, and so that the questions were open ended. This was so the talanoa (method of enquiry or to talk) could surface without feeling confined or restricted.

Consultation with Indigenous scholars

I was able to access certain Indigenous scholars through family and academic networks. These Indigenous scholars were either working in universities, ministers, community leaders, or retired school teachers. I was able to email or call them directly and arrange meetings. I sent them an abstract of my exegesis, and arranged a time to meet with them where they felt comfortable talking. My main focus in these meetings was to understand their thoughts about my practical component (manifestation of vā) for this exegesis, and with their agreement, I was able to take notes of their ideas and views.

Gathering peer review as the research progresses

Adjacent to the methodology was the gathering of advice and critique of the research. In the academic realm, research progress has involved presentations of my thinking in progress at conferences and in reading groups. Here, experts and academics considered my ideas and artistic expression and offered advice and contextual information.

I also sought the help and advice of Samoan academics with regard to specific terms and concepts I was employing in my research. Finally, specific elements of the project and developing exegesis were delivered at seminars and conferences, and in publications.

These included:

- Engles-Schwarzpaul, T. & Simati-Kumar, B. (2011). *A fale Sāmoa at Tropical Islands Resorts: Germany – Performing Sāmoa to the world*. Sāmoa Conference II, The National University of Sāmoa.
- Simati-Kumar, B. (Simati-Kumar). *The potential of Vā: An investigation of how 'Te Tōga activate the spatial relationships of the Vā, for a Sāmoan diaspora community*. Fourth Annual Meeting of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association Conference, Moehgan Sun Convention Center, Uncasville, CT.
- Simati-Kumar, B. (Simati-Kumar). The potential of Vā. *Te Kaharoa – The e-Journal on Indigenous Pacific Issues*. 5(1) 115-137 (100%)
- Simati-Kumar, B. (Simati-Kumar). The potential of Vā - Transforming Sāmoan and Pacific communities in the diaspora. *Te Kaharoa: The e-Journal on Indigenous Pacific Issues*, issue and volume etc needed (100%)
- Simati-Kumar, B. (2013). *The potential of Vā*. Maori and Pacific Postgraduate Students Wānanga Series, Nga Wai o Horotiu Marae, Auckland University of Technology. New Zealand.
- Simati-Kumar, B. (2014). *How does the next generation of Pacific diaspora from Blended backgrounds construct and maintain their identities through the spaces they inhabit?* .PGR 9 Presentation, Nga Wai o Horotiu Marae, Auckland University of Technology. New Zealand.

The advice and critique from papers and artwork I presented at these conferences enabled me to access scholarly responses and engage my thought process with broader talanoa surrounding Pacific art and scholarship.

Interviews with diaspora – Reflecting on blended identities in Aotearoa/ New Zealand

To capture the lived experiences of blended identities in Auckland and Wellington, New Zealand, a qualitative design was used featuring the talanoa research method (Vaioloti, 2006).

The talanoa method was used for a number of reasons. First, it is a common tool of communication that is used by Pacific communities, and second, for ethical reasons given the background of the participants and the Pacific worldview, which stems from the Lala-Vā model.

Qualitative interviews

A qualitative enquiry was best suited for the purposes of this research, as I was interested in exploring the voices and experiences of participants with blended identities. The qualitative approach is concerned with how people construct their realities, their experiences and the meanings they assign to these realities (Merriam, 2009). This approach is driven significantly from this process orientation toward the world (Maxwell, 2013) and enables those participating to present ‘inside out’ perspectives of the phenomena being explored (Flick, Kardorff, & Steinke, 2004). Qualitative research also honours and accepts that the social setting in which a person is placed is unique and complex (Hatch, 2002) and therefore, can be applied to a variety of contexts.

The flexibility of qualitative research also facilitates the inclusion of the cultural beliefs and practices of participants – in this case they are blended Pacific participants - into the research process. Maxwell (2013) summarises five goals of qualitative research, which are applicable to this research. These include, that qualitative research explores people’s realities; it investigates people’s individual meanings drawn from their experiences; it considers the context in which they experience this meaning; and the influence of context as well as the process in which they experience it. Lastly qualitative research ensures the researcher is aware of the risks of uncovering any unanticipated factor (Maxwell, 2013).

Talanoa

Storytelling, oral histories, the perspectives of elders and of women have become an integral part of all Indigenous research. Each individual story is powerful. But the point about the stories is not that they simply tell a story, or tell a story simply. These new stories contribute to a collective story, or tell a story simply. These stories contribute to a collective story in which every Indigenous person has a place...

For many Indigenous writers stories are ways of passing down the beliefs and values of a culture in the hope that the new generations will treasure them and pass the story down further. The story and the story teller both serve to connect the past with the future, one generation with the other, the land with the people and the people with the story. As a research tool, Russell Bishop suggests, storytelling is a useful and culturally appropriate way of representing the 'diversities of truth' within which the story teller rather than the researcher retains control (Smith, 1999, pp. 144-145).

I wanted to ensure my research approach resonated well within the Lala-Vā model (see 'Traditional Knowledge' section). I considered talanoa as a culturally appropriate way of communicating with the participants. Talanoa was therefore ideal for this in-depth enquiry and reinforced the importance of using a Pacific knowledge-sharing tool to research Pacific knowledge. The interpretive method of talanoa, like phenomenology, views peoples realities as socially constructed (Geoff, 2006). The talanoa model of research is based on its meanings in Sāmoan, Tongan and in other Pacific Languages. In short, talanoa means to have a conversation, to relate something, or to talk story (Ministry of Social Development, 2005, p. 14).

The talanoa is a traditional method of story sharing and information gathering, where the data collection becomes 'a conversation, a talk, an exchange of ideas or thinking' (Vaiotei, 2006, p. 23). It is culturally appropriate because it fits with the voices of the participants. The use of the talanoa also protects against the well-

reported practice where minority groups, such as Pacific people, have been subjected to disempowering research. Furthermore, Western researchers have taken and created what they claim to be the realities of their participants based on their own Western perspectives (Vaiotei, 2006). To counter this, Pacific researchers strongly accentuate the use of Indigenous epistemologies and research strategies that are grounded in peoples values, beliefs and how they view the world and ways of knowing (Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001). The use of the talanoa was considered an appropriate method of enquiry as it incorporates the holistic nature and practices of Pacific communication and interaction. Its philosophical base is 'collective, orientated towards defining and acknowledging Pacific aspirations' (Vaiotei, 2006, p. 26).

Regardless of Western perceptions that oral history is comprised of myths, talanoa has been influential in shaping the identity of people in the Pacific. In this process, the stories mean more than storytelling, and are shared for the purpose of connecting and building knowledge, history and traditional wisdom (Halapua, 2000).

Furthermore, the connection between researcher and participants is nurtured in the talanoa, and ensures a smooth and enriching dialogue that promotes flexibility and encourages critical discussions. Talanoa also produces a spiritual relationship between participants, by strengthening and nurturing the vā, which is fundamental to the social functioning of Pacific peoples. The use of talanoa gives participants the

time and space to reflect on and honour their journeys (Ka'ili, 2005), and gives them equal responsibility for what is discussed and how this is discussed. This creates a mutually empowering experience. In addition, I was well aware that my knowledge of the Sāmoan language and culture would encourage and facilitate effective talanoa, as this would make the participant comfortable expressing themselves from a cultural and bilingual perspective.

Research participants

Six participants were selected based on their blended Pacific identity. The participants for this research were over 18 years old. The criteria I used to choose who to invite is as follows:

- Female who is over 18 years old
- Descends from at least two Pacific ethnic backgrounds, one of which must be from the Sāmoan Islands, to align with the Sāmoan cultural research ideologies employed in this research. The focus of recruiting will be on the Polynesian Islands as well as Fiji.
- Is comfortable with the researcher photo-documenting their space of dwelling (i.e home, office, garden).
- Identifies with the term diaspora.

The primary focus of this research is the experience of those who have blended backgrounds living in New Zealand as part of a diasporic community. Therefore,

only participants with this knowledge were able to contribute to this research. The participants were recruited using the Pacific method of creating links through genealogy or community ties. Potential participants were also encouraged to promote the study amongst their own networks and communities. A potential list of participants was first identified by myself as the primary researcher and by my supervisor. I then made the initial contact, as the researcher, and followed up with the participants to arrange a face-to-face meeting in which I outlined the research project. During this meeting, I endeavoured to answer any questions that arose. Once participants registered their interest in the research, they received the Information for Participants Sheet and Consent Form.

I am a member of the community being researched. As stated previously in the introduction to this exegesis, I am an engaged member of my Pacific community in Auckland and have experiential knowledge of key Pacific cultural values and norms. Furthermore, I have extensive research experience in Māori and Pacific communities both in New Zealand and in the Cook Islands. Both my primary and secondary supervisors are also of Māori and Pacific descent, thereby providing appropriate guidance in the research.

When choosing participants of blended identity it was important and ethically appropriate for me to position myself where both the informant and I were comfortable with the topics and questions that would be discussed in the interview. My research concept of the *vā* is widely used in the Pacific, which I have

conceptualised and framed in a Sāmoan world view, as I am of Sāmoan descent and understand it from my cultural standpoint. Therefore, I chose to contact participants who were women and had Sāmoan as a part of their blended identity, to frame and conceptualise the concept of vā.

In doing so, I put myself in a safe environment where myself and the participant were free to express any emotions and feelings on issues that might otherwise be seen as disrespectful. As a young Sāmoan woman, it was important for me to feel safe and comfortable conducting my interviews with suitable participants. For this reason, I was gender-specific and wanted women who could add experience and in-depth knowledge to my research, who have raised children but also, are at a stage in their career, where they are comfortable expressing their unique identity, and who could discuss issues they may have faced growing up as Pacific women with blended identities.

In this exegesis I have written about each participant as an individual and they will all remain anonymous as per their request. They will be referred to as Tasi, Lua, Tolu, Fa, Lima and Ono.

Traditional Knowledge

Traditional knowledge: Lalava & Lalaga

Lalava and lalaga are male and female art forms respectively. Lalava is the lashing by a skilled male, when binding together a fale, a canoe, tools, etc.; and lalaga is the

weaving done by women, in the form of 'ie tōga. The binding of both lalava and lalaga is the core strengthening within the objects or structure they compose. They are forms of skill from both male and female, and signify the importance that each role has in the aiga (family). Together they form the structure and conceptualise the theoretical framework in this exegesis. In this section, I investigate the strengths of both traditional knowledges, and their relevancy to the methodology and practice of design.

Lalava

In the exploration of these knowledges, lalava is a useful metaphor. Lalava is about joining and binding material together. Another intention of this technique, according to Tongan artist and tufunga lalava (lashing expert) Filipe Tohi (2006), is to create distinct geometric patterns that were once a well-established feature of Pacific culture. Lalava patterns advocated balance in daily living, and were metaphorical and physical ties to cultural knowledge. In his practice, Filipe Tohi expresses his desire to construct and deconstruct. He writes: 'I see everything around me as pattern, structures capable of being broken down and it makes me think about the illusion of things' (Tohi, 2006, p. 1). Sue Gardiner (2006) discusses how Tohi's work of lalava is based on the building up of patterns, lines, and shapes. These layers evoke associations with genealogies and reflect spiritual, historical, social, and psychological links.

Running strongly throughout the practice of *lalava*, and reflected in Tohi's work as well, is the theme of intersection between traditional practices and contemporary abstraction. Moving back and forth and in and out of pattern, he deconstructs the

spaces and lines, paring back the components to seek the minimal (Gardiner, 2006, p. 53).

Tongan artist Semisi Potauaine also gave me an opening to advance my reading of vā, and therefore my methodology. Potauaine's (2011) practical work from his thesis, *Tectonic of the fale: four dimensional, three divisional*, is based on highly elaborate and complex geometric *kupesi* derived from customary Tongan tufunga lalava art. Potauaine states that lalava is the 'manifestation of drawing and making' (S. Potauaine, personal communication, 2011). The commonly used colours in his work - red and black - are culturally and philosophically developed in customary Pacific material arts, such as tattooing, bark-cloth-making, mat-weaving and pottery and, of course, lalava. In considering the information provided by Potauaine, I realised that his expertise in lalava had potential in regard to the binding of cultures.

Figure 4 is my reinterpretation of Filipe Tohi's sculpture, as it expresses the physical manifestation of lalava. There are six main areas represented:

- 1 aiga (family)
- 2 tautala Sāmoa (Sāmoan language)
- 3 gafa (genealogies)
- 4 matai (chiefly system)
- 5 lotu (church)
- 6 fa'alavelave (ceremonial and other family obligations).

Lala-Vā Model Framework

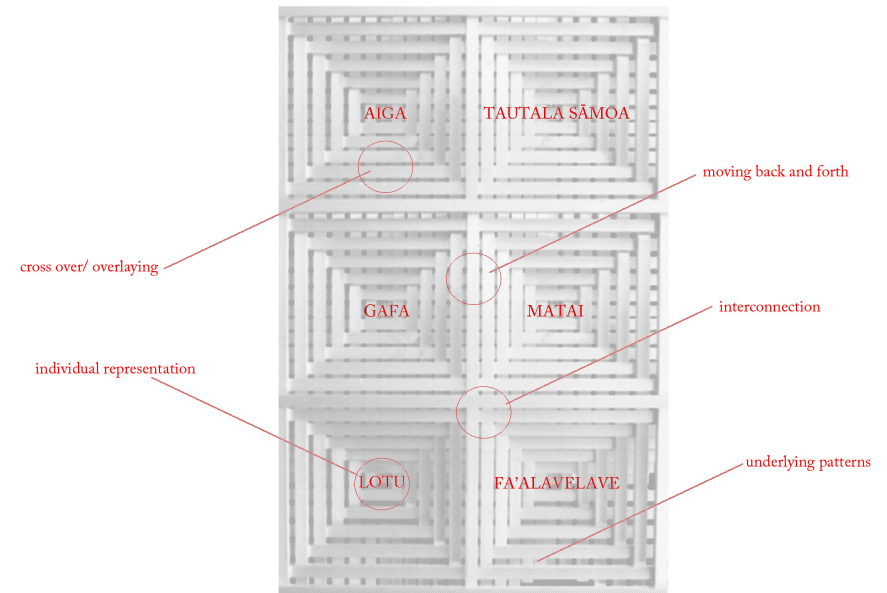


Figure 4: Simati, B. (2011). *Lala-Vā Model Framework*. [Photoshop]

The interconnection of the physical lines in Lala-Vā reinforces aspects of connection and belonging to fa'aSāmoa. Like Tohi's work, they make physical links with one another, and are interdependent on each other. No representation is above the other, as they are all equal, and each needs its length to sustain a coherent system. They formulate a cross-over bond, overlaying each other. This repetitive action represents 'moving back and forth and in and out' (Gardiner, 2006, p. 53), the constant negotiation and re-negotiation of space; the vā. The underlying patterns are the relations that are not seen but are still present; they sustain the overall structure and form the bases of the psychological links. This model I designed is derived from the concept of fa'aSāmoa, and is essential to Sāmoan identity.

Lalaga

Lalaga is the second metaphor I used in developing my methodology. Lalaga is the Sāmoan term for the act of weaving or plaiting. Lalaga – unlike lalava – is a pattern 'technique' used to form goods (e.g 'Ie tōga, mats, baskets, hats, thatching for houses, etc.). Lalaga, I found, is the balance to lalava; it is a technique done by women, which is equally skilful in the craft of pattern. In the past, 'ie tōga had a texture like silky linen. They were made from a fine grade of pandanus leaves, dried, scraped, split into strips, baked, separated into layers, soaked in the sea, sun-dried, split into fine threads, and finally plaited by hand into a cloth measuring approximately one by two metres (Schoeffel, 1999). As Schoeffel explains, the technique of lalaga does not only refer to the weave (plaiting), but includes the many processes executed prior to the weave.

There are many meanings to the word 'weave' and, for my project, I aspire to lalaga, to interlock the threads of meaning and the threads of vā relations that are active within a community. In this exegesis it is important for me as the researcher to retain the significant meanings of lalava as it ties to fa'aSāmoa, and lalaga as it is essential to Sāmoan identity. The methodological processes of both traditional knowledges can contribute to an epistemology for my Pacific diasporic community project.

CHAPTER TWO

Theoretical Frameworks: Review of literature and knowledge

In the previous chapter, I positioned this research in the context of contemporary practice. This chapter considers other bodies of knowledge that contextualise and contribute to this exegesis. This chapter outlines the contributions of theorists and academics who have influenced the development of this exegesis. In relation to the research question I will discuss six significant subjects:

- Space: The vā – a Sāmoan concept
- My Identity: Fa'aSāmoa
- Standpoint epistemologies
- Diaspora
- Blended Backgrounds: Growing diversity
- Traditional Knowledge: Lalava and lalaga

Space: The vā – a Sāmoan concept

This section critically analyses the literature on the vā, which is a Sāmoan/Pacific concept that feeds into the subject of Indigenous spaces, and also looks specifically

at its broader concept in the Pacific. In 1862, vā was defined in Pratt's Grammar and Dictionary of the Sāmoan Language as 'a space between'(Pratt, 1893, p. 216).

It refers to the space between places or people and connotes mutual respect in socio-political arrangements that nurture the relationships between people, places, and social environments' (Sa'iliemanu, 2009, p. 29). The influential definition is from Albert Wendt's (1996) *Tatauing the Post-Colonial Body*:

Important to the Sāmoan view of reality is the concept of Vā or Wā in Māori and Japanese. Vā is the space between, the between-ness, not empty space, not space that separates but space that relates, that holds separate entities and things together in the Unity-that-is-All, the space that is context, giving meaning to things. The meanings change as the relationships/the contexts change. A well-known Sāmoan expression is 'Ia teu le vā.' Cherish/nurse/care for the Vā, the relationships. This is crucial in communal cultures that value group, unity, more than individualism: who perceive the individual person/creature/thing in terms of group, in terms of Vā, relationships (Wendt, 1996, p. 1).

This quote refers to the art of tatau, or tattoo, from a global perspective (Clayton, 2007). Wendt refers to 'space' as the 'space between' and considers how this 'space between' relates to different identities. Spaces of identity merge and as they draw closer together to form relationships with one another. Differences between cultures, families, and traditions are created from the interaction in the relational space, which we become aware of when we draw close.

Wendt suggests that *vā* is not a vacant space, nor a space that needs to be filled. Wendt further implies that some Westerners tend to think that space is a gap that has to be closed. But there is no empty, separate or closed space. Rather, space is of woven connections – a ‘duality of substance and respect’ (Wendt, 1996, p. 1), and it provides context and symbolises relationships between people, places and environments. Wendt further discusses the importance of social space, because the Sāmoan sense of self is ultimately relational or communal, rather than individualistic (Sa’iliemanu, 2009).

Wendt’s (1996) position has been used widely by scholars in the health sector, including Melani Anae (2009, 2001, 2000, 1998a, 1998b, 1997) in relational education, Karl Pulotu-Endermann (2009) for his Fonofale Health Model, and Karlo Mila-Schaaf (Mila-Schaaf, 2006; Mila-Schaaf & Hudson, 2009) with regard to perspectives on Pacific mental health. A study of Sāmoan perspectives on mental health and culturally appropriate services in New Zealand reports:

Sāmoa’s traditions and protocols explain the nature of Sāmoan being as that of a relational being, that is, the Sāmoan person does not exist as an individual. There is myself and yourself. Through myself, you are given primacy in light of our collective identity and places of belonging (*fa’asinomaga*), our genealogical lineage (*tu’u’aga*), and our roles and responsibilities and heritage (*tofiga*) (Tamasese, Peteru, & Waldegrave, 1997, p. 28).

The New Zealand/Sāmoan health interpretations employ holistic approaches to Pacific concepts and ‘engage a responsible ethic in health institutions, dealing with Pacific population/stake holders’ (Refiti, 2008b, p. 1).

Wendt’s description of the *vā* is informed by his Sāmoan heritage, but it is important to note that this concept is just as significant to other cultures in the Pacific. Tongan theorist Ka’ili states:

Vā can be glossed as ‘space between people or things’. This notion of space is known in Tonga, Sāmoa, Rotuma, and Tahiti as *vā*, while in Aotearoa and Hawai’i it is known as *wā*. *Vā* (or *wā*) points to a specific notion of space, namely, space between two or more points (Ka’ili, 2005, p. 89).

The *vā* is pertinent across many Pacific cultures. For instance, in Tongan culture this is known as *taubi vā*. The concept of *taubi vā* plays a significant role in the Tongan culture and the identity of Tongan people. The term *taubi vā* refers to the art of creating and maintaining beautiful socio-spatial relations (*vā*) through the mutual performance of social duties (Ka’ili, 2008).

In his dissertation *Taubi vā: Creating Beauty through the Art of Sociospatial Relations*, Ka’ili (Ka’ili) briefly describes the views of anthropologists who studied the social relationships, social relations, and social space of the *vā* within Pacific cultures. He notes that Feinberg’s (2004) study of the Anutan social structure states that *vā* means a kinship line. In Anutan society, any set of persons with a common ancestor may belong to the same kinship *vā*. Furthermore, Shore (Shore) adds to this and

mentions vā in his ethnography of Sāmoans. Shore employs vā to conceptualise the Sāmoan notion of personhood. Like Wendt, Shore states that a clue to the Sāmoan concept of being is found in the popular Sāmoan saying *teu le vā* (take care of the relationship)(Wendt, 1996, p. 1). Shore also notes that although vā refers to relationship, 'it also means space or between' (Shore, 1982, p. 311).

Similarly, linguistic anthropologist Alessandro Duranti records that vā demonstrates both space and relationship for Sāmoans. Duranti translates *teu le vā* (or *teuteu le vā*) as 'make the relationship beautiful' (1997, p. 343). His interpretation of *teu le vā* is important because it highlights vā as a space that is 'aesthetically transformed' (Ka'ili, 2008, p. 19). Duranti further states that *teu le vā* is a key expression for understanding the collective actions of titleholders in the village meetings in Sāmoa (1997, p. 343). Duranti is specific in that vā denotes not only space and relationship but it also means 'interval' and 'between', or the physical space between people or things (Duranti, 1997, pp. 343-345).

Jeannette Mageo (Mageo), translates the Sāmoan saying *teu le vā* as 'decorate the space between'. Mageo (Mageo), in relation to Sāmoan notions of respect, contextualises *teu le vā* in the following way:

Sāmoan moralism councils respect. One does not action one's own behalf but as an ambassador of one's group; therefore, one gives respect in representative capacity to the ambassadors of other groups. This moral principle is celebrated in the poetic dictum that one should "*Teu le vā*" (Decorate the space between); The space between

signifies A relationship, particularly between groups, and is conceptualized as the center of a circle (Mageo, p. 81).

The analysis by anthropological scholars and their knowledge pertaining to vā has provided meaningful concepts to the creative practice of this exegesis. Anthropologist, Anne Allen, who studied the architecture and social space in Sāmoa, defines *teu le vā* as 'order the space' or 'adorn the relationship'(Allen, 1993, p. 157). Duranti, Mageo, and Allen show in their translation of *teu le vā* that vā is a space that is decorated, adorned, or beautified. Their interpretations also suggest the notion that *teu le vā* is a social and artistic process of transforming vā into a harmonious and beautiful social space (Ka'ili, 2008).

The descriptive translations from these anthropologists gives consideration to the literal interpretation, as their interpretation of vā will help form the manifestation of design practice (this will be carried through later in the exegesis in relation to the methodological and design practice). Ka'ili further suggests that this is not only a Sāmoan concept but it is connected to all Pacific cultures and values, that is, that the vā signifies a relationship. Sāmoans, as well as other Pacific cultures, think about social relations in spatial means (Ka'ili, 2008).

These different, but in many ways similar, interpretations of vā made me realise, as a researcher and designer, the importance of stating my own standpoint, that is, where I position myself. Wendt (1999), I believe, is correct when he explains that

the vā is not empty space, but space that relates. However, there may be problems with his notion of between-ness. While vā is activated within the subject in the presence of ‘at least two’(Wendt, 1996, p. 1) , it is also a spiritual embodiment in us all. We not only carry this vā within ourselves, but it is embodied in our proper and improper behaviours. Food division and distribution, sleeping and sitting arrangements, and language usage in private and public spaces are all conceived through the vā (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2009). There are also personal and group responsibilities, which maintain balance and agreement in the vā, thus providing social cohesion. All of this can be linked to Sāmoan epistemology. In an interview conducted by Dr Sa’iliemanu Lilomaiva-Doktor with Aumua Mata’itusi Simanu, who is a Professor of Sāmoan Studies at the University of Hawai ‘i, Mānoa, Simanu says:

Vā is the most significant concept to understand the complexity of Sāmoan social interactions between people, church, and the environment. It underpins all epistemologies of participation, obligation, and reciprocation that guide our interactions and continue even as Sāmoans move abroad. Performances of social responsibilities and obligations prescribed in Vā rest on the knowledge of social and genealogical connections that ‘aiga members possess (Aumua Mata’itusi Simanu, 2006, quoted in Lilomaiva- Doktor, 2009, p. 14).

Simanu explains how the relationships between Sāmoan people have great influence in social interactions. Their social interactions are a way in which Sāmoans view their understandings of one another, and behave in a way that is expected, in accordance with their roles and responsibilities.

Albert Refiti describes the vā as a co-openness (Refiti 2008, personal communication). Refiti contradicts Wendt (1996) to an extent when referring to the example of a meeting of Sāmoan chiefs (fono).

When Sāmoan chiefs encounter each other in the fono council they don’t think strategically about their vā as a between thing – no, they are already in it, they are seized by it and therefore a being-Sāmoan can be said to be already opened. There is no gap, when a matai sits in the fono council he/she is no longer what he/she is today, he/she becomes the ancestor. This is what I mean by a co-openness (Refiti, 2008a, personal communication)

Refiti goes on to say that the vā changes depending on the context of the relations and therefore has a temporal aspect. He supports I’uogafa Tuagalu (2009) who specifically examines vā from a New Zealand perspective, attempting to adapt it in ‘context to Sāmoa notions of Vā Fealoaloa’i (relational space) and Vā Tapua’i (sacred/worship space)’ (Tuagalu, 2009, p. 108).

Tuagalu (2009), in his article *Heuristics of the Vā*, suggests that Wendt’s widely used definition has a commonality with a theory of social action that is being developed in New Zealand by Sāmoan scholars. They all deal with a notion of the vā as a ‘holistic identity formation predicated on co-belonging and relationship building’ (Refiti, 2008b). The active character of the vā becomes desirable when applied as a strategic concept ‘creating space for mutual respect’ (Aanae, 2001, p. 4).

The *vā* in Sāmoa social structure begins from one's identity. It is referred to as *fa'asinomaga* (identity). According to Aiono (Aiono) 'the Socratic maxim to 'know thyself, the beginning of all knowledge (*poio*) is knowledge of oneself' (Aiono, 1997, p. 6). *Fa'asinomaga*, Aiono (Aiono) explains, that *fa'asinomaga* is founded on three main poles (*poutu toa*): 'firstly, *matai*, chiefly titles to which one has genealogical ties; secondly, the land (*ie'eie ma fanua*), that is attached to those titles; and, lastly, the Sāmoan language, *gagana Sāmoa*' (Aiono, 1997, p. 6). The Sāmoan language is regarded as the 'fundamental way in which Sāmoans differentiate themselves from other Sāmoans and non-Sāmoans' (Tuagalu, 2009, p. 111).

The *vā* is important to this research because it helps us understand the complexity of identity for Pacific peoples, as it provides context and symbolises relationships between people, places and environments. Wendt (1996) further discusses the importance of social space, because the Sāmoan sense of self is ultimately relational or communal, rather than individualistic (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2009).

I acknowledge that my participants from many parts of the Pacific have different interpretations of the *vā* that add value to the research and stimulate discussion. Epistemologically, *vā* is encoded with respect, service, and hospitality in maintaining and retaining 'aiga status and a socially well-located family (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2009). It is important for me to acknowledge and adhere to the variety of references to such a relational space—for example, the gap between

cultures, a space within, a third space, the space to which things are brought back, a different context, the liminal space—which in turn gives rise to a variety of parallel characterisations: interface, *limen*, *vā* (Whimp, 2009). This importance is further examined within traditional constructs of space in the Pacific. A look at Indigenous spaces conceptualised within *vā*, specifically the 'Ha'amonga 'a Maui', was the next point of observation. I choose to investigate this as the physical landmark as *vā* is said to derive from chiefly systems, which references to Refiti's (Refiti) chief's encounter.



Figure 5: Rose, S. (2009) 'Ha'amonga 'a Maui, Retrieved 27/07/14, from https://www.flickr.com/photos/sarah_rose/3374123463/

Ha'amonga 'a Maui, meaning Maui's burden (Fig.5) is a historical site in Tongatapu. It consists of three coral slabs, two vertical slabs holding the third across. There are many theories about this historical site, however, the theory that has relevance to this research is from Pilimilose Jr Manu's (2013) thesis. He states:

One theory implies that it was the gateway to the royal compound and another that it was used for astronomical purposes. Long before the arrival of the missionaries, Tongans believed in Pacific Gods and spirits. Maui was one of those Gods who was said to have pulled the Pacific islands out of the sea with a hook. It was also said that Maui was under pressure by his task, with the weight of the heavens, sky and other planets placed on his shoulders. The structure appears as a person with a heavy burden. Hence the naming of the structure, Maui's burden (Manu, p. 13).

Following a discussion regarding the vā with his grandmother, Manu (2013) explains how the Ha'amonga is a symbolic metaphor, which fits well with the concept of vā relationships:

She suggests that the Ha'amonga is a reminder to Tongans about the faka'apa'apa (respect) and hierarchy within Va relationships especially that between a brother and sister. She goes on to say that the two vertical pillars are the brothers carrying their sister, fulfilling their fatongia (obligation) to care for the needs of their sister. According to the Tongan gender roles the females are ranked higher than the men in the community whereas the men have more political power. The mehikitanga (father's sister) controls the future of her brother's children, they are her faiteliha'anga. When she becomes a Mother or an Aunt she then takes on the role as Fahu/Mehikitanga while the brothers remain tu'a (lower in rank) as the fa'e tangata (Mother's brother) (Manu, p. 13).

Manu (2013) shares a deep and meaningful conversation with his grandmother, where she enables him to see the historical Ha'amonga 'a Maui site as a physical manifestation of the relational concept of vā, and, in doing so, brings forth the importance of respect and obligation.

In acknowledging these relationships and spaces, the research will draw connections from the vā as a portal and cultural lens to these Pacific historical 'tribal boundary areas'.

Standpoint epistemology gives an overview of my position and perspective with regard to this research. As a concept, Indigenous epistemology focuses on the process through which knowledge is constructed and validated by a cultural group. In my research, the cultural group is composed of a pool of Pacific artists and theorists who influence thinking and behaviour of Pacific communities in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It was important to understand the diverse interpretations of vā, and seek alternative meanings of vā to understand the different epistemologies arising from each standpoint. From the vā standpoint, Indigenous ways of creating knowledge are part of understanding its full potential and diverse meanings, to justify its use within the exegesis, and its significance to my cultural understanding. Drawing on the knowledge residing in this cultural group, and applying it to create space, has been vital to my project.

With regard to Pacific artists in Aotearoa, there have been a variety of references to the absence of space. This absence is confirmed by the artists all of whom embrace contemporary technologies and diasporic identities, and was discussed in Chapter One.

In conclusion, one of the overarching themes in this research is the Sāmoan concept of *vā*. The *vā* has the potential to bridge a connection between identity and spatiality. It formulises a space of belonging and respect, and captures a glimpse of how we might improve our awareness of the changing Pacific communities living in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Respect, although briefly discussed in terms of *vā*, is the vital interconnection in this exegesis between the research undertaken and the practical element. It is my duty to pay respect and honour the sacredness of our Pacific knowledges, and to nurture the relationships and space.

Fa'aSāmoa: The Sāmoan Way

The fa'aSāmoa is our culture. It is the way we behave and act. It is respect, how we talk, righteous behaviors, royal conduct since we are descendents of kings, and servitude. These are just some of the things that encompass the fa'aSāmoa (Puaina, Aga, Pouesi, & Hubbell, 2008, p. 25)

This exegesis is located inside Sāmoan ways of knowing and being, and it draws upon collective thinking around Indigenous knowledge. This section of the literature review examines what makes fa'aSāmoa significant to Pacific identity in the diaspora. Fa'aSāmoa is discussed because it sheds light on the complexity of customs and traditions in the Pacific.

Fa'aSāmoa refers to an all-pervasive system of governance and social organisation that affects most aspects of life in Sāmoa. It can simply be defined as 'the Sāmoan way of life', although it must be noted that the Sāmoan culture is diverse in terms of ideas, customs, myths and legends (Tagoilelagi, 1995). George Pratts (1893) defined fa'aSāmoa as 'an act according to Sāmoan customs' (p.131). In her book, *Tamaitai Samoa Their Stories*, Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop (1996) adds to this and defines fa'aSāmoa as 'in the manner of the Samoans; according to Samoan customs and tradition' (p.185).

The concept of fa'aSāmoa is essential to Sāmoan identity, and consists of a number of values and traditions, including:

'aiga (family)
matai (chiefly system)
lotu (Church & Religion)
tautala Sāmoa (Sāmoan language)
gafa (genealogies)
fa'alavelave (ceremonial and other family obligations) (Howard, Shaw, Hoddell, Street, & Wildblood, 2002, p. 25)

Fa'aSāmoa conceives of individuals as integral members of 'aiga, irrespective of where they currently reside. The development cycle of the 'aiga refers to its social, spiritual, physical, and economic improvement in parallel with the life cycles of the individuals within an 'aiga. Individuals are constantly reminded of their important contributions to the collective welfare. One develops one's 'aiga relationships through responsibilities that are maintained over time. Sāmoan society is highly stratified, and a person's status determines his or her roles, responsibilities and corresponding entitlements. This system is known as fa'amatai (Howard et al., 2002; Tagoilelagi, 1995; Tuagalu, 2009).

The fa'amatai is a chiefly hierarchical system whereby titled chiefs (matai) exercise responsibility and authority over extended family units. 'A matai title holder may be called an ali'i or tulafale, which become the trustee of the good name of the family. All ceremonial recognition of the status of his family rests upon him' (Tagoilelagi, 1995, p. 5).

Matai administer customary land, titles, and are responsible for upholding the family's good name and standing in the community. Therefore, fa'aSāmoa, in this sense, is a framework for action, based upon the social structure of the extended family (aiga) and the village (nu'u), with the authority of matai incorporated into it (Tagoilelagi, 1995, p. 5).

Christianity is part of the Sāmoan way of life, and it is located within fa'aSāmoa. Christianity was accepted by the Sāmoan people with negotiation and deliberation. Tagoilelagi (1995) asserts that missionaries had preached to middle-class individualism, and Protestantism became a major influence on the Sāmoan people.

Felix Keesing (1934) states that Sāmoans did not re-structure their lives around Christianity; instead they took Christian practices and gave them a place inside fa'aSāmoa, making it part of their culture. Adding to his argument, Meleisea (1987) argues that despite the fact that some Sāmoan customs and practices contradicted the Christian ideals, Christianity was absorbed and 'Sāmoanized'.

The Sāmoan people obtain their sense of unity from being a communal society. Because of this, the gathering of goods is established on a shared basis, unlike a pālagi (European) middle-class society who save their goods (Crocombe, 1973; Tagoilelagi, 1995). Fa'asaulala Tagoilelagi's (1995) adds to this notion of a 'communal-based society':

The social organisation of a village is characteristic of the extended family living in close vicinity with each other, thus the sharing between each family is relatively easy. In most villages, there are committees specially designated for the women and single girls. A group called the aualuma consists of unmarried girls of the village, with a similar group for single men which is called the aumaga. The fa'amatai also exists within the village (p.6).

All aspects of fa'aSāmoa can be found in a typical Sāmoan village. The traditional and spiritual aspects of the villagers' lives are authorised and maintained by the matai and the supremacy of the village faifeau (pastor/s). Land is allocated to each 'aiga for their cultivation purposes and then what is produced is shared amongst the villagers. Tagoilelagi (1995) stresses that these general threads of reciprocity are woven within fa'aSāmoa.

In a study conducted by health professionals Seumaninoa Puaina Daniel Aga, Daniel Pouesi and F. Allan Hubbell (2008), matai chiefs and faifeau were interviewed and voiced their perspectives and thoughts around fa'aSāmoa. Comments from the matai include:

“Well as I said before, it all started from the top. In Sāmoa they have family, a clan of people that should be headed by a matai. The family is governed by the High Chief. He also governs the lands. He has the last saying. There are other chiefs of the family as well, but they are relegated to serving under the High Chief and assist in ensuring the wellbeing of the family under the care of the High Chief. One day, they too will become a High Chief, but only after servitude. If there is a funeral or a wedding, then you will see the *Fa’aSāmoa* at its purest...” (cited in Puaina et al., 2008, p. 25).

Another matai asserted the importance of family to fa’aSāmoa, he comments:

“...We all know from the beginning of life that everything in the *Fa’aSāmoa* begins with the family. In the family we raise and begin to mold the conduct of our children out in the world. It is the way we represent ourselves before others, within our families, villages, and in the world. Just like setting a table for dinner, the *Fa’aSāmoa* teaches a child how to behave and act in a manner that is acceptable, like in setting the table, certain plates, utensils, and glasses are put forth, this is the *Fa’aSāmoa* (cited in Puaina et al., 2008, p. 26)

Comments from the faifeau include:

“The traditions and customs of our country, we can’t do away with. We can’t change them either. God created the world. He divided the world into different languages, like Sāmoan. He also gave each, traditions and customs to live by. These are the things that are important in Sāmoa; its traditions and customs. They’re a way by which Sāmoan s relate to each other. It’s relational. But what’s most important is a life of worship. Sāmoan s relate to each other through their traditions and customs. From these comes a life of respect. This life is centred on God. Everything is one because of God’s name and purpose...” (cited in Puaina et al., 2008, p. 26)

“The *Fa’aSāmoa* is how one carries himself, it is something that is passed from generation to generation and will continue on till eternity. I also believe that this is one area that the new male generation is trying to change as well. But to me, I don’t think it works that easily. You can’t just barge in and change the *Fa’aSāmoa*. This is

one of the reasons that Sāmoan s are held in high esteem, because they have an identity that goes way back in history” (cited in Puaina et al., 2008, p. 26)

“The *Fa’aSāmoa* is one of the highest regards no matter where one travels. Sāmoan s are prideful and take great pride in who they are and where they come from. They never want to be put down by anyone, because they are descendents of royalty. There is no other culture around the world that compares to the Sāmoan culture” (cited in Puaina et al., 2008, p. 26)

These comments from the matai and faifeau show there is a general agreement among the group participants that fa’aSāmoa refers to the culture of the Sāmoan people. However, the men from the community discussed fa’aSāmoa in general terms, while the matai tended to stress the role of the chiefs in Sāmoan society, and the pastors stressed the importance of religion (Puaina et al., 2008). This highlights the importance of fa’aSāmoa in relation to an individual’s role in a group/society. Over time, Western ways and migration have influenced the changes of fa’aSāmoa, although this also tells us that despite the effects of change, fa’aSāmoa still exists even more so in the diaspora, because the diaspora hold onto it as crucial to their identity. Fa’aSāmoa in the diaspora has the capacity to change and re-new itself and still be regarded as tradition (Tagoilelagi, 1995).

Fa’aSāmoa practices in Sāmoa may differ from those in New Zealand, and it is important to realise that not every Sāmoan has the same understanding of the concept. It is my contention that the meanings and nuances of the vā fealoaloa’i, (relational space) though not lost, become muffled in translation, for there are marked differences between the village organisation in Sāmoa and the Church

organisation in Aotearoa/New Zealand. That is, the Church does not have a set fa'alupega, a permanent geographical location, nor an unchanging population as the membership is transient. Tuagalu (2009) explains that the relational space taught in a Sāmoan village structure differs from that taught in the diasporic church organisations, and further outlines that the church has no 'permanent geographical location' (p. 121).

Given this outline of what makes fa'aSāmoa, the question can now be asked about the role it plays in the Sāmoan diaspora in relation to identity.

The change of social structure in Sāmoan church communities in New Zealand has provided a successful framework to sustain fa'aSāmoa. It is important to recognise these changes, and to understand that in some ways the term 'diaspora' no longer applies to this community. It is equally important to realise that change has occurred in the migrant communities (Yamamoto, 1996), adapting to different rules and set laws. Over the last 30 years, generations have been brought up as Sāmoan New Zealanders, each having been taught Sāmoan culture in different situations and contexts, with different understandings and meanings of the culture. Clifford (2007) maintains:

Later generations forced or drawn into towns or cities, have no realistic intention of actually living continuously in traditional places, then the connection to lost homelands comes closer to a diasporic relation, with its characteristic forms of longing and displaced performances of heritage (p. 202).

The paradoxical relationship between lost homelands and diaspora described by Clifford generates confusion. This is further exemplified in the relationship between the customary label of one's identity and the circumstances in which a person is raised. In Melani Anae's (1997) focus group of New Zealand-born Sāmoans, she encapsulates the perplexity in the following verse:

I am - a Sāmoan, but not a Sāmoan
To my 'aiga in Sāmoa, I am a palagi.
I am - A New Zealander, but not a New Zealander
To New Zealanders, I am a "bloody coconut" at worst, a "Pacific Islander" at best
I am - To my Sāmoan parents, their child (Anae, 1997, p. 128).

Anae's verse summarises the paradox of identity for many New Zealand-born Sāmoans, and New Zealand-born Pacific Islanders in general. In Sāmoan communities, they are not 'Sāmoan enough', in the wider New Zealand community Sāmoans have been criticised as 'not New Zealanders', 'coconuts', or 'FOBs' (fresh off the boat).

Anae investigates the issues of ethnic identity for New Zealand-born Sāmoans. She claims that secured identities can be reached by viewing the identity journey as a series of rites of passage – enforced rituals that challenge one's right to be a New Zealander, and on the other hand, one's right to be a Sāmoan. She goes on to argue that part of this challenge is the way in which New Zealand-born Samoans feel they are 'stereotyped by both papalagi and Sāmoan elders alike' (Anae, 1997, p. 128). These stereotypes are transmitted and perpetuated through negative images as well

as in covert omissions of the positive characteristics of New Zealand-born and Island-born Sāmoans (Anae, 1997).

Linnekin and Poyer’s (1990) suggestion that Pacific Islanders frame their identity based on context rather than heritage, is an argument that has been explored by scholars who are members of Pacific Island diaspora (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990; McGrath, 2002; Tiatia, 1998; Tupuola, 2004). These authors have pointed out that different contexts require people to express different relationships to cultural knowledge (Gershon, 2007). In particular Tupuola (2004) has discussed how, in order to navigate social interactions effectively, the structuring of identity in different contexts requires a wide range of skills that do not always overlap. Operating as a Sāmoan in a bank branch is a somewhat different challenge than operating as a Sāmoan in a Sāmoan church. Anae (2001) notes that the paths by which people can acquire these social skills have been shifting in diaspora. Consequently, the types of knowledge one must exhibit in order to claim an identity is, effectively, constantly changing.

In particular, language skills become a focus through which people explore such challenges. Anae proposes that in the diaspora, migrants are continually struggling to answer the question: ‘To what degree can someone who does not speak Sāmoan be a Sāmoan?’ She advocates that New Zealand–raised Sāmoans frequently have uneasy relationships with their Sāmoan identity, largely because of their varying degrees of comfort with the Sāmoan language: ‘Inability to speak Sāmoan , or

tautala fa’asāmoa, became the prime source of Sāmoan identity confusion’(Anae, 2001, p. 110). Anae argues that although her interlocutors might not be able to speak Sāmoan fluently, or at all, they were quite capable of understanding Sāmoan — that is, they were fluent listeners, not speakers (Gershon, 2007).

Tiatia (1998), in her book *Caught between Cultures*, displays a diagram which highlights some binaries between the Western structure and the traditional structure in the diaspora.

Sāmoan / Tongan/ Niuean Culture	Western System
Communalism	Individualism
Unquestioned obedience and respect for seniority	critique
Understand and speak the mother tongue	Speak the English language
Church and extended family obligations first	Education/ work first
<i>Fa’a Sāmoa / Anga faka Tonga/ Faka Niue</i>	Fa’a palagi
‘you are palagi’	‘you are a Pacific Islander’
‘Don’t ask, just do it’	‘Ask before you go ahead’

(Tiatia, 1998, p. 71)

Tiatia’s discussion focused on Pacific youth raised in both the Western structure and the traditional household structure, and the difficulties between the two ways of living. She conducted interviews and recorded youth recounting their upbringing in both systems as being ‘caught between cultures’. All of the participants that Tiatia interviewed had shared similarities in their experiences. She recorded ideas of tension, confusion, and cultural cringe/rejection.

These views may leave some with a secure self-identity, but others in a state of confusion. Many young diasporic Pacific people talk about having ‘time out’ as a reaction to the difficulty of identity. This usually involves leaving the church and rejecting parental authority (Anae, 1997; Tagoilelagi, 1995; Tiatia, 1998).

There is an underlying theme in the literature, specifically in Tiatia's *Caught between Cultures*, of the space between, the vā. These youth feel as if they are constantly negotiating and renegotiating the space between two cultures (Whimp, 2009). Building on the discussion of recent Pacific art practice in Chapter One (Position of Research), this chapter has considered theoretical knowledge impacting on the design and realisation of the vā.

This discussion on fa'a Sāmoa has been useful in affirming my own cultural journey as a blended Sāmoan, Fijian Indian Spatial Designer, who respectfully acknowledges the cultural sensitivity of the Pacific diasporic communities, and expands upon the ideas of traditional knowledge. Having now outlined theories that impact on the potential of vā, it is useful to state my own standpoint in relation to the literature review.

Standpoint epistemologies

‘Epistemologically, vā is encoded with respect, service, and hospitality in maintaining and retaining ‘aiga status and a socially well-located family’ (Lilomaiva-Doktor, 2009, p. 14).

In the article ‘How We Know: Kwara’ae Rural Villagers Doing Indigenous Epistemology’, David Welchman Gegeo and Karen Ann Watson-Gegeo (2001) revise theories of knowledge, including the nature, sources, frameworks, and limits of knowledge. They state that ‘epistemological agents are communities rather than individuals’ (Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001, p. 58). In other words, knowledge is created by communities, rather than collections of individuals independently knowing, and ‘such communities are epistemologically prior to individuals who know’ (Nelson 1993, p. 124).

For Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo (2001) the concept of Indigenous epistemology distinguishes between accounts of other people’s knowledge, on the one hand, and cultural insiders’ ways of theorising knowledge, on the other. In my research, Indigenous epistemology means, specifically, the ways of thinking and creating, reformulating, and theorising about knowledge that are activated by Sāmoan communities away from Sāmoa – through traditional discourses and media of communication.

As a concept, Indigenous epistemology focuses on the process through which knowledge is constructed and validated by a cultural group. In my research, the cultural group is composed of a pool of Pacific artists and theorists who influence the thinking and behaviour of Pacific communities in Aotearoa. It was important to understand the diverse interpretations, and seek alternative meanings of vā (i.e. absence of space) to understand the different epistemologies arising from each standpoint. From the vā standpoint, Indigenous ways of creating knowledge are

part of understanding its full potential and diverse meanings, to justify its use within the exegesis, and its significance to my cultural understanding. Drawing on the knowledge residing in this cultural group, and applying it to create space, has been vital to my project.

Through these interpretations, I have come to conclude that this space of *vā*, for me, is a space of relationships that have been built around me and with each other. I was raised in a Sāmoan church community as a Christian to speak Sāmoan and learn the Sāmoan way, *fa'aSāmoa*. Being half Sāmoan and also living in a Western society, *fa'aSāmoa* was not really clear for me at times, and I felt a sense of loss and a lack of belonging. Having been educated in a Western society, it was hard for me to distinguish the cross-cultural boundaries, and at times understand the culture in my own church community in regards to my identity. I want to make it clear that in no way am I criticising church values; I am simply trying to identify the key aspects of what made my experience different from other full Samoan youth members, and discover if others, like myself, felt the same way. Like Anae (1997) I tried to encapsulate my perplexity in the following verse:

- I am half Sāmoan half Fijian Indian. Two different cultures, one identity.
- I was born, raised and educated in New Zealand.
- I am a member of the congregational church of Sāmoa; learning Sāmoan Christian values and *fa'aSāmoa*, the Sāmoan way.

I felt to some degree like an outsider in my own church. It took me longer than other full Sāmoan youth to learn and understand the Sāmoan way because I struggled with the language. *Gagana Sāmoa* is the essence of *fa'aSāmoa* because both interconnect and feed one another; they too can be described as *lalaga*, a weaving of balance from two entities. The language was a barrier, and even with translations, Sāmoan traditional customs required another level of expertise, and how was I to understand? Surely there must have been others in my position struggling to adapt to the customs, traditions and language. I turned to what I knew best and educated myself through articles, books, the internet and of course my family, in order to understand my culture and the importance of sustaining items such as 'ie tōga in our culture. This form of learning made me think about other means of teaching and learning *fa'aSāmoa*, and prompted the question: 'How else could we as Sāmoan diaspora pass on our values and customs to our youth if they too feel disconnected from their cultural identity?'

Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand

This section examines the history of Pacific diasporic communities, and how they sustain their cultural values, expressed through their identity. Knowledge relating to diaspora is relevant to this research as it not only addresses the key question in this exegesis, but also gives insight into the lives of the participants that I interviewed for this research.

Diaspora

Many cultural communities move from one homeland to another site of settlement, either for economic opportunity or political refuge (Clifford, 1997). In doing so, they reconstitute their cultural and communication practices considerably to reflect upon their migration experiences (Drzewiecka & Halualani, 2002). Also, upon moving to new places, cultural groups adapt, incorporate, and modernise (Westernise) to fit into new host countries, sometimes casting aside their traditional cultural practices.

As is often described, 'diaspora' is both a spatial and a biological term, its original Greek meaning defines 'diaspora to sow, scatter, distribute or disperse. It communicates the movement of people from a centre outwards, of their dispersal from the place of origin into new territories... It is, by implication, 'a travelling term', one that carries the merged concepts of 'root' and 'route'. It has become a popular term amongst academics reflecting a move from a scholarly of community, culture, nation, centre and continuity to strategies of movement and discontinuity, circulation and contact zone (Jackson, Crang, & Dwyer, 2004, p. 2).

Global movements and journeys, are not the sole focus of attention for geographers of diaspora and the other scholars who focus on space and circulation. As Jackson et al. (2004) argue:

Different diasporas are characterized by different geographies that go beyond simple oppositions between the national and the transnational, the rooted and the routed, the territorial and the deterritorialized. Diaspora is not only an inherently spatial term. Its particular historical forms evidence particular and distinctive spatialities. (p. 2)

Every diaspora – whether recent or long-standing, caused by exile or movement for trade, multi-sited or settled in a single place – has its distinctive spatiality informed by actual journeys past and present, the particular forms and distribution of its settlements, its demography, the characteristic circulations of its members, goods, culture and religion, its local inflections (social, linguistic, cultural), and its distinctive imagined, historical and present geography (Jackson et al., 2004).

Pacific Migration

The first thing one notices when one looks at the history of Pacific Islander migration is that this has always been a diasporic movement (Spickard, Rondilla, & Hippolite Wright, 2002, p. 15).

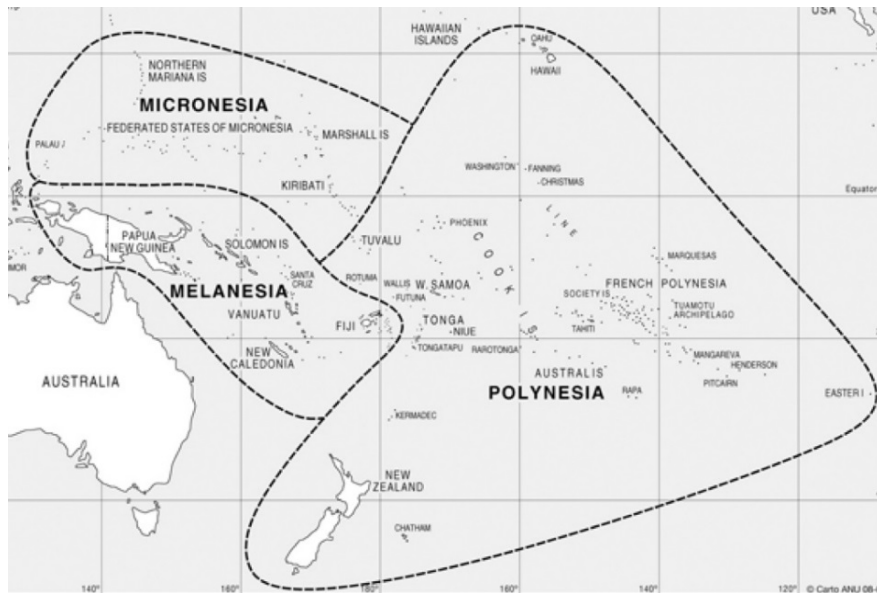


Figure 6: Lewis. (Lewis, 2010, p. 1) *Pacific Ocean*, Retrieved 24/02/14, from <http://www.geocurrents.info/geopolitics/cultural-disparity-and-political-solidarity-in-the-melanesian-island-world>

The Pacific diaspora is thousands of years old. For a very long time, people have been moving around the Pacific Ocean. In modern times, analysts have divided the Pacific Ocean into three groups of islands and peoples. Melanesia is the name given to a wide-ranging band of islands, many of them densely populated, extending from

Fiji, just west of the International Date Line, to New Guinea at the doorstep of Southeast Asia. Melanesia is the home to hundreds of discrete societies and language groups. Micronesia is another band of islands north of Melanesia. Micronesia consists of thousands of tiny islands spread out by the wide ocean, and is culturally-similar to Melanesia. Polynesia is the third band of islands. It is a large arrowhead-shaped region that starts from Hawai'i in the north to Aotearoa/New Zealand in the south, and from Tuvalu in the west to Easter Island in the east. The peoples of Polynesia speak closely-related, often mutually-intelligible languages despite the vast stretches of ocean that separate them (Spickard et al., 2002). Many Pacific Island peoples have migrated to New Zealand, and the majority of these peoples are Polynesians.

A great number of Pacific Island people have formed diasporic communities around the world, often being grouped together as islanders, P.Is, Pacifika and Pacific people (Macpherson, 2004; Morton, 1998; Perrott, 2007; Teaiwa & Mallon, 2005). They have formed active communities with their own individual identities and, in some cases, with their own media (Papoutsaki & Strickland, 2008). Aotearoa/New Zealand hosts the largest Pacific Island diaspora community in the world.

There are growing references to Pacific Island communities living overseas as Pacific diasporas. Helen Morton's (1998) research examines diasporic Tongan youth in Australia and their effort to create their own culture. Her research argues

that their cultural identity is created in conjunction with their roles within their family, obligations to their church, and how they respond to the host culture.

In a chapter entitled *New Zealand's Pacific Advantage*, McCarthy (2005) discusses the importance of Pacific diasporas. He references his encounter with the Chief Executive at the Ministry of Pacific Islands Affairs, who argues that people from New Zealand's many Pacific diaspora communities can and do play significant individual and collective roles in helping to secure a peaceful Pacific. In their book *Pacific Diaspora: Island Peoples in the United States and Across the Pacific*, Spickard et al. (2002) discover the, 'transnational or diasporic model' in examining the Pacific communities living overseas, which highlights the on-going links with their people at home or overseas (p. 7). They also explore the 'pan-ethnicity model', which is more distinctive among second and third generation Pacific Island migrants, who are increasingly seeing themselves as Pacific people with one identity (Papoutsaki & Strickland, 2008, p. 7).

Referring to this disputed identity, Papoutsaki and Strickland refer to Perrott (2007) in his article, *Pacifika: Identity of Illusion?*. Perrot captures the dilemma New Zealand-born Pacific youth have with understanding their own identity. The article appeared as a cover story in the weekend magazine of a mainstream Aotearoa/New Zealand newspaper, and indicated that Pacific peoples, who are one of the most visible minority groups in Aotearoa/New Zealand, are becoming an important identity group that merit the attention of mainstream mass media. Pacific Island people are visible in Aotearoa/New Zealand society not only because of their

presence in numbers but also through their involvement in national sports and the cultural life of the country (Papoutsaki & Strickland, 2008).

While there is a significant body of work on the Pacific Islands and Pacific Island peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Papoutsaki and Strickland (2008) point out the noticeable lack of research on how these communities communicate with each other, with their homes, and with their host country environments; how they are represented in the mainstream mass media, and what their information needs are and how they satisfy them. The most thorough body of work in the wider area of immigrants in Aotearoa/New Zealand comes from Spoonley's (2001, 2004) migration research, which gives a researcher on Pacific diasporas and media a respectable starting point.

Pacific communities in Aotearoa/New Zealand could be what Papoutsaki and Strickland (2008) describe as trade diaspora, at least in the early migration stage. An increase in the demand for labour created rapid growth in the size of the Pacific migrant population, and this growth has continued since the 1960s. It is one of the fastest growing populations in the country (Logan, May-June, 2006). 'The Pacific descent population is expected to grow by 181 per cent by 2051, from 232,000 to 599,000, making up 18 per cent of Aotearoa/New Zealand's population' (Cook, Didham, & Khawaja, 2001, p. 62). Some Islands have seen more than half of their population migrating to Aotearoa/New Zealand and elsewhere, and in some cases, 70 per cent of their diaspora members have been born in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Macpherson, 2004; McCarthy, 2005; Teaiwa & Mallon, 2005).

Macpherson detects that the gradual replacement of the term Pacific Islanders with the terms Pacific people in official and popular discourse is an acknowledgment of the fact that most people of Pacific descent are no longer from the 'traditional island homelands, and that their commonalities derive from culture rather than place of birth' (Macpherson, 2004, p. 139). This shows a need to acknowledge that these communities will start playing a considerable social, economic and political role in New Zealand society (Papoutsaki & Strickland, 2008). New Zealand-born Pacific people are becoming more important in today's society, and their social mobility has made them increasingly 'visible in roles which challenge earlier social stereotypes held of them by Pakeha/Europeans' (Macpherson, 2004, p. 140).

Additionally, for Pacific peoples, one needs to overcome the general tendency to look at them as one single group (Macpherson, 2004). It also shapes how the broader society of people and media understand these communities. At the same time, Papoutsaki and Strickland (2008) point to Macpherson's research that shows New Zealand-born Pacific children, like most children of immigrants, differ from their island-born parents in various ways. This is evident in smaller island groups where they are losing fluency in their mother tongues (Collins, May 30, 2008). Cultural preservation is more advanced among the larger communities, such as the Sāmoans, who, due to their size, can provide more cultural reinforcement (Papoutsaki & Strickland, 2008).

The present argument is whether we now have new ethnic identities, which focus on shared Polynesian descent, pan-Polynesian or 'nesian' identities e.g. 'New Zealand borns', 'P.I.'s', 'Polys', or 'Pasifikans' (Teaiwa & Mallon, 2005, p. 210). These identities have been acknowledged by Teaiwa and Mallon, and they are recognised mainly through the popular culture that has emerged around a vibrant new music and pop culture.

Pacific Diaspora in New Zealand

Diaspora implies that a sense of particularity and ethnic belonging is not only attached to the experience of migration, but it might have an on-going importance for younger generations who have not experienced migration processes ... diaspora implies that particular cultures survive, transform and remain relevant even when members of an ethnic community have not lived in the original Homeland (Myria Georgiou, 2007, p. 1).

The circumstances of Pacific peoples living in Aotearoa/New Zealand are complex. Yamamoto (1996) states: Diaspora in the past meant leaving the homeland forever. It accompanied the feeling of loss, losing one's native idioms, family ties, and the attachment to one's roots, but this is not always the case for the New Zealand Pacific communities. From the 1950s, Pacific Island people migrated to New Zealand in large numbers (Anae, 2000). New Zealand's industry and the service sector expanded over the next 30 years. Many Sāmoan and Tongan communities moved to New Zealand to seek greater opportunities and a better education for their children. Within this span of 30 years, diasporic Pacific Islanders (predominately Polynesians) coped, in part, by becoming part of church communities. In New Zealand cities, Pacific Island churches increased in numbers. They subsequently

took on the role of villages to provide a platform for what Sāmoans would call *fa'asinomaga* (identity).

However, when viewing diaspora from the Pacific, Gershon (2007) describes how analysts of transnational movements tend to see diaspora as disruptive to families. The concerns are with ways in which travel and distance force people to reconfigure their families in response to the need to migrate (Gershon, 2007). Furthermore, Portes and Rumbaut (2001), argue that second-generation immigrants struggle with adaptation as they respond to parental and societal demands, with parents standing for the homeland culture. Whereas others, such as Park (1997) and Brettell (2003), discuss the dynamics underlying changes in gender relations among diasporic migrants. The authors highlight ruptures and reconstructions, often describing diasporas as obstacles to be overcome by families.

However, my research among diaspora participants looks specifically at families and their connections in terms of how they sustain their cultural identity, and what makes them visible within the community. Without families, and the transmission of knowledge among families, how would diasporas survive? How will concepts and differences between cultural or ethnic identity be interpreted in diaspora? By pointing out that families are the culturally-specific, integral units that form diasporas, I am building on Epli Hau'ofa's (1994) insight that to understand the Pacific, one is better served understanding people's daily experiences of interconnected webs of exchanges and kinship than by focusing on the

disconnections and isolations integral to a Western colonial perspective (Hau'ofa, 1994). Ethnographers of the Pacific have long known that the Pacific is not just a sea of islands, but also a sea of families. Culturally sustainable diaspora exists because of the culturally-specific ways through which families circulate knowledge and resources. Families and diasporas are interconnected, they rely upon one another, to such a degree that diasporas cannot exist across generations without families sustaining them (Spoonley, 2000). This is supported by Gershon, who states:

By reconceptualising the migrants as members of family networks, scholars opened the door to seeing the people they studied as more than simply individuals seeking other lives when leaving one country for another. Migrants were instead seen as part of larger diasporas in which knowledge and resources circulated through people in multiple directions — to their local friends and relatives as well as to their families back home (Gershon, 2007, pp. 477-478).

In Pacific Island diaspora literature, questions of identity often also involve questions of how knowledge circulates, and how these patterns of circulation might have changed across distances. I assert that when people are reflecting openly on their identity, they are also expressing how they personally experience and respond to the ways knowledge circulation connects them to various communities. When a Sāmoan woman talks about how she no longer participates in Sāmoan community functions in Seattle because of the gossip she encounters (McGrath 2002, p. 310-311), she is reflecting on how she manages the circulation of knowledge about her and through her. When a New Zealand-raised Sāmoan woman insists that she is

Sāmoan despite the fact that she does not speak Sāmoan fluently (Anae, 2001), she is commenting on more than identity labels and their values; she is also addressing the ways that patterns of language acquisition, such as those Elinor Ochs delineated (1988), have shifted as people move away from Sāmoa. In short, just as exchange in diaspora becomes a vehicle for addressing scale-making, so too identity becomes a vehicle for reflecting on changing patterns of knowledge circulation.

Scholars of Pacific Island diaspora have discussed two ways that Pacific Islanders use identity to comment on how they are involved in knowledge circulation. First, ethnographers have addressed how patterns of knowledge acquisition have impacted peoples claims and understandings of identity. Second, they have examined the ways people respond to the fact that being in a community is also about knowing and being (Gershon, 2012). Anae (2001,2002) pointed out, that the paths by which people can acquire these skills have been shifting in diaspora. As a consequence, what it means to have an identity—that is, the types of knowledges one must exhibit in order to claim an identity effectively—are also constantly changing (Anae, 2001, 2002).

What is also changing is the use of the term diaspora. There is a weakness to the use of the word diaspora for Pacific Islanders living in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and it exists when referring to the second generation of the diaspora. The vast bulk of the Pacific Island population that lives outside the Pacific in places like Australia, has done so for only about a generation and a half. As the next (second and third) generations come of age, it is entirely possible that the notion of island-based

diaspora will not serve as well as it did when compared to the first generation of migrants (Spickard et al., 2002). A new identity seems to be on the verge of being formed in Aotearoa/New Zealand: not Tongan, not Sāmoan, not Hawaiian, not Māori, not Cook Island, but a blend of these identities. For at least two generations, people whose parents were Tongan immigrants may see themselves as two things at once: Tongans and Tongan New Zealanders. But as time goes on, that second, pan-ethnic identity is likely to become more important (Spickard et al., 2002). Macpherson and Bedford (1999) see such a pan-ethnic formation happening amongst the children of Pacific Island migrants in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Their paper '*The Structured Roots of Transformation of Pacific Identity in Aotearoa*' refers to:

The emergence of “Pacific” or “PI” world-views and practices. Thus, for instance, to organise a Pacific cricket tournament a group of people from different sub-groups came together to form a common body of rules for playing “Pacific cricket”. The result is a game which is not Sāmoan, or Cook Island but “Pacific”. “PI” identities are expressed in new syncretic musics as for instance in the music of Te Vaka, in performance art as for instance in the work of Pacific Underground, in patois and language registers which mark a commitment to belonging, in new clothing and building design (p. 2)

Will such blending happen among Pacific Islanders in the generations to come? Do we as a migrant Pacific community acknowledge the blending of not only our cultures, but also our values, ethnicities and beliefs? Pacific diaspora is a critical concept surrounding the framework of this research as in ‘How do we as the next generation view our blended cultural identities as Pacific diaspora?’ Furthermore, how do my skills as a Spatial Designer help explore new methods of valuing blended identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand?

Paint by numbers

In this section, I will explore the literature surrounding the growing diversity in Aotearoa/New Zealand, supported by statistics compiled and collected from Statistics New Zealand. I have chosen to use data sourced from Statistics New Zealand, because of the reliability and credibility of Statistics New Zealand. A century of censuses show long-term trends. Long-term trends bring together a range of indicators from censuses over the years, and show how New Zealand's population and dwellings have changed over time. This rich information helps people decide where to locate a business, what products to sell, where we need roads, schools and hospitals as well as measuring environmental progress, quality of life and how family wellbeing. Statistics are used by government, local councils, Māori and businesses to help make decisions so that New Zealand's economy, people and communities can thrive (Statistics New Zealand, 2015).

In 1956, almost 93 percent of the New Zealand population identified as European, 6.3 percent as Māori and 0.4 percent as Pacific Islander. At this time, New Zealand was predominantly seen as a Pālagi country. In 2013, the demographic breakdown had become 74.0 percent European/Pākehā, 14.9 percent Māori and 7.4 percent Pacific peoples, with 11.8 percent Asian and 1.2 percent from the Middle East (Statistics New Zealand, 2014).

The Pacific peoples ethnic group was the fourth-largest major ethnic group in 2013, behind the European, Māori, and Asian ethnic groups. The Pacific peoples ethnic group also had the highest proportion of children (aged 0-14 years), at 35.7 percent. Māori were the next highest proportion at 33.8 percent. The city of Auckland is often described as the 'Polynesian capital of the world' with almost two-thirds of Pacific peoples (65.9 percent or 194,958 people) living in the Auckland region.

Table 1 shows the Pacific Islands of Niue, Tokelau and the Cook Islands having more than two-thirds of their population living in New Zealand. Māori and Pacific media have expanded and transformed along with the demographic changes and played a critical role in self-determination. Ethnic media is in its infancy but also rapidly evolving (Robie, 2009).

Table 1: Pacific Island population for selected Countries

COUNTRY	NO. IN HOME COUNTRY ⁽¹⁾	NO. IN NZ ⁽²⁾	% IN HOME COUNTRY	% IN NZ
FIJI	867,000	25,374 ⁽³⁾	99	1
SĀMOA	187,820	144,138	57	43
TONGA	103,252	60,333	63	37
COOK ISLANDS	19,100	61,839 ⁽⁴⁾	24	76
TUVALU	10,640	3,537	75	25
TOKELAU	1,411	7,176	16	84
NIUE	1,470	23,883	6	94

Source:

(1) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_and_dependencies_by_population

(2) 2013 New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings

(3) Includes 10,929 from the Fijian Indian ethnic group

(4) Includes 792 from the Rarotongan ethnic group

Religious association has also changed significantly in recent years. Since colonisation, New Zealand has traditionally been a predominantly Christian country. This defining characteristic has eroded quite suddenly since the turn of the century. In the 2006 New Zealand Census, just over 2 million people, or 55.6 percent of those answering a religious affiliation question, identified with a Christian religion (including Māori Christian, such as the Rātana faith). In the previous 2001 Census, 60.6 percent of people surveyed affiliated with a Christian religion. In contrast, between 2001 and 2006 there was an increase of people affiliated with non-Christian religions (Robie, 2009).

Understanding the data in Table 2, Graph 1 and Graph 2.

In the face of public pressure, Statistics New Zealand has permitted people to select more than one ethnicity in the census, and children can now also be assigned more than one ethnic group at birth (Statistics New Zealand, 2015). Statistics New Zealand (2015) define ethnicity/ethnic group in the following way;

Ethnicity is the ethnic group or groups a person identifies with or has a sense of belonging to. It is a measure of cultural affiliation (in contrast to race, ancestry, nationality, or citizenship). Ethnicity is self-perceived and a person can belong to more than one ethnic group.

An ethnic group is made up of people who have some or all of the following characteristics:

- a common proper name
- one or more elements of common culture that need not be specified, but may include religion, customs, or language
- a unique community of interests, feelings, and actions
- a shared sense of common origins or ancestry
- a common geographic origin (p. 1)

The following data has been drawn from the New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings, 1986-2013. It represents Pacific and Māori multiple ethnic responses over time from the Census. From the 1986 Census to the 2013 Census the classification of ethnicity went through significant changes. The 2013 Census and 2006 Census are fully comparable, the 2001 Census somewhat less so. In these three series, respondents were able to select up to six ethnic responses. In the 1996 Census the ethnicity question is more akin to ancestry. In the 1996, 1991 and 1986 Censuses, respondents were able to choose up to three ethnic responses. Table 2 shows Census usually-resident population counts from 1986 to 2013 for selected ethnic groupings.

Table 2: Selected ethnic counts from New Zealand Censuses 1986-2013

Census	Multiple Pacific ⁽¹⁾	Pacific ⁽²⁾	Māori and Pacific ⁽³⁾	Māori ⁽⁴⁾	Total stated ⁽⁵⁾
1986	4,599	130,122	10,887	404,778	3,226,722
1991	5,877	167,073	14,136	434,847	3,345,813
1996	13,743	202,236	29,055	523,371	3,466,587
2001	15,549	231,801	31,548	526,281	3,586,734
2006	19,890	265,974	39,681	565,329	3,860,163
2013	25,356	295,941	49,125	598,602	4,011,402

Source: Statistics New Zealand Customised Census data

(1) Multiple Pacific: At least two ethnic responses fall into current Pacific ethnic group.

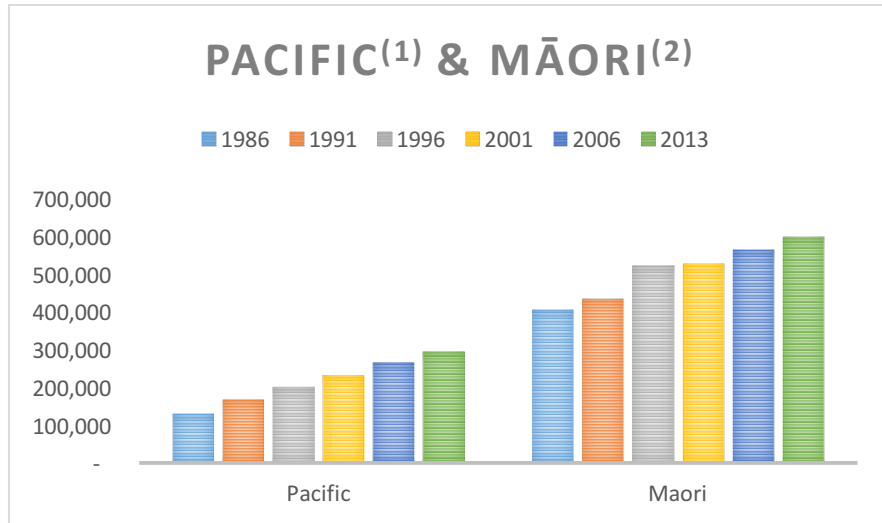
(2) Pacific: At least one ethnic response falls into current Pacific ethnic group.

(3) Māori and Pacific: One ethnic response is Māori ethnic group, and at least one other ethnic response falls into current Pacific ethnic group

(4) Māori: One ethnic response is Māori ethnic group, with or without other ethnic groups.

(5) Total stated: At least one ethnic response is coded.

Graph 1: Pacific ethnic group and Māori ethnic group counts Censuses 1986-2013

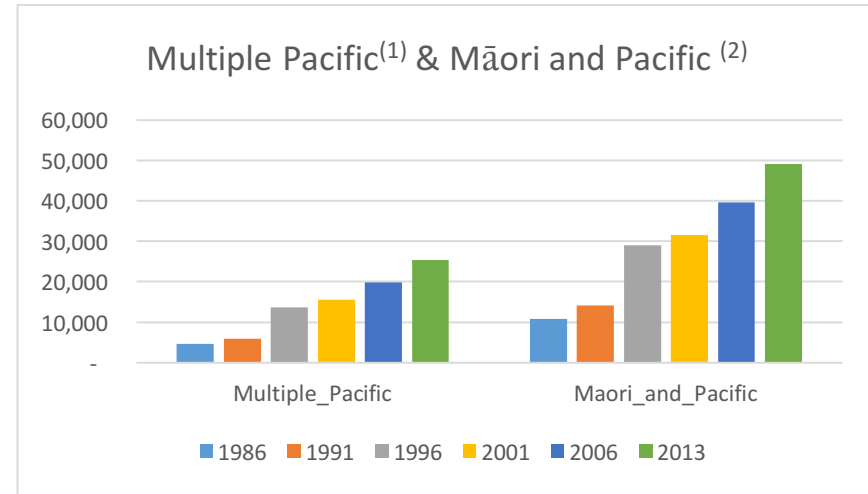


Source: Statistics New Zealand Customised Census data

(1) Pacific: At least one ethnic response falls into current Pacific ethnic group.

(2) Maori: One ethnic response is Maori ethnic group, with or without other ethnic groups.

Graph 2: Pacific with multiple ethnic group and Pacific with Māori ethnic group counts Censuses 1986-2013



Source: Statistics New Zealand Customised Census data

(1) Multiple Pacific: At least two ethnic responses fall into current Pacific ethnic group.

(2) Māori and Pacific: One ethnic response is Māori ethnic group, and at least one other ethnic response falls into current Pacific ethnic group

Over the last three decades the Pacific population has increased by 127% from 130,122 in 1986 to 295,941 in 2013 (Graph 1). In the same period, Pacific peoples, who identified with at least one Pacific ethnicity and any other another ethnicity, increased by 451% from 4,599 in 1986 to 25,356 in 2013 (Graph 2). This extraordinary growth in multiple ethnicities particularly between Pacific with Māori does not appear to slow. The New Zealand 2006 Census showed that 10 percent of the population reported belonging to at least two ethnic groups, rising to 20 percent amongst children aged under 15 years (Statistics New Zealand, 2007). More

recently, the 2013 Census revealed more than 50 percent of the Māori population (53.5 percent or 320,406 people) identified with two or more ethnic groups, compared with 46.5 percent who identified with Māori only. Māori was the only major ethnic group in which people were more likely to identify with two or more major ethnic groups rather than just one (Statistics New Zealand, 2007).

More specific to the Youth Census (2014), the survey generally outlined that amongst youth in New Zealand, about two-thirds of Māori responses were recorded as multi-ethnic, and a relatively high percentage of Pacific and 'other' ethnic groups were recorded as part of a complex ethnic repertoire (relating to at least 3 ethnic groups, if not more). Younger people identify with more ethnic groups than older people. Children (0–14 years) were more likely to belong to more than one ethnic group than people aged 65 years and over.

This difference has increased since the 2006 Census. Overall, the proportion of the population identifying with more than one ethnic group increased across recent censuses. The proportions of people identifying with more than one ethnic group were:

- 11.2 percent in 2013
- 10.4 percent in 2006
- 9.0 percent in 2001 (Statistics New Zealand, 2014, p. 1).

Looking further back, the 2001 Census indicated that 10 percent of the total New Zealand population comprised ethnic migrant communities other than Māori and

Pacific. Projected demographics by Statistics New Zealand (2007) indicate that the country's Asian population could almost double by 2026. The Pacific and Māori populations will also experience increases of 59 and 29 percent respectively. A strategic approach to multicultural diversity is increasingly apparent and essential.

Since diasporas tend to be on the borders of two cultures and two societies, which are never completely interpenetrated and fused (Park, 1997), they often create devices of coping with contradictory needs to integrate in the latter cultural norms, and to maintain aspects of their distinct identity and contact with the former cultural norms (Tsagarousianou, 2002). In this process of coping and transformation, the concept of hybridity is useful for better understanding Pacific Island diasporic minorities. They are:

characterised by internal diversity, especially within generations ... how diasporic cultures are not homogenous, harmonious or singular expressions of community consensus ... and how they actually involve negotiations and conflicts within and outside the group (M Georgiou, 2001, p. 1)

The concept of hybridity implies many points of departure and multiple destinations, and it suggests instabilities and inequalities, not only in the meeting of two different cultures or populations, but within any of those cultures, groups and communities, as much as in-between (Papoutsaki & Strickland, 2008).

Hybrid Identity

Hybrid identity is discussed in relation to an individual who identifies with more than one culture. Bolatagici (2004) names hybridity as:

the fundamental concept of a location that moves beyond reduced definitions such as black and white and opens the possibility to consider the biracial: not as half of two things, but a whole 'new' entity that is not reducible to its components (p. 78).

Her work has roots in the work of Bhabha (1994) who names the hybrid cultural experience as being the third, not a blending of the two originals but a third that is created by the action of blending. The third space gives opportunity for individuals to move from the binary position of Māori or Pākehā, with the positioning of each in an essentialised culture, to a place of continuum and flexibility (Grennell, 2014; Keddell, 2006; Moeke-Maxwell, 2005). This third space I like to conceptualise as being the *vā*.

It is also helpful to note that there are possibilities that come by moving to the hybrid cultural identification. Belonging in both, although being something that is neither, multiplies opportunities and experience. Moeke-Maxwell (2005) expands on this:

The concept of hybridity is liberating because it opens up a space to think about the way New Zealand colonial culture creates unequal subjects. The concept is emancipatory in that its existence (construction and performance) liberates the subject from a sense of unbelonging, dislocation and alienation, and a partial participation and location within the culture(s) of origin. It provides an explanation

for the bi/multiracial women's ability to straddle two different and opposing cultures, providing some understanding of the chameleon-like changes necessary for a hybrid. (p. 503).

Grennell (2014) expands on this and further describes this opening of the third space as a liberating space where individuals can be who they wish without having to fit into the essentialised cultural identification. However, she goes on to say that the negotiation of hybridity is ongoing, daily and tiring. No matter how much the individual may experience themselves as hybrid, the individual is subjected to positioning themselves with one or the other by external pressures.

To exclude one's self from positioning is itself a position that requires resistance to maintain, and in not choosing between one or the other position the individual may exist in a state of discomfort (Grennell, 2014). I am not wanting to put this Pacific community at discomfort so rather than label them as a hybrid identity, I prefer to coin a new term 'blended' that describes them in a less harmful light, and that acknowledges the differences of culture and race in a respectful way.

Blended Background

It is important to state at this point why I have not used the term hybrid identity and instead, used the term 'blended background'. Bolatagici (2004) states that this specific term, 'hybrid identity', is used to describe the identity of an individual who identifies with more than one culture, however, in my research, I am focusing on a community that identifies with more than one culture and race and that these different entities are separate but also related, and that they hold distinct significance to the individual identity, in the Unity-that-is- All (Wendt, 1996).

I have used the term 'blended' as it is not specific to multiple cultural identities but inhabits the blend of mixed culture, mixed race, and mixed ethnicity. Blended speaks of a Pacific community that identifies with many of these identities, and is able to weave (lalaga) and bind (lalava) their individual identity, as they negotiate and re-negotiate their own lived ways of being. What I do acknowledge is that I agree with Bhabha, (1994) that hybridity speaks of a third space, though this third space I have conceptualised as the vā.

The term 'blended backgrounds' I refer to in my research speaks of the up-coming generations of Pacific diaspora youth in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The statistics presented describe a growing community of individuals with multiple ethnicities. Spoonley (2000) in his article '*Reinventing Polynesia: The Cultural Politics of Transnational Pacific Communities*' recognises these changes in the Auckland community and speaks of the emerging change in terms of multiple identities.

The size and maturation of the Pacific communities in Auckland represents the opportunity for alternative and multiple readings of ethnic identity, new forms of association and new personal and communal biographies. It also means that the Pacific is here – in Auckland and New Zealand – rather than a colonial other “out there” in either a geographical sense or as racialised problem within New Zealand civic society. New identity positions have begun to emerge in a New Zealand location, the fa'a Aukilani or fa'a Niu Sila as a variant on a “traditional” fa'a Sāmoa (Macpherson, 1997:93). Indeed, the notion of Sāmoan ess is largely a product of colonialism and migration (Macpherson, 1998:5). It is now also a product of the emerging sense of location and politics of identity of its New Zealand context. The same process is apparent, with important variations, amongst other Pacific communities (p. 12).

It is important to recognise these changes, and to understand that with regard to certain aspects, the term 'diaspora' may no longer apply to this community (Yamamoto, 1996), as it is constantly adapting to different ways of living and raising questions about culture and the environment we live in.

In conclusion, the use of the term 'blended background' can be seen to reflect and emphasise a number of dynamics. It exists in a particular historical and political context. While it allows for children and families to identify as being something other than a presumed norm, it reinforces the 'otherness', by presenting 'cultural identity' as something that is not singular, fixed, obvious and intrinsic to the individual. In this way, 'blended background' is the best option at present as it speaks of the many complexities and layers to identity. It is culturally sensitive and does not allow for racist ideas about the nature of cultural identities.

Meaalofa

Tagoilelagi (1995) stresses that reciprocity is encoded within fa'aSāmoa. Meaalofa is the general term that Sāmoans use to mean 'a gift'. Meaalofa literally means 'a thing of love'. Sāmoans use gifts as gestures of appreciation, respect, love, acknowledgement, and confirmation of special relationships. While the term is synonymous with the kind of gifting that takes place within all Pacific cultures in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Sāmoans see meaalofa as a physical embodiment of the giver's feelings towards the receiver. Sāmoans believe that there is a close spiritual, emotional and genealogical connection that takes place between the giver and receiver of the gift (William, 2006). Therefore, this exegesis may be understood as a meaalofa, a respectful giving. It is a creative blend of knowledge that has been shaped by the generosity of culturally-positioned thinkers, and my work is returned to them and to the wider community. Toluta'u (2015a) expands on this thought and states:

While this thesis within the academy may be traditionally understood as a scholar's independent contribution to knowledge I suggest that it may be considered in another way. Arguably, scholarship (including this thesis) might function as a respectful returning of processed thinking to a greater whole. In this regard the scholar is not a discrete, independent entity, but part of a community of thought from which they receive gifts and to which they return gifts. In doing so they draw on past to contribute to the future. Thus, their thinking, education, inspiration and responsibility function as part of a greater construct of shaped experience.(p.4)

Toluta'u describes the process of formulating her thesis as a collective piece, gifted from the knowledge of others as well as her own. Her thesis is the result of the reciprocity of knowledge that has been given, then gifted back to her community. Like Toluta'u, this exegesis is my gift, my appreciation of respect and love, my acknowledgement and confirmation of the special relationship I have with all of the knowledge and lessons that have been gifted to me. Therefore, the reciprocity act encoded within fa'aSāmoa will be lifted upon completion of this exegesis.

Conclusion

In this chapter, a review of the literature found that there are common themes of vā in fa'aSāmoa and within Pacific cultural beliefs about identity in the diaspora. The theme of vā stresses the importance of considering and incorporating aspects of fa'aSāmoa and into attempts to provide a spatial design that is culturally sensitive to traditional beliefs and knowledge. Reflecting on the design proposal, it needs to explore the strengths of vā through Pacific cultures in successive generations of Pacific peoples living in Western countries, and the ways in which Pacific people draw on traditional and Western ways to sustain their culture in the diaspora.

The design proposal needs to acknowledge the changes of identity that have occurred in the diasporic communities, whilst providing a space for vā relations to occur; a safe natural space for youth to connect with their Pacific culture(s) on their own terms, a space where there is no obligation or pressure to choose your preferred culture or identity, and where there is no tension, confusion, and cultural cringe (Tiatia, 1998).

The vā relations, from my own experience, are still very much active within Aotearoa Pacific communities in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Therefore, what I propose is not just a design offering a space for these vā relations, but an intervention where these relations are stirred (ala-vā means literally 'stirring the vā') to form further connections with multiple cultures and communities. These can also include

metaphorical connections of locations from the diaspora (our current living sites) in Western countries, to the Pacific Islands.

Having now outlined significant literature impacting the research question, it is useful to examine the thoughts and ideas for this research, from the community participants.

CHAPTER THREE

Physical manifestations of identity

This chapter presents findings from the interviews with the six female participants on their experiences with blended identity and their own spaces of living.

The table below provides brief details about each participant with reference to their blended background and generation of diaspora:

Table 3: Participant Details

Participant	Pacific, blended background	Generation of diaspora*
Tasi	Sāmoan, Tongan	Second generation
Lua	Tagata Niue, Sāmoan,	Third generation
Tolu	Sāmoan, Tongan	Second generation
Fa	Sāmoan, Māori	Third generation
Lima	Māori, Sāmoan	Second generation
Ono	Māori, Hawaiian, Cook Island Māori, Sāmoan	Second generation

* Refers to Pacific heritage other than Māori. As the tangata whenua, Māori would not be considered diaspora if living in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Some information has been withheld in order to protect the anonymity of the participants. This includes reference to heritage outside of the scope of the research (e.g. Scottish, French, English etc), location, and community of reference.

This discussion is in four parts, and the participants were asked the following research questions:

Identity

- What is your identity, how do you define yourself?
- What does diaspora mean to you? Do you associate with the term?

Sense of belonging

- Have you visited the islands that you are from? Have these visits influenced or changed your perspective and view of your identity?

The vā

- Which of the cultures that make up your blended identity do you affiliate with the most and why?
- Do you feel that a blended Pacific identity is acknowledged in your community? How?

Space

- Where in your daily life do you feel most connected to your identity?
- How does your space/ home/ furniture/ garden/ art reflect you as a person? Does your environment reflect your blended identity?
- What comparisons can be drawn between the home you grew up in as a child and your home environment now?
- Where do you most feel 'at home' in terms of your identity?

Part One: Identity

Prior to explaining the term 'blended', I wanted to hear from each participant about how they defined themselves and their individual identity. Every talanoa with the participants revealed their identities and who they were, and so part one begins with a discussion about their identities. This is followed by their accounts of their individual explanations on defining themselves. Question one asked 'What is your identity, how do you define yourself?' Tasi said:

I am Pacific, I am a New Zealand born Pacific Islander of Sāmoan, Tongan but also of Chinese descent. (Tasi 2015, personal communication).

Tasi acknowledged first that she is Pacific, but then confirmed that she was a New Zealand-born Pacific Islander. For Tasi, it was important to mention this specific detail and note the difference between Pacific-born and New Zealand-born Pacific Islanders. Lua said:

Firstly, I am a Mother, female, Pasifika, fiercely protective of my children, maternal. These attributes I accredit to my Mother. (Lua 2015, personal communication).

Lua acknowledged that her identity was that she is first and foremost a mother and female. Lua used the term Pasifika and credited her mother for her attributes of being very protective of her children. Tolu noted:

New Zealand/Kiwi/ Polynesian. (Tolu 2015, personal communication)

Tolu identified herself as New Zealand Polynesian and was the only participant who used the word Kiwi to define her identity. It spoke of her close connection to New Zealand and that it was very much a part of her identity. Fa said:

My identity? I am half Sāmoan, half Māori. (Fa 2015, personal communication)

Fa defined her identity as one whole; half being Sāmoan and the other half Māori. Lima said:

New Zealand Pacific. (Lima 2015, personal communication).

Lima was general and straight forward in the way she defined her identity as New Zealand Pacific, that she was not just one or the other, but defined what type of Pacific identity she was by acknowledging she was a New Zealand Pacific. Ono said:

I describe myself as a 'woman of the Pacific; a Pacific woman; a woman from Polynesia; a Polynesian woman'. This is because my ethnicity spans several Polynesian islands including: Māori in Aotearoa; native Hawaiian from the island of Maui; Cook Island Māori from the northern

Cooks of Penrhyn (Tongareva), Rakahanga and Manihiki and Sāmoa.
(Ono 2015, personal communication).

Ono was the most descriptive when it came to defining her identity; she was passionate and spoke very poetically about who she is. Ono was specific about her lineage, and the Pacific Islands that made up her identity.

Most, if not all, of the female participants were brief and described themselves as either New Zealand-Pacific or Polynesian. Their individual response to the question refers to the 'new identity' (Spickard et al., 2002), that even though most were not native New Zealanders, they felt as if New Zealand had to be acknowledged as part of their Pacific identity, as if it would set them apart from other Pacific and Polynesian peoples.

Question two asked 'What does diaspora mean to you? Do you associate with the term?' As anticipated from the literature, most of the participants had vaguely heard the term diaspora, but did not describe themselves as diasporic identities. Therefore, as the researcher, I explained this term, and how it is used within this body of research. Of the six I interviewed, four knew the term but were brief in their reply, so their responses are discussed first. Those of the six who were more knowledgeable about the term diaspora are discussed next, followed by their views in relation to identity.

Tasi who earlier acknowledged that she was a New Zealand-born Pacific Islander, did not feel any affiliation with the term diaspora. She said:

Diaspora to me means widespread from our homelands. I have never really associated with this term before. (Tasi 2015, personal communication).

Tasi clearly knew the term had to do with migration and leaving the homeland of the Pacific, but never associated with the term. This is also supported in Lima, and Tolu's response, who say:

I have heard of the term diaspora in literature, but I don't associate with it. (Lima 2015, personal communication).

Not a term I hear every day. To do with migration. (Tolu 2015, personal communication).

Their responses were brief but to the point. Lua added that it was an ancient Greek term she learned in school, then specified that it related to her parents who left the Pacific Islands for New Zealand seeking a better life. She went on to say:

From school I remember this to be an Ancient Greek term given to 'a scattering or sowing of seeds'.... I don't really associate with the term, as it was my parents who left their Pasifika islands to come to New Zealand seeking a better life. I am New Zealand-born and I have my connection to

my ethnicity/heritage, but I don't feel that I am the one to feel being torn or pulled from my roots. (Lua 2015, personal communication).

Initially, Fa didn't think she was diaspora because of the notion with migration, but then took a long pause and reflected upon her own experiences as a New Zealand-born Sāmoa. She says/said:

I don't think I am diaspora because I was born in New Zealand, so I can't really relate to it in terms of migrating somewhere else, but I think it relates to me in being two different ethnicities. So the times when I go to Sāmoa, I can sort of feel a sense of belonging there but I live in New Zealand. But also living here in Porirua, which is a strong Pacific Island community and travelling to my mum and my Māori family up North it's like a strong Māori community, to me it's like I got the best of both worlds I can relate in both culture's, as they are quite similar, but there not, like the values are similar. So diaspora I can relate to it, but I don't feel like it describes all of me and who I am. (Fa 2015, personal communication).

Fa's response was interesting as she redefined her use of the term to describe the experiences she felt visiting Sāmoa, and her Māori family north of Auckland city. To her, diaspora meant feeling a sense of belonging to places of identity, away from Porirua Wellington, where she lives. Ono's response to the question is similar, however, her use of the term is somewhat different again. She said:

I understand diaspora to mean any group or community that have fled their country of origin. I understand that the term is a Greek term and related originally to the scattering of the Jews to countries outside of

Palestine after the Babylonian captivity. In modern times I understand the word to mean a scattered population with a common origin. Yes, I do associate with the term because my family has immigrated to Aotearoa from Hawai'i, Sāmoa and the Cook Islands and because I was born here in Aotearoa and not on any of the islands (Ono 2015, personal communication).

It is evident in these participant responses that the use of the term diaspora is changing and has weakened for Pacific Islanders living in Aotearoa/New Zealand who are members of the second and third generations (Spickard et al., 2002). However, it is also important to realise that Fa and Ono have thought-provoking responses, as they were able to conceptualise the meaning of diaspora for themselves, in their own living context, and therefore able to relate to the term.

Part two: Sense of Belonging

When asked if the participants have visited the islands that they are from, and whether this had influenced or changed their identity, they each described a unique experience; yet they all came to the realisation that they felt more closely connected to their Pacific identity. A sense of belonging had come through in the participant responses. Lua, in her interview, pointed out that although she felt a sense of belonging to Niue when she first visited at the age of 54, this did not change her sense of identity. It did, however, enrich her perspective of her native culture. Lua says:

Niue – this was totally a different connection all together. My first visit to Niue was in 2011 at 54 years' age. Leaving the airport and standing in the middle of the 'main road' two hours later – I felt and knew – this is where I belong...I absolutely loved the emotion and have been back several times to visit with family and enjoy The Rock...My visits have been a couple of weeks at a time as initially there was only one weekly flight to Niue. This has been improved with another service being provided. My visit to Niue did not change my identity – more so – it gave me a stronger insight as to where I belonged, where I/my parents came from, what life may have been for them, why they left to come to New Zealand.... It gave me a perspective of enrichment, a million and one questions to ask my Mum when I returned to New Zealand. (Lua 2015, personal communication).

Tasi's constant visits to Tonga meant that she felt more closely connected to her Tongan identity. She felt that if she were to visit Sāmoa and China as often, then

she would have the same connections to these places as she does for Tonga. She said:

The more times I have visited Tonga, the closer connected I feel with my identity of being Tongan. I feel I also need to go back to Sāmoa so I can have the same connection there and I would also, one day, like to visit Guangdong province in China which is where the Chinese workers that first came to Sāmoa come from. (Tasi 2015, personal communication).

Ono supported Tasi's statement but goes into detail and lists the factors that influenced her Pacific identity. She said:

Travelling to these islands has given me greater insight into the languages and cultures and enabled me to reflect upon my own upbringing, lifestyle, environment, behaviours and ways in which I interpret the world around me. So yes, these trips have influenced my identity over time. When I am in Hawai'i I feel more Hawaiian than Māori. I used to feel more Māori while living in Aotearoa, but as I have grown older, I feel a very strong mix of Pacific and Māori. (Ono 2015, personal communication).

The experience of visiting the islands was a real eye opener for the majority of these participants. Most indicated a sense of appreciation for the islands, and while they acknowledged the environment and lifestyle of the people, at the same time, they were aware of the benefits they had growing up in New Zealand. Fa says:

I have been to Sāmoa twice and both times I have stayed for three weeks. After the first time it was a real eye opener, because I guess you don't really

appreciate what you have, until you go somewhere and your like..”the struggle is real”.. (Laughs) and your crying because you didn’t get a lolly. (Laughs) No but in all seriousness it was a good eye opener because it made me appreciate everything, but it made me understand sort of where they (family in Sāmoa) were coming from in terms of money, what I really understood was because we were from New Zealand, and we were visiting Sāmoa that we were seen as rich, because you lived in New Zealand, and things like that, and I got to understand that better because of the conversation I had with my nana. I asked my nana why don’t you tell our family that we’re not rich, that we’re not millionaires that we can’t pull money out of our pockets like left, right, and centre, for them. Like I understood that they were struggling but so are we, it’s just like in a different way. In Sāmoa they can grow their crops they have that freedom to work and sustain themselves of the land, but here in New Zealand we have to find work and jobs to survive. So that’s what I mean that we are both struggling. Nana’s response was that she agreed with me, she said that “they don’t know because they have never left Sāmoa, so what they see is that we are coming to the island with our flash clothes and assume that we are rich, they don’t understand our story back in New Zealand. But then I wanted my nana to make them understand, because I was getting annoyed at our family always asking for money, money for this, money for that, like we are struggling to pay our bills, and I totally feel for them but at the end of the day, we are not rich ourselves, but then nana got me to understand things a lot better. In terms of appreciation I appreciated everything a lot more, just being able to drive around here in New Zealand, the food that we ate, the quality of things that we have, like health, education and other benefits. And seeing back in Sāmoa that they had minimal things but were really happy, like not needing materialistic things to make you happy. The second time I went was with my little cousin, and it was good for him to see everything because he is quite spoilt so it was a good experience to see everything with him and value the life we had at home. The last time I was in the island was in 2009, I’m due to go back to the islands soon and take my husband back because he has never been, and he is full Sāmoan. (Fa 2015, personal communication)

Fa expressed the view that ‘they were seen as rich’ coming from New Zealand, and that they were more fortunate, but the reality was they too were struggling to maintain their lifestyle. Fa summarised the hardship many Pacific migrants face when leaving the homeland to find better opportunities for their families in Western countries. She noted they are faced with new difficulties of maintaining their family and living expenses in Aotearoa/New Zealand, whilst supporting family back in the Pacific Islands. Such practices are encoded within fa’aSāmoa, where individuals are constantly reminded of the importance of their contributions to the collective welfare of the ‘āiga. As mentioned, one develops one’s ‘āiga relationships through responsibilities that are maintained over time. Sāmoan society is highly stratified, and a person’s status determines his or her roles, responsibilities and corresponding entitlements. (Howard et al., 2002; Tagoilelagi, 1995; Tuagalu, 2009). Fa’s nana was merely upholding the values and teachings she grew up with and passing the knowledge of fa’aSāmoa onto Fa. Fa’aSāmoa encourages and obliges ‘āiga to become cohesive, and fa’alavelave operates to ensure that ‘āiga meet together often, with continuous open communication to and from New Zealand, the homeland and abroad (Aanae, 1998a).

Part three: The vā

We often talk about the vā as a conceptual relational space that is separate but connected. The vā was evident when the participants spoke about their blended identities, specifically in response to the question ‘Which of the cultures that make up your blended identity do you affiliate with the most and why?’ Most said in their experiences growing up, one culture had always played a dominant role over the other, and this was influenced by location, parents, elders in the family, language, and church. Fa said:

I affiliate most with my Sāmoan side because I was raised in it, my Sāmoan family is a lot bigger than my Māori family, and actually where I live in Porerua, all my Māori family don't live there, they all live up North, and most of my Sāmoan family live in Porerua with me. I go up North twice a year to see my Maori family, because me and my mum are really close and all my Maori family we are really close. I'm living with my dad at the moment because I'm trying to save for a house with my husband. (Fa 2015, personal communication).

Being raised in the Sāmoan culture meant Fa was closely affiliated to her Sāmoan identity, and she added that this was also influenced by her location because she lived amongst most of her Sāmoan family. However, her location did not mean her Māori identity was compromised; she remained closely connected to her mother of Māori decent and visited her Māori family as often as she could. For Lua her

experience was much the same as Fa's, raised in her Niuean culture as it was dominant in her household growing up. She said:

I affiliate more with my Niue culture – although my Mother is Sāmoan and my Father Niuean, my Mother was sent to Niue where she met and married my Father. Maybe because my Father was the head of the house – I don't know for sure, but I remember growing up that the main culture in our home was Niuean. My Niuean family visited all the time, our home was always filled with Niuean relatives and cousins. I remembered that my Sāmoan family was very strict all the time – when growing up, I always felt that they were not much fun – therefore, I/we gravitated to mainly our Niuean side. (Lua 2015, personal communication).

Lua expressed that her Sāmoan family was very strict, and reflecting on her response, it never occurred to me to ask Lua to elaborate on this topic. Lua's view of her Sāmoan family could have resulted from them being very strict in their fa'aSāmoa. It is important to note that perhaps Lua felt the paradox of identity that she was not ‘Sāmoan enough’, and did not understand their ways of being (Anae, 1998a), therefore distancing herself and creating a vā. This point is further explored in Ono's response, who affiliated more with her New Zealand Māori, Cook Island Māori and Hawaiian identity, because the fa'aSāmoa way was denied by her Sāmoan grandmother, who broke tradition by refusing to marry a Sāmoan man. She states:

I affiliate more with New Zealand Māori, Cook Island Māori and Hawaiian. This is because my paternal grandmother was very close to her Cook Island father and fought with her Sāmoan mother to the point where she defied her mother's wish for an arranged marriage to a Sāmoan and eloped with her Hawaiian beau. She married for love. (Ono 2015, personal communication).

The vā, although not explicitly recognised by the participants, was present in their lives as being the space that separated them from the other cultures and traditions that made up their blended identities. This is not to say that it was intentionally disregarded, but it was something I recognised from my experience of vā, as more of a space that could be filled and nurtured. This then led me to ask each participant if they felt that blended identity was acknowledged in their community. Their responses were:

All my life I have been made to separate out my Pacific side from my Māori side such as: the forms we filled in to go from primary to secondary school and on more official forms like the New Zealand Census. This also applies to the communities we belong to as a result of intermarriage being frowned upon. Often it was very hard as a child juggling the multiple identities associated with our mixed ethnicity and the pushback from peers and society in general in accepting these – a kind of clandestine racism. While this seems to have reduced to some extent as an adult it is alive and well in some quarters of my life and particularly in my work environment. Unusual though it may sound, haole colleagues perceive me as being only Māori and are in denial about my Pacific genealogical links. The same can be said for my Pacific colleagues who claim the same thing and go a step further by claiming that Māori are colonising the Pacific in Aotearoa/New Zealand. There is an attitude by some Pacific and Māori colleagues that if you are of 'mixed blood' then you are contaminated, or less than and don't count as being a Pacific person or a Māori person. It is very disturbing and so as a protection this can lead people from blended backgrounds to choose one identity over another. For me, I have NEVER chosen one over the other; throughout my whole life I have always been defiant and acknowledged all of my identities. Not to do so would have made me feel like an empty vessel. (Ono 2015, personal communication).

Ono spoke of the difficulties she experienced growing up in her community with her blended background, having to justify her identity according to who she was with. This statement is supported by Lima. She said:

This is not something that I experienced growing up. Those days we had to choose between being Maori or a Pacific Islander. The circumstance and who was asking determined which I chose. These days, with the influx of numerous diverse settlers, particularly to Auckland, there is more acceptance of difference – regardless of blend. However, at times, I feel that some Maori are not as accepting. For instance, I was privy to a speech recently by someone I respect. However, I was concerned about their comments that Maori are different to any other peoples in NZ and should be treated and respected that way. It transported me back to my growing up days and the pressure to determine which I was. I didn't have time to speak with the presenter and wondered if they realised that they were separating two peoples who are very connected by history and have an understanding. My experience in NZ is that the Tangata whenua peoples are acknowledged and respected by Pacific people always. (Lima 2015, personal communication)

Sawicka et al. (2007) found in their study of young New Zealanders of Indian, Pākehā, Māori and Greek ancestry that their expressions of cultural identity varied depending on the situations they were in, that there were marked differences between what some saw as merely an ethnic label and what others saw as a living culture, and that for young Māori there was much variation in terms of alignment with 'traditional' markers of Māori identity (Sawicka et al., 2007). At certain times within both Ono and Lima's careers, they experienced racism, and this brought back

the feelings of pressure to identify who they were going to be according to their community, family or environment. This was also supported by Fa's experience growing up. She says:

But in terms of me growing up, I didn't really know my Māori side, so I would never say I was Māori. I was actually ashamed because I never really knew anything about it, and my mum didn't really put that on me, it wasn't until I was older she reconnected with her culture, then she brought that down on me. When I was raised, I was brought up in a Sāmoan community, and I never acknowledged my Māori side because my mum never made a point of it to me. At the time she was living with me and my Sāmoan grandparents and she was trying to be respectful in terms of making them happy, so she would raise me as a Sāmoan girl. It was only until I reached intermediate that I realised there were heaps of people of other cultures and that actually I wasn't the only Māori (laughs). Because in Primary everyone was either Sāmoan, or Tokelauan or something but there was no Māori's, but then I went to intermediate that was joined with a collage so then I saw a whole lot of older kids and I was this little year 7 form 1, and there were heaps of different cultures, and it was fine. I was teased and mocked at Primary school by all my friends for being a Maori, but when I was surrounded by others in intermediate it didn't hurt me as much and I was ok with being Māori. I was like, ok but you're in my country so it was a cool way to retaliate, but growing up I was never taught any of that and never realised it. My whole family would acknowledge I was Māori, and be like come here you little Māori girl, everyone knew it, but because we lived with my grandparents everything was just Sāmoan, speaking the language and doing things the Sāmoan way. (Fa 2015, personal communication)

The participants were then asked 'Do you feel that a blended Pacific identity is acknowledged in your community? How?' They all had mixed responses, which were all positive, and they explained that a lot has changed and progressed over time, making blended identity more accepted in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In Lua's view:

The pride of being acknowledged more in society of who my identity is has I think has been brought about by my children this generation, yells to the world who they are and where they are from and very proudly in school, work, social media (Facebook which I do not even try to use) every form of oral, visual concept. (Lua 2015, personal communication)

Lua recognises that change has occurred over time, and she sees this through her children, who proudly acknowledge their blended backgrounds. It is acknowledged through their schooling and work, but most importantly, through social media. Over time, social media has played a huge role with online communication channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration (Rouse, 2015). Lua adds that social media is a medium where her children can express their identity, and allow them to form wider connections of networks with family and friends. Lua uses Facebook as an example, but other forms of popular social media sites are Twitter, Instagram, Google+, Wikipedia, LinkedIn, and Pinterest.

Lima speaks of her own experience being able to negotiate her identity depending on her situation. She said:

I believe I have become the expert of being at home, whatever the situation. It doesn't mean that I am not one identity or the other, but that one or other usually dominates depending on the situation. The change between them for me is seamless and very easy and gentle – on myself and those around me. I have often thought that I might pursue one identity and leave the others somewhere else – however, this hasn't been possible and I have come to realise that it isn't necessary and they are all special and contribute to the person I am – that is someone who is many parts and comfortable with this state of being. A gift that I am ever grateful for. (Lima 2015, personal communication)

At first I was a bit taken by Lima's response, and did not feel comfortable knowing she changed her identity. I came to know that it was Lima's choice, and if anything it made her unique. Lima was able to negotiate her vā relations according to where she positioned herself in a certain situation. She used her blended background as her strength and came to know it as a gift she is grateful for.

Ono also expressed that she experienced the change of acceptance first-hand through her hapū. She said:

Throughout my lifetime I have experienced a change in societal attitudes. New Zealand Māori generally frowned upon intermarriage between New Zealand Māori and Pacific peoples in the 50s and 60s; and the same attitudes existed within Pacific communities as well. I was fortunate that within my hapū of Te Whānau a Ruataupare and the vision of our former leaders, strong relationships were forged between the Cook Islands and my hapū through the naming of our whareniui, Te Hono ki Rarotonga.

Consequently, there has been intermarriage between members of the hapū and Cook Islanders and whakapapa is the evidence of this long-term relationship. (Ono 2015, personal communication).

For Ono, blended identity was becoming more acceptable through intermarriage, and the acknowledgments by her hapū of relations in the Cook Islands. Tasi, like Ono, also felt the recognition of blended Pacific identity is being realised, but is only at its beginning stages. She states:

I feel the recognition of blended Pacific identity is only just starting to be realised. Before we were all just lumped into one culture or another. Often in the past when I was asked I would say I'm all of them and it would irritate me when I was told to choose one over the other because I was proud of both backgrounds just as I was proud to be the child of both parents not just one. (Tasi 2015, personal communication).

Tasi feels that we have still got a long way to go in recognising and acknowledging the diversity of Pacific peoples with blended backgrounds. In adding to this, Lua and Tolu also believed that although blended identity is recognised, this is not acknowledged in their community. Lua said:

I have felt that there has been more of a changed view of blended identities only in my latter years of life. Growing up, everything was taught to us – 'doing things the Palagi way', therefore, sadly, we lost a lot of our heritage. I have always regretted not being able to learn either language, although I understand more Niuean than Sāmoan, and also speak very little of Niuean language. (Lua 2015, personal communication).

Although Lua was affiliated more with her Niuean identity growing up, it was still considered very much the Pālagi way of doing things. Lua acknowledges that, for her, language plays a major role in her Pacific identities, which she regrets not learning, but this also may have caused uneasy relationships with her Sāmoan identity, as language is one of the three poles founded within fa'asinomaga (Aiono, 1997), thus creating a vā. For Tolu, she feels no acknowledgment at all, although she claims she has not been compelled to investigate, and she too feels that knowing a Pacific language entitles you to more of an authentic Pacific identity. She states:

Unfortunately, as a Kiwi-born (Wellingtonian) I don't think we're really acknowledged. In relation to a blended Pacific identity – I haven't been compelled to investigate how we're acknowledged. I do feel that if we don't speak the language of any of our blended identity then we're not seen as 'authentic' or the 'real-deal'. We're 'Plasifika'. This is so annoying to me! (Tolu 2015, personal communication)

There was no real cohesion or theme that was shared between the participants to whether they thought blended identities were acknowledged in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Everyone had their own views and opinions according to their own experiences. The factors that influenced this vā, were the same factors that connected them to their main affiliated culture; these were: location, parents, elders in the family, church and language. Language, according to Lua and Tolu, played a huge factor in them being acknowledged as an 'authentic' Pacific Islander, and this is the case for most New Zealand-born Pacific youth.

Part four: Space

As expected, the concept of space in relation to their identity was a new concept for all participants. In this part of the talanoa, I began by explaining what I meant by this, and then opened up the discussion for questions. While this was the first time most had thought about their spaces in relation to their identity, most had reflected on the spaces they inhabit (home, work, office, church) and found it easy to see the relationship I was drawing on. They started to see spaces and objects that reflected their identity, and spoke about objects that reminded them of the Pacific Islands. Most of the participants were able to speak of several spaces that reflected their identity. Lima identified her family home, work, and her daily activities as spaces she connected to her identity. She said:

In my home, when I look in the mirror, when I have family gatherings, when I am cooking, when I am working, when I am shopping. I am very comfortable having a diverse background and no longer feel obliged to fit in with NZ pakeha society and communities. I enjoy the freedom of living in a diverse city that is learning tolerance and to enjoy difference. Something that wasn't in existence when we were young. (Lima 2015, personal communication)

Lima identified spaces, but also beautifully described her physical appearance when looking in the mirror as a space that reminded her of her identity. This bold statement was her starting point, it was evident in her confidence that she was able to manifest her diverse identity in all that she inhabited. Her acceptance of who she was reflected in her freedom and ability to embrace the differences around her. Ono

possessed this same confidence, although she was very brief in what she said, and spoke largely of her surroundings and spaces she decorated.

In my home, in my research and supervision with postgraduate students which takes me to the Cooks and Hawai'i. (Ono 2015, personal communication).

Fa embraced her home, her Sāmoan husband and work environment as places she felt connected to her identity. She said:

Everywhere really, at home we're all Sāmoan my husband is Sāmoan, at work I work for Pacific communities, even though everyone at work calls me a Maori (laughs). I connect with a lot of my Pacific colleagues from managers, to team leaders and I love my job. (Fa 2015, personal communication).

Lua summarises nicely in a few words the impression I got from Lima, Ono and Fa that 'There is no gap/gaps'. That identity for these participants was not seen as separate components of islands, culture, and traditions; it was a merging of these that they embraced as their identity. Lua said:

There is no gap/gaps. I am Pasifika. My values and learnings are from my Mother and this is instilled to my children on every level at every point. For me, there is no such thing as a point or time in my daily life in feeling most connected to my identity. (Lua 2015, personal communication).

Lua's upbringing and Pacific cultural teachings from her mother, have also been passed down to her children. For Lua there is no point in time or place where her identity lies, it is very much who she is as a Pacific woman.

Unlike the others Tasi felt a reconnection to her identity when returning to postgraduate study as a mature student. She said:

Since returning to do postgraduate study, I am starting to feel reconnected to my identity because in finding answers to my research question I am reconnecting with extended family I have not seen since I was young and being reintroduced reminds me of the identities I had put on a shelf and had forgotten for some time. I don't wear it loud and proud but more a quiet pride on the inside. (Tasi 2015, personal communication).

Tasi's response was humbling as her postgraduate study took her on a journey that would reconnect her with parts of her identity she had forgotten about. Her identity is very much reflected in her artistic ability and research, but not so much in the spaces she inhabits.

Their responses to the questions taught me that over time, they became more comfortable expressing their identities. All participants except Tasi, had come to realise that their daily living was a reflection of their identity, not just a singular space, but 'everywhere'.

Photographs Documentation of blended spaces

This chapter concludes with photos of the spaces described by each participant, these selected images are accompanied by their anonymous voices and personal insight into their identities.

- Figure 7: Simati, B. (2015). *Family kitchen image 1*. [Digital Photographs] (p.g.67)
Figure 8: Simati, B. (2015). *Blended space image 2*. [Digital Photographs] (p.g.68)
Figure 9: Simati, B. (2015). *Blended space image 3*. [Digital Photographs] (p.g.69)
Figure 10: Simati, B. (2015). *The garden image 4*. [Digital Photographs] (p.g.71)
Figure 11: Simati, B. (2015). *Blended space image 5*. [Digital Photographs] (p.g.73)
Figure 12: Simati, B. (2015). *Blended space image 6*. [Digital Photographs] (p.g.74)
Figure 13: Simati, B. (2015). *Blended space image 7*. [Digital Photographs] (p.g.76)
Figure 14: Simati, B. (2015). *Blended space image 8*. [Digital Photographs] (p.g.78)
Figure 15: Simati, B. (2015). *Blended space image 9*. [Digital Photographs] (p.g.79)
Figure 16: Simati, B. (2015). *Blended space image 10*. [Digital Photographs] (p.g.81)
Figure 17: Simati, B. (2015). *Blended space image 11*. [Digital Photographs] (p.g.82)
Figure 18: Simati, B. (2015). *Blended space image 12*. [Digital Photographs] (p.g.84)
Figure 19: Simati, B. (2015). *Blended space image 13*. [Digital Photographs] (p.g.86)
Figure 20: Simati, B. (2015). *Blended space image 14*. [Digital Photographs] (p.g.87)
Figure 21: Simati, B. (2015). *Blended space image 15*. [Digital Photographs] (p.g.88)
Figure 22: Simati, B. (2015). *Blended space image 16*. [Digital Photographs] (p.g.90)
Figure 23: Simati, B. (2015). *Blended space image 17*. [Digital Photographs] (p.g.91)
Figure 24: Simati, B. (2015). *Blended space image 18*. [Digital Photographs] (p.g.93)

I have different living experiences that reflect many things – one home is very special and holds the history and memories of five generations of our family. There are smells, imprints, photos, memories that surround me when I am in the old house. Far from a museum, the old house is a safe haven, not just for me, but for the ever-expanding extended family that love to visit, hear the old family stories, see the history and feel part of it all (Lima 2015, personal communication).







The garden is a reflection of my grandparents – old trees planted by them – fertile soil, which my grandfather utilised every square inch to help feed his family, neighbours and friends. I love occasionally finding ‘things’ deep in the soil that belonged to the family – old bottles, gardening equipment. I curse the old Holly Tree that grandmother planted so many many years ago. Sometimes, barefooted, I step on the prickly leaves – ouch. When I fire up the old coal range, I think of my grandparents and their lives back in the early 1900s (Lima 2015, personal communication).



I was born into a home where beads, carvings, photos were everywhere, I loved the items my mum would display around the house; you just don't get that anymore. We were part of the new suburbia that developed in the 60s in New Zealand. Nuclear families (which I hated – I missed my Aunties and Uncles that I had around me for the first 5 years of my life). (Tasi 2015, personal communication).





My homes today – reflect many parts of me and I am privileged to have the luxury of them being separate, rather than trying to blend them all together. It means that I get to be that part of me completely depending on where I am. One day, I will need to work out how to bring it together as I won't be able to live so separately (Tolu 2015, personal communication).



I feel most connected with my culture at home, because I have my sister with me who brings the Maori culture into my life, and every day now, and she teaches me heaps of Maori words. And living with my Nana who only speaks Sāmoan, so having that language around me constantly is precious to me, and makes my cultural identity. Definitely at home where we are all connecting and engaging with each other (Fa 2015, personal communication).





Come to our home, and you can from a visual perspective, of my identity, see the love of Pasifika. The brightness of colour, richness of food, music of singing, vibrancy of art, design of dress...everything is Pasifika – it's the language that there is little of, but not for want of trying...I practise all the time (Lua 2015, personal communication).

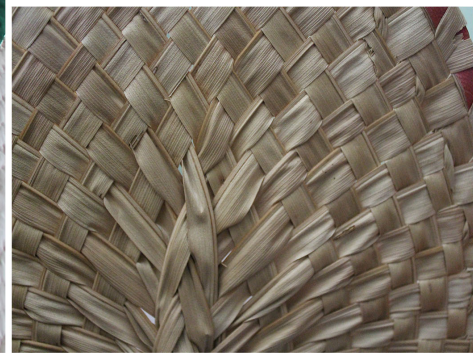




The strength of family has never diminished from growing up and to what I have imparted to our children. The love and support from family towards each other, the basic family values of courtesy and manners is always at the forefront. Not having much is called improvising – no such thing as ‘going without.’ Our houses were very different in structure and location, but our home has always been filled with love and caring, which is the only thing that matters (Lua 2015, personal communication).



My home, furniture, garden and art reflect my blended identity! Of course in the food we eat, in the jewellery I wear; in the family artefacts that adorn our home like, the Hawaiian quilts and tivaevae from the Cook Islands that adorn the beds; the framed Māori and Pacific art on the walls; the frangipani and gardenia in the outside gardens and moth orchids and anthuriums inside; the scent of tiare or pikake from candles; the koa wood panel; the ukelele's; the Hawaiian signage; the numerous CDS of Pacific musicians, etc (Ono 2015, personal communication).







The most poignant comparison between my home as a child and my home now is the absence of elders from my Cook Island/Sāmoan /Hawaiian and Māori families. I was fortunate to have been brought up with grandparents and great grandparents who had significant influence on my life (Ono 2015, personal communication).





The home I live in now, is quite empty and undecorated in comparison to the home I grew up in. I grew up in a house that had cultural wall hangings, religious paintings and family portraits with plastic flowers around them. We had a woven mat on the sitting room floor and my mum did a lot of embroidery which was on our pillow slips and other items. We also had crocheted blankets and I remember one brightly coloured tivaevae blanket that was used on my parent's bed too. My mother did a lot of craft which she had learnt as a child in Tonga, both she and my father were keen on gardening so we had taro leaves growing out back and in the front, our garden looked like a decorative Tongan garden of the monarchy with neat rocks surrounding flower beds and so on (Tasi 2015, personal communication).



Discussion

During the process of taking photos in the home of Lua, our talanoa continued as she weaved her way through her beautiful home narrating stories about certain pieces, and then she asked me about the security of her tapa cloth and fine mats. I was curious to find out what she had meant by this. She went on to explain how a few pieces of her tapa collection had suffered water damage from a house flood earlier that year. The concern in her voice was because these particular tapas (Fig.25) were unique and special to her; they had been in her family for generations and were then gifted to Lua as a wedding gift, and she had planned on gifting these to her daughters when they got married. I then respectfully asked Lua if I could view the damage, and she was more than happy to bring the tapa into work for me to view.

These tapa cloths have been in my family for generations, and I am just heart broken, that I didn't realise the water from upstairs and soaked through the ceiling and was leaking straight onto my previous tapa. It was only months later when I was going through my tapa to air it out, that I found out what had happened and it was too late to do anything. But other issue was with my claim for insurance, I know it can't be fixed, I just wanted it value in money so I could possibly buy another one to replace it. But I don't know how much these things cost, or how much I'm entitled to, could you help me Benita? (Lua 2015, personal communication)

She had mentioned she had house insurance, but did not know the value of her tapa, or how to seek this sort of advice from an expert. By this time, I was eager to help



Figure 25: Simati, B. (2015). *Damaged Tapa*. [Digital Photographs]

my participant, so I sought help from my connections in the community, and they too were unsure of the value of the tapa in monetary terms. I then asked an elder from our church community, and with her knowledge and expertise in making the tapa and my historical knowledge about the tapa, we were able to value the tapa. I then went away to write up a letter for Lua explaining how we justified the value and authenticity of the tapa for her insurance claim. Lua was very grateful and was successful in receiving her claim.

Lua was one person who I had the pleasure of helping, and our talanoa together raised many issues for me regarding the preservation of Pacific artefacts in the diaspora. This was a beautiful piece of history that pertained to Lua's family and it was a shame to have lost the mana (authority, power, prestige) this tapa carried. At the same time, I knew this particular story was an example of what I was hoping to gain from my talanoa with participants. This was not just a journey Lua had travelled alone; many others in the diaspora have shared similar experiences. It raised questions for me around issues of preservation, and what happens to the masses of artefacts that are damaged, lose recognition and disappear without proper care. Reflecting on the photos I had taken from all of my participants, it was amazing to see the historical pieces collected and treasured in each home, which showed that it was not the spatial environment that was important, but rather the artefacts that adorned these blended spaces. Pacific artefacts that have travelled from all around the Pacific Islands have their own significant history and meaning to each family. These were the very images I wanted to archive and expected to exhibit for

my final examination, that is, these blended spaces of identity. The spaces of our future generations is something to celebrate and be a part of. Yet something in my heart did not sit right for the conclusion of this exegesis. Something more was beginning to take shape in my head.

I wanted to contribute to my community in more ways than one, to give back to my participants and show them the alofa (love) I was offered when I visited each of them; to acknowledge each Pacific Island individually and its significance to our blended identity in the diaspora. I also wanted to capture other beautiful Pacific artefacts in the diaspora that reflected traditional knowledge, skills and significant history; to acknowledge the blended Pacific communities in the diaspora. To create a blended Pacific community in the wider diaspora; to create an archival repository shedding light on Pacific craftsmanship; to create a space for blended identities to feel safe learning about their different identities, cultures and traditions. So how were my skills as a spatial designer going to achieve all of these goals?

An archival digital repository of Pacific artefacts from the diaspora community was my solution. The framework and visual template of this repository was to be the creative component of my exegesis and, specifically an archival system built for the sole purpose of preserving the knowledges, traditions and history contained in Pacific artefacts from the diaspora. This has long been a dream of mine to create something I could gift to my community and be proud of achieving.

Having now discussed significant talanoa with the research participants, it is useful to examine the Lala-Vā methodology and its application to the project design.

CHAPTER FOUR

Methodology- Lala-Vā

In her thesis Toluta'u (year) states:

Remember the path you have travelled and if it is a hazardous path the you should turn towards a path on which it is smoother to journey. This PhD charts unfamiliar waters, yet it also journeys along the same hala toka kovi (a rough road) or hala toka lelei (a flat road) that the hou'eiki fafine (Tongan women) who form its focus experience (Toluta'u, 2015a, p. 39).

Like the migrations of these *hou'eiki fafine* (Tongan woman) to other countries described by Toluta'u, I did not undertake this journey knowing the outcome of my destination, but like them, I knew clearly the purpose of my journey. In this regard, Toluta'u reminds us of William and Ormand's (2010) assertion that research is 'a process of seeking explanation and meaning' (p.1). As such, we may employ it when we either seek to generate new knowledge or 'make a contribution to human experience' (Scrivener, 2000, p. 6). In such instances that contribute to human experience, we deal with judicious questioning rather than simply re-orchestrating facts (Toluta'u, 2015a).

Table 4: Research Design

PARADIGM	METHODOLOGY	METHODS
Practice- Led Creative Production	Lala-Vā	Interviews Archival research Current Museum displays Participation and documentation Experimentation: Lalava & Lalaga

Paradigm

The research design for this exegesis may be understood as three layers. I begin with its paradigm as the first point. In practice-led research it is useful to consider what Toluta'u (2015) describes as a subsection of qualitative research that is supported by Scrivener (2000) who calls this Creative Production Research. This kind of review he defines as 'inventive and imaginative and realised through artefacts' (Scrivener, 2000, p. 15). Scrivener proposes that such research projects have distinctive norms that separate them from research that might be defined as problem solving in their orientation. In her thesis, Toluta'u (2015) describes how Scrivener (2000) sees the following as the norms of Creative Production Research:

- Artefacts are produced. These are not by-products of the research or illustration of knowledge. Instead, Scrivener says, they are objects of value in their own right and may be understood as objects of experience.
- Artefacts are original, in a cultural context. By this Scrivener means the research *reflects* culture, and concerns and interests are manifested within the creative production. He addresses the idea of originality by noting that whilst the creative outcomes may have precedents they are not derivative or imitative of others work.
- Artefacts are a response to issues, concerns and interests. The work is not necessarily the solution to the problem, instead it can be a response expressed through one or more artefacts.
- Artefacts manifest these issues, concerns and interests through the process of creative production.
- The issues, concerns and interests reflect cultural preoccupations. In the instance of this thesis 'cultural' is located within Tongan epistemological constructs.

- Artefacts contribute to human experience.
- As contributors to human experience, artefacts are more important than the knowledge embodied in them (Toluta'u, 2015a, p. 40).

Therefore, this exegesis, like Toluta'u's thesis may be understood paradigmatically as a practice-led creative production inquiry because, through such positioning, the researcher prioritises the role of artefacts and the thoughtful practices that create them. Furthermore, Toluta'u positions her research as a creative cultural expression and contribution to human experience (Toluta'u, 2015a).

Methodology

The methodology is the second layer to the research design. By methodology I refer to the all-encompassing approach to the research that is more than a discussion of methods used in its explication. Therefore, a consideration of methodology is shaped by cultural concepts and theories that underlie the tools and processes used in developing the project (Toluta'u, 2015a).

Lala-Vā

This exegesis is located inside a Sāmoan epistemological framework. Because it is concerned with ways of being, knowing, and doing, methodologically it composes certain traditional Sāmoan approaches to accessing, processing and creating knowledge. Through this practice-led creative production 'we may encounter certain approaches and structures that resonate with views of heuristic and action

research' (Toluta'u, 2015a, p. 40). The project's design is founded on the views of Lala-Vā. Lala-Vā is based on the concepts of fa'aSāmoa.

Since this exegesis is a 50:50 combination of writing and practice-led creative research, the cross-fertilisation between explorations of theory and experimental studio methods is crucial. I am currently developing systematic cross-overs between the reading of theoretical texts, archival research, documentation, and experimental approaches.

My research methodology is the Lala-Vā of these methods, which include interviews that allow me to draw on different knowledge systems and concepts, and designing and making explicit reference to Pacific traditions, knowledges, and cultures. In this project, I align myself with standpoint epistemologies, which emphasise the diversity and situatedness of knowledges (Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001, p. 58). They argue that any knowing is always a knowing from a certain perspective, and that this perspective needs to be made explicit (Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2002).

Sāmoan values, beliefs, history and oral narratives are the foundation for this research. In addition, the *lalava* and *lalaga* form the basis for understanding traditional construction within the exegesis. In utilising the traditional art forms of *lalava* and *lalaga*, with the theoretical concept of *vā*, it transforms the Lala-Vā Model as a portal and cultural lens. This provides a foundation from which the

researcher can analyse, describe, explain and critique the data collected for this research project located within an Indigenous paradigm.

From the beginning of this research the need to understand existing forms of cultural spatiality in New Zealand-based communities (specifically diasporic Sāmoan and Pacific people living in South Auckland) was an important driver in the development of my methodology. The Lala-Vā methodology is a method I designed to look at the research through a Pacific lens. It is key to conceptualising the values and beliefs of our Pacific people and specifically the blended Pacific communities here in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Considering forms of display was crucial, because the relationship between modes of observation and engagement of these communities with my exhibit was an important factor that could determine success or failure of my design proposal. In my investigation of the potential of *vā* relationships for the design, I surveyed and documented forms of display, from the past to the present, including spaces and objects that my participants shared with me. All forms of exhibition of Pacific items, and all ways in which they could be viewed, were principally included and seen as worthy of analysis.

I mediated the shift between past and present through a reflection on the methodology and concept of the Lala-Vā Model; referencing the *lalava/lalaga* patterns that are metaphorical and physical ties to cultural knowledge advocating

balance (Tohi, 2006). For my project, the balance of understanding past and present displays, and their sometimes conflicting aims, was important; it would help me select and develop appropriate modes of showing, learning from past Sāmoan and Pacific exhibitions as well as present public museum exhibitions and displays by Pacific communities. At the same time, the potential of ‘stirring the vā’ as a driver for change remains an important concept.

Further to this investigation, I wanted to design an intervention within my community, and to display and create spaces of identity and multiple identities. The relational space created in my project is aimed at all cultures, religions and members of the community; a space or creative collection for those who may feel disconnected from their own Pacific identity in the diaspora.

I wanted to create a space that is accessible to all, but specifically for the Pacific community, and speaks of blended identity to create an environment of change and awareness; a design that references and speaks to ethnicity, culture, and race, blending them to describe the society we live in. I wanted this design to evoke the way we think about space and our constantly changing Pacific diaspora communities.

The Lala-Vā methodology of these construction methods was discussed in the last section. The Lala-Vā methodology of the project describes the design practice. Studio methods utilised various approaches, including photography,

documentation, experimental approaches, and collaborative concepts from interviews. My research methods included interviews, which allowed me to draw on different knowledge systems and concepts, designing and making reference to Pacific traditions, knowledges, and cultures. Those whom I interviewed are persons from blended backgrounds, and were open to visual documentation of the space/s they inhabit. Most of the informants affiliate with the term diaspora, and explained their individual conceptions of the term.

Impetus

When I consider the concept of fa’aSāmoa, I am reminded that I grew up in Aotearoa/New Zealand with parents who migrated from the Pacific Islands in search of economic stability. The projected growth of these Pacific communities living in Aotearoa/New Zealand over the coming decades means that the politics of place and identity will become even more significant, and will add to the complexity of culturally diverse societies in a globalised world. The need to document their stories became an artistic concern for me as a Pacific woman born and raised in New Zealand. I was always curious about the identity experience of blended Pacific women, about how they adapted to and integrated with Aotearoa/New Zealand culture; what that change meant for their identity, spatiality, cultural practices and the way that they raised the next Pacific generation outside of the Islands. There is very little research and documentation on blended Pacific diaspora and their identity and I felt it was important to contribute to this area of research using spatial design practice as a mode of retelling stories that had been undocumented.

Extension

Although my formative work had dealt with the potential of vā for a diasporic Sāmoan community living in Aotearoa/New Zealand, in this exegesis I wanted to extend my consideration to blended Pacific communities residing in Aotearoa/New Zealand. I feel the potential of vā has more to offer, not just for a Sāmoan community, but that it can be adapted to other Pacific cultures, especially those that are blended. It is important to extend the source of information in order to move the research focus beyond a cultural binary.

Methods employed in the second, creative phase of the research

The methods employed in this phase included:

- Indwelling
- The designer's journal
- Photography

A number of methods were employed in the second phase of the research and although they are discussed below under separate headings, they did not operate as disconnected components but instead as a Lala-Vā of components. They functioned in creative collaborations to advance my design thinking. Mostly the methods I used in this phase may be seen as an 'indwelling', a process mediating between my journal, photography, and designing exploratory artefacts (Toluta'u, 2015a, p. 46).

Indwelling

Toluta'u defines indwelling:

as a phase of the research and artistic process where the artist/researcher reflects on and immerses herself in the depth of her creativity and inner spirit. This is done in order to unravel deeper meanings and interpretations of natural and social realities (Toluta'u, 2015a, p. 47).

Like Toluta'u, in designing the creative component of this research, I 'felt' the stories told by the participants required me to reflect upon their content. This is because the works I created were both poetic and 'documentary'. When I considered the participants' talanoa, I was not 'editing' for influence. I was trying to draw to the surface the essence of the person, and the relationship between her blended identity and the spatiality around her. To do this, I immersed myself in her recordings and my photographic images of the objects and spaces.

I was 'indwelling' of her talanoa and used this lens to visualise and capture the images. These images were a reflection of the talanoa; small recollections that captured both a narrated memory and the identity of the participant.

This intuitive process of 'indwelling' involved a form of immersive contemplation that led to creative considerations of image, colour and composition that were critically reflective.

Design of spaces

From the very beginning, my supervisors advised me to start thinking about exhibition spaces where I could exhibit my final design proposal. This was not new to me, as I had come from a background of Art and Design, where exhibiting in a gallery was a design process of its own. I used my journal to think about spaces beyond the gallery, spaces that could be accessible to my blended Pacific community, for whom this project is aimed at. My supervisor suggested AUT Ngā Wai o Horotiu Marae. At first, I thought it was an ideal location to exhibit. I drafted my way through potential ways of exhibiting, using photography that enabled me to think through concerns of lighting, placement, scale, and relationships between the viewer and the exhibited elements. Nearing the end of my design proposal, I concluded that the best way of distributing my design was to exhibit everything in the form of a book. There are many reasons why I wanted to present this work in a book format. Firstly, this research project as stated from the beginning was aimed for my Pacific community, if I think about this community, exhibitions and art galleries are usually aimed for a specific audience, and is a Western concept of exhibition. I did not just want the work displayed for a certain time period then taken down, but rather I wanted to display the design in a way that was accessible and readable to a broader audience. I wanted to distribute my book, and gift it to many, as this was not something that was done on my own, but a collective project that belongs to the community. I wanted the exegesis to speak with the design side by side, to reinforce the Lala-Vā of the exegesis; aspects of connection and

belonging to fa'aSāmoa, the interconnection between two entities that are interdependent on each other.

Photography

Photography played a major part in the development of the exegesis, and it was used in two ways. The first was documentation, a medium of recording, collecting and archiving material. The second was as a medium to capture and refine the spaces recorded from the interviews.

Methods employed in the third phase of the research

The methods employed in this phase included:

- Archival research
- Current museum displays
- Experimentation: lalava & lalaga
- Mapping
- Participation and documentation

Archival research

- *USA (Chicago: World's Columbian Exposition, 1893)*
- *UK (London: British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, 1924)*
- *New Zealand (Wellington: New Zealand Centennial Exhibition, 1940)*

Archival research was the starting point of this investigation. The goal was to collect and collate all of the information available from New Zealand archives concerning three Sāmoan fale that were exhibited in the USA (Chicago: World's Columbian Exposition, 1893), in the UK (London: British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, 1924) and in New Zealand (Wellington: New Zealand Centennial Exhibition, 1940). The information was compiled in a database of written and visual documentation. From the documentation gathered, I found the visual images most informative, giving good insight into the forms of display. This knowledge challenged my perspective on how Pacific culture was viewed by others, from the

1890s to the 1940s. It also helped me appreciate the difficulties of space restrictions, the duration of travel, mis-readings and re-interpretations of items, and the view of Pacific displays generated from non-Pacific cultural perspectives, which cater to the interests of visitors to international and national exhibitions. Of the national and international exhibitions, I researched in Archives New Zealand, Wellington, the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago was by far the most difficult to gather and source information about. Harry. J. Moors, a Michigan-born entrepreneur who resided in Sāmoa, set out from Apia to exhibit his work in the South Sea Islands as part of the 1893 Chicago World Fair. He wanted to represent a Sāmoan Village but his disloyalty to Malietoa (the then paramount chief of Sāmoa) led to Malietoa forbidding Sāmoans to associate with Moors (Bancroft, 1900). This meant his display would eventually be made up 'mostly of half-castes (people of mixed Sāmoan and Papalagi descent) and other Pacific Islanders, with only a few full Sāmoans who had been spirited away' (Salesa, 2005, p. 15). Moors managed to take aboard a huge cargo of Sāmoan objects, including a seventy-foot canoe of modern design (a taumualua), several smaller watercraft, and three large houses (fale). It is here, with the three fale, that the information becomes blurred; two book sources (Bancroft, 1900; Crocombe, 1973) claim that there were three fale, and one claims it was one 'knockdown Sāmoan House' (Furnas, 1945, p. 146). It is also still unclear whether one of the fale belonged to Mata'afa Iosefa, an exiled high chief of the Atua district, whom Moors befriended. Initially, I was so fascinated by Moors' approach to display and authenticity that for my own project I wanted these approaches to be clear and distinctive. Mata'afa Iosefa turned out to

have also played a role in the preparation for the British Empire Exhibition (B.E.E) at Wembley, in 1924. From the communication between officials based in Britain, Sāmoa and New Zealand held in the archives, it appears that Mata'afa offered to build a fale for the New Zealand External affairs administrators who organised exhibits for the Empire Exhibition. He gathered 200 of his people as workers in Sāmoa and offered to erect it in Wembley. This offer was declined by the New Zealand colonial government, which had explicitly decided not to send any 'Native troupes' to Wembley (Johnston, 1999, p. 150). Instead, an Englishman, Mr. H. Charles Reed, a trader married to a Sāmoan chief's daughter, Masooi Reed, erected the fale at Wembley – not unlike Moors at the Chicago Exposition. However, Reed altered the construction to some extent to fit it to a site that was shorter than anticipated. The Ministry of External affairs requested that the Sāmoan exhibits be returned to New Zealand after the British Empire Exhibition, later to be displayed at the Dunedin Exhibition. Delay in the fale's disassembly by Reed, as well as a misunderstanding regarding a payment of £300 for the exhibits, meant the fale, at the time at least, remained the property of the British Administration (Department of External Affairs, 1924).

A third exhibition I researched at the Archives New Zealand was the 1940 New Zealand Centennial Exhibition in Wellington. The documentation indicates that the fale exhibited in the Wellington Centennial arrived from Sāmoa on the ship Tofua. Along with the fale, other Sāmoan exhibits arrived aboard ships, which were to be displayed at several exhibitions held in New Zealand, namely in Auckland,

Christchurch, Dunedin as well as at the Hokitika Exhibition. Reading through the archives, I found it difficult to track the fale's journey since then. However, there is a document to show that towards the end of the Hokitika exhibition, it was advised that the fale be exhibited in the Wellington Museum (p. 4460). A search through Papers Past led me to a small extract from a newspaper article (15 May 1940) according to which the fale had been purchased by an Auckland by the name of Mr. H. J. Kelliher. Kelliher intended to re-erect it on the island of Puketutu, in the Manukau Harbour, then owned by him. To this day, the fale stands on the Kelliher Estate.

Current museum displays

Auckland War Memorial Museum

The Auckland War Memorial Museum was the beginning of my investigation for current displays of Sāmoan and Pacific items. What was most attractive at first sight was the Māori gallery filled with significant artefacts. The display was a coherent journey from the history of Māori culture to a live cultural performance. The museum stores a generous collection of Sāmoan and Pacific artefacts. The individual Pacific displays within the Auckland Museum reflect the Pacific Island groups who live in Auckland and highlight different communities; objects such as tools and utensils for communal living, hunting, fishing and recreation to me failed to communicate their use and natural environment. The Pacific gallery, although generous in its volume, I felt lacked in materiality in emphasising the Pacific Islands artefacts. The Auckland Museum stores artefacts from Tonga, Fiji, Sāmoa, Kiribati,

Niue, the Cook Islands, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea (Auckland Museum, 2011), but in my opinion the displays also create clutter and a 'busy' environment. Reflecting on the journey, I had to understand the many difficulties and restrictions curators must deal with when exhibiting such a large collection of Pacific items. I cannot fault the design concept, lighting, and craftsmanship of display units as all of these elements brought to life a somewhat imaginary voyage through the Pacific.

Te Papa

Te Papa is New Zealand's national museum, located in the capital city of Wellington; Te Papa is renowned for being bicultural, scholarly, innovative, and fun. The success of the museum is built on its relationships and ability to represent the New Zealand community. The Te Papa Museum, I felt reflected a more urban view of Pacific items on display. It was an honest take of the diaspora Pacific youth; it showcased the diaspora community and reflected their influence within the arts community through music, art and cultural festivals. Collage display units reflected the colourful nature of Pacific communities in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and how they are very much interconnected with one another. Te Papa also has in storage some of Sāmoa's most prestigious 'ie toga. These items, in storage, become 'lost' and forgotten by the public. The relations symbolised by these objects no longer in social use, become dormant and worthless. 'Museums are burdened with objects which do not fit and which therefore are rarely or never shown to the public' (Kirshenblatt- Gimblett, 2002, p. 60). Most museums are only able to exhibit a very

small share of their holdings and in many cases not more than 10 per cent. This piece of information was an opportunity, a chance for my project to put on display Pacific items that have been archived, to reunite vā relations within the Pacific community. The Pacific items in storage were historical and held significant value to the Pacific diaspora communities; they maintained ancestry and traditional knowledges that would enable these communities to imbibe cultural connections.

Reflecting on contemporary forms of Sāmoan and Pacific displays, it is obvious that Māori and Pacific curators have in-depth knowledge of the items they display, despite working within the restrictions of galleries, institutes and museums. The items on display and in storage are well organised, categorised, described, and archived. However, while it is clear that these forms of display are aimed at education and tourism, Pacific communities, I feel, are disconnected from these institutions. To me, the thought of museums archiving artefacts that hold significant relations within the Pacific diaspora community is unsettling. If *lalava* is about balance and change, *lalaga* is about tying these different entities together in various ways. In contrast to the Westernised views of knowledge commonly held within the walls of the museum, my plan of intervention is a proposal that Pacific communities have access to these archived artefacts. My project aims to interlock the threads of meaning and the threads of vā relations active within the blended Pacific community.

Experimentation: Lalava & Lalaga

As stated in the 'Traditional knowledge: lalava & lalaga' section of the exegesis, the information provided by Potauaine (2011) about lalava had potential regarding the binding of directional lines in the mapping process. For this exegesis, I initially reviewed the processes of my Masters thesis – specifically the use of materials that have no obvious relation to Pacific construction materials. Testing different variations of spatial relationships, I began to form my own language of lalava. I paid close attention to what happens in the process of binding together cotton and steel rods to produce spatial models. I observed the properties of the materials (e.g., stability and fragility), how they react, and what the resulting spaces look and feel like. I then took photos of the models created and adjusted light settings in Photoshop to explore the spatial properties of different configurations. I then moved on to lalaga, this time focusing on the 'ie tōga, finding spatial relations that pertained to the 'ie tōga by means of photography, scanning, and lighting.

Reflecting on both of these processes, it was interesting to note the fragility and fluidity of the materials. The feedback I received from my community elders and participants made it clear to me that it was difficult for others to associate the metaphorical relationships, and spaces of my experimentation of lalava and lalaga; meaning my conceptual design aesthetic was not communicating well with my community. I had to ask myself, 'What was the potential of vā within this experimentation?' The physical manifestation of both of these metaphors was not leading me to a design proposal. I therefore decided to move away from the

materials, and to engage with my community to find other means of using lalava and lalaga in spatial relationships within the vā.

Mapping

Mapping was a method of graphically locating the space of my diaspora participants in relation to the Pacific Islands they associated with. I used mapping to visualise and consider ways of locating and presenting my design proposal. It aided me in thinking about the general approach. However, this was an initial consideration because this framing was significantly altered by the nature of the talanoa with each participant. The lines and connotations in my mapping were checklists or accounts of the spaces I might be wishing to capture, or actions, themes and directions for myself.

Participation and documentation

The Pacific arts community is very much alive in the diaspora, each year celebrating Pacific culture and showcasing a range of crafts on display. From the Otara South Auckland markets to the Waitakere Pacific Arts and Community Trust, Pacific culture is noticeable in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Part of my methodology was to become involved with my surrounding communities and to participate in workshops throughout the year. My participation and documentation adopted the method of lalaga because, 'like [in] a fine mat being woven, the strands of Sāmoan history, fa'aSāmoa and Sāmoan contemporary livings, and their interaction with 'others' interconnect to inform Sāmoan identity' (Anae, 1998b, p. 1). Thus, with my involvement and accounts (interconnection) of the many events and activities

(threads) offered for Pacific peoples, this exegesis acknowledges and connects to the larger body of the Sāmoan diaspora (Sāmoan identity). I hope that the information collected here helps recognise the Pacific communities in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and what they offer as diaspora peoples.

Rosanna Raymond

Colab, in conjunction with AUT University, invited Rosanna Raymond to be their artist in residence. As part of the programme, Raymond held a full day workshop, which I attended, using the AUT Manukau Campus sculptures to investigate the tension between language, voice(s), the written word, the spoken word, the body and material objects. Rosanna Raymond is a woman of many talents, but she is first and foremost an artist. Raymond is a well-known figure in the New Zealand Pasifika movement, being an integral practitioner in performance, poetry, art installation and exhibition. The workshop was to create a series of performative interventions revealing, activating and interplaying with the hidden voices and stories imbued in the AUT Manukau Campus sculptures. Raymond held quick sessions where we were given a few minutes to describe the sculptures in a list of words. In relation to my practice as a designer it forced me to see beyond the physical object and read deeper into the meaning of form. The reading of patterns on the sculptures was a meaningful journey as it provoked feelings of my own identity. Raymond's workshop covered creative expression using Pacific stories and cultural objects; I found a creative voice within myself, being expressed through words of identity. This information fed directly into the introduction of this

exegesis, describing this project from my own perspective and identity as a member of the blended Pacific diaspora.

Rick Pearson

My next point of investigation was difficult in that I needed to figure out what was the physical spatial design of my proposal. Having done research on exhibition and displays it was appropriate to meet an architect behind these curated displays. Rick Pearson is an architect who specialises in exhibition and museum design; his expertise in this area gave me two important directions on how to begin the process of designing an exhibition. Pearson's first point of direction was beginning with knowing your material of display. Knowledge of the material meant an awareness of how to spatially create an environment. His second point was to document every item, and familiarise myself with the site of display, space restrictions, lighting, preservation of items and those not necessary to the display. Pearson made me critically think about the traditional forms of display. I constantly kept coming back to forms of display cabinets, lighting levels, space restrictions, but when I thought about my Sāmoan diaspora community I wondered whether these traditional forms of display would cater to their needs. What forms of display could actively communicate to this community? I did not know the answer, however, I knew the solution did not lie within a museum or gallery exhibition.

By this point in my research I had taken photos of my participants' homes, and the images were something I wanted to display, but there was something beyond the

image that was hard to articulate and display, it was the artefacts themselves. How would I exhibit these to a broader audience? How could I tie the exhibits from the museums together with the artefacts that existed in the community?

I knew I wanted to display Pacific artefacts, but what sort? I had to be more specific to items that were going to activate relations of location and identity, but these specific Pacific items were either held or stored in museums, or by the government.

Mamas and Museums

The South Auckland Pacific Arts Summit forum provided an opportunity for my practice to expand further from the museums and exhibitions and become involved with visual arts, forums, and literature in the community. Mamas and Museums was a workshop created by Kolokesa Māhina-Tuailooks as part of the South Auckland Pacific Arts Summit. The aim of the workshop was to create mutual understanding and foster better communication between the museum sector and female Pacific fine artists. 'Mamas' from across New Zealand, representing a variety of island nations, were invited to exhibit their fine art and share information about the type and variety of art works they create and the materials they use. What was most interesting about Māhina-Tuailooks' workshop was the communication between the mamas and the representatives from Te Papa Museum and Auckland Museum who talked to us about the work they do with their respective Pacific collections. The conservation workshop sessions run by the conservators from both museums provided a safe place and mutual understanding for both parties, sustaining, distributing and contributing to Pacific knowledge.

For me, what was most successful about this event was the safe environment Māhina-Tuailooks provided for the mamas. The mamas spoke about their crafts and the difficulties of teaching this knowledge to the younger generation who were largely not interested. For most, this was their first time presenting their craft to an audience. The workshop was a success as it celebrated these mamas for their skill and knowledge, with each being very proud of the island they represented. Their stories resonated through their artefacts. It was this very aspect that I drew from my interaction with my participants. The stories told in their own language was something powerful and poetic that had to be shared. The artefacts did not stand alone, they existed and came to life with the traditions and history that pertained to them. The interconnection of the artefact and the story teller was the *vā*, 'not space that is separate but space that connects' (Wendt, 1996, p. 1). The relationship of the artefact and the storyteller was a concept that had to be carried through to my final design proposal.

Pasifika & ASB Polyfest

People from many Pacific nations grace Aotearoa/New Zealand with their rich cultures and spiritual traditions expressed in many ways including music, song, dance, prayer, language, visual art, performing arts and traditional arts. Involvement with the Pacific performance sector was the next stage in the methodology.

Pasifika is a Pacific Islands-themed festival held annually in Auckland. The festival presents a wide variety of cultural experiences, including traditional Pacific cooking

and performances ranging from Sāmoa to the Māori of New Zealand. A second event, the ASB Polyfest, is South Auckland's most iconic Pacific event. The festival is a celebration of Māori and Pacific Island communities through cultural song, dance, speech and art. Every year, the festival delivers healthy competition between secondary schools celebrating diversity and cultural identity.

Reflecting on my documentation of both festivals, Pasifika and Polyfest, I could not help but feel the pride gleam from the sea of brown faces. The festivals, I felt, gave the youth pride in terms of their blended identities, but also acknowledged their peers and the relationships they share as Pacific diaspora. The community participation was incredibly supportive and accommodating of their cultures. The essence of what Pasifika and Polyfest provide is the wellbeing of cultural identity. This essence was what I wanted to seek in the 'participation and documentation' method.

My involvement as a South Auckland resident, member of the Weymouth Congregational Church of Sāmoa, church youth participant, and recipient of the Manukau AUT Scholarship, has allowed me to view our community from these different vantage points and analyse the successes of each event. For my project, I wanted to take a few qualities of a festival to manifest in the display of artefacts; a display of artefacts provided from the blended Pacific diaspora community and for the community that centres on the celebration of these artefacts.

More significantly, I have always joined, or been a part of the social gatherings held for the Pacific communities in Auckland. To document the occasions in the past few years has justified the importance of cultural gatherings for me, and the need to sustain these different and diverse knowledges within the blended Pacific diaspora community. The celebration of the ASB Polyfest, as well as the Pasifika Festival, is hugely popular and brings forth blended identities from Pacific communities. These events inspired my project to take on the performative and creative characteristics that are the bases of success for both of these events. They prevented me from focusing solely on the display of an exhibition, and inspired me to embrace the performativity that activates vā relations. The performative aspect in the display of artefacts lies within the story that pertains to each significant piece. To achieve this, the community must be involved in the production of the display. My intention is to create a space where the community can put forth their most precious family artefacts that have history and significance to the 'aiga and would be beneficial to document and archive for future generations. These artefacts will not be taken away or tampered with, but treated with respect and shown in the light they deserve. An important aspect in this documentation is locating which part in the Pacific Islands these artefacts originate from, and the authenticity of each piece. There will also be a form of filtering the artefacts. The performative element, is where the family themselves either submit a written statement on the artefact, or agree to be video-documented speaking about the artefact on behalf of their family. This brings about the question, 'What sort of spatial environment will allow me to archive these artefacts from the community, and display these artefacts for the community?'

Conclusion

In this exegesis, talanoa, together with digital and spatial design approaches, weave together a union of traditional knowledge, Sāmoan epistemology, and research-informed design. The research proposes a new way of approaching spatial design that is essentially Pacific. By recording the stories through talanoa this exegesis has both preserved narratives and proposed a new, more culturally respectful way of archiving Pacific artefacts. This form of participation and documentation is not photographic, but poetic. As such, the research also offers a contribution to international discourse surrounding Indigenous people. Therefore, both the content and the style of the work may prove worthwhile for Pacific Studies, family history, humanities research, and developments in art, and spatial design disciplines.

This chapter has discussed the paradigm, methodology and methods active in the exposition of the exegesis. Located paradigmatically as creative construction research, the exegesis is concerned with imaginative and inspired thinking, understood through and in artefacts (Scrivener, 2000).

Methodologically, the exegesis is inspired through a unique application of Lala-Vā that is, by extension of theories. The stages and considerations of this methodology has enabled me reflect deeply on the interviews from the participant. Lala-Vā has also offered a culturally appropriate and responsive framework for working closely with the blended Pacific participants. In practice, a number of methods have been essential to developing the exegesis.

Having now discussed the research design method for the exegesis, the concluding chapter of the exegesis focuses on the actual physical design, and thinking in relation to the critical ideas that shaped the physical appearance.

CHAPTER FIVE

The importance of archiving Pacific Indigenous artefacts is based on the importance of archiving Pacific knowledge. Sāmoan people have adapted their fa'aSāmoa in the diaspora for the advancement of their culture and people. This provides the basis for which I argue that Pacific peoples should seek out new methods to preserve their artefacts. With reference to the Lala-VĀ model, the interrelationship of family, language, genealogies, chiefly systems, religion, ceremonies and other family obligations is illustrated by the link between artefacts and other aspects of Pacific culture and tradition. The comprehensive nature of the artefacts and the stories that accompany the visual image ensure that the digital archive is all-inclusive.

Design

As noted in the discussion in Chapter Three, this chapter focuses on the digital archive. There is a discussion on the different features of the website design, with each part explained in detail. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part presents the research-design. In this section, I discuss the digital archive itself. I also reflect on vā as a digital archive, materiality and processes, traditions and development, lines of location, blended backgrounds, and imagery and colour.

The second section considers the details of the website and discusses a digital archive of Pacific art, its target audience, locating the archive on the web, the name of the digital archive, and content that appears on the homepage. The final section discusses why I did not choose a traditional exhibition design to present the works, but rather chose to present in the exegesis book layout. The final section also considers the whole exegesis, and its significance to the blended Pacific diaspora community.

The subjective designer/ researcher

In this exegesis, I position myself as a subjective researcher. I do not claim independence from the research, but rather the ability to produce ideas and concepts from literature that transforms into designs from the potentials of written language. The exegesis explores and interprets the nature of *vā* by searching through the traditional meaning and into what is not yet known. While the design of the exegesis is informed by the literature, methodology and stories from the blended Pacific diaspora participants, it also tells my subjective story because the exegesis is filtered through my aesthetic and personal values as a designer. In this process, the filtration is interpreted as the potential of *vā* through the *Lala-Vā* of photography, archival research and interviews. The resulting design removes the limitations of traditional ways of preserving knowledge, and brings them to the forefront of technology and preservation.

As such, the exegesis presupposes knowledge is personal and cultural (Toluta'u, 2015a). In creative, practice-led research Griffiths (2010) states: the self is inescapable, because the person creating, responding to, working on, developing or evaluating performances, artefacts and practices is central to those activities (p.185).

Griffiths proposes that in all research, the researcher must acknowledge and take responsibility both for his or her subjectivity and that of the public because 'all facts and information are value laden [and]... knowledge of human beings gets its meaning from the value system of the knowers' (p. 46). Griffiths (2010) also

emphasises that 'the political and social dimensions of individuals' values systems' are important and that '... knowledge gets its meaning from the political position of the knowers, as well as from other value systems'(p.46-48).

Research informed design: *Vā* as a digital archive

As mentioned earlier in this exegesis, *vā* is pertinent across many Pacific cultures. The concept of *vā* plays a significant role in the culture and the identity of Pacific peoples. The term *vā* emphasises for Pacific peoples the importance of relationships and space; it urges the individual to be aware of their relational space with others, and of the knowledge and teachings of ancestors.

I named the digital archive '*Vā*' because it speaks and relates to Pacific peoples. It is a term that is significant to culture and identity. *Vā* also adheres to the concept that 'is a space that separates but also relates' (Wendt, 1996), and the Pacific Islands represented in the digital archive are portrayed visually as separate islands in their geographical location. They are not the same, but share commonalities of oral narratives, history, language, knowledge, identity, culture and many more. These Pacific Islands also share the ocean that separates them. *Vā* is the word I chose for this digital archive as it is not only understood in many Pacific languages, but also speaks to the Pacific community metaphorically and spiritually.

Ka'ili (2008) writes that *vā* refers to the art of creating and maintaining relations. This is normally in reference to relational spaces among Pacific people, but in this exegesis I suggest that it be transferred and expressed through all forms of cultural knowledge. Therefore, I believe the maintenance and preservation of Indigenous artefacts builds upon the Pacific concept of *vā* in that it creates and maintains aspects associated with the concept.

In this exegesis, I frame *vā* as a distinctive form of relational space that, in contrast to Wendt's (1996) views and in accord with those of Refiti's (personal communication, 2008), may be applied to a unique form of relational space associated with a co-openness of Pacific peoples. While I admit that such a framing is debateable, the term *vā* allows me to articulate a conceptual form from the exchange of knowledge.

When encountering *vā* we participate in social gatherings by communication; we are therefore in a co-openness of experiencing in an effort to find the true meaning of the existing message. I do not see *vā* as abstract or as ordinary; its diverse meaning has artistic formality and spiritual connotations that are distinctly Pacific.

Vā is the name of the digital archive, it presents stories of a community through photos of Indigenous artefacts. However, they are more than photographs; they are collections of narratives and histories that communicate origins of identity, location, diaspora, culture, art, tradition, and space. We, the audience, view these artefacts

and narratives, and envisage their history as it is presented to us. Together with the text we begin to see the significance of the artefacts, and we get a sense of belonging, can feel the connection to ancestry, and the grace of the spoken word together with the humility of craftsmanship. These things could not exist in a traditional museum, as they are categorised in a formal Western way of displaying knowledge, and the information provided is formal and academic. When we understand these artefacts in relation to the families' personal narratives, then we learn the value of artefacts in preserving Pacific knowledge.

Materiality and processes

The images used throughout the website design are photographic, and have been edited in Photoshop CC. The photos were collected between January 2011 and August 2014 from archival research I conducted, and each image was sourced with permission for use in this research. Although I initially intended to present the photographs taken from the interviews as my final submission for this exegesis, I chose to display the images in this exegesis, as well as design a separate component that was beneficial to the Pacific diaspora community. The selection of photos for this exegesis was based on the richness of the talanoa; the connection I felt towards the voice of the participant and the image meant that my handling of the visuals was more in harmony with their identities.

I photographed the spatial environments of Tasi, Lua, Tolu, Fa, Lima and Ono, because this was an insight into their identities. I also chose to interview the participants in their environment as they could speak to objects and spaces, while not disrupting their sense of comfort. I photographed each space using natural light as I did not want to bring excessive equipment that could have disrupted their environments. I did not want them to feel restricted and I knew that this would affect the flow of the conversation and what they shared. While studio lighting can carry very 'dramatic effects, rich contrasts and heightened details', these are all alterations to the environment, which make it fabricated (Toluta'u, 2015a, p. 71). By photographing these spaces in their homes I may have lost some of these

theatrical qualities, but I trust that I came closer to the natural essence of who the participants are and the identities portrayed within these spaces. Consequently, the work has unique characteristics that would have been missed had I photographed the spaces in artificial lighting.

I took approximately 200 shots of each space I visited so I would not need to request further sittings. Because these photographs were taken during and after the interviews, each talanoa was much more relaxed. After each shoot I returned to my studio and tested possible applications on Photoshop CC in order to determine the best way of presenting these images. Towards the end of this process I applied the Lala-Vā methodological process of editing and arrangement.

The final images presented in this exegesis represent a collection of objects that were significant in the spaces photographed. Each photo portrays images of artefacts that detail texture, technique, colour, and space. These images can also be seen as a Lala-Vā of family, language, genealogies, chiefly systems, religion and ceremony. The images show elements of tradition, history, and culture that reflect identity.

It was important for the research that the participants who contributed to this exegesis were happy with the choices I made in selecting their talanoa in relation to the photos I had chosen. Therefore, before compiling the final files for submission, I sent them digital copies so that they could inform me of any concerns. This

development also allowed them to offer feedback on my artistic approach to their identities. Only when the participants gave their consent did I proceed with my design.

Traditions and development

The lalaga and lalava in this exegesis were not physically made but were manifested through the literature and methodology of Lala-Vā. Visiting communities such as Mamas and Museums where lalaga and lalava were traditional physical practice made me appreciate these techniques and skills that much more.

I was grateful to be able to spend time with the Mamas and Museum community as they shared stories about their lives and how they grew up learning the skills of lalaga and lalava that was a part of their identity. This changed my view of both these skills considerably as I began to understand the materials a lot more, and it made me aware of the amount of effort and time spent on production. I also gained a deeper understanding of the physical and social significance that lalaga and lalava have to culture. I understood how these techniques bring communities together, and in turn become part of the creation of art.

‘The great works of Oceanic art are those that were created when the people made them for their own purposes, to help them understand their own world and their place in it’ (Gunn, 2006, p. 16). The making of the digital archive may therefore be seen as both art and cultural construction. While I am responsible for the design

and concepts underpinning the work, the archive exists because of the shared commitment to an idea. Rather than simply selecting and digitalising materials, the knowledge and appreciation gained for this research from my community and participants became part of the creation.

Photoshop CC

This project demanded hours of editing and test iterations to resolve design issues. I wanted a design that would represent the Pacific and capture an audience that would recognise the value of the archive and want to contribute to the project. The website design was created on Photoshop CC, and it allowed me the freedom to articulate my thoughts and processes as well as work with the archival images I had collected for this research.

Instead of planning a specific design proposal to guide the research, I allowed the literature and the methodology to inform a design that would benefit the research and inform a design proposal. Due to costs and time restrictions placed upon this research project, the proposed digital archive is presented as finalised digitally rendered images as opposed to a live website. However, this website has all the necessary design templates and actions to be coded and go live pending funding approval and consent. Developments in digital archiving enabled me to consider the digital content from the Pacific community that is uploaded and stored to an online archive, and to the best of my knowledge, this has not been created before. An important advantage of working with an online digital archive is being able to filter

the content for authenticity and categorisation. This allows for a more refined database of suitable artefacts that align with the aims and purpose of the digital archive.

Lines of Location

The significance of location for the Pacific diaspora is crucial to the development of this digital archive. Location determines the sense of belonging this community has, which is influenced by the location of buried ancestors and the location of Pacific Islands/ and villages in relation to the present locations of the diaspora. Within this method of mapping, *lalava* is used as the visible lines that locate and mark the territories of the Pacific; *lalaga*, on the other hand, is used as a metaphorical term of weaving and connecting the Pacific community to their *vā* relations through the visible lines of *lalava*. My strategy of mapping, as a design tool, is informed by precedents set by the work of Daniel Libeskind (2001), particularly the Jewish Museum in Berlin. Libeskind's design involved a process of connecting and mapping historic events and locations of Jewish culture in Berlin. The resulting lines determined the structure of the building. Libeskind also used the concepts of absence, emptiness, and the invisible signs of the disappearance of Jewish culture in the city. These notions have an affinity to my own project, particularly the concept of absence in relation to migration and diaspora, and lines of location in terms of locating your home and identity.

Blended backgrounds

This digital archive represents the diversity of Pacific cultures in relation to Indigenous art forms. Its intention is to remind the blended Pacific diaspora community of the traditional origins of their identity. The islands shown on the Pacific map that contribute to their unique blends of identity signify the physical location of where they come from. The islands represent and reinforces the *vā* connections to homeland, culture, language, genealogies, chiefly systems, church and ceremony. It provides a safe platform for individuals, who struggle with identity, to learn and experience their cultures through the medium of Indigenous art.

Imagery and colour

The use of imagery in the digital archive design develops the theme of the ocean, which may be seen as the physical and metaphorical representation of the concept of *vā* because it both connects and separates the islands. Neutral and subtle colours of blue were used in the background to emphasise the artefacts in the forefront. The subtleness of the sea in the background mimics the physical forms of the artefacts so the two origins are perceived as an extension of each other. The sea represents the Pacific Ocean, which supported migration and also sustains the people of the Pacific.

Research informed design/ project

This section presents the practical design of the digital archive. There is a discussion of the different features of the website design, with each part explained in detail. This section includes images of the digital design.

A digital archive of Pacific art

As part of this exegesis, and with the intention of submitting a practical component with the written piece, I developed an online digital archive for the preservation of Pacific artefacts. The website will be free to access globally and will act as an archive to preserve the knowledge pertaining to Pacific artefacts that are held in the diaspora. Therefore, the website is an international resource. In her doctoral thesis, Ka'ai-Mahuta (2010) presents a digital repository for the preservation of *waiata* (poem, song, chant) and states:

The repository will illustrate the interface between recovering traditional knowledge and storing this through innovated technology for the future. The importance of archiving Māori oral history and tradition has been established, and it is for this reason that the repository will include not only the lyrics of the *waiata* but also in-depth analysis of the meaning behind the lyrics (p.281).

Like Ka'ai-Mahuta's digital repository, the design of the digital archive demonstrates the connection between recovering traditional knowledge and storing this through innovative technology for the future. Ka'ai-Mahuta (2010) explains that her repository contains the lyrics of the *waiata* but also an in-depth analysis, and this means that the user of the repository is provided with more understanding

of the content of the *waiata* and the composer. This resonated with me as it mirrored the concept of what I was trying to produce. The digital archive is designed for the Pacific diaspora to upload their content and provide their personal written narrative (in their own language if appropriate) pertaining to the artefact. This provides for a more personal dialogue and collection; one that belongs to the community and adheres to the references provided by the community. The uploader will have the option of adding extra content, such as the history behind the artefact, information about the maker, supplementary video footage of the artefact being made or used, and supporting links about the artefact. The copyright also belongs to the person who uploads the content. Users of the website who wish to use the images must contact the website for permission, and the website administrator will follow up with the instructions and protocols provided by the uploader.

The website itself has been designed and organised with simplicity and ease in mind, and for the purpose of navigation and accessibility for most ages. The digital archive has been developed in English, however the uploader will have the option of uploading the content in their native language or in English.

Target audience

As mentioned earlier, this website is designed for the Pacific diaspora to upload photos and content on Pacific artefacts, however it is not limited to this community. It is for the use of anyone with authentic Pacific artefacts that they wish to preserve and archive digitally. Like the digital repository created by Ka'ai-Mahuta, it is an archive conceived for academic use, 'but is not limited to, school teachers, university students and lecturers', artists, archivists, 'and people overseas researching things' Pacific (Ka'ai-Mahuta, 2010, p. 282).

Locating the archive on the web

Search engines, such as Google would be the starting point for most users accessing artefacts through the internet. To ensure the archive is accessible and known to the user, it will need to appear via these searches. The table below is a list of words that will be provided to the website developers to use as keywords that will lead to the archive when users are searching on the internet.

Table 5: Key words for website developers

Keywords	
Pacific art	Indigenous art
Pacific artefacts	Indigenous artefacts
Pacific weaving	Indigenous weaving
Pacific lashing	Indigenous lashing
Pacific craft	Indigenous craft
Pacific wood	Indigenous wood
Pacific stone	Indigenous stone
Pacific bone	Indigenous bone
Pacific fibre art	Indigenous fibre art
Pacific shells	Indigenous shells
Pacific archive	Indigenous archive
Pacific library	Indigenous library
Pacific collection	Indigenous collection
Pacific files	Indigenous files
Pacific records	Indigenous records
Pacific history	Indigenous history
Pacific culture	Indigenous culture
Pacific traditions	Indigenous traditions
Pacific knowledge	Indigenous knowledge
Pacific Islands	

Name of the digital archive

The name 'Vā' was the obvious choice pointed out to me by my primary supervisor. Her recognition of the word includes everyone from the Pacific and denotes our vā relations between one another as people of the Pacific. It is used metaphorically and spiritually, and it separates us but at the same time it connects us. The word vā is part of most Pacific languages, but its meaning is significant to all Pacific cultures. 'Ia teu le vā.' Cherish/nurse/care for the Vā, the relationships' (Wendt, 1996, p. 1) between the Pacific Islands, and this digital archive aims to achieve the same degree of nurture through its artefacts.

The website address is www.pacific.art.archive.com. It is straightforward and in a few words describes what the website is about.

Content that will appear on the website

When the web address is located, the user will be faced with the Vā homepage. The homepage provides the first impression for the archive. The headings that follow the homepage will be displayed in further detail.

Homepage

Welcome to 'Vā', the text appears in the bottom left-hand corner of the homepage. It provides a brief overview of 'Vā'. See the following Figures:

Figure 27: Simati, B. (2015). *Homepage*. [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.122)

Figure 28: Simati, B. (2015). *Homepage- detail select*. [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.123)

Figure 29: Simati, B. (2015). *Homepage: read more about vā*. [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.124)

About page

The 'About' page contains information about the archive, including the aim and purpose of the website. See the following Figure:

Figure 30: Simati, B. (2015). *About Page*. [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.125)

Resource page

The 'Resource' page contains information about how the website is a use of resource for the public. See the following Figure:

Figure 31: Simati, B. (2015). *Resource Page*. [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.126)

Pacific Art page

The 'Pacific Art' page presents the user with a map of the Pacific Islands. It is an archive of artefacts that pertain to each island. The user selects their region of choice, and browses through the collection. Filters appear as an option to narrow down the search finding. See the following Figures:

Figure 32: Simati, B. (2015). *Pacific Art Page*. [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.127)

Figure 33: Simati, B. (2015). *Pacific Art Page- detail select1*. [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.128)

Figure 34: Simati, B. (2015). *Pacific Art Page- detail select2*. [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.129)

Material page

The 'Material' page provides the user with the archive of artefacts categorised by material. The user is to select their material of choice, and browse through the collection. Filters appear as an option to narrow down the search finding. See the following Figures:

Figure 35: Simati, B. (2015). *Material Page*. [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.130)

Figure 36: Simati, B. (2015). *Material Page: click on wood*. [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.131)

Once the user has selected the artefact of choice, they are presented with the written detail information available about the artefact on the right-hand side of the page. The visual photographed image appears on the top left-hand corner of the page, followed by featured media available below (which enlarge when selected). See the following Figures:

Figure 37: Simati, B. (2015). *Material Page: click on nifo'oti*. [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.132)

Figure 38: Simati, B. (2015). *Material Page: click on 'ie toga*. [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.133)

Contribute page

The 'Contribute' page provides information for those who wish to contribute to the archival website. See the following Figure:

Figure 39: Simati, B. (2015). *Contribute Page*. [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.134)

Contact page

The 'Contact' page provides contact details for the contributors who wish to contact the webpage administrator. The 'Contact' page also provides a submission box for those who wish to upload and contribute to the archival website. The user is advised to familiarise themselves with the submission rules and guidelines before uploading their entry. See the following Figures:

Figure 40: Simati, B. (2015). *Contact Page*. [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.135)

Figure 41: Simati, B. (2015). *Contact Page: click on submission rules and guidelines: Photograph*. [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.136)

Figure 42: Simati, B. (2015). *Contact Page: click on submission rules and guidelines: Videography*. [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.137)

Figure 43: Simati, B. (2015). *Contact Page: click on submission rules and guidelines: Audio*. [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.138)

Figure 44: Simati, B. (2015). *Contact Page: click on submission rules and guidelines: why should I submit?* [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.139)

Figure 45: Simati, B. (2015). *Contact Page: click on submission rules and guidelines: when can I submit?* [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.140)

Figure 46: Simati, B. (2015). *Contact Page: click on submission rules and guidelines: what are significant Pacific artefacts?* [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.141)

Figure 47: Simati, B. (2015). *Contact Page: click on submission rules and guidelines: Property of Vā* [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.142)

Search function

The 'Search' function provides the user to search by conducting a simple search. Filters will then appear as an option to narrow down the finding. See the following Figure:

Figure 48: Simati, B. (2015). *Search Page*. [Photoshop drawing] (Pg.143)




Welcome to Vā

DIGITAL ARCHIVE OF PACIFIC INDIGENOUS ARTEFACTS

The website is a repository for historic, indigenous Pacific artefacts that are housed worldwide in the diaspora. The content of the website is comprised of contributions from the public, who have significant indigenous artefacts they have gifted to Vā to preserve digitally and share on a national/international platform. [Read more about Vā](#)

VĀ HOME ABOUT RESOURCE PACIFIC ART MATERIAL CONTRIBUTE CONTACT SEARCH



Welcome to Vā

WĀ ARCHIVE OF PACIFIC HERITAGE ARTIFACTS

This archive is a repository of historic, contemporary Pacific artifacts that are housed worldwide in the museum. The content of the website is comprised of digitized items from the archive, which have significant indigenous meaning. They have either been in the museum display, or they are on a national international exhibition. [Read more about Vā](#)

VĀ HOME ABOUT RESOURCE PACIFIC ART MATERIAL CONTRIBUTE CONTACT SEARCH

Vā

The name 'Vā' speaks and relates to many Pacific peoples. It is a term that is significant to culture and identity. 'Vā' is a space that separates but also relates' (Woods, 1996). The Pacific Islands represented in the digital archive appear visually as separate islands due to their geographical location, while at the same time share commonalities of oral narratives, history, language, knowledge, identity, culture and many more. Those Pacific Islands also share the ocean that separates them. 'Vā' is the name chosen for this digital archive as it is not only a word that appears in many of the languages of the Pacific, but it also speaks to the Pacific community morphologically and spiritually.

Vā

The name 'Vā' speaks and relates to many Pacific peoples. It is a term that is significant to culture and identity. Vā 'is a space that separates but also relates' (Wendt, 1996). The Pacific Islands represented in the digital archive appear visually as separate islands due to their geographical location, while at the same time share commonalities of oral narratives, history, language, knowledge, identity, culture and many more. These Pacific Islands also share the ocean that separates them. Vā is the name chosen for this digital archive as it is not only a word that appears in many of the languages of the Pacific, but it also speaks to the Pacific community metaphorically and spiritually.

ABOUT Vā The digital archive of indigenous Pacific art

The archive is a repository for historic, indigenous Pacific artefacts that are housed worldwide in the diaspora. It is comprised of contributions from the public, who have gifted their art to be preserved digitally and shared on an international platform.

Aims

Vā aims to connect and provide comprehensive information about Pacific art, and this includes a photographic image of the artefact, a description (written narrative), a translation if applicable, an explanation of the context and history, any supplementary photos, audio or video files of relevance, and a list of references or links for further study.

Purpose

The purpose of this archive is to promote the expository of indigenous Pacific art located in the diaspora. We believe Pacific artefacts hold a sacredness of knowledge that needs to be sustained and maintained. We hope this archive preserves knowledge, forms communities, and creates connections to our outer islands.

Without your contribution of documented goods this archive would not exist.



RESOURCE

Established in 2015 to promote research into the arts of the indigenous people of New Zealand, the Māori, and those of the people of the Pacific Islands, its holdings today include material from most Pacific Islands areas. We hope to expand this archive with commercial and field recordings of vocal and instrumental music, oral histories, stories, and language resources.

The curator, together with scholars and members of the community, has built a platform of research, teaching and photo images that actively provides for contemporary cultural and academic needs and that also works for future generations of Pacific peoples. Therefore this archive is accessible to the general public as well as researchers, scholars and students.

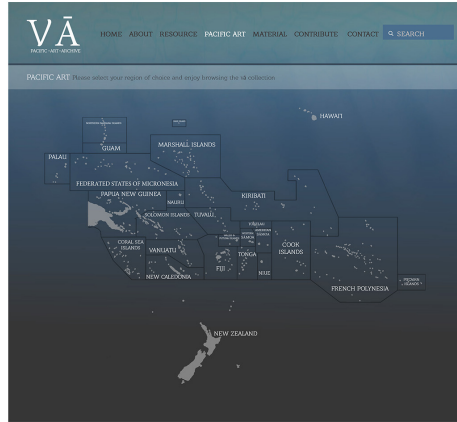
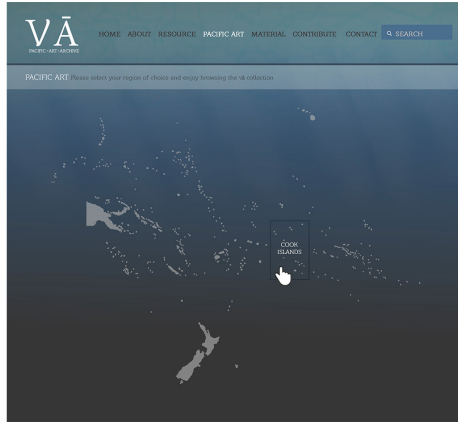
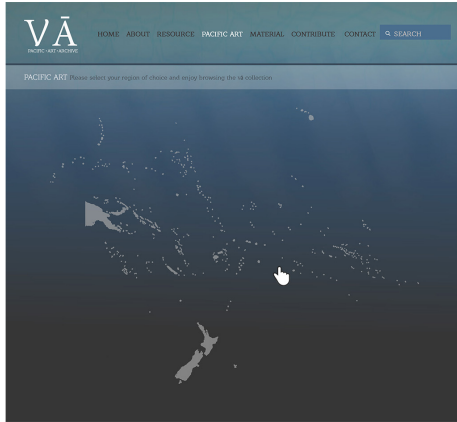
The archive's mission is to promote knowledge and understanding of the Pacific, past and present, as an integral part of the cultures represented in its holdings. Changing socio-demographics and cultural needs in New Zealand have resulted in new demands for online resources as the repositories and generators of societal knowledge.

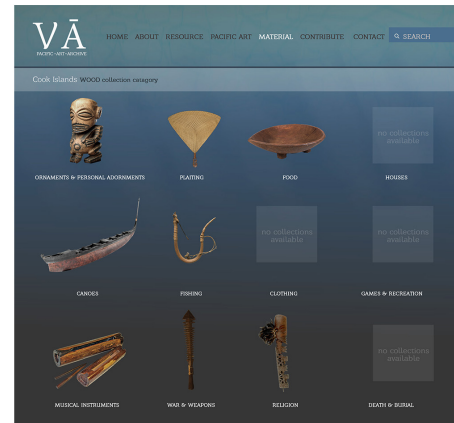
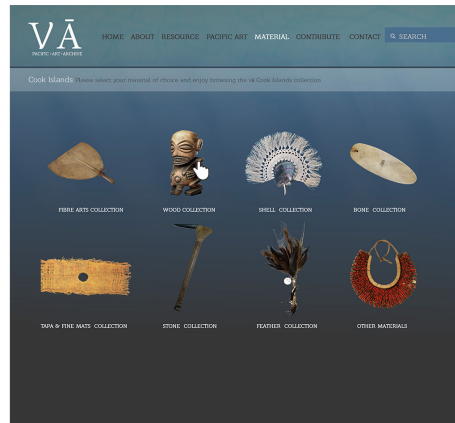
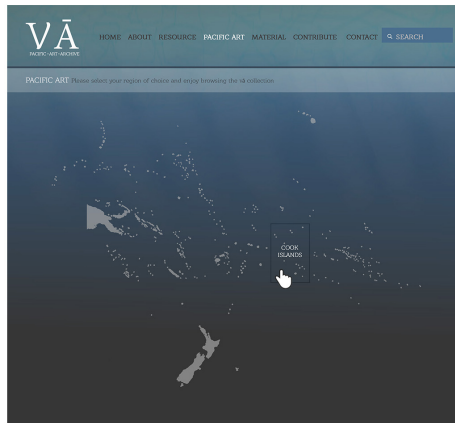
The Vā is an international repository devoted to the study of the arts from the Pacific. Its goals are:

- To make members more aware of the state of all the arts in all parts of the Pacific.
- To encourage international understanding among the nations involved in the arts of the Pacific.
- To promote research, interpretation and reporting on the arts of the Pacific.
- To stimulate more interest in the teaching of courses on Pacific art especially at, but not limited to, the tertiary educational level.
- To encourage greater cooperation among the institutions and individuals who are associated with the arts of the Pacific.
- To encourage conservation and preservation of the material culture in and of Pacific arts.

PACIFIC ART Please select your region of choice and enjoy browsing the vā collection







MATERIAL Please select your material of choice and enjoy browsing the vā collection



FIBRE ARTS COLLECTION



WOOD COLLECTION



SHELL COLLECTION



BONE COLLECTION



TAPA & FINE MATS COLLECTION



STONE COLLECTION



FEATHER COLLECTION



OTHER MATERIALS

REFINE RESULTS

MATERIAL: "WOOD" (156)

FILTER BY PACIFIC:

- SAMOA (156)
- TONGA (128)
- FIJI (97)
- NIUE (94)
- KIRIBATI (87)
- HAWAII (63)
- TOKELAU (26)
- FRENCH POLYNESIA (18)
- NAURU (3)

FILTER BY ARTIFACT:

- WEAPONS (114)
- CEREMONIAL (40)
- ORNAMENT (2)

COLLECTION MATERIAL
WOOD

Nifo'oti (Mrs Louisa Kronfeld)

Date: Early 1800's
Origin: Samoa
Materials: wood
Classification: clubs, weapons, ceremonial weapons
Technique: carving
Dimensions Overall: 750mm(Length) x 80mm (Width)



COLLECTION MATERIAL
WOOD

Nifo'oti (Mrs Louisa Kronfeld)

Date: Early 1800's
Origin: Samoa
Materials: wood
Classification: clubs, weapons, ceremonial weapons
Technique: carving
Dimensions Overall: 760mm(Length) x 80mm (Width)



COLLECTION MATERIAL
WOOD

Nifo'oti (Salesa 'Aiga)

Date: Unknown
Origin: Samoa
Materials: wood
Classification: clubs, weapons, ceremonial weapons
Technique: carving
Dimensions Overall: 500mm(Length) x 85mm (Width)



COLLECTION MATERIAL
WOOD

Nifo'oti (David Tau)

Date: 2010
Origin: Samoa
Materials: wood
Classification: clubs, weapons, ceremonial weapons
Technique: carving



COLLECTION MATERIAL
WOOD

Nifo'oti (Malaga Family)

Date: Early 1800's



REFINE RESULTS

WOOD: Nifo'oti (Mrs Louisa Kronfeld)

FILTER BY PACIFIC:

- SAMOA (156)
- TONGA (128)
- FIJI (97)
- NIUE (94)
- KIRIBATI (87)
- HAWAII (63)
- TOKELAU (26)
- FRENCH POLYNESIA (18)
- NAURU (8)

FILTER BY ARTIFACT:

- WEAPONS (114)
- CEREMONIAL (40)
- ORNAMENT (2)



WATCH



Traditional Samoan siva with Nifo Oti

Nifo'oti (Mrs Louisa Kronfeld)

Date: Early 1800's
Origin: Samoa
Materials: wood
Classification: clubs, weapons, ceremonial weapons
Technique: carving
Dimensions Overall: 750mm(Length) x 80mm (Width)
 Photo Credit: Dr.Moe Kronfeld

This nifo'oti is part of a larger collection of items from the Pacific Islands that belonged to Mrs Louisa Kronfeld and her late husband Gustav Kronfeld. In 1999, her son, Dr.Moe Kronfeld facilitated the gifting of the collection to the Te Papa museum on Mrs Kronfeld's behalf. Later in 2015, Dr.Kronfeld uploaded the photos of the collection to Vā

This is a nifo'oti, a carved wooden weapon from Samoa. It is one of several forms of nifo'oti that have been made in Samoa from at least the early 1800s.

The first nifo'oti may have been modelled on cane knives or the blubber knife of early nineteenth century English and American whalers. These knives became a popular weapon in the Samoan civil wars of the mid to late 1800s and can be seen in old photographs from the period. The most common form of nifo'oti was a wooden club carved with long teeth along one side and a single curved hook projecting at the end of the other. In 1927, anthropologist Te Rangi Hiroa considered the wooden nifo'oti a modern development most likely made for show and ceremonial purposes. However, in the United States at the Peabody Museum in Salem, there is an example of a wooden nifo'oti given to the museum in 1821 that points to a much earlier origin (1). [Read more](#)

Weapons and warfare in nineteenth century Samoa

In the nineteenth century, Samoans engaged in spear throwing and club fighting contests but weapons were most often used in small scale skirmishes or ambushes. Fighting could be vicious and the injuries if not fatal, very serious. Battles were fought over major chiefly titles and to settle disputes or avenge insults. It has been noted that firearms were not widely used in this period and no one side had a monopoly on them (2). Some indigenous weapons had importance as heirlooms and were passed down and in some cases even named. The family war club was known as the anava, and it would be brandished on the malae of the village when a troop of warriors were setting out to march. In the twentieth and twenty first centuries, indigenous forms of weaponry were still made in Samoa for cultural performances and the tourist market. [Read more](#)

References

- (1) Peabody Essex Museum , Salem Cat no: 7121A12/2 Donor : B.F.Johnson. Date received 1821
- (2) Howe K.R. 1984 Where the Waves Fall. George Allen and Unwin. Sydney page 245

REFINE RESULTS

TAPA & FINE MATS COLLECTION: 'ie toga (Leaupepe 'Aiga)

FILTER BY PACIFIC:

- SAMOA (68)
- TONGA (60)
- FIJI (8)

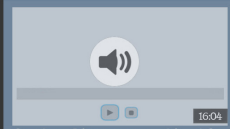


WATCH



Leaupepe si'i

LISTEN



Grandpa Fa'asuamaleaui To'o Tofa Leaupepe II, speaks about our 'ie toga

'ie toga (Leaupepe 'Aiga)

Date: Early 1960's
Origin: Samoa
Materials: plant fibre
Classification: ceremonial object
Technique: weaving (lalaga)
Dimensions Overall: 2000mm (Length) x 600mm (Width)
Photo Credit: Teresa Fofoga Leaupepe

O le tausaga e 1930 na amata lalaga ai e Savaiiolefilemu Liki Tiatia le 'ie lenei o le malo. E tusa ai ma le aganu'u, ina ua tu'umalo le Savaiiolefilemu ona tu'uina lea i le tama a lana tama O Va'asilifiti Moelagi Jackson na te lalagaina. Na toe fa'auau le lalagaina o lenei 'ie e Va'asilifiti i le afoaga o Avao i Savai'i. E o'o mai i le 1990, e le'i maea lava lenei ie ona tu'uina atu loa lea e Va'asilifiti i lona alo o Lagipoiva Cherelle Jackson n ate lalagaina. O Lagipoiva na na fa'amae'a ina le vaega na totoe o le 'ie lenei a'o le'i taua'aina atu i le Palemata'aga i ona foliga va'ia o iai noi, mo le fa'alautioloaina o lenei galuega taua o le Aganu'u Samoa mo tagata e maimoa i ai.

This fine mat was started by Savaiiolefilemu Liki Tiatia Leaupepe in Fagamalo, Savaii, in the 1930s. As is customary, upon her death it was passed onto her grand-daughter Va'asilifiti Moelagi Jackson. Va'asili then added to the weaving of the fine mat in the village of Avao in Savai'i. In the 1990's, still half done and incomplete, Va'asili passed the fine mat to me her daughter Lagipoiva Cherelle Jackson. I then wove the last part of the fine mat before loaning it to the Auckland museum in its current state, for people to appreciate the work involved in creating such a valued part of the Samoan culture.

Feel free to watch our family video which shows the traditional gifting ceremony of our 'ie toga. Also take the time to listen to a recording from our grandpa Fa'asuamaleaui To'o Tofa Leaupepe II, who speaks more about our family history and the significance of this particular 'ie toga.

CONTRIBUTE

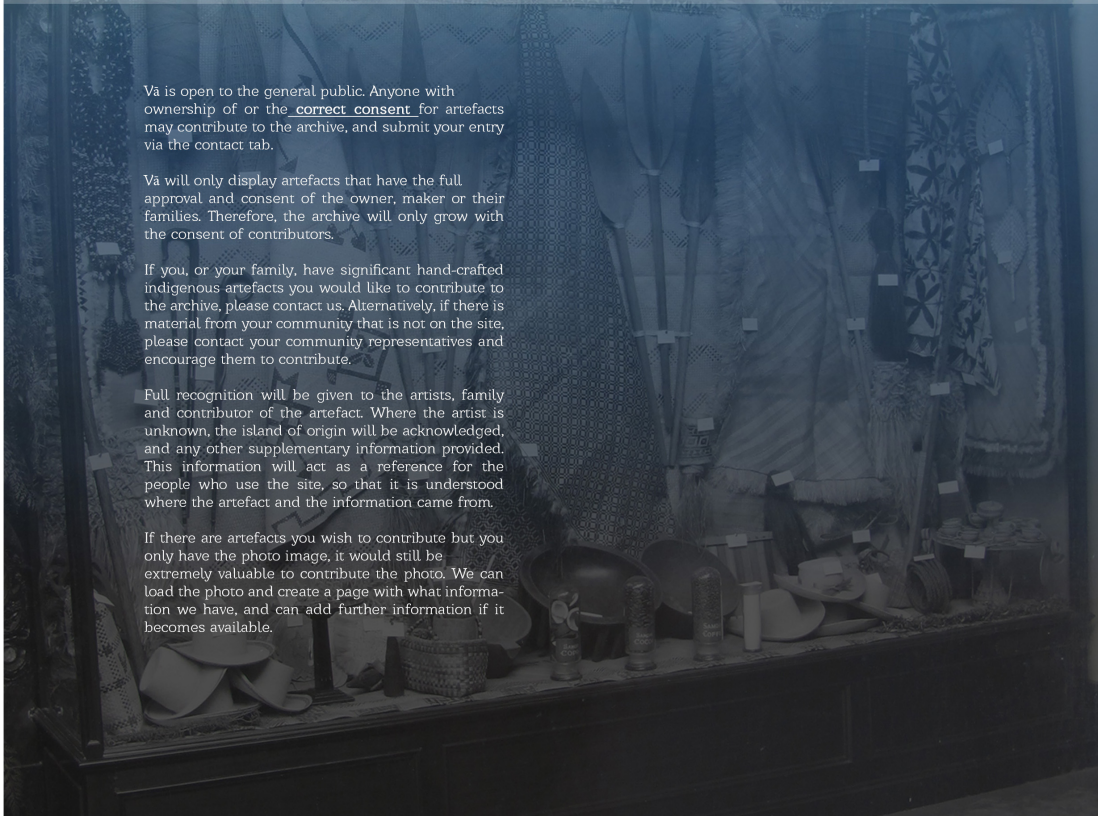
Vā is open to the general public. Anyone with ownership of or the correct consent for artefacts may contribute to the archive, and submit your entry via the contact tab.

Vā will only display artefacts that have the full approval and consent of the owner, maker or their families. Therefore, the archive will only grow with the consent of contributors.

If you, or your family, have significant hand-crafted indigenous artefacts you would like to contribute to the archive, please contact us. Alternatively, if there is material from your community that is not on the site, please contact your community representatives and encourage them to contribute.

Full recognition will be given to the artists, family and contributor of the artefact. Where the artist is unknown, the island of origin will be acknowledged, and any other supplementary information provided. This information will act as a reference for the people who use the site, so that it is understood where the artefact and the information came from.

If there are artefacts you wish to contribute but you only have the photo image, it would still be extremely valuable to contribute the photo. We can load the photo and create a page with what information we have, and can add further information if it becomes available.



CONTACT For further information about Vā OR to contribute, please write to us, and submit your request below.

Please take a moment to familiarise yourself with the [submission rules and guidelines](#) before uploading your entry

EMAIL US

NAME	EMAIL	PHONE
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
ARTIFACT	ARTIST/MAKER & YEAR	PACIFIC ISLAND REGION
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

DISCRIPTION

UPLOAD MEDIA

ADD IMAGES	ADD VIDEO	ADD AUDIO
<input type="button" value="📷"/>	<input type="button" value="📹"/>	<input type="button" value="🔊"/>

SEND EMAIL

Photograph parameter guideline for uploading images in online archive

Upload only photos you have taken yourself

You must own or hold all necessary rights (copyrights, etc.) to your photo/s.

We would prefer the artefact to be photographed in front of a neutral black or white background

You can upload photos you did not create as long as they hold the necessary rights and permissions.

Formats for uploading photographs: **JPG, TIF, PNG, and GIF**

Resolution

Size of photo – Minimum 10 KB – Maximum 1GB.
The minimum dimensions are 350 pixels (width) x 350 pixels (height).
The maximum dimensions are 1000 pixels (width) x 1000 pixels (height).

Photos over 1GB in file size will not be accepted. All photos are automatically resized to 3000px wide when you upload them, so it is not necessary to manually size the photo before uploading. For best results, your photo should at LEAST be 1680px wide. Extremely small photos will not be approved.

You cannot upload certain types of photo content:

- No rips of photos or any other third party copyrighted material. Read more about [copy right](#) and [fair use](#).
- No obscene photos are allowed [Read more](#).
- No solicitations or advertisements are allowed in photo or photo description
- Photos may not suggest or encourage illegal activity

These photos will not be approved. Respect the privacy of others. Do not upload photos that contain identifying information such as phone numbers, addresses, etc.

Videography parameter guideline for uploading video in online archive

Upload only videos you created yourself

You must own or hold all necessary rights (copyrights, etc.) to your video.

You can upload videos that you appear in or helped create (as director, DP, editor, musician, motion graphics artist, actor, etc.) as long as you have the necessary permissions from the copyright holders.

You can upload videos you did not create as long as they hold the necessary rights and permissions.

Formats for uploading video: MOV, MP4 (MPEG4), AVI, WMV, FLV, 3GP, MPEGPS and WebM.

Resolution

Vā accepts 4K resolution, 360 degree videos and file sizes up to 2 GB in memory.

In case your video camera has another format, you may always convert video to one of these formats with free [Freemake Video Converter](#).

It is recommended you upload videos in HD for quality playback.

You cannot upload certain types of content:

- No rips of movies, music, television, or any other third party copyrighted material. Read more about [copyright](#) and [fair use](#).
- No obscene material [Read more](#).
- No videos that are hateful, harass others, or include defamatory or discriminatory speech. [Read more](#).
- No videos that depict or promote unlawful acts, extreme or real-life violence, self-harm, or cruelty toward animals.

Audio parameter guideline for uploading audio in online archive

Upload audio you created yourself
(e.g music, field recordings, podcasts or voice messages)

You must own or hold all necessary rights (copyrights, etc.) to your audio.

You can upload audio that you appear in or helped create (as recorder, editor, musician, actor, artist, voice contributor, etc.) as long as you have the necessary permissions from the copyright holders.

You can upload audio you did not create as long as they hold the necessary rights and permissions.

Audio format:

Formats for uploading audio files: **WAV, MP3, OGG, GSM, DCT, FLAC, AU, AIFF, VOX and RAW.**

High-resolution audio

Va accepts high definition audio with file sizes up to 2 GB in memory. It is recommended you upload audio in HD for quality playback.

You cannot upload certain types of content:

- No rips of movies, music, television, or any other third party copyrighted material.
Read more about [copyright](#) and [fair use](#).
- No obscene language is allowed
- No solicitations or advertisements are allowed in audio description
- Audio may not suggest or encourage illegal activity

SUBMISSION RULES AND GUIDELINES

When can I submit my entry?

You are welcome to submit as many entries as you like, whenever you like. Submissions can be made to the archive 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Once received, your entry will be reviewed by our team (committee of academics and community leaders with the necessary knowledge and skills) for authenticity and the nature of each piece of art will be determined. We are aware the sub-categories are broad, however if we feel there is a need for an additional category, we will adjust accordingly.

SUBMISSION RULES AND GUIDELINES

Why should I submit my artefact?

That ancient I'e toga (fine mat) underneath your mattress that was gifted to your mother as her wedding gift, which she holds so dearly to her heart, is what we value. The material culture is something to be celebrated and shared for others to appreciate and learn from. We don't want this art to disappear, or to take this art away from you. We would like to create a digital reference of the artefact that sustains and maintains the art form, and the knowledge that it holds.

SUBMISSION RULES AND GUIDELINES

What are significant Pacific artefacts?

Indigenous Pacific artefacts that are hand-crafted goods and that have historical, national and international significance. These are the sub-categories under which the art may be listed:

FIBER ARTS, WOOD CARVING, SHELL, BONE, TAPA & FINE MATS, STONE, FEATHER, & OTHER MATERIALS

The archive is an photo image collection accompanied with written narratives or featured media. These photos are of historic arts and crafts pertaining to the Pacific i.e tapa cloth, wood carvings, 'ie toga (fine mats), green stone ect.

SUBMISSION RULES AND GUIDELINES

Property of Vā

All photos uploaded to the Vā archive become the property of Vā. Please be sure to supply a 'Credit' to your photo when uploading so all contributors can be acknowledged properly for the information they have supplied. This will also provide a reference for the people who use the site, so that it is understood where the information came from.

All text supplied (i.e., description, copyright, credit, source) must provide the correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. Vā reviews every photo before posting, and will edit the text you provide where necessary with your consent and approval. If your information does not comply with this guideline, we will be forced to decline the entry.

Alternatively, for further information about Vā please contact va@pacificarchive.com

REFINE RESULTS

SEARCH RESULTS FOR: "ie toga" (132)

FILTER BY MATERIAL:

- TAPA & FINE MATS (103)
- FIBER ARTS (26)
- OTHER MATERIALS (3)

FILTER BY PACIFIC:

- SAMOA (68)
- TONGA (60)
- FIJI (8)

COLLECTION MATERIAL
TAPA & FINE MATS

'ie toga (Leaupepe 'Aiga)

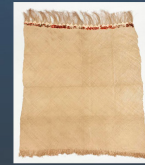
Date: 1960's
Origin: Samoa
Materials: plant fibre
Classification: ceremonial objects
Technique: weaving (lalaga)
Dimensions Overall: 2000mm (Length)
x 600mm (Width)



COLLECTION MATERIAL
TAPA & FINE MATS

'ie toga (Iosefa 'Aiga)

Date: Unknown, 1900-1922,
Origin: Samoa
Materials: plant fibre, feather
Classification: ceremonial objects
Technique: weaving (lalaga)
Dimensions Overall: 2070mm (Length)
x 1900mm (Width)



COLLECTION MATERIAL
TAPA & FINE MATS

'ie toga (Peniamina Tuvalu)

Date: Unknown, 1900-1922,
Origin: Samoa
Materials: plant fibre, feather
Classification: ceremonial objects
Technique: weaving (lalaga)
Dimensions Overall: 3000mm (Length)
x 2000mm (Width)



COLLECTION MATERIAL
TAPA & FINE MATS

'ie toga (Kalamei)

Date: Unknown
Origin: Tonga
Materials: plant fibre, feather
Classification: ceremonial objects
Technique: weaving (lalaga)
Dimensions Overall: 2080mm (Length)
x 1900mm (Width)



COLLECTION MATERIAL
TAPA & FINE MATS

'ie toga (Johnson Family)

Date: Unknown, 1900-1922,



Conclusion

This chapter outlined the design of the digital archive. I have been interested in Pacific artefacts in relation to identity for many years and as a designer, and always felt a close connection to the concept of *vā*. While testing the potential surrounding the uniqueness and value of *vā*, I came to the conclusion that the *vā* is an essential part of Pacific culture, as it speaks of the knowledge that exists for its people. Pacific culture has layers of meanings that are hidden and then revealed, like the *lalaga* and *lalava* that are reflected in Pacific artefacts. This is the primary focus of the archive, to reveal and protect Pacific artefacts and the knowledge pertaining to them. The following chapter concludes the exegesis by considering the research question alongside the findings of this chapter, and the findings of Chapters Two to Five.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

The intention of this exegesis was to explore how the next generation of Pacific diaspora from blended backgrounds construct and maintain their identities through the spaces they inhabit. This exegesis contextualises and conceptualises a body of creative work. Collectively, the writing and my practice locates and explains some ideas about Pacific spatiality. Though the exegesis is presented in two parts, specifically the written and practical, these components can be understood as an integrated whole that Kroll (2004) describes as an ‘authorial announcement’, where scholars ‘reveal their personalities as well as their methodologies’ (2004, p. 4). During the development of this exegesis, I journeyed into new waters and sometimes ‘navigated conflicting currents of thought’ (Toluta’u, 2015a, p. 107). Like any existing knowledge, Sāmoan and wider Pacific ideas are neither permanent nor complete. Scholars offer diverse framings of thought and in that process deliberate understandings, and pursue to move epistemologies forward (Toluta’u, 2015a).

Exegesis summary

Formulating and designing an exegesis for a creative practice PhD was challenging. I contributed a significant effort to design this text so it not only articulates central ideas within the work (contextualisation, methodology, critical ideas and practice), but it also brings together the character of the exegesis as a whole. Therefore, I approached the design of the written component of my exegesis in a way that is distinctively Sāmoan in its aesthetic.

Chapter One introduced the exegesis by discussing the cultural location of the research. I positioned myself by placing my current research in the context of my previous work. I considered the artistic field in which this exegesis might be measured by discussing contributions to this field from other Pacific artists. I examined the value of such contributions to academia and discussed how Sāmoan epistemologies influenced both the topic and methodology of the literature review.

Chapter Two of the exegesis offered a review of literature on the topic. In outlining thinking relating to the *vā*, I discussed ideas from scholars of diverse disciplines and positioned this in the framework of existing references. In preparation for Chapter Four's discussion on methodology, and Chapter Five's discussion on the design proposal, I also discussed knowledge relating to space, identity, ethnicity, and the materiality and processes. I then discussed the exegesis as *meaalofa*. I proposed that a creative, practice-led scholar is not an independent entity who offers artefacts as

gifts, but in fact, forms part of a community of thought from which the scholar collects thinking and to which the scholar returns thinking (Toluta'u, 2015a).

Chapter Three presented the findings from the research participants in relation to the inquiry.

I recognised and considered *talanoa* as a culturally appropriate way of communicating with the participants. In so doing, *talanoa* drew focus and brought forth the recurring themes of identity, sense of belonging, *vā* and space. I then concluded this chapter by presenting the photographic images accompanied by the voices of the participants.

Chapter Four presented the methodology of *Lala-Vā* used to approach the research design. Archival research, current museum displays, participation and documentation, and experimentation were explored within this methodology. *Lalava* and *lalaga*- the two different kinds of traditional practice used to address the research question- were outlined as well as the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches.

Chapters Four also focused on the creative practice that established the inquiry in the exegesis. It described and then unpacked the methodology of *Lala-Vā*, which was developed from the findings of the literature review. Building on the work of past scholars, I offered a methodology that is useful for Sāmoan and Pacific creative

research projects. In this respect, I related Lala-Vā to existing ideas surrounding family, language, genealogies, chiefly systems, church and ceremonial obligations in the field of knowledge. Furthermore, I discussed the development of a variety of research methods, including interviews, archival research, museum displays, documentation and the experimentation of lalaga and lalava.

Lastly, Chapter Five opened with a dialogue of the nature of creative practice research as a personal response, then offered ideas and processes underpinning the proposal, experiments supporting the development, and the website design itself. A digital archive was designed as the practical component of this exegesis. However, the research design represents only the surface of an extensive inquiry that developed through practice-led experiments of photography, and an analysis of thought and ideas. I argue that the website design may be understood as the vā as it aligns with Pacific ideologies where cultural relationships are interconnected and integrated.

Contributions to the field

This exegesis contributes to its field in many ways. As Pacific people are becoming more visible in numbers and impact, New Zealand society with our unique culture and identities and the need to analyse the perspective of the diaspora of these communities, becomes more apparent. Their modes of communication and use of media, both non-Western and mainstream, can help us better understand the needs of these Pacific communities. The value of conducting this type of research will firstly enable other researchers to study Pacific diaspora in the Aotearoa/New

Zealand socio-cultural context; and secondly, creates a methodological framework that is Indigenous and will inform designs that explore the wider needs of diasporic communities. There is much left to explore in this field.

This research has the potential to benefit Pacific communities by opening a space where identities of blended backgrounds and relations can arise, progress and change; where young people can find new means of protecting and sustaining Pacific identity in the diaspora – be that through items of craft that relate to oral narratives, sacred traditions, cultural knowledge and native languages.

In designing the Lala-Vā methodology for practice-led research, the model communicates how it can be used to work respectfully with participants while at the same time adapting to artistically conceptualise a design that is beneficial to the research inquiry. Others may use this research model in their own contexts, as essentially the model created is for analysing identity construction and maintenance in the diaspora.

This research adds to the growing body of knowledge, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, that exists in a Māori and Pacific space. The exegesis supports Te Ara Poutama's aims of building an Indigenous Pacific strand within the Faculty. The exegesis also complements the research undertaken by Te Ipukarea and Te Whare o Rongomaurikura, as it argues that language is a key marker of identity. This research could also assist policy-makers and government agencies, such as the

Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, in understanding the changing demographics of Pacific peoples and their blended identities. Finally, as the primary researcher, I benefit directly from the research because it is an opportunity to give back to my community and at the same time, obtain my doctorate.

Further research

It is my intention to seek funding to build this website, and promote its use within Aotearoa/ New Zealand and the wider Pacific. Furthermore, it is also my intention to present ideas and concepts within this exegesis at conferences that support Indigenous knowledge and consider practice-led research in art and design. As there is a word restriction in place for this exegesis, I hope to add depth to certain themes in the chapters, and submit this to Indigenous academic journals that relate to art and design. In so doing, I hope to offer understandings of an alternative framing of visual design research. Outside the research ideas in this exegesis, I aim to continue testing the potential of vā through different modes of communication that seek to find new ways of preserving and acknowledging Indigenous knowledge.

Closing

My method throughout the duration of this exegesis has been to ‘read, look and listen respectfully’ (Toluta'u, 2015a, p. 107) and then to create thinking in a style that supports the development of design, and nurtures the blended Pacific diaspora. My exegesis seeks to offer alternative proposals to certain ideas.

The exegesis considered the nature of vā and its creative translation into artefacts. The website design draws on artistic considerations from the participants who are from blended backgrounds. These artistic considerations represent a creative fusion of the participant’s talanoa into new forms of artistic communication, designed to capture the cultural aspects of their individual identities. The methodology of Lala-Vā applies designer’s journal, photography, archival research, forms of display, experimentation of lalava and lalaga, participation and documentation, and mapping have informed the research process. Therefore, I present this exegesis both as a contribution to artistic scholarship and as a form of meaalofa.

Finally, as an extension of meaalofa, I acknowledge I have come so far from where I began this research journey in 2009, struggling to adapt and communicate the ideas and concepts I had for the potential of vā. It is my purpose and goal in life to teach and nurture other young Indigenous researchers and artists to voice their opinions and comments through creative practice led research, and to encourage higher learning that advances Indigenous knowledge in the academic world.

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Personal Communication

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Participant Interviews

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- Fa (May 14, 2015), *Face to face interview with Benita Simati*.
- Lima (June 6, 2015), *Face to face interview with Benita Simati*.
- Lua (April 20, 2015), *Face to face interview with Benita Simati*.
- Tasi (April 18, 2015), *Face to face interview with Benita Simati*.
- Tolu (May 14, 2015), *Face to face interview with Benita Simati*.

Glossary

The following Sāmoan words, expressions and phrases are based on Pratt's Grammar and Dictionary of the Sāmoan Language (1893), Milner's Sāmoan Dictionary (1966), and Glossaries in Meleisea's publications (1987).

Aiā tatau	Rights to which an individual is entitled by inheritance or privilege
'Āiga	Family. Member of a family. Extended family
Aotearoa	New Zealand
Alofa	Love
'Ia teu le vā'	Cherish/nurse/care for the opening between or space between
'Ie avaga	Marriage
'Ie sina	Finely woven cloth of hibiscus fibre in which loose ends form a hanging surface on one side; worn by taupou or sao tamaitai; now very rare.(Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1996)
'Ie tōga	Finely woven mat of pandanus fibres bordered with red feathers. Varieties if 'Ie tōga are named according to their size and quality, or for the purpose for which they are given. Usually called 'fine mats' in English, although they are not mats.
'Ie tu	Fine mat worn by a bridegroom at the wedding

Ifoga	A ritual involving one party seeking forgiveness from another
Oloa	Male valuables
Fa'aaloalo	Behaviour and language that honour vā feāloaloa'I and vā tapuia relationships. Glossed as respect
Fa'aipoipoga	Weddings
Fa'alavelave Fa'alupega	Ceremonial and other family obligations Traditional words pertaining to each village
Fa'amatai	The ``faamatai`` or ``fa'amatai`` is the traditional Indigenous form of local governance in the islands of Sāmoa in the South Pacific
Fa'aSāmoa	To do things according to Sāmoan beliefs and practices,'the Sāmoan way of life'; Sāmoan Custom, Sāmoan language
Fa'asinomaga	Reference points that validate an individual's identity and places of belonging; includes family titles, land, villages
Fa'avae	Founding principles of e.g. a nation, villages, families

Faiā	Connections that make known kinships by blood or by affinity	Lotu	Church
Faifeau	Pastor, church minister, preist	Maliu	Funerals
Fanua	Land. Family lands		
Feagaiga	Covenant. The most important is the covenant between the brother and his sister		
Folafolaga	Formal acknowledgement of goods		
Fono	A council meeting		
Fonofale	Meeting house		
Gafa	Genealogy		
Gagana o aso uma	Informal, everyday language		
Gagana fa'aaloalo	Formal language of respect. Gagana o aso uma: informal, everyday language. Gagana Sāmoa: Sāmoan language		
Gagana Sāmoa	Sāmoan language		
Lauga	Traditional speeches		
Lalaga	Weaving		
Lalava	Lashing; binding		
Lala-Vā	Stirring the vā		

Mana	In Polynesian culture (the word “mana” is a cognate in many Oceanic languages), mana is a spiritual quality of supernatural origin—a sacred impersonal force existing in the universe. To have mana is to have influence, authority, and power to perform in a given situation. Mana is not limited to human application: governments, places and inanimate objects can also possess mana. People and objects that have mana are accorded respect because their mana gives them authority, power, and prestige	Pālagi	Also papālagi sky-breaker, white man, Europeans, foreigner
Matai	Titled family members who are heads of extended families, and are responsible for the wellbeing of all family members	Papa’a (Cook Island Māori)	European
Meaalofa	Meaalofa is the universal term that Samoans use to mean a gift. Meaalofa literally means ‘a thing of love’. Samoan’s use gift as tokens of appreciation, respect, love, acknowledgement, and affirmation of special relationships. While the term is synonymous with the kind of gifting that takes place within all cultures in New Zealand, Samoan’s see mea alofa as a physical embodiment of the giver’s feelings towards the receiver. Samoans believe that there is a close spiritual, emotional and genealogical connection that takes place between the giver & receiver of the gift.	Pākehā (Māori)	Non-Indigenous New Zealanders
Measina	White mats	Si’i	Ceremonial exchange of gifts
Moana	Sea, ocean, large lake	Tautala Sāmoa	Sāmoan language
Nu’u	Physical village settlement. Also refers to families with shared history and genealogy living in the village Matai Titled family members who are heads of extended	Tauhi vā (Tongan)	Refers to the art of creating and maintaining beautiful socio spatial relations
		Talanoa	Method of enquiry or to talk
		Tamāli’i’aga	Behaviour and conduct of someone brought up and grounded in fa’aSāmoa. Dignified and principled behaviour, language, and thought.
		Tamafafine	Descendants of women, daughter of a woman
		Tamatāne	Descendants of a man
		Tangata	People, men, persons, human beings
		Tangata whenua	New Zealand Maori
		Tatau	Tattooing

Tofā loloto:	Knowledge and wisdom that has critical depth	Whenua (Māori)	Land, country, ground
Tofā mamao	Long term vision based on wisdom and knowledge. Associated with	Whakapakari (Māori)	To discover, evolve or grow
Toga	Female valuables		
Tufunga lalava	Expert in lashing/ binding		
Tupu'aga	Genealogical lineage		
Vā	Opening between or space between, to denote relationships		
Vā o tagata	Refers to the relationship space between people		
Vā feiloa'i	Refers to the protocols of meeting		
Vā feāloaloa'i	Relationships. Refers to the respectful space; Glossed as respect		
Vā fealofani	Refers to the brotherly and sisterly love that people should show one another		
Vā tapua'i	Refers to the worshipful space		
Vā tapuia	Covenantal relationships between people that is sacred		
Hou'eiki fafine (Tongan)	Respectful term woman		
Kupesi (Tongan)	Raised stencils used in making tapa		
Waiata (Māori)	Poem, song, chant		