Navigating the boundaries of two cultural worlds while re-negotiating a space for myself: My journey as a Samoan woman in the AUT Psychotherapy course

By

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Attestation of authorship

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

Signed: Athena Tapu Tu'itahi, 26 June 2018

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<u>Abstract</u>

Navigating the two cultural worlds of Psychotherapy and Fa'asamoa (Samoan culture/ Samoan way) is a continuous discovery of edges and boundaries. It is the intersection of two worlds, how they meet, collide or miss each other. This dissertation reflects on the personal experiences I encountered throughout my Psychotherapy training. Often, these were painful experiences that were thought about and discussed in many different forums before being written in my journal. This piece of research asks the question, 'What were my experiences as a Samoan woman in the AUT Master of Psychotherapy programme?' It is grounded within the Teu le vā methodology and Fa'afaletui-Tōfā sa'ili research framework as a reflection of my worldview that incorporated nurturing relationships, appropriate consultation and seeking wisdom. This lead to a shift of re-negotiating spaces within Psychotherapy and Fa'asamoa. Findings included the experiences of a 'lack of cultural safety' and 'navigating the edge of two worlds'. This dissertation concludes with recommendations for the Psychotherapy programme and future research in this area.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

'Sufiga o le tuaoi' (Tui Atua, 2011) negotiates the boundaries between ourselves, others, our environment and what is tapu or sacred. 'Sufiga o le tuaoi' is the Samoan concept of negotiating spaces around you (Tui Atua, 2011, pg. 1). There are many such spaces and edges that must be defined and re-negotiated in this research. Sufiga means to coax, placate, negotiate, canvass and/or persuade. Tuaoi means boundary or boundaries (Tui Atua, 2011, pg. 1). Therefore, my research question is 'What were my experiences as a Samoan woman in the AUT Master of Psychotherapy programme?'. This chapter begins with an introduction of myself that makes up my fa'asinomaga (identity). Here, I identify myself and my position in the world, as this is culturally imperative for me. I continue to set the foundation by introducing my research topic of navigating two worlds of Fa'asamoa and Psychotherapy with 'The edges'.

Following on is an outline of key cultural concepts for this dissertation: Pacific collective identity, Le vā and the re-negotiated space, Fa'asamoa, Tama'ita'i Samoa (Samoan women) and Samoan ways of learning, alofa (love) and fa'aaloalo (respect). Next, is a survey of the literature on Pasifika student experiences in Psychotherapy training. The literature review is expanded on in the results chapters. Lastly, is an introduction of indigenous knowledge and western education, Psychotherapy and the psychotherapy training at AUT and the research rationale that looks at the conflict that I experienced.

Fa'asinomaga (Identity)

"I am not an individual; I am an integral part of the cosmos.

I share divinity with my ancestors, the land, the seas and the skies.

I am not an individual, because I share a "tofi" (an inheritance) with my

family, my village and my nation. I belong to my family and my family

belongs to me. I belong to my village and my village belongs to me.

I belong to my nation and my nation belongs to me. This is the

essence of my sense of belonging".

(Tui Atua, 2002, pg. 2)

My fa'asinomaga or identity is how I position myself in the world. This is my collective worldview and navigational compass as a Samoan woman in Aotearoa, New Zealand. This is where I begin to tell the story of my journey through Psychotherapy training.

I am Talutoe Athena Tapu Tu'itahi, the second eldest daughter of Tauanu'u and Jennifer Tapu; the granddaughter of the late Dr Leota Tapu, the late Lufilufi Tapu, the late James John Tyrrell and Peseta Kiona Tyrrell. I am wife to Rizván, mother to Caleb, sister to Alicia, Neil and Esekielu, Su'e and Mike; and aunty to Jameson and Louella (LJ). I was born and raised in Aotearoa. I am Samoan and my family and land ties with the villages of Lotofaga, Safotu, Vaimoso, Iva and Pu'apu'a. Talutoe is my tulafale[1] title that was bestowed on me from my father's village of Lotofaga, in the provincial area of Atua, Samoa. I am Catholic, I am a youth leader, I am a past Le Vā scholarship recipient, a student in the Master of Psychotherapy and a mentee and supervisee to numerous supervisors and mentors. I am a registered interim Psychotherapist at Kari Centre Auckland District Health Board, Auckland.

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[1] Samoan orator.

In my different roles as a Samoan woman, wife, mother, daughter and sister, I am expected to be primarily involved in the care and wellbeing of my family before any other commitment. My role and responsibility has been bestowed upon me from God, my family and the Fa'asamoa (Samoan culture/Samoan way). My roles include active involvement in the day to day management of nuclear and sometimes extended family duties, particularly caring for my parents and grandmother. As a wife my role consists of supporting my husband and his cultural and family duties and managing our household and children. My role as a sister involves mediating relationships, collaborating with and supporting siblings or taking care of their children in the family. As a mother my role is the primary (at times sole) caregiver, provider and facilitator of childcare and activities. As a holder of the 'Talutoe' title my role is to serve the ancestral lands, family/aiga and village to which the title belongs. As a wearer of the malu (traditional samoan female tattoo) I am a representation of dignity, security and protection that negotiates and reconciles relationships. In my family I am expected to do this by supporting and contributing to ceremonial events, cultural protocols and customs during life events that includes (though is not limited to) funerals, village fundraisers and welcoming visiting parties.

It is with alofa (love), fa'aaloalo (respect) and loto maualalo (humility) that I honour both my Samoan and Psychotherapy culture by telling my story. This research expresses my personal views as a Samoan and my experiences in the Psychotherapy programme. Be advised not to inadvertently generalise this view to all other Samoan and Pasifika students partaking in this programme.

The edges

"'On the Edge' describes the place, the position I believe some of us feel we must, prefer, or fear to occupy as pioneers of the new scholarship".

(Teaiwa, 2001, pg. 343)

The definition of the 'edges' by Teaiwa (2001) describes a conscious intersection of political, social, cultural, academic and geographical fields. Turner, Davidson-Hunt and O'Flaherty (2003) discuss 'edges' as transition zones that are the meeting place for different eco-systems and habitats to meet and integrate. McCay (2000) coined the term 'edge effect' that likens ecological edges to people coming together, cultures integrating resulting in rich knowledge and practice.

Throughout my Psychotherapy Master's training at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) I felt 'on the edge' of different circles of Fa'asamoa and Psychotherapy. This dissertation will reflect on my experiences in the Psychotherapy course by focusing on some of the cultural meetings that occurred for me and the 'edges' that I encountered in my journey.

Pacific collective identity

Pacific people make up 7.4% of the New Zealand population with seven major Pacific Island ethnicities. Samoa is the largest Pacific people's ethnic group in 2013 with 48.7% (144,138) of the Pacific people's population (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Through a Samoan lens the concept of self is defined in a collective context and the individual exists in relation to others and to their environment (Tamasese, Peteru,

Waldegrave, & Bush, 2005). Pasifika and Samoan identity is shared in that it relates to the world in accordance with their spiritual and physical, mental and emotional elements (Tavana, 2002; Tamasese, et al., 2005). The 'Fa'asinomaga' (identity) quotation by Tui Atua (2002) on page 10, outlines what he deems as the 'essence of belonging' for a Samoan person. This aligns with the significant underpinnings of my core values of belonging to my Samoan ancestral heritage, family groups and land. Tui Atua (2002) states in the opening excerpt 'I belong to them as they belong to me'; in this way I carry my collective identity and reciprocate love and support to my family, community and academic groups in my actions. This dissertation is one opportunity to reciprocate that and disseminate information from my experiences to help others with their journey, particularly Pasifika students. It is with this understanding of the collective group that I use the terms 'Pasifika' and 'Pacific' interchangeably to discuss the contexts of shared identity of Pacific Island peoples. I am mindful that people of the Pasifika are a heterogeneous group that share some (but not all) identities, beliefs and values. As a Samoan person I use many Samoan concepts and intermittently refer to this wider collective identity of Pasifika people. I do this as it makes sense to me and this is my worldview.

KEY CONCEPTS

Le vā and the re-negotiated space

The vā is generally defined as a relational space or the "space that relates" (Wendt, 1999). Tuagalu (2008) describes the vā as the "social and spiritual relations between

people, is an important concept to understand the ways that Samoans relate to each other and the world at large" (pg. 108). Tui Atua (2007) gives the definition of vā as "the sacred relationship between humans and all things animate and inanimate things" (pg. 116). Mila-Schaaf and Hudson (2009) reiterate this as a Pacific way of understanding life and reciprocating respect. It teaches an individual how to conduct the relationship between self and others in personal, physical, social, cultural and political settings. They also describe the vā as the space that allows people to relate, negotiate, re-create and play. The different types of vā considered in this dissertation are the vā o tagata (space between people), vā fealoaloa'i (respectful space) and vā tapu'ia (spiritual space). Vā o tagata describes the consideration in the research of the work and collaboration between others and myself. Vā fealoaloa'i is the respectful space (Tuagalu, 2008) as 'Fealoaloa'i' means to 'face each other'. This vā refers to the space between individuals or between individual and family, village or community (Pulotu-Endemann, Suaalii-Sauni, Lui, McNicholas, Milnes & Gibbs, 2007). It is with respect and humility that I recognise the many different people in my family, community and academic groups that helped me through the Psychotherapy course, and ultimately to this place of research. Vā tapu'ia describes spiritual and worshipful space (Tuagalu, 2008); in that I acknowledge my spiritual faith in God and the guidance of prayers from my elders. It is also the vā that describes my connection with the cosmos, with my land and particularly my Samoan ancestral heritage that have passed before me and are alongside me every step of the way.

Notions of the vā being a space that is creative and negotiable opens up the parameters of what the re-negotiated third space can look like. For the purposes of this research I have amalgamated these definitions of the vā as the sacred relational space that is social, spiritual, relating, negotiating and creating. However, defining the re-negotiated space is

the amalgamation of Mila-Schaaf and Hudson's (2009) indigenous negotiating space, Bhabha's (1990; 1994) third space alongside Tui Atua's (2007) vā tapu'ia (as described in the above paragraph) that encapsulate the re-negotiated space that was formed for me. Bhabha (1990; 1994) introduces the intervening and breaking away from notions of hierarchy in cultural differences that make a third space. This allows new meaning and cultural hybridity to occur (pg. 209). Tui Atua (2007), however, describes the notion of vā that is tapu or sacred.

> "The Samoan word, *vā tapuia*, includes the term *tapu* within. The term
> literally refers to the sacred (*tapu-ia*) relationship (*vā*) between man and all
> things, animate and inanimate. It implies that in our relations with all things,
> living and dead, there exists a sacred essence, a life force beyond human
> reckoning" (pg. 116).

This concept of re-negotiating space is echoed in Iosefo's work (2016) where she brings together the concepts of vā and third space (Bhabha, 1990) to make sense of her identity as a Samoan woman alongside post-colonial theories. Re-negotiating space is elaborated on further in the discussion chapter of this dissertation.

Fa'asamoa (Samoan culture)

To understand the context of Samoan women and their roles in Samoan society one must look at the social and organisational levels of the Fa'asamoa and fa'amatai systems (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1996). The fa'amatai is a chief-based organisation of life that governs the village and family circles. For a Samoan woman there are many different levels and structures of culture, gender, age and status that must be navigated

in the Fa'asamoa. Within the family group each person has a role and knows their duties and obligations, some that are sacred and revered and others that are secular (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1996). The fa'amatai system assigns the family and the village into gender groups based on marital status. This is a system based on divisions of power, status, labour and expectations. An example of this is matai or title-holders who are traditionally known as the head of the family and are chosen by the wider extended family to make decisions for the group. Aualuma are the unmarried daughters of the village where young women will remain until married (see Figure 1). There she will learn the correct etiquette on hospitality at home and in public, how to weave fine mats or 'ie toga', and arts (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1996). The aualuma are also in charge of the hospitality in the village. Once married, a young woman will enter either groups of the Faletua ma tausi (wives of titled men) or the Ava a taule'ale'a (wives of untitled men). If her husband is untitled and does not have a matai then she is in the Ava a taule'ale'a group (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1996).

The other groups in Figure 1 are the untitled males or Aumaga and Tamaiti. Aumaga are responsible for food production and will serve their matai and learn the oratory language until they become matai. In the Fa'asamoa, Tamaiti or children are constantly surrounded by people in a communal setting and their role is household chores. Children are expected to watch and learn from others before doing age appropriate tasks themselves.
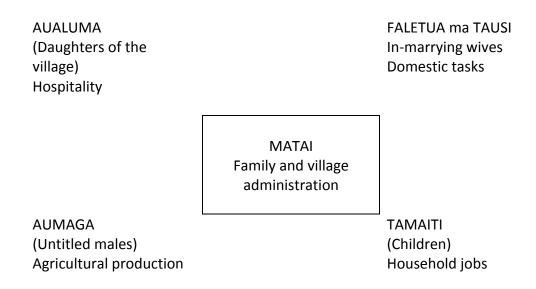
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AUALUMA                          FALETUA ma TAUSI
(Daughters of the                In-marrying wives
village)                         Domestic tasks
Hospitality

                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │        MATAI        │
                    │  Family and village │
                    │   administration    │
                    └─────────────────────┘
AUMAGA                           TAMAITI
(Untitled males)                 (Children)
Agricultural production          Household jobs
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Figure 1. The Fa'amatai system. Reprinted from Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1996, pg. 104.

Tama'ita'i Samoa (Samoan women)

Traditionally the daughter of the village matai or paramount chief is 'taupou'. A taupou is a young ceremonial hostess who is of elevated rank. She is revered because she alone performs specific ceremonial rituals and protocols in the village (Deihl, 1932; Krämer, 1994). She is also chaperoned and groomed to behave in a modest and dignified way that is role modelled for the aualuma of the village. In modern times such cultural expectations are still alive and Samoan women are expected to carry themselves with respect and reservation. Therefore, it can be said that many Samoan women become hesitant and apprehensive about speaking about their private life "for fear of tarnishing the honor and name of the *aiga*" (Tupuola, 2004a, pg. 120). Hence, a Samoan woman's role in the community is significant as her behaviour or demeanour reflects on the

honour of her family (Tupuola, 2004a). These are the cultural values that are ingrained in me to carry out my role as a good Samoan daughter who is obedient, quiet and virtuous. It is within this realm of learning and performing my duties that I recognised my hesitation to speak candidly in the Psychotherapy course.

Such traditional roles and responsibilities for Samoan women still echo in the modern world despite emigrating to New Zealand. However, being born or raised in New Zealand exposes Samoan women to less traditional values and lifestyles. Mageo (1998) states that the Samoan identity is continuously changing and is dynamic; taking on new and different roles that is essential to being Samoan. Consequently, the shift in gender roles can cause some tension as traditional expectations on Samoan women and daughters meet more liberal ideals. Menon & Mulitalo's (2006) study found Samoan New Zealand women felt forced to be obedient to the expectations of their family while others felt rebellious and did not want to attend family events. A common theme emerged of Samoan New Zealand women juggling both worlds of obligation to family and choosing their own path. Furthermore, Fairbairn-Dunlop & Makisi (2003) describes the Fa'asamoa as still strong in New Zealand-born Samoan women and that they have assertive opinions and ideas about who they choose to be that does not always adhere to their cultural norms. "Today the role of Pacific women has changed from the past and increasingly women are taking up traditional titles and more diverse leadership roles in their families, communities and in the public arena" (Pulotu-Endemann et al., 2007, pg. 31). Personally, this resonates strongly with me as a Samoan woman born in New Zealand and growing up in both Samoan and Western worlds. The expectations of me from both worlds vary and this determines my roles and behaviour in both. As mentioned in the 'Fa'asinomaga' section of this chapter I fit into these roles as a Samoan daughter, a wife, a mother and a part of the wider community. This is a part of my identity and culture.

Samoan ways of learning, alofa and fa'aaloalo

In Pacific cultures children are taught to be obedient and seen, not heard. They learn not to question elders or authority and are taught to honour their parents (Tuafuti, 2010). Children's behaviour is seen as a reflection on their nuclear and extended families, therefore if a child misbehaves it brings shame to the wider family. A Samoan proverb says 'E iloa lava le tamalii i lana savali ma lana tautala'; this is translated as, "an aristocrat of noble birth is recognised through his or her respectful and noble way of walking and speaking" (Tuafuti, 2010, pg. 5). Knowledge is passed on to children by observing and remaining quiet during formal occasions, in this way they absorb knowledge through observation (Tagoilelagi, 1995). This enables Samoan children to be sensitised to and accommodating of others. Due to this relational collective social setting the Samoan child is socialised to be aware of relationships and how to maintain them (Ochs, 1988). The child also learns tacit knowledge of changes in social structure according to those present in a space for example addressing a matai by his appropriate title.

In the Fa'asamoa, a basic value is alofa or love; this is the concept of giving, receiving, reciprocity and sharing of gifts (Lui, 2003). A second value is fa'aaloalo or respect; this is the foundation of keeping good relationships. It is protocols and etiquette that define the respectful behaviour discussed earlier in 'Vā and negotiated spaces' as vā fealoaloa'i (Lui, 2003; Silipa, 2008). Fa'aaloalo can also be defined as reverence, courtesy and politeness. It is one's respectful actions, words and appropriate behaviour according to the social or cultural space or vā (Silipa, 2008). The third main value is fa'amagalo – this is translated as forgiveness but is also the process of getting back in line with the correct relational arrangement of the elements if a person breaches tapu.

The fourth is loto maualalo; this is humility or modesty. Fa'asamoa teaches a child to have loto maualalo when in the presence of adults and people in authority (Silipa, 2008). These values are ingrained in me to show humility at home and in public and show fa'aaloalo to teachers, elders and authorities by listening and not speaking or being critical.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pasifika student experiences in Psychotherapy training

The empirical literature pertaining to Pasifika student experiences in their Psychotherapy training is limited. It is my understanding that since the AUT Master's Psychotherapy programme began there have been a handful of Pasifika psychotherapists to successfully graduate from the course. There are no statistics to quantify this, only anecdotal evidence from Psychotherapy staff at AUT. In light of this my search for literature extends to published chapters, interviews and writing of Pasifika psychotherapists, psychologists and counsellors of their experiences in their respective training courses.

In a chapter by Berking, Fatialofa, Lupe, Skipps-Patterson and Agee (2007), Skipps-Patterson describes her experience as the first Samoan Psychotherapist to graduate from the AUT Psychotherapy Master's programme and the difficulty of pioneering the training as a Pacific person. "Psychotherapy training was one of the hardest journeys of my life – one in which I often felt alone and marginalized" (pg. 136). This is not an uncommon reflection, as McRobie & Agee's (2017) study of Pacific counsellors and psychotherapists reveal the disempowering experiences that they encountered in their training. Such experiences include not being culturally valued as Pasifika, not being

acknowledged for their Pacific identity and recognising the uniqueness of Pacific culture (pg. 108). This led to feeling that their voices were unnoticed and their cultural knowledge unrecognised. In her study Stewart-Folau (2017) examines the perspectives of Pasifika students enrolled in Psychotherapy training. Her findings show many similar themes emerged, including not being heard and feeling undervalued. In addition, a common theme in each account involved leaving parts of themselves outside to be able to get through their training. Berking et al. (2007) talk about feeling silenced when their culture went unacknowledged or cultural issues were not talked about, and they reiterate putting their culture outside to 'survive' the course. "In Psychotherapy I just put my culture away in order to survive" (pg. 57). Makasiale (2007) supports this notion of leaving her spirituality outside during training as "being asked to leave an essential part of me out in the corridor" (pg. 111). Furthermore, in an interview (Coombes & Alefaio-Tugia, 2013) with one of the founding members of Pasifikology Siautu Alefaio-Tugia, she describes initially forming the group to connect and support other Pacific psychology students. Before long they identified some key issues such as the "lonely journey for each of us"; that culturally their psychology training was not welcoming nor did it support cultural Pacific values and beliefs (pg. 39).

Berking et al. (2007) echo this further by recounting their collective experiences of anger, frustration and isolation in their respective training. The Pacific psychotherapists and counsellors highlight the triggering cultural clashes that occurred as Pacific students in a Eurocentric Psychotherapy or counselling training. One such clash was feeling uncertain about their cultural knowledge and ways of relating to a client, and having to double-check according to Western models of practicing. McRobie & Agee (2017) echo this by recalling the struggle to maintain their Pacific indigenous practices and learning while undergoing a European mainstream counselling training. However, it is Skipps-

Patterson (Berking et al., 2007) who questions the ability of her non-Pacific supervisor (with an "independent self construal" pg. 143) to advise her on how to work with a client from the Pacific culture who shared the same "interdependent self construal" (pg. 143) as she.

The voices of Pasifika psychotherapists, psychologists and counsellors give some insight into the experience of Pacific students in their respective Western training programmes. An article by Ioane (2017) invites thought and discussion on the two worlds of Pasifika culture and psychology. She reflects on Pacific clients and families being brought into the psychology world and whether clinicians are open to doing the same for the Pasifika cultural world. She highlights key cultural concepts of engagement such as 'Vā feilo'ai' (respectful space) and how this can be applied in practice. Ioane (2017) brings to light the significance of having mindfulness with Pacific cultures and how culturally aware clinicians must be in their practice.

An overview of the literature of Pacific therapist, counselling and psychologist perspectives in their training programmes portrays a severing of the cultural part of themselves, isolation and feeling unheard. This resonates with my own experiences as a Samoan woman in the Psychotherapy course.

INTRODUCING CONCEPTS

Indigenous knowledge and Western education

Introducing indigenous ways of learning clarifies the Samoan cultural way of learning and being and how this contrasts to the expectations in formal Western education. An

example of this is Fa'asamoa teaches Samoan children not to draw attention to themselves or to speak out of turn in formal settings (Tuafuti, 2010). This way of communicating can cause problems in Western academic settings. Kavapalu notes, "the process of Western education entails questioning, critical thinking and independent expression, all of which conflict with the cultural values of obedience, respect, and conformity". (1991, pg. 191). Therefore, the values and practices of Western education may oppose or reject the Samoan way of learning. Some Pacific literature highlights the different educational value systems and looks to revert or reclaim more indigenous knowledge in formal education. Nabobo & Teasdale (1994) discuss the importance of Pacific cultural knowledge within the Western education systems and call for more of a balance of traditional cultural knowledge and Western education. They claim the first step must begin with teachers recognising and knowing their own cultural heritage. In this way they will become more tolerant and understanding of cultural diversity within their classrooms. Smith (1999) stresses decolonising research and allowing a space for indigenous knowledge. Thaman (2003) also adds to this by encouraging Pasifika to deconstruct the Eurocentric methods of research and reclaim "indigenous perspectives, knowledge, and wisdom that have been devalued or suppressed because they were or are not considered important or worthwhile" (pg. 2). Additionally, psychology circles recognise that the field is still monopolised by theories and research practices with Eurocentric/Western epistemological assumptions (Coombes & Alefaio-Tugia, 2013). This research attempts to heed the call for more negotiated spaces allowing diversity and reciprocal relationships in Western and Pacific ways of learning.

Psychotherapy and the AUT Psychotherapy course

This section gives an overview of Psychotherapy and the AUT Psychotherapy training course that I undertook. Psychodynamic Psychotherapy is the main therapeutic approach taught at AUT. It is therapy that focuses on the unconscious content of a person's psyche and relies strongly on the interpersonal relationship between psychotherapist and client to foster recovery (Cabaniss, Cherry, Douglas & Schwartz, 2017). In utilising the therapist-client relationship the goals in therapy are to change habitual thoughts and behaviours through self-exploration (Shedler, 2006). This is achieved through strong rapport and a relational, supportive and warm therapeutic environment (McWilliams, 2004). Transference (the sum of feelings that the client has towards the therapist from the present and feelings displaced from the past) and counter-transference (the therapist's feelings experienced while with the client) are also used to help both the client and therapist notice the dynamics in the therapy room (Cabaniss, Cherry, Douglas & Schwartz, 2017). In this way, the therapist is able to determine recurring patterns and themes that become the source of further analysis (Shedler, 2010). Psychodynamic Psychotherapy also focuses on early life events, childhood attachments and significant occurrences in the past (Holmes, 2001). It examines early attachment and how the subsequent stages of development continued. Additionally, the therapeutic relationship looks to help the client experience a secure base and develop a new understanding of themselves in a safe environment (Holmes, 2001).

The AUT Master of Psychotherapy is made up of 240 points over two years full time or four years part time. It offers a variety of research, theory and practice papers, and includes clinical placement in the community and at the AUT Psychotherapy clinic, as well as clinical supervision. The course expects open discussions about students' experiences and the disclosure of feelings, emotions and thoughts. In the AUT Reflexivity and Relational Skills paper the student is expected to:

- Attend to his or her own processes, including participating actively in the development of a healthy group environment.
- Observe themselves and take responsibility for their own behaviour, while focusing on the way they respond and their understanding of how such dynamics come about.
- Attempt to stay present when others express themselves emotionally.
- Exhibit an ability to critically reflect on the values of differences related to power, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and culture within Aotearoa.
- Examine their personal extents of culture, ethics, values, belief, religion, spirituality and personal purposes and aptness for practicing Psychotherapy.

RESEARCH RATIONALE

Conflict

In the Psychotherapy course there is an expectation to notice one's own reactions, thoughts, feelings, associations and express them publicly. This was a very foreign concept for me. On one hand it was liberating, as Psychotherapy culture nurtures freedom to notice and openly express internal processes and on the other hand it was very conflictual as sharing personal stories and feelings feels counter-cultural to me. I was not accustomed to speaking my mind openly and sharing private and intimate details of my life. I quickly realised that there was a different, more openly expressive language and culture within Psychotherapy; and I felt discomfort every time I went into classes and process groups. This impacted deeply on me as I undertake my roles and responsibilities with great consideration as my way of contributing to my family and society. As a student I had to learn to adapt to the educational setting and put on a new critical lens to deconstruct my knowledge and understanding of the world such as my personality, patterns of behaviour, defences, my culture, my family and my ways of being. This created a distance or a gap between myself and my family; as my culture

and my community teach respect, knowing your role and responsibilites, obedience and conformity in a collective society.

This is the tension that is confronted and wrestled with in this dissertation. As I attempt to negotiate, navigate and compromise these two worlds, I searched for another place for myself or le vā that led to my reflection and asking the question: What were my experiences as a Samoan woman in the AUT Master of Psychotherapy programme?

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

> *"The indigenous Samoan proverb to "teu le va" and the concept of "va feiloa'i" are relational concepts that involve respecting sacred spiritual boundaries and the relational space between two people. If fully understood, these could be vital tools in a therapeutic relationship".*
> *(McRobie & Agee, 2017)*

This chapter introduces the Teu le vā methodology (Anae, 2010) and the Fa'afaletui-Tōfā sa'ili method used in this research (Tamasese et al., 2005; Tui Atua, 2007). A brief explanation is given first as to why I prioritised Samoan research frameworks rather than the Western models. Additionally, a further definition of the vā is given before an explanation of the Teu le vā methodology and Fa'afaletui-Tōfā sa'ili method and how these were applied to the research. Finally, this chapter will describe the data sources and give a summary of the methodology and method process.

Initially the heuristic inquiry method and phenomenological methodology was chosen for this research (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). The heuristic inquiry entails the discovery of the self using internal problem solving, imagination, self-reflection, intuition and tacit knowledge to understand one's own process. This is phenomenological in nature and investigates how a person experiences their life "just as it appears" for them (pg. 43). It encourages full disclosure from the researcher and being connected with one's own data rather than being detached from it. Heuristic inquiry also re-integrates information or data about oneself through synthesis to help understand oneself, and explores an in-depth process of the subjective human experiences and making meaning of such experiences. Therefore, the end result is a person's

autobiographical study of himself or herself as a single individual entity. This notion of a single individual view of oneself clashes with my sense of identity and self that is Samoan, shared and collective. My worldview and identity is linked in with my family, my culture, community, ancestors, cosmos and the relational space that links us. Therefore, my view of myself is not as a single individual. As mentioned in the introduction section of fa'asinomaga (identity), these factors are inextricably intertwined and cannot be separated.

As a result of this I experienced tension speaking as an individual when my worldview and belief system is relational with my spirituality, my environment, my family and my community. For this reason, I chose the Teu le vā methodology (Anae, 2010) that incorporates the Samoan worldview that I hold. I also amalgamated methods of Fa'afaletui and Tōfā sa'ili (Tamasese et. al., 2005; Tui Atua, 2007) that emphasises consultation and reflection in a way that better fits my values and beliefs. Therefore, I consciously chose to use my Samoan indigenous research methodologies and methods to explore this research.

Defining vā and Teu le vā

The introduction chapter of key concepts gives an amalgamated definition of the vā as the sacred relational space that is social, spiritual, relating, negotiating and creating. It considers the different vā in this research as vā o tagata (space between people), vā fealoaloa'i (respectful space) and vā tapu'ia (spiritual space). To reiterate, the vā incorporates "the sacred relationship between humans and all things animate and inanimate things" (Tui Atua, 2007. pg.116). Mila-Schaaf and Hudson (2009) reinforce this as a Pacific way of understanding life and reciprocating respect. It teaches an

individual how to conduct the relationship between self and others in personal, physical, social, cultural and political settings.

The concept of Teu le vā is the nurturing and maintaining of the space that relates, or relationship. Anae, Mila-Schaaf, Coxon, Mara & Sanga (2010) translate Teu as to cherish, nurse and take care of. Therefore, Teu le vā denotes tending to or maintaining good/sacred relationships (between people, environment and creator). From a Samoan worldview perspective Lui (2003) states the viewpoint of good Samoan health as having "positive and balanced relationships between these three elements" of *Atua* (God), *Tangata* (people) and *Laufanua* (land). The ability to "Teu le vā" within this worldview reinforces the vā and the sacred relationship between people, God and land and reinforces the Samoan values and protocols of upholding good relationships (Lui, 2003; Anae et al., 2010). In an attempt to cherish and nurse the vā in my research I put my Samoan holistic worldview in the forefront. This is the definition that aligns most with this research as it contextualises the values that underpin my experiences and personal responses.

Teu le vā research methodology

The Teu le vā methodology used in this study was adopted from a Pacific education research framework by Anae et al. (2010). It was developed in order to uphold safe cultural practice and relationships within the Pacific communities and researchers in Aotearoa. It is significant to acknowledge here that there were three Teu le vā principles that were adopted in this research and act as guiding principles.

1. The importance of nurturing the relationships between researchers and policy makers
2. Sharing collective knowledge to develop optimal relationships
3. Having a clear focus for research and policy efforts (Anae et al., 2010. pg. 20-27).

While the guiding principles remain the same, the six practices of Teu le vā have been re-framed to suit the subject areas of this dissertation of Fa'asamoa, Health and Psychotherapy. The following are the six research practices of Teu le vā methodology.

Teu le vā methodology research practices

The following is a summarised version of the education research practices for the Teu le vā methodology (Anae et al., 2010).

Table 1

Pacific education research practices:
1. *Engage with stakeholders in Pasifika education research.*   Ensuring that discussions happen between those directly involved in or affected by Pasifika education research and policy-making such as: · Pasifika learners;   · their families;   · teachers as practitioners;   · Pasifika communities;   · the research community and research organisations;   · policy-makers.   This collective approach to knowledge generation enables a relationship between stakeholders to have shared understandings of the research.   2. *Collaborate in setting the research framework.*   Pasifika priorities in education held as the main concern for researchers and policymakers. Spending time engaging with Pasifika in all levels of research and policy making areas and exchanging information. Understanding the

collaborative relationships as dynamic and essential.

3. *Create a coordinated and collaborative approach to Pasifika education research and policy-making.*

    Aligning with the Pasifika education plan finding creative and empowering ways to develop Pasifika education. Sharing knowledge with stakeholders, institutes, organisations, governement agencies to contribute to develop the Pasifika education plan, the gaps, expanding research capabilities, policies and practice.

4. *Grow knowledge through a cumulative approach to research.*

    Learning from past research by identifying issues in current research to develop new ways of researching. Adding knowledge to current research to create new projects that may be of interest for future policies.

5. *Understand the kinds of knowledge used in Pasifika education research and policy-making.*

    Understanding that different knowledges are from different perspectives and used for different reasons.

    "the ability to transfer knowledge requires an understanding of the 'receivers' of this knowledge, and being able to understand their knowledge needs and speak their knowledge-language. An understanding that different stakeholders frame knowledge differently assists with producing research that has resonance and relevance to all groups" (pg. 26).

    This practice identifies different knowledge and language used by different policymakers, stakeholders and partners in the research to policy process. So it recognises the importance of this and how this knowledge is relayed for the Pasifika community taking into consideration the importance of the research agenda and existing policies and frameworks.

6. *Engage with other knowledge brokers.*

    Recognising the role of researchers in Pasifika education as knowledge brokers that shift valuable Pasifika knowledge into Pasifika research that influence policy making. They are able to synthesize, translate knowledge, bridge cultural divides in knowledge cultures and apply this to practical information, theoretical knowledge and scientific evidence in other fields. Recognising that everyone is a potential knowledge broker and this enhances the knowledge understanding in Pasifika education.

Note. Anae et al. (2010, pg. 20-27).

Teu le vā Psychotherapy adaptation

Below I explain how I adapted and/or followed the Teu le vā principles for this psychotherapy research.

Adapted Teu le vā methodology principle 1:

1. *Engage with stakeholders in Pasifika health research.*

This was the collective conversation that occurred for this research. This engagement transpired between myself as the Samoan learner and researcher with my family members, community members, members of my Pasifika AUT community and members of the AUT Psychotherapy department and past and current Psychotherapy student peers (Pacific and non-Pacific) by talking about my subject area.

Adapted Teu le vā methodology principle 2:

2. *Collaborate in setting the research framework.*

As a sole researcher and participant I have consulted with my supervisor and other AUT Pacific academic staff and the wider AUT and Pacific communities in formulating and setting a unique research framework for my study. In accordance with the practice of Fa'afaletui-Tōfā sa'ili the collaborative discussions of Samoan methods and methodologies of research helped to shape the research foundation. This was an ongoing and dynamic discussion about choosing a Pacific research framework (as opposed to a Western methodology and method) that aligned with my Samoan indigenous ways of knowing and being and fit with my worldview, such as Teu le vā.

Adapted Teu le vā methodology principle 3:

> 3. *Create a coordinated and collaborative approach to Pasifika in*
>
>   *Psychotherapy and policy-making.*

As required by academic standards this research has had some input in the initial stages of application with the AUT Postgraduate Research Proposal (PGR1) process. The PGR1 response commented on the incongruence between my topic of research from a Samoan perspective, in that it did not quite fit the heuristic method of inquiry. This encouraged the utilisation of Pacific research methods that fostered a Pasifika perspective in Psychotherapy. This process enables academic rigour and a health-based collaboration within tertiary and Pasifika health research standards. There is a wide need for indigenous knowledge and Pasifika research in all academic fields (Smith, 1999). Consequently, the Fa'afaletui-Tōfā sa'ili inquiry method reinforces the co-ordination of a collaborative method with different Pacific and academic communities.

Adapted Teu le vā methodology principle 4:

> 4. *Grow knowledge through a cumulative approach to research.*

Identifying a Pacific methodology that would fit my worldview and philosophy for research was a key issue in this research. In adapting the Teu le vā methodology I am able to construct an outline that is essential for my Pasifika understanding of research in Psychotherapy. The Fa'afaletui-Tōfā sa'ili method reinforces the cumulative style of engagement within different communities. This research attempts to build the knowledge base in Psychotherapy for all practitioners and clients. It also offers a new Samoan framework of research in Psychotherapy.

Adapted Teu le vā methodology principle 5:

5. *Understand the kinds of knowledge used in Pasifika health research and policy-making.*

Understanding that there are different kinds of knowledge in Pasifika health research and policy-making and that such knowledge may derive from many sources. The principles of Fa'afaletui revolve around the understanding that knowledge can be built from many different sources of knowledge. Therefore, a number of sources such as AUT peers, supervisors, Pacific AUT academics and general Pacific community members were consulted for this thesis subject of the two worlds of Psychotherapy and Samoan culture. In addition, researching other Pasifika experiences of training courses in Psychotherapy and similar fields of Psychology, family therapy, and in educational institutions in general. This study is completed as a Master of Psychotherapy requirement so caters to this purpose, but may also have implications for future policy making.

Adapted Teu le vā methodology principle 6:

6. *Engage with other knowledge brokers.*

Engaging with other knowledge brokers included having conversations with other experts of the Samoan world and the Psychotherapy world such as my therapist, my Psychotherapy supervisors and lecturers. This also included consultation with cultural experts, elders, family members and members of my Samoan community; and the academic community, oral histories, art and art histories, anecdotes and other mediums.

Fa'afaletui-Tōfā sa'ili method

Fa'afaletui-Tōfā sa'ili method is a blended method that brings together the research method of Fa'afaletui by Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave & Bush (2005) and the Samoan

concept of Tōfā sa'ili. These serve as tools to interweave my research, worldview and values. Firstly, the Fa'afaletui method entails discussion, consultation and validation of important knowledge with selected elders and community members (Tamasese et al., 2005). Fa'afaletui is translated as fa'a = to make, fale = groups or houses and tui = the critical process of weaving together different expressions of knowledge from within groups (pg. 302).

Secondly, the Samoan concept of Tōfā sa'ili is the notion of a person reaching out or searching for knowledge and wisdom. Tui Atua (2007) translates Tōfā sa'ili as Tōfā = wisdom, sa'ili = to search, and defines it as "man reaching out for wisdom, knowledge, prudence, insight, judgement, through reflection, meditation, prayer, dialogue, experiment, practice, performance and observance" (pg. 121). Tōfā sa'ili has been sewn into Fa'afaletui as a research method to search for knowledge, to inquire and reflect on processes and search for meanings.

Step one: Fa'afaletui – Weaving different parts of the fale together
I had weekly to fortnightly discussions in class and supervision groups; fortnightly therapy sessions and meetings with past Psychotherapy peers; monthly conversations with AUT academics; bi-monthly meetings with family and friends. I discussed and consulted with various knowledge sources. In these groups I would discuss different experiences of:

1. How I felt in the Psychotherapy programme as a Samoan woman
2. The tension and emotions I experienced in the course
3. How difficult it was to talk about these experiences

Step two: Tofa-sa'ili – Searching for wisdom

After these discussions and meetings I took time to document and collect my own thoughts, reflections, ideas, words, images, understandings and narrative about the conversations with others through my journal writing.

The following outlines the original Fa'afaletui research (Tamasese et. al., 2005) and what I did in the re-framed Fa'afaletui-Tōfā sa'ili method.

Fa'afaletui research method

Participants: Samoan descent, women and men, 50 years+ living in urban areas of New Zealand

Participants: Myself

1. Collective formal discussions with focus groups with other Samoans.

2. Informed consent completed.

3. Focus groups met with the research facilitator then representatives of these 'fale' came together in another collective group and discussed their respective findings. This process enabled further discussion and consultation, leading to consensus. Semi-structured interviews in the Samoan language were recorded and transcribed.

4. Topics discussed:

- Samoan perspective of mental health and self

- Causes of mental unwellness among Samoans

- Additional causes to mental unwellness in New Zealand

- Effectiveness of mental health services for Samoans

- Successful mental health services for Samoans.

5. Analysis of data: interviews were coded manually and themes that consistently recurred were grouped into subject areas. Themed subject areas were then organised and subcategorised in a way that showed the consistently repeating knowledge pieces.

Fa'afaletui-Tōfā sa'ili – What I did

1. I consulted various knowledge sources on a weekly to monthly basis as previously noted. This included class, supervision groups, therapy sessions, meetings with past Psychotherapy peers, clinical supervisors and Pacific student and other academics. Occasionally I met with family and friends.

2. As sole participant I gave my informed consent for the personal data that is being used as data in this research.

3. Informal discussions and conversations in class and supervision groups at AUT. In the AUT classroom setting the group would begin with checking in or sharing what each person was carrying emotionally. This gave me an opportunity to regularly talk about my experience in the course and the conflict I experienced when talking about it. I met with past Psychotherapy peers informally on a monthly to bi-monthly basis. The conversations would begin informally before initiating the discussion about the tensions I felt while going through the Psychotherapy course and how difficult it was to speak about it. This occurred in weekly therapy also. Occasionally, I would consult a family elder or friend in their home setting. In these discussions the process was different with

family elders as I had to schedule time to sit and talk with them, then explain

Psychotherapy and my feelings and tensions that I experienced.

4. Topics discussed (not in particular order and in some discussions only a few topics
were discussed):

- Experience of 'walking in two worlds' – Samoan and Western

- How I felt in the Psychotherapy programme as a Samoan woman

- The tension and emotions I experienced in the course

- How difficult it was to talk about these experiences

- Problem solving, how to work through these conflicts

- Finding a voice

5. Data analysis:

- All journal entries and notes were coded manually.

- These were analysed in accordance with Fa'afaletui method of identifying
  themes that were most salient within the data.

- Themes that emerged and occurred repeatedly were grouped together then sorted
  into subcategories.

- These results were then compared with the literature on Pasifika perspectives
  while undergoing Psychotherapy, Psychology or therapy training to find any
  consistency and validation.

Data source

The research data is comprised from personal journal entries from March 2016 to June

2017. The excerpts used in this research are retrospective and are dated to time of entry.

However, the event or situation that the entry pertains to may have occurred days and weeks before the entry due to the process of Fa'afaletui of reflection, consultation and discussion.

Summary

The Teu le vā methodology and two-pronged method of Fa'afaletui-Tōfā sa'ili inquiry offer a Samoan cultural platform to position myself in my research. Teu le vā methodology underpins my research as it reflects the Samoan values and worldview by which I orient myself. Such values are based on vā or the relational space between people and environment and reciprocity, respect and the Fa'asamoa (Ka'ili, 2005). In connecting Fa'afaletui-Tōfā sa'ili as a Samoan tool of research inquiry a natural alignment occurs with my worldview of Fa'asamoa.

The application of the Teu le vā methodology (Anae et al., 2010) grounds my philosophy of being and relating in the world into the research. The two-pronged Fa'afaletui-Tōfā sa'ili inquiry method offers a unique way of weaving my Pacific values into research. Furthermore, it allows collaborative, cumulative and creative processes of Samoan research to unfold (Tamasese et al., 2005; Tui Atua, 2007). This was facilitated through discussion and consultation within communities, as well as reflection and exploration in a personal space. Accordingly, these methods seek to shed light on internal processes of the vā within me from the discussions and experiences of the two worlds of Samoan culture and Psychotherapy.

CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

An excerpt from "Where are you from?"

Where you from?

the Tongan lady asks, her hair

austere, eyebrows high

like question-marks

"Kolofo'ou," I reply,

"My mother is a Palangi."

(She can tell where I come from

vowels tight

like they could fit

square

on any sans-serif font.)

"Are you a Tongan?"

she asks.

I am not sure

if this is a question.

(Mila-Schaaf, 2008, pg. 11)

This results chapter has been divided into two sections. Each section acknowledges a

key theme derived from my data. All the subchapters include journal excerpts of raw

data that are interpreted alongside other studies and literature in this field. The first

subchapter is titled 'Lack of cultural safety – Lē malupuipuia o a'oa'oga fa'aleaganu'u'.

This theme describes my feeling of lack of cultural safety in the Psychotherapy training.

I will give a definition of cultural safety and a brief history of it in Aotearoa and in the

Psychotherapy discipline. The second subchapter introduces the theme of 'Navigating

the edges of two worlds – Tau fa'afoeina o lalolagi e lua'. It discusses the nuances of

navigating the different cultural worlds as a Pasifika edge-walker or growing poly

capital. The themes convey the response to my research question: 'What were my

experiences as a Samoan woman in the AUT Master of Psychotherapy programme?'

Lack of cultural safety – Lē malupuipuia o a'oa'oga fa'aleaganu'u

The poem by Karlo Mila-Schaaf (2008) describes her experience when she is

questioned about where she is from. She alludes to the ambivalence of the person

posing the question, which in turn may question her legitimacy of belonging. This

resonates with my experience as a Samoan woman in the Psychotherapy programme, of

not belonging, being "other" and the safety or lack of safety around this.

The concept of cultural safety was established in New Zealand in the 1980s by a group

of Māori nurses looking to develop nursing practice (Polaschek, 1998). Ramsden (1990)

clarifies numerous aspects of cultural safety; primarily, that cultural safety is not

cultural sensitivity or practice but rather that it appreciates the diversity of people within

any particular group, who in that setting were Māori. Moreover, cultural safety is an

awareness of one's own perceptions and beliefs held towards a particular group. For

example, recognising individuals have socially constructed ideals about a group, such as

indigenous Māori. Lastly, cultural safety involves the conscious understanding that

health care is executed in a fashion which derives from one's cultural construction and this impacts how they relate to a client or patient (Ramsden, 1996).

Guidelines have been adopted from the Nursing council (2009) in cultural competence for Psychotherapy practice. The Psychotherapists Board of Aotearoa New Zealand Psychotherapist Standards of Cultural Competence was written in accordance with the Psychotherapists Board of Aotearoa New Zealand Core Clinical Competencies, the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and The Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (Psychotherapists Board of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2011; HPCA Act, 2003). Such guidelines were used to establish competent and acceptable practice for Psychotherapists, and also identified disparity in health outcomes between Māori and non-Māori.

> *"All psychotherapists will be knowledgeable of culturally safe practices,*
> *and familiar with the Treaty of Waitangi and be able to integrate these into*
> *their practice in ways that ensure that issues of diversity and equality are*
> *valued, upheld and promoted" (Psychotherapists Board of Aotearoa New*
> *Zealand, 2011, pg. 2).*

This quotation from the Psychotherapist Core Clinical Competencies establishes a commitment to safe cultural practice and development in Psychotherapy practice and training. It also becomes the foundation to a comprehensive cultural conduct guide for developing Psychotherapists. As a result, it gives definitions of culture and explains the standards of cultural competency such as attitude, awareness, knowledge and skills. On a global scale multicultural training and accreditation has become a core component of counselling and psychology training such as in American institutions including the

American Psychological Association (Rogers, Hoffman & Wade, 1998). In an aim to increase and retain students of minority race and ethnicity there is a noticeable effort to integrate diversity and multicultural training into psychology courses (pg. 213). In addition, the American Psychological Association continue to make a commitment to incorporate multicultural training in their programmes. The following extract is from my journal; it illustrates my early thoughts of cultural safety and what it looked like for me at this time.

"The definition of cultural safety that I like is that whenever two or more people meet from different cultures, worldviews, values, whether from the bigger majority group or the minority group. That both or all cultural values are held equally. Side by side. One is not higher or better than the other" (June, 2016).

However, my experiences in the course questioned to what degree the importance of culture and diversity were being held in the community. Community korero (Māori word meaning to talk, comment or relate) is a compulsory weekly meeting for Psychotherapy students of all year levels enrolled in the Reflexivity and Relational Skills paper. All staff are invited to attend but not all do so. The following journal piece was entered after a community korero meeting where I was asked by another colleague from a different year level "Where are you from?"

"… a student asked directly "where are you from?" My rage filled my body and beamed out through my eyes and face as I was deeply offended and hurt at being blatantly 'othered'. I realised then that cultural safety was

something that I alone would have to guard vigilantly for myself" (July, 2016).

To put this journal entry into context, I had spoken in community korero about my struggle to voice my thoughts in the previous community meetings. The conversation predominantly revolves around Māori and Pākehā biculturalism in Aotearoa, so my position as neither Māori or Pākehā put me into the non-Maori indigenous, ethnic minority 'other' group. Therefore being asked by a Pākehā student where I was from felt unsafe for me as generally I did not know how to bring myself into a conversation that felt binary at times.

Pieterse, Lee & Fetzler's (2016) research examined students who were enrolled in mental health, counselling and psychology programmes of study and had experienced being on a multicultural course. The experiences of these students were surveyed and resulted in five themes: (a) impact of classroom diversity, (b) representing one's racial group, (c) having intense emotional experiences, (d) safety issues impacting course experience, and (e) personal/professional growth. Additionally, all racial groups of students in multicultural training in counselling and psychology reported feeling unsafe in their course. Conversely, McKenzie-Mavinga (2005) noted in her study the lack of safety to explore 'recognised trauma' from among both black (of African and Asian heritage) and white (of European heritage) counselling students. Recognised trauma is defined as the fear that is experienced by both groups once the impacts of racism have been realised. Students stated the importance of trust and feeling safe when interacting with issues of race and culture.

To some degree all of these themes echoed my experiences in the Psychotherapy Master programme. Pieterse, Lee & Fetzler's (2016) theme of "safety issues impacting course experience" resonates with me as at times I felt unsafe addressing my cultural difference as an ethnic minority student. The safety net of peers and staff adhering to the core cultural competencies and guidelines for Psychotherapists came into question as to what degree they were enforced. In every assessment I was encouraged to engage with the conversation of critical awareness of power dynamics, culture, bi-culturalism and multi-culturalism in the context of therapy and Aotearoa. Yet, Psychotherapy staff members were not required to attend the compulsory community korero meetings that discussed these crucial conversations. This reinforced the question of cultural safety or lack of when those teaching the course were not present to engage in this korero. Ultimately, I did not feel safe with the conversations in community korero nor did I have confidence that all staff members were able to uphold safe cultural boundaries for me.

I wrestled during the course with these ideas and my expectation regarding cultural safety was that my values, norms, beliefs and identity as I determined them would be upheld alongside others. However, my journal entries and my experiences contrast this. In the next journal entry, I express feeling my cultural difference despite feeling unsure and unsafe and the intense anguish of having to continuously speak about it or "bring my korero" (discussion/conversation).

> *"Despite feeling culturally unsafe a number of times I was still encouraged*
> *(by lecturers and peers) to bring my korero of difference to the community.*
> *At times I struggled extensively to contain my rage yet I was revered by*
> *many for sharing. Therefore, I became stuck in an uncertain limbo that felt*

painful and still continued to push through, always going back for more"

(August, 2016).

This journal passage recognises my unsafe feelings of talking about how different my experiences were within the wider community. It acknowledges my internal struggle and difficulty of expressing my cultural diversity in community korero. I resonate strongly with Tuafuti's (2010) work on the Pacific culture of silence in an academic setting.

> *"Unlocking the Pasifika culture of silence in educational contexts requires an understanding of the discourses between the dominant education system and Pasifika communities. Hence, it is significant to discuss the 'complete whole' and review how the fraction of silence fits within the whole Pasifika cultural package so that the unlocking process is beneficial rather than a subtractive and negative effort"* (2010, pg. 4).

Tuafuti (2010) goes on to describe silence as an active part of Pasifika culture and learning, knowing when and where to speak and when to remain silent in many different contexts. This is important to understanding the struggle that I experience during community korero and how my cultural knowledge values silence and speaking in a different way.

Pieterse, Lee & Fetzler's (2016) themes of "impact of classroom diversity" and "representing one's racial group" also resound here. In having other Pasifika peers on the course this would have added to the feelings of safety and connectedness and not feeling singled out. In this way my experiences could be mirrored and understood by

others. At this stage I was the only Samoan person on the Psychotherapy course. This is significant because I am accustomed to being the only Samoan person in many situations, however, in this instance I felt unsafe and my cultural safety felt compromised. As a result, I felt an alarming concern about the understanding of Pacific cultural values among the student and staff Psychotherapy community.

Navigating the edges of two worlds – Tau fa'afoeina o lalolagi e lua

In/between edges

and fringes I softly tread

traversing worlds

censor silenced parts

polite rage seething teeth smile

get your ticket. leave.

(January, 2017)

A theme that emerged from the data was navigating the edges of two worlds. The solo pu'upu'u[2] that opens this chapter describes the junction between cultural worlds of Psychotherapy training and the Fa'asamoa and being cautiously aware of navigating this space. This section discusses my experiences that portray this theme and introduces the notions of cultural flexibility between worlds in 'edgewalking' and 'polycultural capital'. It then contextualises these experiences within the teachings of the Fa'asamoa.

In the Reflexivity and Relational skills paper there is a compulsory component of a noho marae experience with the staff and students from all levels. In my last year of the

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[2] Short Samoan poem

Reflexivity and Relational skills paper I was asked separately by two staff members to perform a Pacific prayer and dance. My first response was a reluctant "ok, maybe" but something in me jarred and I felt stuck. An internal struggle had started within me and I was confused and uncertain of why.

> *"I was not present at the noho marae this year for reasons that I could not fully understand at the time.. My cultural values include being respectful of authority and not to show feelings of anger towards them as this is considered deeply disrespectful. Yet, I was angry that I did not have the luxury and space to enjoy the noho as my peers could. Instead, I was asked by different lecturers to perform certain Pacific cultural tasks and this made me feel extremely angry. The feelings of rage and resentment about being the 'exotic' other that represented Pacificness felt token and performance-like". (July 2016)*

My cultural values of being respectful of authority and adhering to their instructions were at odds with the culture of Psychotherapy. This is in line with Tuafuti's (2010) work as previously discussed earlier in this chapter. I felt that I could not express my anger towards the staff openly and this facilitated my decision to withdraw from the noho. I was accustomed to being asked to perform in front of others by my parents and family. However, this felt uncomfortable and forced and I became angry as this took away my autonomy to choose for myself. The feelings of anger could not be directly expressed or understood as it was disapproved of in my family of origin and in my culture, therefore it went underground.

In the Fa'asamoa one is raised to consistently be aware of their surroundings in order to develop their sense of self in their social role (Mageo, 1998). Children are constantly surrounded by people in a communal setting, because of this they learn how to be aware

of their settings and are usually cared for by different family members (Ochs, 1988). This includes groups based on familial ties, gender, age and church base which enhance social relationships (Tagoilelagi, 1995). Thus, each member of the Samoan family has been socialised according to their role within cultural occasions (Tagoilelagi, 1995). Children are expected to watch and learn from others before doing age appropriate tasks themselves. This way of learning was instrumental to my upbringing as I acquired this social awareness within my family and cultural setting. So, I underwent the Psychotherapy course with this social and relational conscious lens and I learnt by being quiet and by watching others and being obedient to what was asked of me until this occurred and I chose against my cultural knowledge and expectation.

> *"The clash of 2 cultures, 2 worlds*
>
> *- Pulled in, used*
>
> *- Used for my cultural knowledge*
>
> *- Whose truth matters more/ takes precedent?*
>
> *- Where am I in all this??*
>
> *Expectation:*
>
> *- That I play my role dutifully*
>
> *- That I adapt"*
>
> *(April, 2016).*

This journal entry was made in the weeks after the noho marae had happened when I was told that I may fail the Reflexivity and Relational skills paper for not attending the noho. This was part of my process of trying to work through the thoughts and feelings that I carried. This excerpt shows the questions and reflections of my experience of being asked to perform and having to traverse two sets of truths, values and knowledge.

In her study Mila-Schaaf (2010) examines perspectives of the generation of Pacific people born and raised in New Zealand also known as "second-gen" or "New Zealand born". Many identified themselves with others "across many relational spaces, negotiating both sameness and difference" (pg. 7). Their ability to cross cultures made them more fluid in navigating the different realms and exposed them to different intertextual competencies, resources and a wealth of knowledge giving them polycultural capital. In a similar fashion Tupuola (2004b) describes Pacific youth as 'Pacific edgewalkers' who are able to weave between the different cultures and identities that they choose to engage with. The term 'edgewalker' was coined by Krebs (1994) on the healthy and resilient nature to which ethnic minorities in America were able to shift and be transient between their cultural worlds while sustaining a grounded persona or self. Tupuola (2004b) noted that Pacific young people in Aotearoa had similar attributes of weaving between the cultural worlds of Pacific and Western while forming their identities.

In working through and describing the agony that I confronted about not attending the noho marae I was permitted to continue the Reflexivity and Relational skills paper. However, I was encouraged to continue sharing my feelings and perspectives about my personal processes. This helped me to acknowledge my tendency to isolate myself when I was feeling overwhelmed or like I did not have support or anyone who would understand me. The Samoan phrase, *'A lafalafa tuna, o le tagata ma lona aiga o le tagata ma lona fa'asinomaga'* echoed in my heart. It states that 'In life's journey, one's family is one's guide', therefore a person without their family has no guide. In this setting I turned to my year level peers who were of different ethnic backgrounds from me for support. Despite our cultural differences I felt support in the peer group that was warm and encouraging. In this way I had an avenue to share some of my experiences and still share the angry feelings that I carried.

"..like an edge-walker that has to dance carefully on the fringes of two worlds while struggling to create a space for myself. I have come to understand some of my angry feelings of rage that live in me. I am allowing a voice for those feelings that have been disavowed for a long time. In this way I strengthen my small voice to become more powerful." (May-June 2016)

In my attempt to forge a new space for myself I retreated into the safe haven of my room throughout the remainder of the noho marae. I took with me the anger and shame that I could not face or share and in this decision I passively said "no". The training course encourages recognising your internal processes, emotions and behaviour. It also helps you to notice the feelings that you experience in the present and how these might relate to some patterns in your relationships. The training promotes noticing how these can be interrelated and that one's internal processes, emotions and behaviour can be influenced by a group and system. This is conflictual to my Samoan cultural knowledge and socialisation that would otherwise show restrain from disclosing personal feelings in public to maintain social harmony. Therefore, I experienced sharing personal stories and feelings as counter-cultural. On one hand, the western Psychotherapy culture encourages freedom to express oneself and notice the internal processes that occur. On the other hand the fa'asamoa promotes obedience, conformity and personal restraint. As a result, the master's course was a journey of learning and understanding on how to navigate these two worlds more intimately.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

"I'm a child of the edges. The edge of the circle, of society that has been taught so well how to camouflage, how to manage, present, shape shift to fit in … enough" (November, 2016).

This discussion chapter is divided into two sections. The first section interprets the findings from the results chapter and the second section discusses the overall learnings of the research.

Other – Le isi

The first theme of Lack of cultural safety – Lē malupuipuia o a'oa'oga fa'aleaganu'u discussed occurrences in the Psychotherapy course that made me feel culturally unsafe. As mentioned in the results section a fellow student asked, "where are you from?" The response that I gave was "Auckland" and the student questioned again, "but where is your family from?", to which I replied "Samoa". This line of questioning felt confronting as I felt it implied that I was not a New Zealander or from Aotearoa. It made me feel "othered" and different. My status of Pasifika and ethnic minority in the Psychotherapy community and in Aotearoa was brought to the forefront in this conversation and this was a new and frightening experience. I felt fearful, exposed, confused, isolated and unsafe for being different despite being strongly rooted in my cultural identity. I was puzzled as to why this line of questioning felt so unsafe for me and I felt like an outsider that did not belong. DeSouza and Cormack (2009) discuss the minority ethnic migrant group as 'competing other' to the indigenous Māori of Aotearoa. They examined the impact of colonialism of the 'white settler' and the

relationship with the Treaty of Waitangi and Māori sovereignty that places other ethnic groups outside of this biculturalism conversation. I was a part of the ethnic group that was outside the biculturalism circle and my attempt to speak about it was met with a reminder that I was on the outside. Nairn, Pega, Mccreanor, Rankine & Barnes (2006) describe the label of 'other' as having colonial beginnings in Aotearoa and that indigenous culture, language, law and way of life changed to fit the colonisers', "foreign became the natural or normal and the indigenous, particularly those who did or do not assimilate, became alien" (pg. 185). Nairn et al. (2006) discuss how Māori had open and positive attitudes towards the new settlers yet this was not reciprocated. Furthermore, Jackson & Penrose's (1993) work on race construction reveals that those who were from the 'subordinated' cultures and not the dominant culture were labelled as 'ethnic'. This demarcated ethnic groups regarding to race and also added to differential power relations (pg. 18). This brings to question a possible dynamic in the Psychotherapy course of how groups of students and cultural values might be privileged. Stewart-Folau's (2017) study of Pasifika students enrolled in a Psychotherapy course reveals a power dynamic of 'student responses to individualistic dominance' and 'pathologisation of cultural norms'. In her study Stewart-Folau discusses Pasifika students' worldview not being valued or understood by lecturers then subsequently being blamed for not being understood. Students also felt alienated and rejected if they did not conform to the Psychotherapy culture. Ultimately, this left Pasifika students feeling as if there was "something wrong with them" (pg. 43). In this particular incident of being asked by a student where I was from, I felt culturally unsafe as the Samoan cultural part of me was not being acknowledged. My identity as a Samoan woman from a collective way of life was not validated in that moment and I felt rejected and shut down while attempting to voice a narrative of difference within the community space.

Shame and anger – Fa'amamāsagia ma le lē fiafia

"Cry lava

Exhale heat

Breathe life

Roar

Fanua

Pou."

(November, 2016)

The second theme from the results section was Navigating the edges of two worlds – Tau fa'afoeina o lalolagi e lua. This theme ignited many strong feelings of which the two most salient were shame and anger, or Fa'amamasagia ma le lē fiafia. These are the intense emotions that I experienced when the edges of two cultural worlds crash. The opening solo pu'upu'u addresses the parts of me that have been stirred while journeying through both worlds and feeling angry, ashamed wanting to leave or withdraw and finding a way to stay.

As mentioned in the results chapter the experience of being asked to perform a Pacific dance and say a Pacific prayer at the annual noho marae lead to intense shame and anger and internal conflict of having such feelings. My values and beliefs as a Samoan woman urged me to want to nurture the vā with my Psychotherapy lecturers and community. As defined in the method and methodology chapter, to nurture the vā is to foster or take care of the vā or the relational space between people and things. In this instance my Samoan cultural way of being values the maintenance of good relationships

and I felt a strong desire to keep the peace by attending the noho and performing the tasks that I had been given. However, I was embarrassed that I alone had been asked to perform Pasifika cultural tasks despite the course having other ethnic minority students that were free of this obligation. I have performed Samoan siva (dance) on numerous occasions with siblings and cousins at family and community cultural events. Yet, in this case it felt forced, confusing and angry and simultaneously I felt the need to retreat in an attempt to work through the internal conflict that I experienced.

On reflection, I felt unfairly singled out and to a degree I felt looked at as if I was an image on a postcard of a dancing Pacific woman or 'exotic' other (Jones, Herda & Sua'ali'i-Sauni, 2000). I felt disrespected like I had been used for my Pacific identity, which did not sit comfortably for me. In an effort to understand my jarring feelings of anger and shame I retreated into my own safe haven and chose not to attend the noho marae. Afterwards, I experienced great difficulty and shame returning to the Experiential Training group knowing that I would have to speak openly about it. I noticed that I had taken the confusion, anger and shame that I could not face or share at that moment and made the decision to passively say "no" by not attending the noho marae. This incident illustrates the tension that I felt when the two cultural worlds of Psychotherapy and Fa'asamoa collided within me. I struggled to maintain my values as a Samoan woman that desired to be part of the noho marae group and stay in relationship with my colleagues and lecturers. I felt obligated to perform a prayer and dance that are familiar and align with my Samoan cultural practices. However, I experienced distress and discomfort that I alone carried these cultural expectations from my lecturers and no one else. Additionally, an internal struggle occurred of wanting to express my feelings of shame and anger to my lecturers even though it collided with my principles as a Samoan woman that values relationship, obedience and respect. The

subchapter mentioned earlier by Berking et al. (2007) describes the experiences of cultural clashes being Pasifika in their respective psychotherapy and counselling courses. The group learnt to cope with cultural conflicts by putting their culture away despite the internal tensions and feeling invalidated. I resonate strongly with this experience as my experience felt invalidating and caused conflict within me. Therefore, I struggled to find ways to bring my cultural self into the Psychotherapy community world, to find a voice to express my struggles, and I felt a strong urge to withdraw from the programme as it seemed easier to "leave it at the door" (Berking et al., 2007 pg. 56).

Re-negotiated space – Taumafaia o se avanoa e fa'atāua le leo

"Both are spaces of in-betweenness, both allow for movement. The third space provides a space of fluidity and retreat while staying in relationship, in the vā. Within the vā, there are layers of between-ness and layers of the unseen" (Iosefo, 2016, pg. 190).

As indicated in the introductory chapter the definition of re-negotiated space is an intersection of Mila-Schaaf and Hudson's (2009) indigenous negotiating space, Bhabha's (1990; 1994) third space and Tui Atua's (2007) description of the vā tapuia. It is this sacred space or vā tapuia that is woven in with the third space that develops the negotiated space. This becomes the foundation for negotiated space to be re-negotiated.

The experiences of shame, invalidation, anger, rejection and feeling unsafe during my time in the Psychotherapy course forced me to find spaces and different ways to cope and manage myself. This is the re-negotiating of space that needed to occur for me to continue through the programme while keeping the essence of my values as a Samoan

woman intact. As quoted in the introduction chapter Tui Atua's (2007) passage reflects my identity as communal and collective, this posits that I am within the group and not an outsider or 'other'. Therefore, the action of accommodating myself to suit the dominant Psychotherapy culture created internal tension, confusion and conflict that I could not comprehend or work through. Yet, I wanted to continue the course to become a Psychotherapist and remain in relationship with others and continue to nurture the vā. The unbalanced cultural perspectives that I experienced align with Mila-Schaaf and Hudson's (2009) model of negotiating spaces. It describes a space that fosters connection and relationship between different cultural knowledge systems and within different models of health care. This model was born from the unbalanced value that is placed on Western understandings of mental health care and illness compared to Pacific indigenous concepts. It encourages openness to engaging and exchanging knowledge and ideas, to explore and develop, adapt and retain through "self-determined growth and self-conscious maintenance" (Mila-Schaaf & Hudson, 2009, pg. 17). Therefore, this model illustrates a re-negotiation of cultural exchange of knowledge and I felt encouraged as a Pasifika student to interpret and explore my indigenous ways of healing and learning alongside the Psychotherapy training.

In addition, walking in between edges of Psychotherapy training and my Samoan cultural world caused constant tension within me and not knowing how to voice this without breaching the vā felt counter-cultural. I was in conflict over my Samoan way of life and culture versus the Western need to express myself as an individual. Traditional cultural norms and values encourage women to be modest and conscious of their social conduct. Therefore, expressing my individual thoughts and emotions without a filter and openly in front of other students without the consideration of my family and community felt exposing and foreign. In her later work Mila-Schaaf (2010) offers

another dimension to the vā in her study with young Pacific people. Participants struggled with ways to bridge the different cultural spaces to redefine a place for themselves. Mila-Schaaf offers the negotiated space again as a place that allows young people to self-determine the ways they can feel like they belong to a group. In this way I too was able to redefine or re-negotiate a space that fit my needs such as confiding in others, reflecting on situations and physically finding a safe haven. In doing these things I was more able to govern how and when I would fit into the Psychotherapy world.

Using Bhabha's (1990; 1994) concept of 'third space' assists in re-negotiating spaces as he describes an 'in-between' element of culture. Bhabha examines the limitations of traditional notions of culture and identity to form the 'third space' that is ambivalent, interruptive, reflective and a space that stimulates new possibility. These components bring to life the re-negotiation of space as the times I felt culturally unsafe, othered, navigating two worlds and feeling shame and anger. Therefore, I had to retreat, review, consult, ponder, discuss, reflect and process my experiences. This was an ambivalent process that did not have a straightforward route. Instead it was back and forth in a rolling motion, like waves that come and go.

As aforementioned, Iosefo (2016) discusses the concepts of vā and third space to make sense of her gender and Samoan heritage alongside post-colonial theories. In this space she is able to critically deconstruct and re-construct her identity within spaces in higher education. I connect to this deconstruction and re-construction as Psychotherapy invited me to question and deconstruct, be curious about and attempt to voice the nuances and boundaries of myself in my Samoan world. In turn Iosefo does this by expressing her views of higher education in three different voices – Fetaui, the narrator of experience; Jerodeen, the academic analyser; and JoFI, the poet (pg. 189). Iosefo's work resonates

strongly with me, as she is a fellow Pasifika woman and academic who writes about the different campuses that she must traverse. From her home in South Auckland or "the hood" (pg. 189) to Auckland central campus where she identifies as the "space invader" (pg. 189) and a large downtown campus which she describes as "spooky space". (pg. 189) Iosefo (2016) is able to use Bhabha's (1990) concept of the third space to be creative and construct a world that helps her navigate her academic world. Many times I was encouraged by supervisors, staff, current and past peers to continue to find a voice for the tension I felt. In the re-negotiated space I was able to draw and write notes and poetry about my thoughts and feelings. In doing so I was fashioning a space to continue the course and uphold my values as a Samoan woman.

O lo'u leo

> *Our relational space*
>
> *we give and take*
>
> *we share*
>
> *envelop, develop*
>
> *fold in*
>
> *breathe out*
>
> *stretch and hold. Embrace me.*
>
> *See me.*
>
> *O ai oe?*
>
> *Soothe me in your somber hymn.*
>
> *Calling to the leo in me.*
>
> *Hear my call*
>
> *it is my leo*

it is my lament.

Oi aue!

sense me,

mold my spirit,

that yearns e pese atu.

Raw, fresh, untouched, unconscious, depth, sensual, soul, move me.

Self care. While you

climb edges

and build bridges

between worlds.

You have to

shape-shift,

be athletic, nimble, quick to traverse in between.

I am a weaver,

a tailor,

like Nana in her solidness, in her humanness, in her knowingness, her

beingness,

her homeliness,

her strength,

her spiritualness.

Say something

Write something

Paint something

Create something

Create a space

Sing a space

Laugh a space

Speak a space

Claim a space

Guard a space

Beyond the mold is fertile

soulful

life giving

life loving

unashamed

powerful

sister keeper

boundary pusher

voice tester

space claimer.

(February, 2018).

The opening of this dissertation sought to survey the land to find the boundaries of this

research. O le sufiga o le tuaoi (Tui Atua, 2011) or the Samoan concept of negotiating

spaces around you has been completed and the terrain of this research indicates many implications. This second part of the discussion chapter determines how the landscape was navigated by examining the overall effects of this journey for me. As a result, the most meaningful impact from this learning journey has been to claim 'Lo'u leo' or my voice.

On reflection, this academic journey was uniquely challenging as it unexpectedly tested who I was as a Samoan woman and a trainee Psychotherapist. In this testing was the consistent wrestling with the dynamics of shame and anger and feelings of not belonging. This grappling and struggle were invaluable as it gave rise to amplify my leo. The ability to voice my experiences without fear in the Psychotherapy world is developing and strengthening.

The experience of being able to voice my experiences and myself was empowering. I am more able to share my understandings and lived experiences with confidence and not fear and apprehension. I concur with Skipps-Patterson's (Berking et al., 2007) reflection that "Psychotherapy training was one of the hardest journeys of my life – one in which I often felt alone and marginalized" (pg. 136). In addition, McRobie & Agee's (2017) study portrayed Pasifika therapists feeling culturally unseen and their voices heard. The cultural part of me has shifted somewhat towards the Psychotherapy or clinical part of me and I am better able to acknowledge my cultural parts without having to hide it. This can be likened to the strength of the pou (structural poles used in a traditional Samoan fale). My leo can speak of my difference as an ethnic minority woman with a rich cultural heritage that at times is vastly dissimilar to the Psychotherapy world – and that is OK.

My leo was afraid of being heard, judged and misunderstood. As the only Samoan student in the course at the time I did not feel culturally safe and supported enough to voice my concerns. As mentioned by Coombes & Alefaio-Tugia (2013) the "lonely journey for each of us" (pg. 39); this was also my reality. In this way I would feel exposed and unsafe as I was unsure of what the response would be from others about my experiences. My leo is an invitation to be seen in the community with my own views. This has started to form a space within me for reflection, curiosity and conversation. It is a developing part of me that is more able to withstand feelings of difference and loneliness while continuing to remain in relationship with others. It is the strength of the pou that grows in me like the 'Ulu' tree (Breadfruit tree) from deep roots to a solid trunk, firm branches, lush leaves and fruit.

This journey has constantly reminded me to reflect on the internal conflict of navigating two worlds that are often incongruent. In this way be mindful of the importance of re-negotiating a space for myself and claiming my leo.

Conclusion

This final section gives a brief summary of the data and findings, before outlining recommendations, limitations to the research, and future research possibilities.

The findings from the data showed two themes: The lack of cultural safety and navigating the edges of two worlds. These themes fostered feelings of anger and shame as well as not having my cultural values upheld and being seen as 'other'. This cultivated an awareness of a cultural dis-ease and internal conflict that I experienced throughout my Psychotherapy training.

By using Teu le vā methodology and Fa'afaletui-Tōfā sa'ili research framework provides an alternative view of Psychotherapy training. It offers a voice from a Psychotherapy student that is not only Samoan but is also a woman. It gives a Pasifika perspective that attempts to wrestle with both Western and Fa'asamoa worlds to negotiate and re-negotiate the edges where many people tread. It creates the groundwork for a track that others may traverse to help voice their difference. This dissertation is an uncomfortable and painful reality from the edges of the Psychotherapy world. It describes raw and tender experiences that did not fit my worldview and values as a Samoan woman. So it compelled me to re-negotiate the spaces within the course and within me. This re-negotiation of spaces enabled me to continue to be part of both the two worlds while keeping the integrity of who I am.

The tension and internal wrestling of two cultures can be viewed as similar to the earth's tectonic plates that grind and crash against each other. In this metaphor one tectonic plate is the world of Fa'asamoa and other tectonic plate is the Psychotherapy master's programme. At times the two plates would meet and bump lightly or smash together, as seen in my experiences of being questioned and asked to perform at the noho marae. Other times they would slide over each other, where one overrides the other, such as experiencing my Samoan values not being upheld to the same degree as Western values. Through these meetings the tectonic plates cause friction, pressure and hot air. These materials from under the earth push through the earth's crust to create volcanoes or islands. These are new spaces and lands with fertile soil and a chance for new foliage, growth and life. Such are the spaces in human experience that encourage growth, development and learning. This is also the new place of learning that this dissertation creates in the Psychotherapy course and discipline as well as in the world of Fa'asamoa. Additionally, this is the leo that has been strengthened in me to speak my truth and continue seeking and re-negotiating spaces that fit me.

Recommendations

The process of examining lived experiences during Psychotherapy training has lead to some areas that are worth consideration and recommendation.

The most significant issue is the importance of mirroring Pasifika students through increasing the numbers of Pasifika students and staff. This is significant as it encourages a Pacific worldview and voice in Psychotherapy. It also reflects the diversity of the population in Aotearoa. Here are some ways in which this can be actioned:

> Increasing the visibility of Psychotherapy as a pathway in the AUT community and Pacific communities in general by connection with Pacific groups at AUT. Connecting with the AUT Health Sciences Pacific student support networks in undergraduate levels introduces Psychotherapy to prospective Pacific students. Psychotherapy and talking therapy is still a relatively new concepts in Pacific communities and so face to face meetings with the AUT Health Sciences Pacific student body is the beginning of a 'fa'avae' or foundation.

- Making links with the Pacific Psychology and Counselling undergraduate student networks at AUT such as Talanoa Mai (counselling) and Hold on Pacific Psychology Students (HOPPs) increases an awareness of Psychotherapy as a potential career path.

> These Psychological disciplines have more enrolled Pacific students at AUT and registered Psychologists and Counsellors in the community. Additionally, they have organised bodies such as Pasifikology and Pasifika Counsellors Collective

(PCC). Linking in with such groups is imperative, as future Psychotherapists will be working alongside other disciplines as such in the work force.

- Establishing a Pasifika Psychotherapy student body for past and present students and affiliates supports Pasifika cultural values and learning.

This group may be able to support Pasifika students culturally and academically such as peer supervision groups and possibly increase the Pacific research and resources in Psychotherapy.

- Engaging current AUT staff in Pasifika cultural training and learning.

This includes utilising AUT Pacific staff members in the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences department that are able to supervise and support staff learning. This equips non-Pacific staff with support on understanding their Pacific students and teaches an understanding of Pacific worldviews, knowledge and practices. In this way they are more able to meet their Pacific students in culturally appropriate ways.

Limitations to research

A limitation of this research is the newly blended approach of the method and methodology. Teu le vā and Fa'afaletui-Tōfā sa'ili are Samoan frameworks that have never been used in Psychotherapy research. In utilising a combination of Pasifika research models and concepts from other fields this pushes the boundaries of academic research. This hybrid of different Pacific and non-Pacific concepts encapsulates the re-negotiation of space to allow for new possibilities to fit in and belong. However, the

nature of such new blended approaches may lack standing in Psychotherapy academic literature.

Furthermore, this work is an account of my experiences that illustrate personal views and biases. As a Samoan woman this research is weighted to my Samoan point of view while undergoing the Psychotherapy training course. Consequently, this perspective may sway readers to perceive my interpretations of my experiences as 'right' and alternative views as 'wrong'. This is not intentional and I recognise this as a limitation of this research while holding the integrity of claiming my experiences as my own.

Future research

Future implications for this research include:

- Further qualitative studies on the perspectives of other ethnic minority students within the psychotherapy, psychology and counselling programmes at AUT and in Aotearoa.
- Building a multi-cultural awareness and safety culture within the psychotherapy department according to the recommendations mentioned earlier.
- Encouraging students to use cultural research frameworks in their psychotherapy studies and research.

Concluding thoughts

Throughout this dissertation process I struggled considerably with re-living some confronting experiences that occurred during my training. At the same time, not being

able to write and voice my thoughts made me avoidant. This made the process of writing difficult and slow yet healing.

As a result, it is my intention that this work becomes an opening for further research, conversation and analysis of the realities of Pasifika students in Psychotherapy training and other mainstream academic courses. It raises questions of the cultural safety and awareness for ethnic minority students as well as the cultural competence of academic staff. Finally, it also brings to light the reality of relevant cultural approaches in Psychotherapy for the diverse clientele in Aotearoa that we serve as Psychotherapists. For these reasons, I hope this dissertation acts as one part of a beginning fa'avae or foundation that will begin to build a Pasifika voice in Psychotherapy.

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