



Ekistics

and the New Habitat

The problems and science of human settlements



SPECIAL ISSUE

The Global Pacific: Coastal and Human Habitats

Guest Editor: Dr. Ian Fookes
Waipapa Taumata Rau / University of Auckland

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Ekistics and the new habitat: the problems and science of human settlements

The International Journal of *Ekistics and the New Habitat* is an online double-blind, internationally peer reviewed research journal. The journal publishes scholarly insights and reflective practice of studies and critical writing concerning the problems and science of human settlements. The field of Ekistics is mapped against a classification of settlement scale, from the remote village and rural township to global systems of dense smart cities, and increasingly the challenges of on-and-off world sustainable habitats.

In broad terms, papers in *Ekistics and the New Habitat* contribute to the scholarly discourse about the systemic nature of how humans design, build, link-up and transform their world. Articles examine empirical and non-empirical research and ideas that critique the necessary relationship between people, our human settlement designs and technological systems, and our natural and designed habitat. Models, case studies, rigorous conceptual work, design critique, smart-citizen education for smart cities, resource flows, network behaviour, and reflective practice are published in order to continually improve and advance the application of integrated knowledge that defines the epistemic telos of Ekistics.

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Ekistics and the New Habitat: the problems and science of human settlements is the 2020+ online and revised continuation of the ground-breaking and influential ideas published throughout the preceding print version of the journal in *Ekistics: the problems and science of human settlements* 1957-2006.

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Standard Call for Papers.

There are few scholarly journals whose papers archive the evolution of development and thought tracing back to 1957: *EKISTICS* is a rare exception. This background makes for an extraordinary historical collection of research and practices documenting how humans have colonised the planet and transformed our built habitats. The journal seeks papers from students, post-graduate candidates, academics and practitioners. We seek papers, typically of a cross-disciplinary nature that:

- Target any aspect of the [United Nations New Urban Agenda, in Habitat III](#), including reference to the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).
- Critiques *local, regional and global policy* of human settlement development, design and planning, and urban transformation
- Offers a critical description of the *core elements that define the liveability of human settlements* such as:

NATURE: Habitat foundations. How settlements rely upon, interact with, alter, or produce living ecologies, biodiversity, and climate.

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SOCIETY: Social, economic, educational systems, fiscal and political organisation. How settlements rely upon, interact with, or are affected by governance and leadership, vicarious or present communities, groups, markets, cultures, beliefs and values.

SHELLS: The envelopes that contain settlement functions. How the design, technologies and places created, altered or removed in settlements affect the functions and amenity of the settlement from the scale of personal shelter to the home, to urban business districts and precincts, to towns, cities or regions.

NETWORKS: Node-to-node systems and flows of resources, waste, data, people and information and communication systems. How the design, technologies and transport of goods, waste, energy, resources, water, food, people and information affect a settlement's functionality, amenity and viability.

SYNTHESIS: Combined, coherent design and knowledge. Physical design and planning; Ekistics theory expressed through evolving models and principles of habitat. How systems of systems may differ from small and remote, to large and urban-dense settlements and linked-up settlements in regions.

This journal invites and accepts three types of submissions, all double-blind and internationally peer-reviewed for their type:

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 - a. an introduction to a problem or topic outlining the need for or goals of the research,
 - b. the key prior papers in Ekistics archives and other sources that best relate to the topic,
 - c. the methodological or conceptual framework and methods used,
 - d. a summary of key results or findings,
 - e. a critical concluding discussion
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2. **Scholarly essays/extended abstracts (double-blind review):** typically, with title, authors, institutional affiliations, keywords, body text (1000-2500 words), and [APA 7th References](#) at the end of the article. These shorter submissions are well placed for academics and practitioners seeking to share a critical reflection of an issue, or for first-time students seeking to publish an academic submission (often co-authored with a mentor/supervisor). They may focus on a think piece style of critique, or a project in process, or a topic of interest for a geo-location or generic issue. Short ***Essays/Extended-Abstracts may be tested in Ekistics*** before a full paper version is submitted elsewhere.
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We welcome book reviews. Submissions are copy-edited, normally 300-500 words, designed to share with the readership community interesting or provocative volumes, monographs, or edited books that may be of interest to scholars, practitioners and students of human settlements, Habitat III New Urban Agenda, and the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

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EDITOR'S DESK

SYNTHESIS

2021, Vol. 81, Issue 3

Welcome to the sixth special issue of the contemporary international journal *Ekistics and the New Habitat: The problems and science of human settlements*. On behalf of the international board of editors, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce this special issue: 'The Global Pacific: Coastal and Human Habitats'.

The cover image for the present issue is an adaptation of a map of the world's oceans. Developed in 1942 and subsequently published in 1979 by then Senior research fellow at the Institute for Marine and Coastal Studies at the University of Southern California, Athelstan Spilhaus, the map presents a striking image of a blue planet. This unusual projection was made possible by cutting along coastal boundaries to generate minimal distortion to the world's oceans. In this context, it serves as an example of what happens when familiar projections of our world are reimagined: In an instant new relationships become apparent, while old ways of seeing suddenly seem outdated.

Such an image is timely for a special issue produced during a COVID-19 pandemic that caused the world's nations to reassess the effectiveness of their governance, their health systems, as well as a raft of other social and economic aspects of their communities. Not only was the resilience of institutions and those involved with them revealed, but the values on which they were constructed and maintained were tested. This global challenge was (and continues to be) lived in diverse ways throughout the world, leading to an ongoing call to reconsider and improve the way political, economic, and social systems operate. The contributions to this special issue are part of this reflection.

One feature of the issue is that it begins with a clarification of its use of the term 'Global' in the title. This interrogation aims to situate the journal in relation to the emerging discipline of global studies on one hand, and ekistics on the other. 'The Global Pacific: Coastal and Human Habitats' thus begins by asking readers to think through the role that ekistic theory and practice can play in relation to other academic fields and professional practices relating to human settlements. Another feature of the issue is that, by virtue of its range of contributions, it seeks to highlight the importance of thinking through the problems of human settlements from a broad mix of perspectives. Ekistics is characterised by a comprehensive, transdisciplinary, and somewhat eclectic approach which allows for ekisticians to synthesize ideas and to consider settlements 'globally', that is, in the sense of working from a holistic standpoint.

Accordingly, the contributions encompass a mix of texts - an imaginative proposal for a future oceanic city by architect and academic Norman Wei, Ricardo Arribas' study of Caribbean and Oceanic aesthetic engagements with colonial spaces, a literature review by political scientists Stephen Noakes and Anna Powles who evaluate recent accounts of Chinese involvement in the Pacific, studies that adopt Pacific ways of knowing as their epistemological framework pioneered by Patrick Thomsen and his colleagues Tiyanji Luo and Bangguo Du, a personal account by Daisy Bentley-Grey

detailing educational experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand, a case study by Glenda Tibe Bonifacio focusing on post-disaster impacts in the Philippines, as well as Ian Fookes' analysis of Yuki Kihara's politically engaged artworks. This range is intended to enable readers to recontextualise their understanding of familiar issues relating to the Pacific / Moana.

It is also hoped that readers will appreciate fiona chivers sherriff's poetic vision of Tahiti, which was penned between time zones at 10,000 feet. It offers a sense of unity through a poetic impulse not unlike Spilhaus' desire to reveal the connectedness of our world's oceans. This poem, though occupying only a single page, serves as a transition to a literary and philosophical section of the issue. Beau Miles, an off-beat filmmaker, writer and philosopher reconceptualises the everyday and has kindly shared an extract from an early version of his book *The Backyard Adventurer* (2021). Finally, Peggy Lauer's book review introduces the lifetime effort and exemplary strategic nous of Huey D. Johnson, a land conservationist whose memoir, *Something of the Marvelous: Lessons learned from sixty years as an environmentalist* (2020), serves as a practical guide for anyone wishing to solve environmental problems.

In closing, I would like to thank all the contributors for their patience and perseverance in putting together this special issue that will help us to think in 'global' terms about the Pacific / Moana, to synthesize our ideas, and to improve our world through the study of human settlements in all their dimensions.



Dr Ian Fookes
Deputy Editor | *Ekistics and the New Habitat*.

Special Issue: The Global Pacific: Coastal and Human Habitats

Guest Editor: Dr. Ian Fookes

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Editorial Note - The Global Pacific: Coastal and Human Habitats

Ian Fookes

Waipapa Taumata Rau / University of Auckland

The present special issue is based on a call for papers that sought to explore the ways in which the Pacific is being re-imagined. Not surprisingly, our point of reference was Epeli Hau'ofa's seminal essay 'Our Sea of Islands' (1993). This text is the point of departure for transformative Pacific studies, an emerging disciplinary area that decolonises the Western academic discourses of which it is part. In his call for the reconceptualization of the Pacific as 'a sea of islands belonging to Pacific peoples' instead of 'far flung islands in the South Seas', Hau'ofa instigated a revolution. His essay was pointedly addressed to academics and administrators in the region who were perpetuating, through their research, teaching, and policies Western perceptions of the Pacific as remote, disconnected, and above all, lacking. By challenging this then widely held attitude, Hau'ofa reframed the region in terms of the *Moana*, that is, indigenous views of the Pacific. From this 'internal' perspective rather than that of distant Western shores, the Pacific consists of interrelated archipelagos connected by water - as opposed to being separated by it. Moreover, such connections extend to all aspects of the Pacific's diversity.

The present issue brings together contributions that aim to act in the same spirit, reconceiving of their chosen topics in innovative and radical ways. This type of thinking operates by either reimagining the familiar or by identifying new objects within it; objects that, once recognised, transform our understanding of what we thought we knew. Contributions include architectural imaginings, literary and aesthetic analyses, poetry, political analysis, and studies whose methodologies are based on Pacific ways of knowing. Indeed, the contributors to the present special issue come from diverse backgrounds and disciplines. They have offered their work as part of a contribution to our understanding of the Pacific in a holistic way, but one that is transformative, in the sense of being self-reflexive. As such, the contributors address topics relating to the Pacific but are equally concerned with the discourses of which they are part. The juxtaposition of self-reflexive, disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary approaches promotes dialogue and reflection from a 'global perspective' which aims to be holistic and inclusive. However, the term 'global' requires further clarification.

Accordingly, the special issue begins with a contribution by Ian Fookes entitled 'Exploring the Relationship between Global Studies and Ekistics'. In this article, the author elaborates on the meaning in which 'global' is used in the issue's title, before arguing that global studies has been simultaneously attempting to define itself through its interdisciplinary history and progression beyond its roots in International Relations and Area Studies, as well as maintaining a stance according to which it resists definition in order to remain a 'boundaryless' field of study. This 'transdisciplinary' aspect of Global Studies is then compared with the C.A Doxiadis' approach to ekistics. Despite some tensions between the ambition of ekistics to be the science of the problems of human settlements and the 'boundaryless' aspect of global studies, the common ground relating to transdisciplinary and the applied nature of both fields is established.

Norman Wei's contribution, 'Pacific Man – A Future Speculation developed from Pacific Architectonics' presents an exercise in imaginary architecture that deploys Pacific construction techniques to reimagine the notion of land-based settlement. His study challenges Ekistics theory to develop by highlighting its bias towards land-based settlements, thereby coming into dialogue with Pacific ways of knowing and the special relationships to water prevalent in the *Moana*.

This is followed by Ricardo Arribas' article, 'Spacing Decoloniality: De-figuring the Coloniality of Space and Subjectivity in the Caribbean and Oceania'. This author provides an analysis of the ways that space is reconceived and used as a pertinent critique in works by Ibrahim Miranda, John Puhiaata Pule, Epeli Hau'ofa, and Eduardo Lalo. The article highlights the ways that these artists reimagine geographical outlines and landscapes to decolonise their experience of colonial space. However, such decolonisation is not guaranteed of success as Arribas' analysis of the fate of intellectuals in archipelagic postcolonial spaces demonstrates. Through an analysis of Hau'ofa's short stories, he shows that the educated elite are faced with harsh dilemmas vis-à-vis their societies, pointing out the challenges in neo-colonial and postcolonial contexts in the Caribbean and the Pacific. Arribas analyses how the works of these artists and writers reimagine space and time in acts of resilience and reasserted agency, gesture which, nevertheless, cannot escape the entangled nature of postcolonial states.

Our focus then shifts towards the way that the Pacific is being studied. Stephen Noakes and Anna Powles present a critical literature review of recent texts on the Pacific from a Politics and International Relations perspective. The review concerns what is known about China's shifting role in the region. The analysis highlights the need for analyses from within the Pacific to play a more prominent role in discussions about the geo-political rivalries and dynamics operating within the region.

In a timely response to this call, Bangguo Du and Patrick Thomasen's study, 'Outside in the *Moana*? Exploring Chinese International Students' Experiences of Studying in Pacific Studies at the University of Auckland through Su'ifefiloi' is a demonstration of what can be understood when Sāmoan methodologies are used to study contemporary experiences in the

Pacific. It not only provides a snapshot of the challenges of studying in Aotearoa New Zealand as a Chinese student, but also serves as an example for further studies into contemporary experiences within Pacific contexts. Significantly, this study reveals how Chinese students in Pacific Studies in Aotearoa New Zealand feel doubly 'other' as they recognise their place as outsiders within a postcolonial nation and as students of a non-western subject area within western academia.

Further pursuing the theme of education in Aotearoa New Zealand, Daisy Bentley-Gray's account, 'Pacific Peoples in Tertiary Education in Aotearoa New Zealand' provides a complementary snapshot of the student experience from the perspective of someone responsible for helping migrants and international students. The challenges identified are different, yet not unrelated, to those highlighted by Bangguo and Thomsen's account. Bentley-Grey provides an account of the student experience with regards to the wider migrant journey from Sāmoa.

This discussion is then extended by Tiyanqi Luo and Patrick Thomsen with an article based on a complementary study of the role that China is now playing in the formal study of Pacific languages. This analysis clearly indicates that China is engaging in the Pacific in new ways linked to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Moreover, by using the Fa'afaletui methodology, Luo and Thomsen are able to grasp with clarity the structure and ambition of the Chinese language teaching policy currently being implemented. This has implications for our understanding of the extent of the Maritime Silk Road and the practical implementation of the BRI in the Pacific.

The impact of the BRI in the Pacific is then addressed from a different angle. Ian Fookes discusses the ways that Yuki Kihara's work 'A Song about Samoa サモアについてのうた' engages viewers in a specifically global art practice which embraces the political. Fookes outlines the ways that Kihara challenges viewers to reimagine their understanding of themselves, their past, and the Pacific region more broadly. Specifically, the work shifts our attention away from questions of identity to a clear focus on the issues raised by globalisation, the impact of climate change and the environmental concerns that take centre stage for Pacific peoples. Kihara's depiction of Sāmoa on Kimono made of siapo material present a mural-like 'aidscape' that highlights the central importance of aid and development to the problems facing Pacific nations. This directly implicates Japanese aid projects as well as drawing attention to the dangers of receiving foreign aid within the context of the BRI.

Kihara's message is rendered more tangible by Glenda Tibe Bonifacio whose report 'Gender and Equity in Post-Haiyan Disaster Resettlement Communities in the Philippines: Reflections from Fieldwork in Leyte' outlines the disproportionate and unforeseen effects of post-disaster aid initiatives on local populations.

The issue then shifts gear and transitions back to the central theme of re-imagining the Pacific. This transition is achieved through the inclusion of a poem by Fiona Chivers-Sherrifs that recalls landing in Tahiti on a flight from Aotearoa New Zealand. It provides a perspective on the Pacific from that particular moment.

Continuing the theme of re-imagining the Pacific, Beau Miles has kindly provided us with an extract from an early draft of his book *Backyard Adventurer* (2022). His text describes how he commutes to work from his rural lifestyle block to the University of Melbourne. His journey takes in the familiar route through the unfamiliar perspective of a pedestrian. The unconventional reflection is an exercise in phenomenology, and helps us to see the impact of our infrastructure on the landscape, and the commute on our perception of our surroundings.

The issue closes with a book review by Peggy Lauer who presents a heartfelt account of Huey D. Johnson's memoir *Something of the Marvelous: Lessons learned from my sixty years as an environmentalist* (2021) (Fulcrum group). The review is an appropriate way to conclude the special issue: It describes the life and philosophy of an innovative and pragmatic land protector who played a key role in protecting the environment in the United States and the Pacific. Indeed, Huey Johnson and his mission were truly global in nature and impact.

Exploring the Relationship between Global Studies and Ekistics

Ian Fookes

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Abstract

The special issue of *Ekistics and the New Habitat* (2021, vol. 81 Issue No.3) was initially thought to be straightforward and timely. However, since the call for papers in 2019, the terms of the title 'The Global Pacific: Coastal and Human Habitats' have elicited a call for clarification. This article aims to respond by explaining what is understood by the term 'Global Pacific' as it is used in this special issue's title, and thus articulate the position with which the contributors to this issue are associated. To do so, the author discusses the features of transformative global studies, identifying a resistance among global studies scholars to providing any essential definition of their 'boundaryless' discipline. While this openness sits uncomfortably with the efforts of other global studies scholars to define global studies within institutional contexts, it is an ethical stance that enables global studies to constantly redefine themselves and their discipline in terms of their research practice. It is argued that this stance echoes what Michel Foucault described as an ethic of the care of the self, and what others have called subjectivation. Finally, the theory and practice of ekistics is introduced and compared with global studies in such a way as to situate the special issue in relation to these two disciplines. In this way, readers can appreciate how the special issue focuses on a certain 'Global Pacific', which is located in relation to both global studies approaches and ekistic methods.

Pepeha

Ko Taranaki te maunga te rū nei taku ngākau
Ko River Torrens te awa e mahea nei aku māharahara
Ko Black Eagle tōku waka
Ko Cracroft Fookes tōku whānau
Nō Royal Oak ahau
E mihi ana ki ngā tohu o nehe,
o Tāmaki Makaurau noho nei au
Nō Ian Thomas tōku ingoa
Kia ora tātau

It is appropriate to begin the present special issue with a *Pepeha*, a Māori introduction that situates me in relation to the places and people who define my identity within *Te Ao Māori* – the Māori world of Aotearoa New Zealand. I begin by associating myself with the mountain of the region where my ancestors settled. They are defined by the vessel in which they came to this land in 1881, the Black Eagle. I then mention a river that soothes my worries, the River Torrens in South Australia where I spent my childhood, and from where my mother's side of the family hails. I am associated most clearly, however, with my father's side of the family through Albert Cracroft Fookes who arrived in Aotearoa from England as part of the British army. He helped to establish the colony through treaty, war, trade, and by negotiation. By mentioning this ancestry, I acknowledge the colonial background of which I am the direct descendant and beneficiary. Though belonging to the Taranaki region, I am also associated with my local area, Royal Oak, a part of Onehunga which is an area of



Fig 1: Mt. Taranaki, Aotearoa, New Zealand
Source: Rach Stewart Photography

Auckland where I have lived on and off since 1993. Finally, I acknowledge the landmarks of Tāmaki Makaurau, the Ngāti Whātua land on which the city of Auckland and its university are situated.

Introduction

When preparing the call for papers for this special issue of *Ekistics and the New Habitat*, the title and approach seemed obvious: 'The Global Pacific: Coastal and Human Habitats'. The terms in this title appeared straightforward and timely; in early 2019 adopting a 'global perspective' was almost conventional, the inclusion of the word 'coastal' alluded to the archipelagic nature of the Pacific, and mention of 'human' spoke to *anthropos* – one of five fundamental elements of ekistics. However, no sooner had the submit button been clicked than questions began to arise concerning these terms. In particular, the approach suggested by the term 'global': What does it mean to describe a geographical area as 'global'? How does such a description serve to define this place? And finally, which approaches, epistemological or otherwise, does the term invoke?

This article addresses these questions by situating the present special issue in relation to the emerging discipline of global studies on one hand, and Ekistics, the scientific approach to the study of human settlements on the other.

In doing so, it aims to clarify what is understood by the 'global' perspectives implied by the title, as well as articulating the discursive position with which the contributors of this issue will be associated. Such an articulation is necessary given the contested nature of the ways in which the Pacific has been (and continues to be) framed according to political interests within colonial, neo-colonial, and geo-political contexts (Medcalf 2020; Teaiwa 2020; Douglas 2021). As will become clear, the 'Global Pacific' offers an alternative to contested descriptions of the Pacific by various stakeholders.

Transformative Global Studies

In a recent commentary on the epistemological foundations of global studies, Koos & Keulman (2019) point to the work of Manfred Steger and Amentahru Wahlab whose 2017 study *What is Global Studies?: Theory and Practice* established the intellectual roots of the discipline, delimited its area of study and discussed its methods. According to Koos and Keulman, although the book can "easily pass all traditional academic scrutiny" it leads to one nagging question regarding the field, "to what extent does the work embody an American (or Western, or Global-Northern) outlook as opposed to a genuinely global (or culturally unbiased) outlook?" (Koos & Keulman 2019, p.1). In response to this question concerning 'methodological nationalism', the authors argue that efforts by global studies scholars to move beyond the epistemological and historical foundations of international relations, international studies, and area studies have only been partially successful. In other words, they maintain that global studies continues to rely on theories tied to Cold War politics and nation-state-based theorisations and analyses. Despite these lingering ties, progress within global studies has been made due to the influence of gender theory, sociology, and postcolonial approaches to the field. Global studies has made significant progress in both recognising its biases and limitations, and in developing ways to work with and around them. Indeed, it is in this respect that global studies overlaps with decolonisation movements that seek to expose and deconstruct various biases within western academia.

This research orientation is endorsed by the editors of the *Routledge Handbook to Transformative Global Studies*

(2020) who seek to distance themselves from IR-informed global studies by adding the epithet 'transformative' to the discipline. This term highlights the fundamental importance of scholarship that is both self-reflexive and radically transformative in its attempts to understand and intervene in the forms, dynamics, and politics that constitute the objects of its field. The conceptual structure of the handbook is based on a call for contributions that challenge "popular social myths around the systemic causes of global issues" before presenting alternatives that address the "major structural and socio-cognitive factors" determining them (Hossenini 2020, p.8). Specifically, the editors insist on the importance of addressing forms of "ideologically manufactured consent" that enable the ongoing use, or at least reorganisation of, "carbon-, capital-, and growth-dependent 'modes of livelihood and sociability' in the face of mounting global crises and their local impacts" (Hossenini, 2020, p.8).

If (transformative) global studies has shown itself capable of recognising its biases, then it has also promoted itself as enabling the analysis of new objects of study which are defined as being uniquely 'global' in nature. These topics transcend local, national, and regional boundaries because they occur within global networks that extend beyond and within traditional national and regional boundaries. Global studies therefore facilitates the study of problems relating to new modes of technology, migration, identity, and governance which require, by definition, transversal and multidisciplinary approaches to be apprehended.

The issues studied by global studies can be linked to discussions around 'transdisciplinarity' in higher education and attempts to encourage teachers and learners to go beyond interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary approaches. According to Budwig and Alexander (2020), the challenges of developing transdisciplinary approaches can be traced to discussions in education and psychology led by Jean Piaget in the 1970s when the limitations caused by disciplinary 'silos' led to the misrecognition or even an inability to identify real world problems. Such issues are recognisable however, and as Budwig and Alexander argue, they have been shown to be accessible by adopting a transdisciplinary approach. Global studies distinguishes itself by focusing on real world problems, irrespective of any particular disciplinary area within which they may arise. Significantly, such problems typically occur at the intersection of or across multiple fields (King & McEntee, 2022), and it is this ability to apprehend interstitial problems that sets global studies apart.

One result of this research orientation is that global studies scholars must be capable of drawing on multiple disciplines in order to study this new class of object. This means mastering one or more disciplines either individually and / or collectively. For precisely this reason, when asked to define their disciplinary approach, global studies scholars often adopt a stance conceived of as being at the limits of any singular or inter-disciplinary approach. As Jamie Gillen, Director of Global Studies at Waipapa Taumata Rau / University of Auckland notes when interviewed about the definition of Global Studies, its connection with his area of expertise (discipline) and its value (2021, 8-9):

One of the things that is interesting about Global Studies is that it is a boundaryless field of study. I also think that people need to construct meaning out of their lives by categorising and prioritising things, people, and place that matter. That tension between seeing

the world as a very exciting and dynamic place but also having smaller chunks is what I think is interesting about Geography and Global Studies.

He continues, taking specifically about the value of global studies:

My personal opinion of its value is that it's much more reflective of the way in which society and people interact with one another. I would take this from Hilary Chung who used to always say, the value of Global Studies is what people make of it – not just students, but people who are interested in the field as observers or whoever. For all that it is, it's a little bit amorphous because it's really how you define it.

Finally, Gillen shares his own personal *ethos*:

For me, it's a way to make connections between the local and the global, between who I am as a person and who I want to be in my identity, but also how that connects to other ways of thinking and doing. I think I live Global studies, so many of us in Global Studies, as students and educators live this sense of "Who am I?" and "Where do I belong?" The thing I find really exciting about all of our community is that we're trying to find these answers together.

Engaging in global studies not only means to address 'global issues' or address 'wicked problems' by using an approach that embraces transdisciplinarity, it equally describes an attitude for engaging with the world that produces meaning for those involved in it. For this reason, the definition of global studies is deeply personal; situated, as it is, in one's location within local and global contexts, and according to one's interests and values.

Whilst adopting the specific approaches developed within traditional disciplines, global studies, like transdisciplinarity in education involves a process of learning through inquiry which enables self-knowledge and identity construction; a process that Michel Foucault described as the "critical ontology of ourselves" (Foucault 1984, p.50). Foucault's concept, elsewhere described as "ethics", "the care of the self" or "subjectivation" (Flynn 1985, p.534) is conceived as the ongoing construction of one's identity through the exploration of the limits of power and knowledge that both enable and constrain us within historically constituted discourses and practices. The importance of the care of the self is that it maintains Foucault's anti-platonic stance. This stance challenges the platonic idea that knowing the self involves discovering one's essence. The care of the self proposes an alternative ethics which involves aesthetics: the conscious stylisation of one's life according to values. Instead of discovering one's essence, Foucault suggests the deliberate construction of one's identity, the cultivation of the self as a care of the self, understood to take place within systems of power-knowledge.

In this respect, the transdisciplinary approach within global studies can be recognised as a process through which the scholar cultivates a sense of self via their research practice. By extension, global studies is constantly defining itself through the studies that its researchers complete. It is therefore not bound by a fixed disciplinary identity, but is involved in an ongoing process of negotiating its identity within discursive fields of knowledge-power relations. Accordingly, global studies cannot *a priori* provide us with a fixed definition of itself, as its practitioners are engaged in a process as varied as those who practice it.

This refusal to define global studies in terms of its disciplinary methods or through a delimited set of objects within its domain sits awkwardly with the research conducted by Hossenini et al. (2020) which aimed to provide a history and definition of the emerging discipline. However, this uncomfortable mismatch between efforts to reinforce our understanding of global studies through the creation of a more robust definition of its objects and practices, on one hand, and the philosophical position that quietly refuses to be defined on the other, is one of the hallmarks of a field which encompasses a range of sometimes contradictory approaches to itself and its role as an academic discipline. For those who engage in global studies as a form of 'subjectivation', the project of establishing a fixed definition of global studies will overdetermine the outcomes of the heretofore open approach which gains traction by virtue of its non-definition. In other words, while some scholars seek to garner recognition and institutional position through academic definition and the articulation of the history of global studies in its various forms, other scholars seem to be engaging in a craft that forms them as much as it produces a certain type of knowledge and practice. For the latter, global studies is an academic programme and field of research that embraces this strategy of non-definition. They are well aware that the polite refusal to define themselves enables them to create the space required for the ongoing construction of their identities through their research which repeatedly attempts to make sense of the world.

The coexistence of these two approaches under the singular umbrella of global studies can be confusing for non-global studies practitioners. However, this misalignment of approaches is unproblematic for those engaged in the field. Attempts to establish the discipline are viewed as context dependent; within the academic institution it is necessary to develop a robust definition of the discipline and an institutional identity. However, within the field itself, it pays to remain open to all possible forms of global studies that may arise. Like the situations being studied, they consist of loose ends and untidy boundaries that do not conform to any positivistic categorisation.

Interestingly, in its attempt to accommodate the scope and diversity of its contributors, the *Routledge Handbook to Transformative Global Studies* is over 500 pages long. It would seem that those looking to define global studies as a discipline with a history and methodological coherence have no shortage of material. Equally, those wishing to embrace a quiet resistance to efforts at 'establishing the discipline' can point to the same material as evidence of the effectiveness of its diversity and openness. Much research has been completed and continues to be done - quite possibly due to the fact that global studies is not restricted to any one singular definition of itself.

By naming the present special issue *The Global Pacific: Coastal and Human Habitats*, the contributors are associated with this transdisciplinary approach that seeks to identify 'real world' or 'wicked problems', the study of which also serves to develop their own sense of place and identity.

Ekistics: a scientific approach to the study of the problems of human settlements

Constantinos Doxiadis (1913-1975) was an architect, engineer and planner who played a key role in the reconstruction of Greece following the destruction of World

War II. This role involved the comprehensive and systematic recording of damage caused during the Nazi occupation, and the planning for national reconstruction - compiled in a Greek text called *Αι θυσίαι της Ελλάδος*. As noted by Doxiadis' colleague and friend, John Papaioannou, what would come to be known as "Ekistics" in the mid-1950s emerged out of Doxiadis' approach to his role prior to and then as part of the Marshall plan (Cited in Fookes 1987). Papaioannou identifies the 'attitude' by which the roots of 'ekistics' can be understood.

Highlighting a "tendency towards a global approach", the scope of which included a focus on an understanding of space through the combination of various disciplines not limited to geography, economics, planning and architecture, but also extending to include the social sciences and the arts (Cited in Fookes 1987, p.219), Doxiadis focused on the study of human settlements through the detailed analysis of different densities and scales using maps, aerial photographs and matrices. This prototypical form of ekistics involved not only detailed empirical research, but also the development of models that could be tested in order to establish ekistic principles. Finally, in the reconstruction project undertaken between 1944 and 1948, Doxiadis relied on the accumulation of vast amounts of documentation and data relating to all aspects of human settlements that had been collected in secret during the occupation of 1943-44. This information focused not only on damaged structures or infrastructure, but also on destroyed natural resources and cultivated spaces. In short, thanks to its broad scope and comprehensive data collection, Doxiadis' ekistics style report enabled the efficient reconstruction of Greece within the context of the Marshall plan.

In the context of this article, the connection between global Studies and ekistics lies in this "global approach" characterised by a broad inclusiveness on one hand, and a systematic collection of empirical research on the other. In this respect, ekistics could be said to be similar in character to global studies in that they both embrace holistic approaches to real world problems. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that ekistics is firmly grounded in planning, architecture and engineering, and as such, it retains a focus on the issues related to human habitats, as opposed to global issues or 'wicked problems' emerging within global networks or at the intersections of national and regional boundaries.

Doxiadis coined the term 'Ekistics' in 1942, deriving it from the ancient Greek word *oikos* which refers to the house, home, or one's habitat, in addition to "the establishment of a colony, settlement or town" (Rushforth 2015, p.64). Ekistics would grow into a method for studying human settlements as well as a theory for constructing them. Through his consultancy, Doxiadis and Associates, as well as through the innovative Delos symposia, during which leading thinkers, engineers, planners, architects, and academics from diverse disciplines gathered aboard the ship *Nea Ελλάς* to share ideas within an increasingly influential school of thought. The Greek planner also led planning projects throughout the world, including a long-term study of the urbanisation of Detroit, the creation of the new capital in Pakistan, Islamabad, and the redevelopment of Riyadh. Effectively, these arenas provided a means of developing ekistics as both a theory and a practice for the improvement and creation of human settlements. In 1968, Doxiadis published *Ekistics: an introduction to the science of human settlements*, a text

which presents his vision of ekistics as a science. He argues that through the global study of settlements past and present, it is possible to establish ekistic principles that could be used to predict the outcomes of urban development and renewal. These principles were subsequently developed and published in a series of "red books" and numerous papers in the Ekistics journal. Nevertheless, the ambition of developing a science of human settlements was a collective enterprise that, like any scientific discipline, remains an ongoing project. Following Doxiadis' death in 1975, the elaboration of ekistics as a science continued through the efforts of members of the World Society for Ekistics (WSE) and those influenced by his ideas.

Although debate within the World Society of Ekistics (WSE) and elsewhere continues over whether ekistics constituted a science, a sub-field of architecture and planning, or simply an approach to transdisciplinarity (Agrafiotis, 2010), Doxiadis' theory and practice remains an example of transdisciplinary thinking that aimed to grasp the complexity of settlements in their entirety, through the synthesis of multiple perspectives. Significantly, Doxiadis did not content himself with assembling various experts to learn more about cities (multidisciplinarity or interdisciplinarity). On the contrary, his ambition was to synthesise their knowledge using a formalised method that would account for human settlements' dynamism and complexity.

This was achieved in several ways. Firstly, Doxiadis identified five fundamental elements within human settlements: anthropos, nature, networks, shells, society (Fig.1). These domains and their interaction could account for the growth and development of cities and the causes of their problems. It was not sufficient to focus on one element alone, however, but to envision one element in its relationships with the others.

Secondly, Doxiadis identified five forces that would influence the five elements: economic, social, political, technical and cultural (Fig. 2). The interaction of the forces on the elements, and one upon the other, formed the basis of an analysis of how settlements developed. However, whereas Doxiadis' antecedent, biologist and planner Patrick Geddes (1854-1932), had conceived of cities as living organisms and developed matrices to account for their complexity, Doxiadis elaborated on this model considering the full spectrum of settlements at fifteen different scales, ranging from the individual in a single room to a global urban network, the ecumenopolis. In contradistinction to Geddes, Doxiadis defined settlements in terms of their specifically human dimension. They were not considered as natural phenomena created by animals or insects, but as the deliberate product of human activity in all its richness and diversity. In this sense, they were treated as being of a higher order of evolutionary development (Jagadisan & Fookes, 2006). Although interacting with nature, human settlements were defined by the needs of *anthropos*, humanity, therefore,

they were not considered to be an inherent part of the natural world.

Thirdly, Doxiadis conceived of a settlement as belonging to a region rather than to its immediate surroundings. As such, the study of a human settlement encompassed a much greater field of study than had previously been undertaken; the most famous example being the study of Urban Detroit Area that encompassed four levels on the ekistics scale: (1) USA and Canada, (2) the Great Lakes and the Eastern Megalopolis, (3) the Great lakes Area, and (4) the Urban Detroit Area itself. The conceptualisation of settlements as part of various regions and considered in terms of ekistic elements and forces transformed the way that settlements were conceived.

In addition to the analysis of cities at various scales and in terms of their complex components, Doxiadis insisted on the importance of 'human scale', which refers to the appropriate dimensions of settlements so as to facilitate human happiness. At a time when cities focused on developing height and efficiency, Doxiadis insisted upon the importance of buildings that did not dwarf their inhabitants, and transport networks that while fast, would not endanger their users. In particular, he was concerned about preserving neighbourhoods in which the separation of motor vehicles and pedestrians could ensure the safety and serenity of the latter.

This principle was put into practice through the design of a settlement of Apollonion in Porto Rafiti, Greece. This settlement includes "hu-streets" devoid of mechanised transport, and separate "mec-streets" for mechanised vehicular access. (Doxiadis, 1975).

Fourthly, Doxiadis introduced the scale of time. Akin to the models used in developmental psychology, ekistics differentiates between old and new areas of settlements with different needs and problems. Urban renewal and the prevention of urban sprawl assume a greater prominence in ekistic thinking as a result. To account for the dynamism of cities developing over time, Doxiadis also posited the design of the 'dynopolis' – which he considered to be a model for the 'city of the future'. The dynopolis is a city that was designed to incorporate change from the gradually expanding centre in one direction, rather than through rapid uncontrolled growth on the outskirts of a city in all directions.

Doxiadis' emphasis on human scale, time, and the creation of dynamic cities were important factors in distinguishing his work from that of the members of CIAM, the *Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne*. Leading modernist architects, Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, Mart Stam, and Sven Markelius founded CIAM in 1928 and hosted a series of conferences focused on issues relating to cities until 1959. They espoused a universal architecture using modernist forms, and through their efforts developed a better understanding of the problems of human settlements. Further, through the application of grids and matrices, they sought to develop principled models that could be applied anywhere in the world. However, the realised designs by CIAM members came to be criticised as "universal, uniform, ugly, inhuman, elitist, [and] lack[ing] meaning" (Mahsud 2006, p.241). Notably, Le Corbusier's apartment buildings would come to be known for their detrimental psychological impacts on residents as they eventually became ghettos on the outskirts of urban centres. Doxiadis attempted to improve upon the CIAM principles by remaining sensitive to the internal complexity of cities and local historical

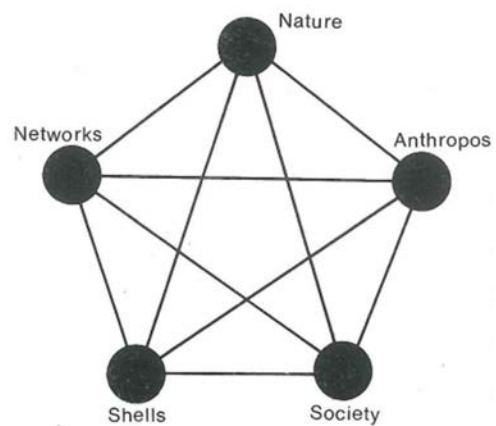


Fig. 1: The five elements of human settlements
Source: Doxiadis, C. (1975). *Building Entopia*. Athens Publishing Center. p. 44.

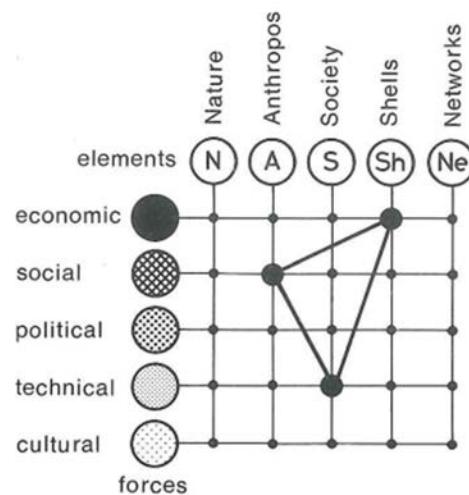


Fig. 2: The five forces of human settlements
Source: Doxiadis, C. (1975). *Building Entopia*. Athens Publishing Center. p. 44.

factors. Though operating from universal principles, Doxiadis ekistics grid was more sensitive and detailed than that used by Le Corbusier (Jagadisan & Fookes 2006). Moreover, it accounted for change through time and could be applied at larger scales.

Eventually, though, Doxiadis' theories combined to form the anthropocosmos model, a grid that plotted the ekistic elements against the 15 different scales of his development from a room in a dwelling to the ecumenopolis, a global network of cities that would function as a singular urban settlement (Doxiadis, 1975). The anthropocosmos model incorporated more factors to take into account the gap between desirability and feasibility as well as economic and

time constraints. The completed model has been criticised however (Rushforth 2015) as being overly complex to be workable in practice. That is, the comprehensive and fine grained analysis that it makes possible is perhaps too costly and detailed for governing bodies to undertake. That point notwithstanding, the greater challenge to Ekistics has been the development of other areas of the social sciences and in particular, the rise of urban design, which is seen by some as the successor to ekistics. However, as Rushforth (2015) notes, Urban design could never be "considered as a substitute" (p.75) for Ekistics, due to its interdisciplinary approach. That is, ekistics offers a 'global' perspective that relies on the systematic synthesis of multiple perspectives. The importance of the anthropocosmos model is that it provides a framework through which complexity and change can be understood in a systematic and comprehensive way.

This synthesis takes place using the ekistics grid and method called IDEA-CID, which stands for Isolation of Dimension and Elimination of Alternatives, Continuously Increasing Dimensionality. This method seeks to identify the various dimensions of a settlement, theorise their development by eliminating potential future forms, and then plotting this development within a process of permanent growth. As Rushforth (2015) notes in his critique of this method, although Doxiadis was able to predict in 1968 the urban decay of Detroit that led to its bankruptcy in 2013, the analysis is potentially too cumbersome to be practically applied. On the other hand, as Fookes (1987) has argued, the IDEA-CID model allows the basic aim of Ekistics to be achieved: "to advance our understanding of solutions for the issues and problems of human settlements, by way of their synthesis into both theory and practice. (p.223).

Fookes (1987) insists on the importance of synthesis in terms of theory and practice by pointing to the 18 hypotheses developed by Doxiadis and his associates, and the participants of the regular Delos symposia. These hypothesis inform empirically tested models relating to cities which are understood as growing and dynamic entities that support human flourishing to different degrees. They are an attempt to practically improve the functioning of settlements for their inhabitants whilst developing scientific knowledge about how they function.

When describing his relationship to human settlements, Doxiadis was fond of using the analogy of a physician treating a patient. The planner, who otherwise enjoyed describing himself as a humble "builder", sought to develop a systematic understanding of the problems of human settlements in order to find their treatments. The medical model is important because it conceptualised cities as living organisms whose *telos* ought to be the flourishing of *anthropos* – the people who lived within and in relation to them. In this simple sense, cities are built by and for people, but in many cases, through their design and growth they fail to serve people's needs. Extending the medical analogy, cities can be young or old, in good or poor health, and as they age their ailments need to be accurately diagnosed and treated. Cities are considered as complex and ever changing as human health, and ekistics developed into a complex combination of disciplines with the aim of becoming a science of human settlements.

To be an "ekistician" or practitioner of ekistics thus means to master at least one discipline and to engage with other experts in higher level thinking based on a synthesis of

approaches. Similar to global studies scholars, then, ekisticians pride themselves on going beyond single-disciplinary thinking. Also, like their global studies counterparts, ekisticians consider themselves to be part of a discipline that is synthetic and holistic in its approach, 'going beyond' current methodologies to examine a new class of object.

However, in a reflection of the modernist moment in which ekistics was conceived, Doxiadis defined it as a scientific discipline that aimed to systematically combine various approaches to the study of specific aspects of human settlements into a comprehensive discipline; one capable of developing universally applicable solutions for humanity. Doxiadis aimed for ekistics to become a science of human settlements through which the latter's problems could be understood in their essence and thus be solved or at least alleviated. The aim was to develop a comprehensive body of knowledge (*savoir*) of human settlements and to develop predictive models based on principle and empirical analysis. In this sense, ekistics is platonic and one could describe it as approaching human settlements "globally" – only in the sense of developing a comprehensive understanding of their various forms and evolution. From an ekistics perspective, historical knowledge of settlements is to be combined with analysis of an extensive range of settlements at different scales in order to improve them, and to develop plans for realisable ideal cities described as entopia – in contradistinction to dystopia and utopia. Doxiadis sought to construct a future based on ekistic knowledge, theory and practice. This master narrative is characteristic of modernist theory.

However, in comparison, global studies is less ambitious in its scope whilst still aiming to develop knowledge of global problems in order to understand them, and with the goal of taking action to solve them. The open approach of global studies scholars (discussed earlier) is important here, as it may be considered as a reflection of the lessons learned from the pitfalls of adopting such an all-encompassing modernist approach. This is why Foucault's notion of subjectivation may be helpful to understand how global studies scholars approach their 'boundaryless' discipline that resists any essentialising definition. Hence, the self-reflexive, 'transformative' dimension is a key feature of global studies.

Interestingly, the emphasis in ekistics on 'synthesis' of disciplinary knowledge to achieve higher-order solutions anticipates to some degree the approach developed by global studies scholars. In this regard, ekisticians could look to global studies for ways to articulate this 'synthetic' transdisciplinary level of analysis more clearly within ekistic methodology.

Conclusion

The aim of this article was not to recount the history of ekistics or to explain ekistic theory in detail. Rather, our concern has been to develop a schematic understanding of how ekistics relates to global studies, and how the present special issue is situated in relation to these two approaches. Thus far, we have demonstrated the transdisciplinary focus of global studies and likened this to the transdisciplinary "synthesis" achieved by ekistics. We have also pointed out a key difference in approach, namely, that ekistics is surely focused on human settlements and the problems related to

them, whereas global studies is examining issues that arise within global networks and across and within national and regional boundaries. What this means is that certain global studies researchers may feel at home contributing to ekistics insofar as their research relates to human settlements. Further, ekistics and its archives may well have a lot to contribute to global studies in terms of understanding particular issues, as well as methodologically. Although there is more research needed to clarify the disjunction between an ekistics rooted in European modernism of the 1950s and the more recent and open approach developed by global studies, it can be acknowledged that the ekistics grid, the IDEA-CID, and the 'attitude' embodied by Doxiadis and emulated by his followers may well prove useful for global studies scholars.

Finally, we began this article with the task of clarifying the sense in which 'Global' was being applied to the contributions in this issue. By designating 'The Global Pacific' as the locus of the current special issue this collection of texts is positioned in relation to both global studies and ekistics. On one hand, contributors have responded to the call for papers to produce research that is revolutionary as it reframes or reimagines the Pacific; on the other hand, insofar as they form part of this journal, the contributions add to the ongoing creation of ekistics as a discipline and as a body of knowledge.

The 'Global Pacific' therefore does not pretend to offer a comprehensive view of the region or claim to be representative of its diversity. Rather, this issue brings together a range of voices that challenge the reader to rethink their understanding of the Pacific, whilst building our transdisciplinary understanding of its dynamic complexity. Further, this understanding is developed with the express purpose of engaging with the problems studied. In this precise sense then, the present special issue is an invitation to engage in the process of reframing the Pacific, to position oneself in relation to that process, and to engage in the project of solving the global issues and the problems of human settlements.

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Keywords

Ekistics, Transformative Global Studies, Pacific, decolonisation

Pacific Man – A Future Speculation developed from Pacific Architectonics

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Abstract

Characterised by flexible joints and renewable use of materials, Pacific Architecture contains an integrated tectonic system that is historically used to construct both buildings and highly efficient watercrafts, enabling civilizations to flourish in Oceania. However, its significant architectural languages are widely dismissed in today's utilitarian society. Witnessed in museum, cultural faculties and resorts, Pacific Architecture is often perceived as a cultural artefact that lacks of practical application.

As a celebration of Pacific Architecture, the paper aims to discover how tectonics and construction systems from the Pacific could be revived, radically developed and utilised to accommodate "Future Pacific Living" in the rapidly changing world. Through a collective of speculative architectural propositions, the paper proposes alternatives to the existing postcolonial built environment while fully embracing future technologies. The paper also aims to rethink the current Ekistics Scale by demonstrating possible Oceanic alternatives to land-based human settlements.

The first part of the paper is a review of the author's past project 'The Lomipeau Speculation', a macro-scale visionary proposal to conceive of a city formed by Pacific tectonics. The second part, Pacific Men, is a narrative developed from the past project, exploring how Pacific Architecture can re-define humans' relationship with the Ocean at multiple scales. This speculation will be presented through architectural drawings with references to Doxiadis's Ekistics Territory Scale, while proposing a new unit of Okeanopolis that is positioned outside the existing Scale.

Introduction - Pacific Tectonics

Often linked to ground conditions, stability and permanency, architecture is widely considered as a land-based practice. However, this is an incorrect statement for the Pacific where the Ocean is the genesis of its architecture. Surrounded by an enormous body of water, traditional buildings found on Pacific Islands from Melanesia to Polynesia are closely tied to boat-making technologies (Austin, 2001). This enables a unique

palette of architectural languages to evolve in the fluctuating Oceanic environment, forming prosperous human settlements with exceeding mobility, empowering island civilizations to thrive for many centuries.

What makes Pacific architecture extraordinary is that buildings and watercraft share the same tectonics system. The most pivotal feature found among Pacific buildings is the centralised ridgepole structure, which can be

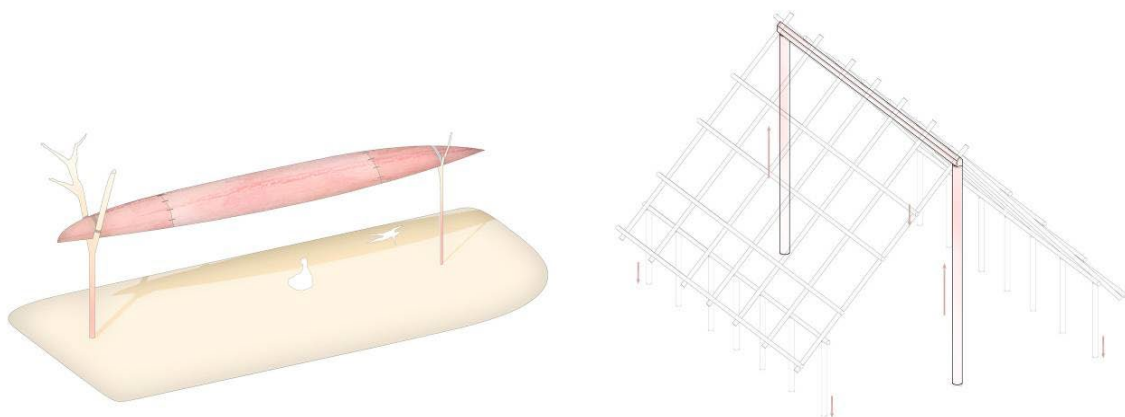


Fig.1: Diagrams showing the fundamental Pacific Architectural structure.

Left: A Canoe being turned up-side down forming the first Pacific shelter

Right: Ridge Pole being the primary structure of a Pacific House, with roof being tied down to the ground

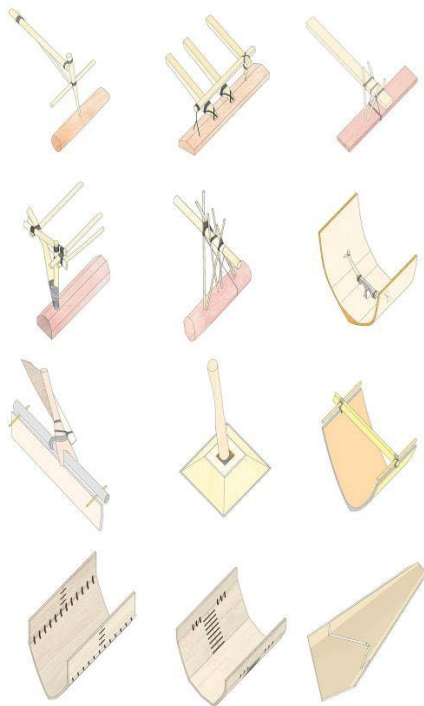


Fig.2: Pacific Vaka tectonic composition

perceived as a translation of canoe hull (Austin, Treadwell, 2009). A Pacific house prototype can be seen as a vaka (Pacific canoe) turned up-side-down, propped up by central posts and stabilised on the sides (Fig.1). Within this arrangement, a combination of tension and counterweight is achieved in its construction. Its large lightweight roof is tied down to a significant counterweight - the ground, its walls are often non load-bearing, therefore, become screen-like elements to provide efficient climate control.

Construction techniques are crucial in Pacific Architecture. Structural components are commonly connected with lashing joints, allowing some degree of movements and flex, so that building or canoe parts can be easily replaced and renewed when damaged or worn out. This also enables buildings to be more easily rebuilt at new locations for various purposes, gaining traditional settlements mobility. Migration between islands was made possible. In Aotearoa, this also greatly assisted Māori settlements' seasonal migration during the pre-contact period (Brown.2009).

The unique tectonics system of Pacific Architecture can be discovered in most parts of the Pacific Ocean – from as far as Ancient Japan's Ise Shrine to Aotearoa's Wharenui. It makes Pacific architecture lightweight, flexible, and potentially mobile. This is essential to accommodating a 'Pacific way of living' that embraces open space,

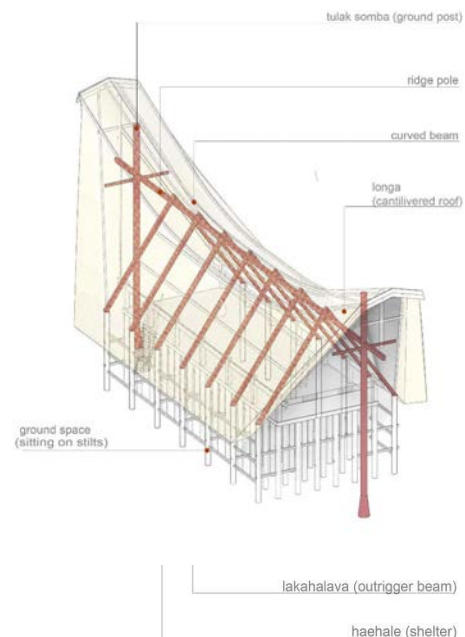


Fig.4: Tongkonan Tectonic Diagram

renewability and migration, forging the collective of highly diverse Oceanic cultures.

Archetype Studies

The following section conducts studies on some of the key Pacific building archetypes, demonstrating the coherent tectonic linkages between different parts of the Pacific.

Fale – Polynesia

Often considered as one of the most iconic archetypes of Pacific Architecture, Samoan Fale offers a good example of the ridgepole-to-post system. The middle section of its large roof, named Itu, has a short ridgepole at the centre which is directly supported by the central post. The round sections at the two ends of the roof, named Tala, are lashed to Itu and resting on a circle of side posts (Austin and Treadwell, 2009). The side posts work in tension against strong wind, holding the lightweight roof down to a raised stone platform at the building base which works as the counterweight. The complex structural system together creates a highly flexible space under the roof. No load-bearing walls are required as enclosure is generally achieved by weaved screens placed between side-posts, accommodating a communal life that is unique to traditional settlements in the South Pacific.

Houses on Stilts - South East Asia

Traditional houses in Southeast Asia display many similarities to Fale and other South Pacific archetypes. Visually defined by large lightweight roofs and often incorporate centralised structures, the buildings are commonly constructed on wooden stilts that raise living spaces above the ground. This enables buildings to be built close to water edge or even above water. Thai architect Sumet Jumsai describes the amphibious architectural system as the basis of ‘Water-Based Civilisations’, forming relatively impermanent but potentially mobile aquatic settlements across the Pacific (Jumsai, 1988). Using the Thai village of Tha Khanon as a precedent, Jumsai suggests that houses can be even built on bamboo rafts that automatically afloat when the ground is flooded (Jumsai, 1988), becoming a hybrid of building and boat.

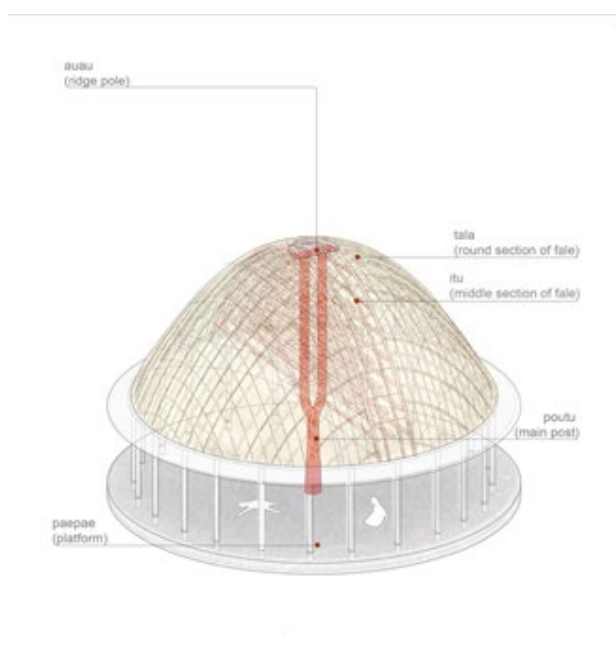


Fig.3: Fale Tectonic Diagram

The houses on stilts sometimes show formal references to watercrafts. Evidence can be discovered on South Sulawesi's Tongkonan. The Indonesian archetype is sheltered by a self-tensioned roof, explicitly resembling an upside down boat.

Ise Jingū (Naiku and Geku) – Japan

The historically significant Japanese archetype exhibits a highly consistent structural system to various buildings found in Polynesia and Southeast Asia. It evidently accommodates the centralised ridgeline system while its raised floor platform is sitting on stilts. The roof is topped by katsuogi: nine to ten heavy cylindrical objects made of hard wood. Originally used as weights against wind, these unique building elements have become purely symbolic and structurally redundant during its later development (Tange, 1965).

Ise Jingū is also a great precedent to demonstrate the remarkable resilience and renewability of Pacific

Architecture. Since the 6th Century AD, the shrine complex has been rebuilt on an adjacent site every twenty years as one of the most important Shinto rituals. As Joseph Rykwert describes the reconstruction as an act to “renew time for those who inhabit the land” (Rykwert, 1981), Ise Jingū expresses the Japanese perception of perpetuity which is achieved through continuous self-renewal.

Threshold in Pacific Architecture

The archetypes above demonstrate unique spatial conditions offered by Pacific tectonics. Besides being

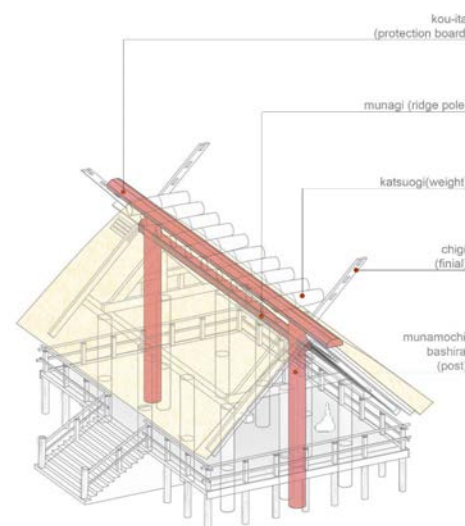


Fig.5: Ise Naiku Tectonic Diagram

extremely open and flexible in spatial planning, another important shared feature is the ambiguous threshold between spaces. Freed from load-bearing, walls in Pacific architecture can exist in extremely lightweight forms such as weaved blinds and full-height sliding screens, they should be perceived as operable devices rather than space dividers. The threshold is further blurred by the use of raised platform and verandah that create a continuous flow between the interior and the exterior, removing boundaries between human settlements and the broader Oceanic environment. This spatial arrangement can be still witnessed today at Wharenui's paepae and traditional Japanese house's engawa.

Lost in Translation

Many would consider Pacific Architecture a treasure that provokes excellent cultural and historical values, but irrelevant to our everyday life. Pacific Architecture and its tectonic system have been practically dismissed in the region since the post-colonial era, and its development ceased soon after the continental building typologies were introduced in the 19th century. Many contemporary buildings claimed to be Pacific architecture tend to be “post-modern decorative sheds”, only borrowing visual and formal elements without incorporating its signature tectonics. They are commonly witnessed in cultural and tourism facilities where monolithic reinforced concrete structures are

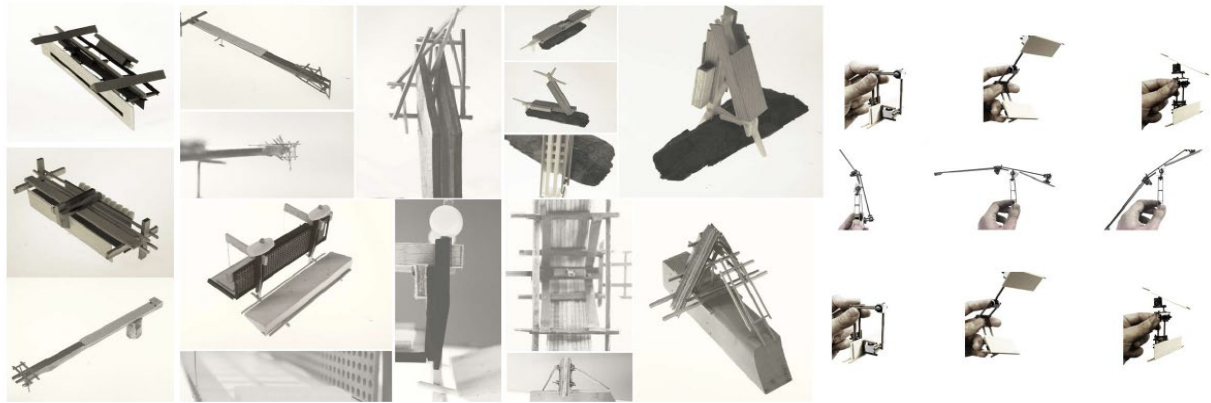


Fig.6: Wei's model studies translating Pacific tectonics into new compositions from Wei's past research on Pacific syntax

crowned with "Fale hats", or decorated with motif precast facades. Such buildings merely display a visual resemblance and spatial mimicking to their historical archetypes, very often represent a commodified image of Pacific Architecture. As architectural academic Jeremy Treadwell suggests, this practice is mere "design for representations" (Treadwell,2006), which turns Pacific Architecture into a symbol of indigenous exoticism. Consequently, human settlements in the Pacific region have been primarily homogenised by their continental counterparts, losing the traditional 'Pacific way of living'. Especially these settlements are prone to the increasingly frequent natural disasters in recent years, and its residents suffer tremendously from water-related disasters such as tsunamis, typhoons and sea levels rise.

Pacific architectural scholar Mike Austin suggests the dull reality of today's Pacific architecture is caused by a "mistranslation" from the traditional Pacific tectonic languages to a contemporary setting - where contemporary Pacific buildings maintain semantics but lost its tectonics syntax. (Austin, 2014). In language, the syntax is generally understood as the systematic arrangement of parts or elements. In architecture, syntax refers to the composition of structure that "persists over time," thereby ensuring coherent tectonic sequences. In language, linguistics semantics are associated with meaning and signification. In architecture, semantics can be understood as referring to those conditions that are changeable; for instance, form, material, and decoration. The syntax is the key to maintaining the translation's coherency, while the semantics is to respond to specific conditions such as culture, climate, and local niche. A good translation, therefore, needs to persistently maintain the syntax while actively changing the semantics to respond to specific contexts. Using this linguistic system, architects and designers can achieve innovation and development based on the original syntax, and architectural language can evolve while generating new possibilities (Austin,2014).

America's Cups racing boats of AC-45 can serve as an excellent example of using Pacific Syntax to achieve efficiency in today's world. Besides the boats are recast in contemporary materials such as steel and carbon fiber,

many syntactic features from Pacific canoe archetypes are found in its design. The double hull design demonstrates the historically significant performance of counterweight achieved by two hulls balancing each other. The flexible lashed joints are translated to robotic junctions that accommodate kinetic movements, increasing its capacity to respond to changing water conditions. With the world moving to an era that pursues speed, efficiency, and advancement, the racing boat successfully demonstrates that Pacific tectonics has the potential to embrace the future and create many design opportunities. Because of the transferable nature between building and watercraft in Pacific architecture, AC-45 can serve as a design inspiration for building design and construction in many ways.

The original syntax of Pacific Architecture is somehow coherent to many structures that related to architectural innovation and technological advancement.

Kenzo Tange, the head of Metabolism architects in the 70's Japan, was a significant figure to demonstrate a linkage between Pacific architecture and contemporary adaptation. In the writing of 'Ise: Prototype of Japanese architecture', Tange identifies Ise Jingū as the original prototype of all Japanese architecture (Tange,1965). Its renewability, flexibility and mobility were widely considered as the core philosophies among the metabolists. The movement was to create a system of architecture that would embrace change, growing naturally like a living organism as a response to the rapidly changing post-war Japan. In some way, the metabolism movement could be perceived as a 'modern experiment of Pacific syntax'.

In a number of buildings designed by Tange and many other metabolists, the concept of renewability and flexibility is achieved through a combination of centralised primary structures and flexible secondary components, a syntactical composition that can be frequently discovered in traditional Pacific archetypes. The centralised structure was usually interpreted as vertical central cores, carrying the less permanent secondary 'pods' (smaller rooms). These 'pods' were designed to be removed, replaced and renewed overtime based on the occupants' changing needs. Examples are



Fig.7: Site Plan of Special Autonomous District of Lomipeau

given by Tange's famous Yamanashi Press and Broadcasting Centre and Kisho Kurokawa's Nakagin Capsule Tower (Koolhaas and Obrist, 2011). Although most of the proposed adaptation failed due to practical issues, the Metabolism Movement still offers a great deal of inspiration to how contemporary buildings could be designed incorporating Pacific syntax.

Architects of High-Tech Architecture and Deconstructivism movements also demonstrate buildings with many shared features with Pacific buildings. Richard Rogers' Inmos Microprocessor Factory innovatively combines prefabricated building components and a lightweight tensile structural system, creating highly flexible industrial spaces that allow alteration and expansion to easily happen. Rem

Koolhaas' Casa Bordeaux challenges the concept of gravity, employing a massive counterweight to its central portal beam to enable the house to float above the landscape. Although not directly associated, these can also serve as inspiration to the development of contemporary Pacific architecture.

Speculation Proposals

As the world moving into an Anthropocene era - the Pacific region is facing the most significant challenges in centuries. The ongoing climate crisis is bringing a series of drastic changes, from sea level rise to unpredictable natural disasters such as frequent flooding. Water will have an increasingly substantial presence in our everyday life. Cities and villages built in the last two



Fig.8: Speculated drawing of Lomipeau, with the volcanic island of Kao passing under it (with reference to Katsushika Hokusai's drawing - Great Wave)

centuries are prone to the changes since their lack of flexibility and adaptability, affecting millions of people's lives. This might be a critical time for architects and urban planners to rethink Pacific Architecture.

Historically, migration and voyages were taken as a response to environmental change or disasters in the Pacific. Coastal researcher Mark Dickson demonstrates in his research that a one-metre sea level rise between 3000-5000 years ago could have had a significant influence on Pacific settlements (Irwin, 2006). There was a substantial wave of Pacific migration happening during this period after a number of atoll groups were flooded and became uninhabitable (Irwin 2006). According to this historical record, the environmental changes could be seen as a trigger for possibilities in the Pacific. The change catalyses the Pacific people to discover new territories and adapt themselves to a broader range of environments. Needless to say, the flexible tectonic system of Pacific architecture played a vital role in this process to enable Oceanic migration.

If there are opportunities for adapting Pacific Architectonics to the current setting - or even beyond, would it create a positive response to embrace the unpredictable future?

To answer the question above, the author employs the practice of Architectural Speculation to demonstrate the potential development of Pacific Architecture and its tectonics system. Inspired by 'paper architecture proposals' in the 20th century such as the Archigram and Japanese Metabolism, the article will present two design proposals in the form of visionary architecture that project Pacific Architecture beyond its commodified image into an extreme new future. Being highly speculative, the projects do not tend to provide buildable solutions for the current world, nor will they be fully technically resolved with the available technologies. They are to demonstrate the greater inspiration found in the extraordinary

architectonic system, exploring its creative and generative potential beyond the confining perception of Pacific Architecture.

The first Project, Super Pacific City – The Lomipeau Speculation, was completed in 2014 as part of the author's masters graduation project supervised by Jeremy Treadwell. The project aims to present a vision of what it is like to construct a large scale human settlement only with Pacific architectural tectonics. With the key architectural languages translated from the traditional Pacific elements, it is to seek a radical alternative from the existing city-building model. The second Project, Pacific man, takes the form of architectural illustrations with a micro approach, positioning the philosophies of Pacific architecture into everyday life in Auckland Tāmaki Makaurau.

Project One - Super Pacific City - Lomipeau Speculation

Background

The proposal sets in a speculated future scenario where climate changes drastically alter Oceanic environments. Existing cities on several islands are made uninhabitable by rising sea levels and other natural disasters. Started with the Marshall Islands and Vanuatu, several significant island nations have been completely underwater. There will be more and more human settlements affected by the ongoing changes. As a response, Pacific Nations united under the title Pacific Forum, are establishing a Special Autonomous District of Lomipeau at Rangitaiki Plain, Bay of Plenty, New Zealand. The citizens of the settlement are made up of people coming from all around the Pacific Ocean: primarily environmental refugees, craftsmen/technicians and researchers. The city acts as a production and research base, developing Pacific tectonic system into an efficient and adaptive building system for the rapidly changing Pacific environments.

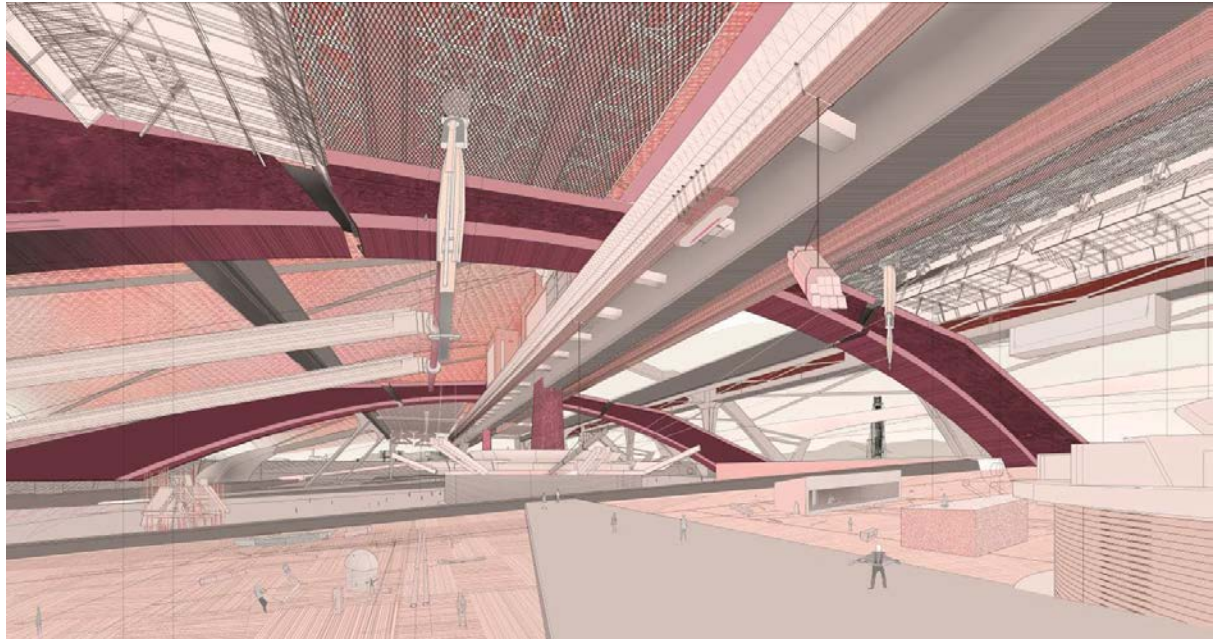


Fig.10 Platform view of the making ground

Etymology

Lomipeau was a giant double-hulled canoe discovered in Togan oral tradition. Capable of carrying four thousand men, it was constructed to transport workers and volcanic rocks for tomb building between islands. The canoe was so large that the volcanic islands of Kao and Tofua could pass under the platform between the two hulls (Martinello, 2006). Although there was no conventionally authoritative historical evidence on how such a giant canoe was built and sailed with the technologies available at the time, the myth does provoke a speculation of architectural formation at a scale never realised in the Pacific in the past. The myth is referenced to be the genesis of a Pacific City, becoming the symbol of Pacific architecture at an urban scale

Site Location

The flat site at Rangitaiki Plain was originally swamp land, formally occupied by the people of Ngāti Awa since the fourteenth century, and significantly represented by several archaeological sites including the significant pā site of Kohika (Irwin, 2004). The wetland provided plentiful food supplies, abundant flax farming and efficient waterways that connect to the outer coast and the inner forests (Irwin, 2004). Canoeing was the primary transportation system for the people to gain accessibility to the surrounding environment, especially crucial for coastal communication (Irwin, 2004). However, after a series of severe flooding, the swamp land was abandoned by Māori residents in the eighteenth century. In the early twentieth century and entirely replaced by a generic post-colonial landscape in the 1930s to accommodate dairy farming and crop plantations. Since then, the site had been altered continuously by natural forces such as earthquakes and persistent floods. In the speculated setting, the plain becomes mostly flooded and uninhabitable under the ongoing sea level rise.

Planning

The unique flooded condition of the selected site invites an opportunity for a Pacific City's establishment. The presence of water initiates Pacific urbanism in the Pacific City. It is to provide an alternative to traditional Cartesian urban planning that is based on "universalising and cardinal directions" (Austin, 2001). The Pacific City's urbanity is driven by a two-direction orientation: seawards and landwards, which Austin claims to be the original spatial organisation of Pacific settlement (Austin, 2001). The seawards accommodates social, industrial and commercial activities, and the landwards accommodates housing communities. The water now becomes the connector between the two orientations, enabling residents to circulate freely in the city through water transportation. Suspended rail system is also introduced as land is scarce in the flooded coastal regions.

Central Making Ground: The Making Ground located at



Fig.9: Make Ground Model

the coastal edge of the city, it is the heart of the Pacific City and acting as a centralised workplace and social platform for its citizens. The Making Ground fabricates all of the city's tectonic structures - including houses, vessels and infrastructure, while the structure itself being



Fig.11: Yard of Renewability – where materials are salvaged from abandoned structures from all over the Pacific. Foreground shows a Pacific worker carrying a Fale Tagata (Water-Jet device that gains him extra strength through hydraulic power)

continuously constructed and modified. Although a production facility, the Making Ground does not operate in a generic industrial model. It is the genesis of the new Pacific tectonics that integrates making, researching, and learning.

The Making Ground consists of many parts that perform a variety of programmes: including Central Marae (The Social Ground), Ocean Paepae (Wave Power Generator), Afolau Lomipeau (Boatshed), and Renewable Yard (The Material Centre). The combination of these centres determines not only Lomipeau's productive system but also the urban composition of the city.

The largest structure of the Making Ground - Afolau Lomipeau, the boatshed, consists of two parts: 'the shed' and 'the vaka'. Translated from Pacific's ridgepole syntax, it is constructed in a manner where the canoe and the shed form one tectonic entity. It is a static complex that belongs to the land of Lomipeau City, but part of it can be detached and becomes a canoe-like urban scale mobile structure that circulates all around the Pacific. Because of the critical role as a productive centre, the structure spans 1200 metres long that can be divided into several working zones flexibly, enabling a range of products, buildings and even infrastructural components to be made. It will incorporate frontier industrial technologies to achieve maximum production efficiency. More importantly, it will contain a high level of urbanity - that the structure itself is a moving part of the city.

Technology

Making and fabrication is a primary function for the city. Water-jet technology is highly developed to allow production to be fully hydraulically aided.

A system called Fale Tagata (man-carried fale) is introduced to embrace the craftsmanship with contemporary technology. The detachability of the fale's

syntax is now utilised in the citizens' work mode. Man-Itu is a hydraulically powered device that workers carry on the back, containing hydraulic pumps that provide extra strength to muscles. Man-Tala is the common name for all the equipment that are changeable. These changeable elements include water-jet blades used for fabrication, or outriggers that turn the human anatomy into a canoe - providing citizens a method of flexible transportation, or a carrier that gives citizens extra strength to move heavy objects. When equipped with Fale Tagata, the new citizens of the Lomipeau City hence gain the abilities to utilise water and the Ocean as a part of their making – as well as living. It offers the citizens additional power and mobility, making them 'super-human of the Pacific'.

Material supply

It is challenging to assemble materials directly from nature for building the settlement and its structures, due to its tremendous scale and the need for a high quantity of material. On the other hand, the industrial refining process of materials would create severe pollution to the waterborne settlement. This is highly inappropriate for a 'watery city'. An alternative could be achieved by looking into recycled materials. Treadwell and Austin documented that salvaged wood from rivers were often used as the material for the making of buildings and canoes in Papua New Guinea settlements (Austin, Treadwell, 2009). This provides an inspiration that the materials for Pacific construction are not necessarily obtained from nature directly, they could be recycled.

The materials for fabricating Lomipeau and the canoe are transported from the east end of the site, which is a place called 'Renewable Yard', or 'Salvage Yard'. It is water hollow that accumulates contemporary reusable construction waste from all around the world. Retired ships, airplanes, and disassembled oil rigs are also among the acceptable. Materials will be transported through the water pathway, and 'reincarnated' through a series of

processes along the water path to Afolau, becoming completely reusable when it reaches the Lomipeau's making space. The process will be fully incorporated with water-jet technologies, which achieves a low pollution reuse process

Environment

Pacific tectonics also embraces an ecological approach towards settlement building. The watery settlement is primarily powered by renewable energy from solar, wind and wave sources. Its water quality is closely monitored to ensure it is suitable for human habitation and marine habitats. Water-based plants such as mangrove trees can be introduced to improve environmental quality as well as increasing the settlement's biodiversity.

Housing

Housing is one of the major outputs of the Pacific City. Here, Where the housing units are constructed with a centralised ridgeline system, constructed with contemporary industrial materials. The house ridgelines are primarily prefabricated as an integrated services core. The secondary structures, such as walls, floors, and windows, are customisable. Citizens can fabricate these elements according to their preferences and needs. Since the centralised structure takes all the structural responsibilities, these secondary elements, therefore, achieve a higher degree of flexibility. They are easily replaceable and detachable. Thereby, lightweight materials such as timber and light steel are mainly used. These non-structural components can be potentially operational, working as mechanically operated façades that can completely open up.

A Wharenuī (Big House) prototype is also designed, becoming a community anchor points for residents. Big house is a traditionally important part of Pacific settlements, this archetype can be found all around the Pacific Ocean, such as Tambaran (the spirit house) in New Guinea and Manihiki in the Cook Islands. The iconic buildings contain large shared spaces that are not designed for specific functions, allowing flexible arrangements and acting as the centres of communities. The Big House can possibly be identified as a universal space to host any community programmes.

Lomipeau – Vaka Form

Even though Lomipeau visually resembles a giant 'canoe', its proper definition is a large, hydraulically powered 'making facility' that rests on three hulls – with one large hull and two outriggers. It floats on water and functions as a mobile part of the settlement, capable of being detached and launched from the Afolau. The extremely large Lomipeau provides a platform for building-fabrication, infrastructure-making, and vessel-production.

The mobility of Lomipeau denotes a new voyage that is meaningful to the new Pacific. Voyage was a significant activity in Pacific history since Pacific people sailed to connect islands as a holistic entity. It was an activity that is profoundly social and political, which shaped Pacific people's life. The significance of sea journeys has been largely decreased after flights became a standard method of transport. Through airports, travel between islands is



Fig.12: A fabrication station demonstrates water jet technologies being used by workers and a robotic arm

made faster and perhaps more accessible. However, long-distance sea journeys became a form of luxury activity such as cruises, with its traditional significance dismissed.

The moving function of Lomipeau demonstrates that a new form of voyages. It allows the fabrication facility to sail into the sea. With foiling devices equipped, high-speed movement is made possible to complete new tasks in the vast Ocean. This activity is named 'the Grand Voyage' which is entirely different from the past definitions of sea journeys. Lomipeau's voyage has several purposes, including building new settlements around the Pacific, rapid disaster relief for settlements that encounter natural disasters and conducting research missions. It adapts settlements with frontier technologies and enables them to regain the traditional flexibility of Pacific architecture.

As Epeli Hau'ofa states in his revolutionary essay, the Pacific Ocean should be perceived as a holistic entity of Sea of Islands - where the Ocean connects all the landmasses (Hau'ofa,1993). Lomipeau demonstrates that Pacific architectonics is an essential component for the island nations to be reconnected in an unpredictable future scenario. The traditional architectural languages can be developed into a tectonics system that enables human settlements to be radically mobile and flexible, making the Pacific a truly holistic entity - an alternative to any existing land-based settlement, which can be named as 'Okeanopolis'

Project Two - Pacific Man of Tāmaki Makaurau

Context

Situated in a prominent location in the South Pacific, the Auckland isthmus is surrounded by a large group of harbours and bays. It is connected to the broader Pacific Ocean by sea trade and houses the highest Polynesian population in the world. Although exhibiting such unique environmental and cultural conditions, Auckland City was created using the same design and planning method as any other colonial port cities around the world, without references to the Māori and Polynesian settlements initially established in the region. As a result, the city has become a system of the Cartesian grid with clear boundaries between land and water, dismissing the human

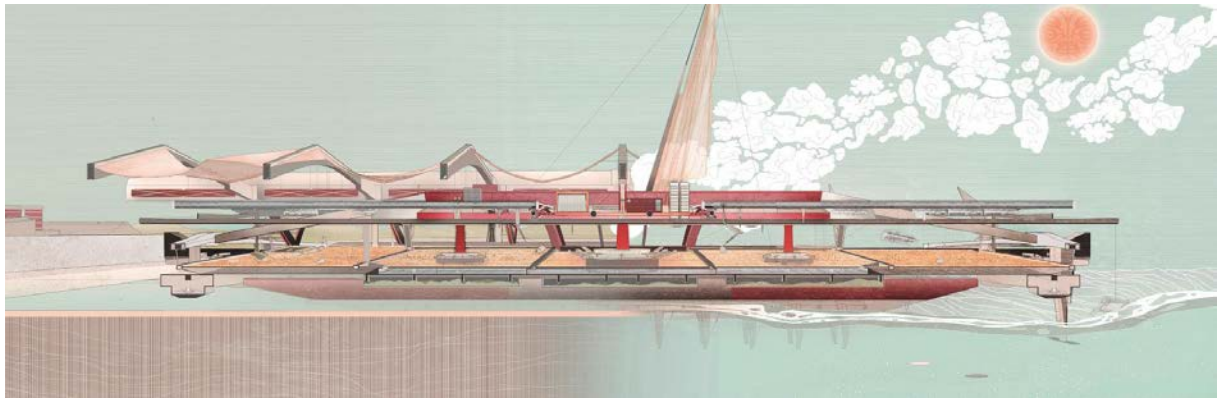


Fig.15: Sectional drawing of Lomipeau showing two modes of operation: Land mode (left) where the canoe is attached to the Afolau, and the Voyage mode (right) which gains Lomipeau mobility

and Ocean connection once existed in traditional Pacific settlements.

Historically, water was a crucial element that determined how human settlements operated in the wider Tāmaki Makaurau region. During the pre-contact period, canoe was the most effective means of transport for Māori people (Hayward, 1983). With human settlements extensively built along shorelines, not only the Ocean provided essential resources, but also it kept communities closely connected through canoe travelling. In the early colonial times, shallow water zones at bays acted as prominent meeting places for Aucklanders. As of late architect Richard Toy recorded, the bays were people's "community centres" and "accommodated an almost infinite variety of conditions and combinations of human belonging and withdrawal." (Toy, 2005). Water was the bonding element between different groups of people, showing great social significance that was later disregarded. Water edges were not merely spaces accommodating recreational and commercial activities, but also acted as knots that connected settlements socially.

As a critical speculation, this project aims to reimagine how future Auckland can become a true Pacific City by reinventing the human and water connection.

Proposal

The project imagines a future Pacific life in Auckland Tāmaki Makaurau. The scenario envisions a possible three-metre sea levels rise that drastically changes Auckland's water edge conditions. Auckland CBD is under the threat of frequent flooding, while many coastal areas are entirely submerged. Many consider that wharves, waterfront, and sandy beaches were the defining elements for Auckland. Due to flooding, these places are now replaced by 'shallow water zones', distributing along the coastline of the city. The altered water edge condition now creates blurred, ambiguous thresholds between the land and the Ocean, which resembles spatial qualities of verandahs in Pacific architecture (refer Archetype studies in the article). Instead of taking a pessimistic approach that keeps us away from the water edge, these semi-flooded zones can be perceived as essential spaces that define the city's future.

Centred on Pacific tectonic elements, especially vaka-making – the project conducts a series of drawing

exercises to demonstrate a speculated future for Auckland's water edge. Four scenarios are presented with reference to Ekistics Territorial Scale, ranging from the interior of a house to the entire Pacific Ocean. The proposal is to envision how water can affect the human settlement at different scales.

Ekistics Scale - Household

Occupants: House Residents

Programme: Learning, Recreation



Fig.16: Lomipeau on a voyage to provide disaster relief (deploying temporary shelters) and rebuilding to a settlement destroyed by a natural disaster in Oceania

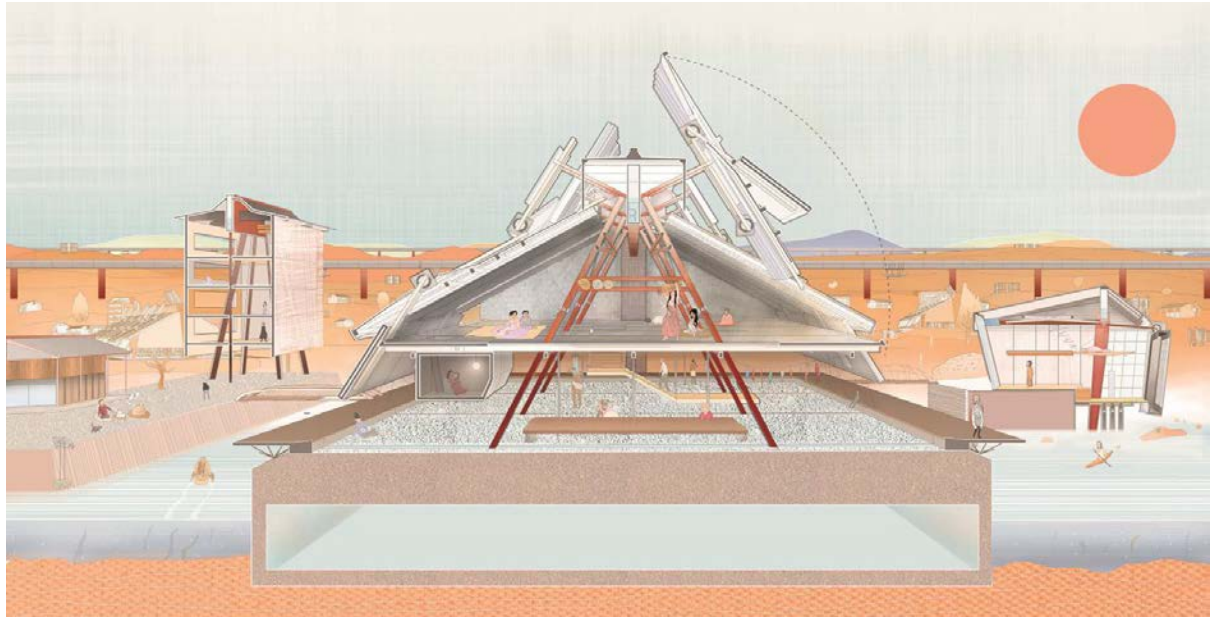


Fig.14: A close up section of a new Pacific Housing community. A Whareniui (Community big house) is shown in the middle, surrounded by a diverse range of individual houses customised by citizens. Centralised ridgepole and stilts are demonstrated.

With the assistance of drastically developing technologies, Aotearoa's much-celebrated DIY culture is now remarkably advanced. Most of the households own their own fabrication workshops, equipped with 3D printing devices and other digital fabrication devices to produce tools and utensils for daily usage. These technologies also enable residents to make equipment that improves their relationships with the surrounding natural environment.

As wharves and beaches gradually vanish, Auckland's water edges become ambiguous spaces with no defined social functions. However, these shallow water zones are soon found very suitable for launching lightweight watercrafts such as outrigger canoes. To effectively utilise these spaces, ordinary residents start building personal vakas through both personalised design and open-source information. With critical joints / Components, 3D-printed and performance optimised through computer software, sophisticated watercraft can be made within family workshops. These contemporary vakas are usually fabricated in sections using recycled materials, which allows them to be easily transported to and assembled at the water edges before sailing into the sea.

Although personal vakas are often built at a small scale and are mainly undertaken for leisure purposes, many Aucklanders start to rethink the long lost relationships between human and water. Being culturally and socially important, the trend of vaka making soon becomes a social movement named 'Vaka Revival'.

Ekistics Scale - Neighbourhood

Occupants: Community locals

Programme: Ritual, Local water transportation

Vaka building is traditionally a community activity that requires collective workmanship. This tradition is now revived at a neighbourhood scale following the popularity of household workshop. Vaka making becomes an event to bring locals together, forming collaborative learning

groups where knowledge and skills are exchanged. It is also an opportunity for people of different generations to learn from each other. In this scenario, vaka-making is not constrained within the traditional sense of wood carving/crafting. It is also a celebration of advancing technologies.

Vaka launching becomes a vital community ritual for Auckland's bay neighbourhoods. As collaborative making enables the production of larger vakas, these vessels are capable of carrying a large number of passengers and are slowly forming into a new public transport network between bays. Communities in Auckland can be tightly connected through water, creating various new centres along the water edges.

Ekistics Scale - Metropolis

Occupants: Residents of Wider Auckland

Programme: Urban social gathering, national & international water transportation, wave barrier

The revival of community vaka making changes urban inhabitants' collective attitudes towards the Ocean, which leads to a series of policy changes around the urban water edges. They eventually become new urban social hubs where major social activities occur, especially around the former Queens Wharf / Princes Wharf sites where the submerged wharves have become ideal vaka launching platforms. As the rising sea-level frequently brings in floods into the city centre, the urban water edge also forms a defence line and a buffer zone. A marae-like sloped platform is constructed along the edges, serving as both a portage for vaka launching and sea wall for wave barrier.

The substantial portage space at the city centre allows a large number of vakas to set off at the same time, serving national and international voyages and establishing a network of coastal communication at a grander scale. Mass-launching events are held on a routine basis, paying respect to Polynesian traditions while creating a new Pacific urban culture.

Pacific('Okeanopolis')

Occupants: Global citizens

Programme: Trans-Pacific free movement

Historically, long Ocean voyages were often made to expand human settlements in the Pacific, establishing sea routes between islands for commercial activities and migration. In the post-sea level-rise times, voyages can be more flexibly taken by individuals to strengthen the network created by their ancestors.

With travel speed and safety drastically increased through future technologies, many have found vaka travelling a feasible method for personal trans-Pacific travelling. The act is further assisted by a highly developed remote-working system so that many workers and professionals are not constrained by a fixed workplace and prefer to spend a better part of their time travelling by sea. The Ocean is now perceived as a flexible platform that allows citizens of Pacific nations to freely circulate using either personal or communal vakas, making the Pacific Ocean an area of free movement. Benefiting from the excellent geographical location, Auckland becomes a popular voyaging set-off point and destination. It is now truly the City of Sails.

While people are becoming much closer to the Ocean, offshore seaweed farm is now a booming industry. Used as a source of food, biofuel and acid neutraliser, the demand of seaweed surges. Parts of the water territories are leased to seaweed farmers. Commercial vakas are used for routine maintenance, observation, and harvesting. These farms can also be used to increase the biodiversity of specific regions of the sea and revitalise damaged ecosystems. With all seaweed farms joined together, continuous green belts between islands are formed underwater. These belts are often used to mark inter-island voyage routes, as well as providing safety and resources to voyagers.

Summary: The proposal demonstrates a series of substantial changes to Auckland's ekistical formation by speculatively inserting the element of Vaka-making. By developing a new tectonic approach to the natural and built environment from a personal scale to a much broader extent, many opportunities arise and further lead to the global revival of Pacific's voyage culture. This can eventually activate a chain of cultural, social and technological movements that redefine Pacific human settlements.

Although voyages were historically made to fulfil essential purposes such as discovery and trading, voyage in the future world can accommodate a much wider range of activities - or can be simply understood as a way of living. It marks the genesis of the new Oceanic Civilisation, the birth of Pacific Man.

Further Discussion on Ekistics Scale:

Proposed by Doxiadis, Ekistics Scale was initially used to classify settlements according to their size. The Scale is particularly used for settlements on habitable land (Doxiadis, 1974). While radically speculating that all human settlements would eventually grow into an 'Ecumenopolis', Doxiadis defines water as 'the most restrictive element' for the formation of the global

settlement. (Doxiadis, 2005). Since water is deemed uninhabitable, we are unable to position Lomipeau and the fourth scenario of the Tāmaki Makaurau project anywhere in the existing Ekistics Territorial Scale.

In contrast, Epeli Hau'ofa's *Our Sea of Islands* offers a refreshing statement that challenges the Doxiadis' understanding of water. Although ocean-voyaging does

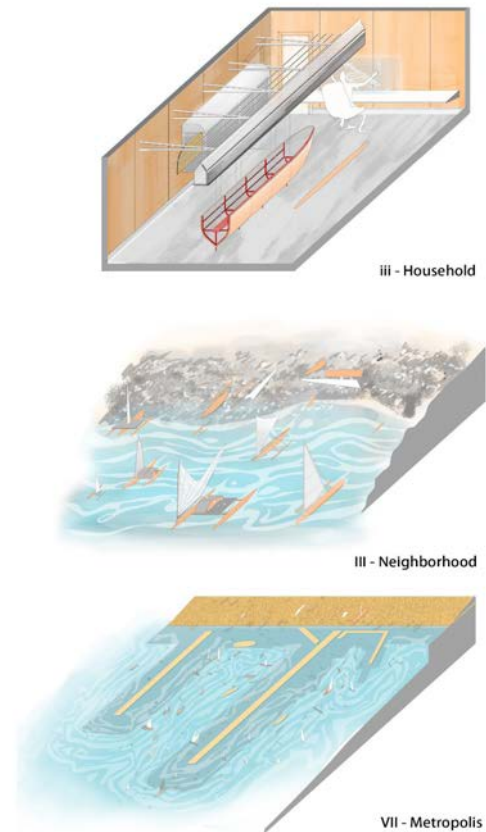


Fig.17: Speculated vaka activities at different Ekistics Territorial Scale units

not involve any activities on habitable land, the activity connects Oceania as a holistic entity, integrating isolated islands into a borderless network (Hau'ofa, 1993). In addition, Pacific Architecture reinforces Hau'ofa's statement as it blurs the boundaries between buildings and watercrafts. With the assistance of Vakas, the Ocean can therefore be perceived as an enormous inhabitable space

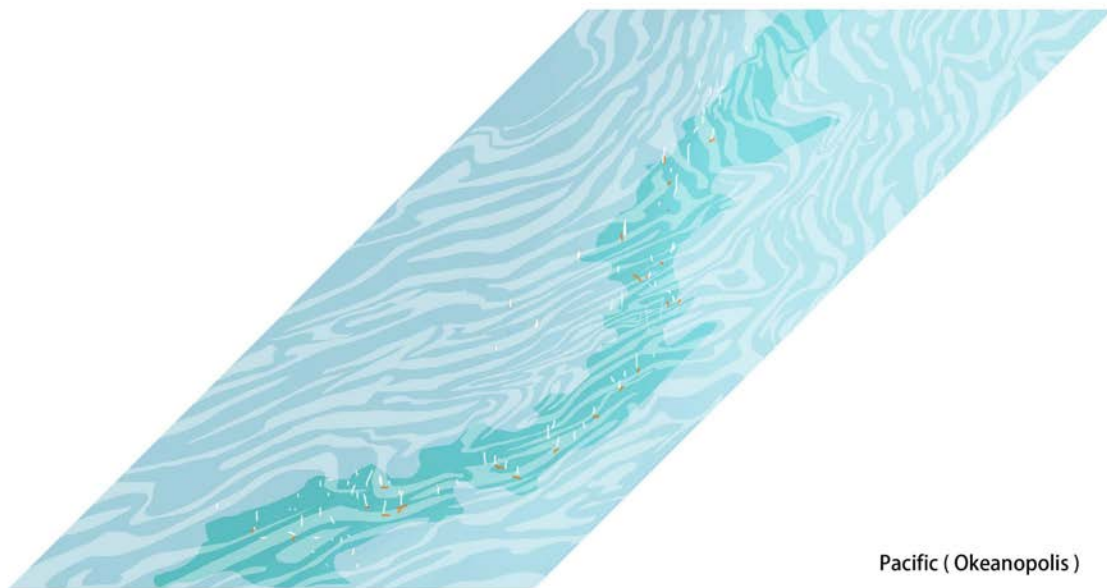


Fig.18: Underwater green belts (seaweed farms) marking Pacific voyage routes

that accommodates social, cultural and productive activities. There is potential that the entire Pacific Ocean can be practically developed into a collective settlement where activities of individual islands are closely linked by frequent and efficient voyages. In this article, we name this type of voyaging settlement 'Okeanopolis'--- a new unit that sits outside of the current Ekistics Scale. By proposing complete alternatives to any static, logarithmically growing land-based settlements, Okeanopolis demonstrates a highly fluctuating form of human inhabitation, providing unique possibilities for the future Pacific.

Conclusion

The two proposals present two different speculated possibilities of Pacific architectonics. Lomipeau Speculation is a radical vision that pays tribute to utopian architectural proposals, it showcases how the world can develop Pacific architecture to an extreme extent and completely changes the way human settlements function. It is purposely disconnected from the current mode of city-building and proposes a complete alternative. By contract, Pacific Man is a vision based on our contemporary society and applies comparatively subtle changes - starting from a personal level (within household workshops). In this project, Pacific tectonics is integrated with many topical technological developments such as digital fabrication and open source design, making it more relevant to our everyday life.

While the world is becoming more and more globalised, the Pacific Ocean is perceived as an increasingly important region where trading, development and investment opportunities flourish. Instead of being continuously influenced by continental superpowers, it is important that Pacific nations must form a cohesive network for collective resilience. Although taking two different approaches, both of the projects embrace the

Pacific as a holistic settlement named Okeanopolis. Pacific architectonics plays a vital role in this process, enabling Pacific people to revive their traditional activities of voyages, creating a shared optimistic future for the island nations.

Both projects are also proposed while carefully studying Ekistics units and elements grid created by C. A. Doxiadis. Although the presented projects are visionary speculations rather than accurate predictions, they do tend to respond to each of the ekistics elements (nature, anthropos, society, shells and networks) to address issues in Pacific settlements. The article is also to emphasis that the ekistic elements should be approached very differently in an Oceanic context because of its unique cultural and tectonic histories. Designers and policy makers should avoid transplanting continental models to design these settlements, as well as thinking outside the existing Ekistics Scales and Grid which were created to merely study land-based settlements.

While the presenting 'paper architecture' projects, the author is passionate about making Pacific architecture practically applicable in real life, and believes that Pacific architectonics offers endless design inspiration for architectural practitioners in Aotearoa and the wider Pacific region. It is hoped that this article could help readers to rethink Pacific architecture more creatively, to recognise its significance and to promote its unsung languages.

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- Keywords
Pacific Architecture, Lomipeau Speculation, Super Pacific City, Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland

Spacing Decoloniality: De-figuring the Coloniality of Space and Subjectivity in the Caribbean and Oceania

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Abstract

When juxtaposed with more classical Benjaminian concepts, such as aura and the role of storytelling in industrial modernity, the archipelagic vision, which is preeminently spatial and therefore impinges directly on the interface between objective and subjective concerns of ekistics, is emblematic of the political role that art and literature play in refiguring the coloniality of space in the Caribbean and Oceania. The argumentative crux of this article hinges on the premise that, considered as the specifically spatial expression of the cosmological sphere of experience whose generic name is Glissant's Relation, and taken within the specific historical context of imperial cartographic practices in both regions, the archipelagic is a useful guiding principle that could inform decolonial ekistics policymaking. With that purpose, the author discusses the work of several artists and writers from the Caribbean and Oceania, in order to illustrate how an archipelagic understanding of space and subjectivity inform their practices. By examining the work of Ibrahim Miranda, John Puhiaatau Pule, Epeli Hau'ofa and Eduardo Lalo the essay shows that their work constitutes a reactivation, at the transnational level, of the classical modernist motif of re-forming what Walter Benjamin called the human sensorium. Moreover, it is argued that these artists do so in order to challenge and undo the cartographic paradigms that were imposed in the region by successive Western empires. Such acts of cartographical undoing and reformulation under an archipelagic paradigm are important to force Caribbean and Oceanian subjectivities to dissolve the weight of colonial history, as it overdetermines their relationship with their space.

Introduction

Then it is discovered that
there are no *zil piti*,
small islands,
and that insularism
persists because
the archipelagos have
not been conceived.
Because everything,
even the smallest island,
is a huge archipelago.

Eduardo Lalo, *Intervenciones* (2018, p.147)

More than thirty years have passed since Marxist literary critic Marshall Berman's celebrated *Everything Vanishes into Thin Air: The Experience of Modernity* was published in 1982. Yet today, Berman's transhistorical analysis of the neoliberal gentrification of New York's urban spaces and its deleterious effects on the social texture of Afro and Latino communities remains, if anything, as pertinent as ever. Land speculation, predatory privatization, and the implementation of policies that blindly obeyed the dogma of 'market forces' are indissolubly associated in the book to the hyper-modernization of the city under the adventurist and mercenary logic of construction moguls like Robert Moses. All these phenomena have reached, both in their causes and effects, global proportions, as every single corner of the planet is today in one way or another implicated in the same predatory mechanisms that were implemented in the urban centers, first in Europe and later in North America, to which Berman's analysis constantly refer. Berman's greatest insight has

been to tangibly demonstrate the intimate relationship between modernization and the eclectic proliferation of aesthetic practices and various other cultural movements that arose as a response to those processes. Not only does his analysis concretely show how those practices gave effective content to those movements, but it also explains why they became integral to the city's modern tradition.

Berman's work also provides an excellent example of how modern literary institutions, and literary criticism most significantly, can contribute to a critique of neo-liberal urban practices and their effects on dwelling. It does so by shedding light on how literature and its institutions are inextricably linked to the aesthetic (sensorial, corporeal) dimensions of communal experience. After all, it can be affirmed without much space for argument that literary and visual modernisms began as a preeminently spatial concern, since it was their increasingly vexed relation to the industrialized modern city, replete with its new architectonic and urbanistic practices, that prompted poets and artists like Baudelaire or Monet to engage in the aesthetic quests that led them to develop literary and visual languages which are now recognized as being distinctly 'modern'. It is therefore not surprising that today a similar relation between decolonial critiques of space, and the implicit search for a new language to give voice to its corresponding aesthetic practices is being suggested by many Caribbean and Oceanian intellectuals, writers and artists. Fijian critic Cresantia Koya, for instance, connects such practices with the Samoan/Tongan concepts of *Va* *Tapuia/Veitapui* (relational spaces), *mana* (spiritual energy) and *tapu* (sacred space), when she asserts that:



Fig. 1: *Noche Insular*.

Sustainability conversations must begin from a deep understanding of the Mana/Tapu and Va/Sautu, and the (traditional) arts can enable that dialogue. It will be essential that difficult conversations are facilitated within Pacific communities themselves, as well as with those who represent and perpetuate oppressive western systems of practice (Koya, p.3).

By blurring the separation between the use and cultural value that models modern Western attitudes towards art and literature, Koya goes to the heart of the matter. Identifying the specific place and function that aesthetics holds in modernity, their ambiguous implications within colonial structures can be examined. Indeed, the revolutionary nerve of modernist movements, in spite of its well-known fascist co-optations, can be captured in their attempts to disrupt the tyrannical dynamics of sensorial assault that late Capital perpetrates against space. They ultimately aim, - in the messianic terminology of Walter Benjamin -, at liberating art objects from their auratic cage, but only in order to liberate aura from its fetishist entrapments. (Let us recall that for Benjamin, aura was 'everywhere'; defining the condition of the dyad subject-world as a synaesthetic perceptual whole, and not just of a particular art object. More on this later). In that sense, the Marxist tenets of Berman's literary analyses resonate strongly, however indirectly, with the kind of later anti-colonial critiques of space that one sees at work in the Caribbean and Oceanian debates around Relation, the archipelagic, and (perhaps to a lesser degree) tidalectics.

It is in this context that questions of archipelagic spaces acquire prominence as the most coherent contestation of the concept of the 'Island', understood as the privileged spatial trope by which successive European empires unloaded their cultural baggage onto archipelagoes encountered in their

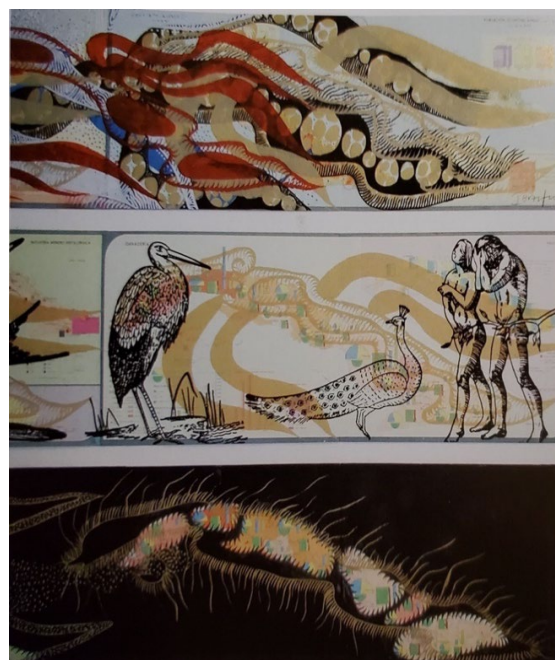


Fig. 2: *Noche Insular* (detail)

mercantile ventures in the Caribbean and the Atlantic. In turn, these questions connect directly to those surrounding what Edouard Glissant calls a 'poetics of Relation', since it is, ultimately, through the invention of a new language that humans can relate to modern spaces, and through which they

will potentially be able to overcome the forces whose unprecedented dynamism challenges every conceptual and representational tool at their disposal.

Glissant's Poetics of Relation and Antonio Benítez Rojo's The Repeating Island figure prominently as referents in a long list of research completed by writers of the region. This body of research invokes the Martinican and Cuban thinkers in order to illuminate aesthetic and social phenomena whose common denominator is a way of conceiving space, time, and subject as existing within a matrix of relations whose fluid, oscillatory, baroque, syncopated and fractal nature is captured by the term 'archipelagic'. This adjective has come to designate the manifold field of meanings in which subjectivities co-exist and interact, influencing one another in a co-constituting poetics of Relation.

The more recent appearance in 2018 of Juan Quintero Herencia's Hoja de Mar (:) Efecto Archipiélago, Tidalectics: Imagining an Oceanic Worldview Through Art and Science ed. (Stephanie Hessler), as well as a forthcoming book titled Contemporary Archipelagic Thinking: Toward New Comparative Methodologies and Disciplinary Formations, (eds. Michele Stephens and Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel), highlight the growing interest in the concept of the 'archipelagic' as a way to account for subjective formations that challenge the currently dominant forms of relating to space. Further, aesthetic practices that have been the object of study by a multitude of writers and artists from both regions throughout this and the preceding century, show that the archipelagic, as it has been elaborated by these writers over sixty years of debates and theorizing, is inherently relational in the Glissantian sense. Archipelagic is a concept which invokes human practices and rituals that signify an understanding of space that emphasizes the diverse, mutually influencing interactions between individuals. It is, moreover, suggestive of a sense of dwelling that connotes a possible community in the kind of constant, fluid mobility which is driven by the forces of capital. This oceanic worldview therefore challenges deeply rooted notions of dwelling as 'taking place' within a subjective cosmos of a fixed and taxing set of sedentary confines, such as nation, race, ethnicity and so forth.

An unavoidable question framing (and to a good extent haunting) the queries in this article is the degree to which the critical literary concept of the archipelagic represents a more appropriate spatial paradigm for informing more technical and objective ekistics criteria. Though beyond the scope of this article, how the archipelagic relates to the five ekistic elements and practical concerns such as efficient transportation, optimal population for a given geographical area and its corresponding rate of growth, appropriate use of building materials given climatological and geological factors, sustainable disposal of waste, etc. could be addressed in future to understand how they would inflect urbanistic policies, not only in the Oceanian and Caribbean contexts, but in the world at large. While the article falls short of providing specific answers to this question, its critical rehearsals around these concepts do bring to light for further discussion the intimate link which has existed since the inception of modernity between aesthetic practices and questions of dwelling, space and urban settlements.

The science of Ekistics was conceived by Constantinos A. Doxiadis in the 1940s and developed throughout the



Fig. 2: *Untitled*.



Fig.4: *Atzolotl*, 2002.

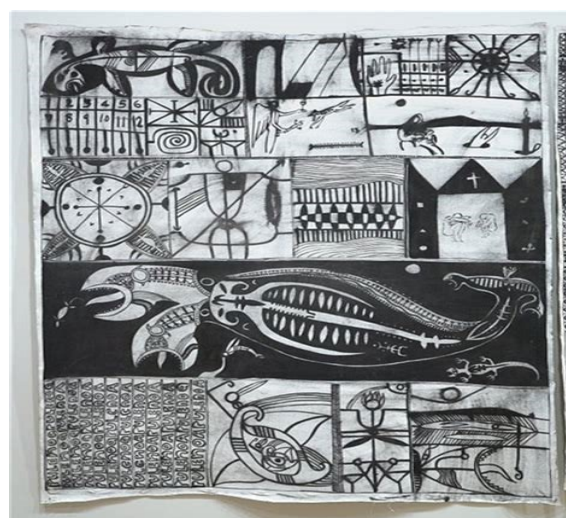


Fig. 2. *Pulanoea Triptych (1st plate)*, 1995.

following two decades. Although it allowed room for the arts in its holistic approach to human settlements, it nevertheless focused on urban design, engineering, city planning, and architectural concerns (Doxiadis, 1968). The five fundamental elements of Ekistics – Man, Nature, Shells, Networks, Society – provide a framework within which the arts can be studied. Ideally, they occupy a place on the Ekistics grid and within its time scales, so that artworks can be understood in terms of their relationships to the different ekistic elements. For instance, a publicly-funded mural in an urban setting can be analysed in terms of its relationship to the wall (Shell) and the street (network) in which it is located. It can also be understood through its relationship to society in terms of its content (Society), and also at the level of the individual artist or viewer (Man). Some forms of street art incorporate elements of public parks and gardens, or depict nature in places where it has been destroyed (Nature). Hence, the science of human settlements aims to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the world's settlements, with a particular focus on grasping and solving their problems.

Given this ambition, Ekistics cannot dispense with the kind of radical sensorial quests that only artists and writers in modernity have accomplished. The artists and their works analyzed below are but a few emblematic instances. However, our analysis serves to correct the bias in Ekistics research, which leans towards the more 'solid' terrain of objective and quantifiable data-based research, by presenting textual and visual analyses which engage more subjective concepts, such as self and personhood, citizenship, affect, community, belief, and storytelling, among others. This sustained focus aims to illustrate that modern aesthetic practices constitute symbolic interventions which reveal the archipelagic as the historical realization of what has always been, perhaps, the most natural realm of humans' relation with their spaces.

Ibrahim Miranda, John Pule: Reimagining Archipelagic Spaces through Art

Now we map ourselves for others.
Consequently we find it difficult to locate ourselves.
Where do we find the map we so desperately need?

Annalee Davis, Barbados in a Nutshell, 2007.

There is a territory wider than this- wider than the limits made by the map of an island- which is the illimitable sea and what it remembers.

Derek Walcott, *The Antilles*, 1992.

Scientific cartography is never an ideologically neutral act. Under the institutional constraints imposed by the triadic political configuration of the capitalist nation-states, it more often than not entails the unilateral imposition of one's own particular agenda, in the pursuit of sequenced, rationally instrumentalized, and self-interested goals (Stone (1988); Thrower (2008)). Mapping presupposes a knowing subject who assumes a set of hermeneutical fictions, not only as ways to translate and construct a narrative around given data, but also as criteria to decide in advance what constitutes a

valuable piece of information. These hermeneutics, however scientific in their claims, or perhaps even because of such claims, result in a panoptical gaze that uncritically projects its light onto that which is to be mapped, thereby imposing upon it a regime of visibility and intelligibility, which in turn excludes those other aspects that somehow contradict, undermine, destabilize or otherwise negate the order of things they intend to impose.

However, scientific cartography and related disciplines share with aesthetic practices a common historical link (Cartwright (2009)). Both intend to transform that which they map - a transformation that becomes inextricably linked to the process of mapping itself. Artists and geographers alike take "raw material [...] transforming it in different ways and for different purposes" (Fairbairn, p.34). Both have mobilized diverse bodies of knowledge that interweave their textual and visual procedures in constitute "complex work(s) of epistemology and practice" (Downton, p.327). But among those similarities, the most prominent (and the one that goes against the grain of Fairbairn's stated argument), underlies the fact that they both engage in exercises of illusionism. The latter often does so with the more or less implicit aim to ludically expose the artifices, also historically determined, available to them that go into creating an effect of spatial 'totality'. They do so ultimately in order to check the limits of a given spatial configuration of things by provoking the questioning on its inhabiting subjects.

This is precisely the concern of Michele Stephens in her discussion of recent Caribbean art and what it has to say about the archipelagic as a realm of experience resulting from this kind of dialectical entwinement of space and subject. Echoing Édouard Glissant and Derek Walcott's insistence on the need to visually challenge colonial regimes, that is, to systematically question and dismantle the perceptual self-transparency of a spatial order (Lefebvre), revealing its cartographic overdeterminations, Michelle Stephens (2013) asserts that

it is in the visual arts that we find an active wrestling with embedded images and tropes of the tropical insular Caribbean, as well as artistic strategies that aim to touch upon and problematize the past very much from the perspective of the now (p.8).

The work of Cuban artist Ibrahim Miranda, titled 'Noche Insular' (Figures 1-2) is an excellent example of such practices. It takes the silhouette of the Cuban island and makes it the foundational object for his artistic transformations. Miranda takes the map of Cuba and transforms its meanings as an exclusively geopolitical enclave, filling its interior with different objects, colors, patterns and forms (Mosaka, 2007, pp. 160-163). Further, his refiguring of the Cuban map does more than merely capture the shape of the island as a pretext for his poetical metamorphoses. Miranda prompts us to rethink and re-imagine Caribbean people's relationship with their geographical space. In doing so, it disrupts our tacit acceptance of the European colonial spatial legacy. This nomadic violence on the usual cartographical conveyances of the Cuban island, his poetic derangement of the traditional referential domains to which we as Caribbean subjects cling, forces us to see the historical contingency and arbitrary nature inherent to the historical materials through which we view the region. Like many of his Caribbean contemporaries,

Miranda's work disrupts our projections of who we are and where we are, as these indeed reflect and are modeled after the place in the world accorded to us by European early modern cartography and navigational sciences.

For Miranda, Cuba could be a reptile where a series of icons would suggest vignettes that follow one another from left to right, inviting us to re-create stories that do not correspond to the official sanctioned histories of the region; but instead ones that project us into the future, and thereby liberating us from an already interpreted past. In other images from the same series, Cuba can sometimes be seen as a tapestry that is reminiscent of the familiar topography of cultivated hills or of urbanized zones as seen from the sky (Figure 3). Or even an embryo-like form on the cosmic blackness of the sea, that extends its small appendages outwards, beyond its geographical confines. (Figure. 5)

Similar gestures that contest conceptions of selfhood which reflect enduring colonial paradigms of space, together with their correlative organizing and policing effects on places, can be found in the works of Niuean writer and visual artist John Puihiatau Pule. Pule's The modernist appropriations of the traditional hiapo technique - a Niuean version of an ancient bark-clothing craft, tapa, that used to be widespread in Southeast Asia, Oceania, as well as some parts of East Africa - constitute pictorial re-appropriations of natural and human objects from Pule's native island (Klarr, 2015). Like Miranda's works, they can also be conceived as imaginative invitations to re-map our sensorial relations to our archipelagic reality: 'island' here becomes a signifier that is reconceived as being embedded within a complex historical web of different traditions, intersecting at crucial junctures of modern Oceanian history. His modernist emulations of hiapo textiles invite the viewer to see those objects - and the places they configure - outside of the semantic confines to which official discourses of touristic friendliness and self-infantilization submitted them. Much like Miranda's poetic transformations of the Cuban archipelago, Pule's hiapos are in their own way attempts at reconfiguring islanders' relation with their natural spaces, and thus provide the viewer with a critical foothold to break away from the colonial legacy of 'mapping ourselves for others'.

When analyzed through the prism of cartographic spatializing practices, this thematic resemblance in spatial concerns between works of artists from the two regions, functions in two opposite yet mutually influencing ways: on the one hand, they more or less directly invoke pre-modern forms of togetherness. On the other hand, Pule's representations of humans interacting with their natural environment feature contour lines that contain and separate one from the other; they appear to be part of the same trace. This hinting at a sense of figural continuity and adjacency blurs conventional binary oppositions such as land/sea, animal/human. Such gestures of the erasure, retracing, and interweaving of boundaries imply a subjectivity whose spatial imaginary undoes hard and fast conceptions of an island as a fixed and isolated domain. Instead the gestures reorient the viewer towards a spatial sense of fluid and fractal-like states that exist as part of a constant process of self-differentiation; harking back, in fact, to pre-modern world-views, such as Edmund Winduo has noted in the essay 'Reconstituting Indigenous Folktales' (2000).

In Miranda's case, his representations of the Cuban archipelago and its surrounding waters are rendered using

traces that evoke life-like fluidity and resonate with Taino myths. In such stories, as recounted by Fray Ramón Pané, both the flora and fauna, as well as specific topographical features such as the islands' littorals themselves, are envisioned as living organisms, changing their shape through time, evolving in constant interaction with the ocean. In the Niuean artist's work, a tribal symbolism as performative as it is thematic is evoked through the use of zoomorphic figures connoting animistic totemic worldviews, submerged human figures interacting with marine animals, and traditional scenes of fishing or cooking. The material transformation of natural and artificial objects, which are originally endemic to the island, conjures links to the artist's ancestral past. And yet, these mythic, cosmological (re-)mappings are thoroughly inserted within the modernist practices characteristic of his European predecessors.

In emblematically modernist fashion, both Pule and Miranda treat creation as a process of engagement with matter that transcends mere production, and adopt a process of making / becoming? a work of art itself. This deeply modernist stance becomes a constant referent, which in turn indexes the tropes to which Pule and Miranda owe their visual projects: immigrational fluxes, geographical delocalization, bodily sensorial reconnection with the oceanic world, exotic romanticism of 'far off islands', and the Edenic fall.

Pule's recourse to traditional objects - canoes, fishing tools, human or zoomorphic silhouettes, natural landscapes - intermingle with abstract geometric figures in addition to shapes suggestive of animals and plants endemic to the region. Together they form a tapestry that, despite being suggestive of European 'primitivist' movements, are actually more deeply reflective of Pule's political concerns over residual colonial practices and their effects on dwelling space production. While their earlier European counterparts' modernist instances of primitivist Orientalism or Africanism could be considered as imaginary inscriptions of a primal desire for African and Oceanian tribal-art practices, and as deceptively evocative renderings of archetypal enclaves of paradisiacal innocence, Pule's textile art should be viewed as a form of political intervention into the contemporary ways Oceania is currently envisioned; as these contemporary visions remain instrumental in reinforcing neocolonial practices of spacing, whether of dwelling or building.

Originally associated with women's roles in Oceanian tribal organizations, textile making, after disappearing from Niue at the end of the nineteenth century, has become today a more prestigious artistic medium than other 'harder', more 'consistent' crafts, such as carving stone or wood. Accordingly, it is frequently privileged by many Oceanian artists precisely because of its being a more ephemeral and pliant haptic support that eloquently conveys the sense of organicity and life-likeness that subjective and spatial boundaries in archipelagic contexts display (Klarr, 2020). Hiapo making has close connections to the living body through its direct links to attire, body ornamentation, rituals of initiation, social status. In addition, it is linked to communal space, as well as textuality through its intrinsic fabric-like quality, which is implied in the process of its making that involves weaving and knitting as a collective. It therefore elicits linkages to narration and subjectivity.

Precisely because of the above qualities, hiapo techniques allow artists like Pule to bring these connections to an expressive domain that brings together space (as the

ontological receptacle where things phenomenologically take place), body (qua perceptual/cognitive membrane for intersubjective spaces) and text (as the iconic-symbolic tissue that also serves as an interface between the two). In fact, these three aspects- space, body, and text- can be seen coalescing in much of Pule's work, offering a sense of archipelagic space and time that defies, much like the poetic cartographies of Miranda, the fixity and static nature of spatial and subjective boundaries which are often associated with the European legacy of conceiving of islands as remote, self-enclosed, autonomous unities. Indeed, it is through the tethering of the realms of space, body, and text, that dwelling attains any empirical significance.

Pule and Miranda are thus emblematic of a recurring concern within artistic communities from both regions: The mutual implications between subjects and spaces in which colonial tropes continue to take effect. Regardless of the obvious differences in these two artists, spatial concerns invite perceptual immersions in the space occupied by the ocean in the experience of those dwelling in archipelagoes. Belonging to the ocean is a recurring motive in both artists. Hence the words 'island' and 'archipelago' acquire for them altogether different meanings from the ones sanctioned by official narratives. Instead of being a mere conglomerate of island-states with fixed geographic and identity-based demarcations, archipelagoes are conceived as living spaces that constantly defy any attempt to make them conform to any set of particular identities. To the contrary, they persist in time, revealing themselves as being in a state of constant geographical and historical becoming.

The early-modern European figured the Caribbean geographically in such a way as to serve their mercantilist and expansive purposes. As a science that was born concomitant to the processes of conquest and resource exploitation, also one that was crucially instrumental to the region's colonization and its construal as one of the first constitutive peripheries of modernity, European cartography pins archipelagic subjectivities to a whole web of other modes of representation that reinforce one another. We as archipelagic subjects still tend to think of our physical space from this perspective, and subordinate other representational modes - necessarily poetic and inherently political - to a paradigm that was, and still is, the enabling one for the geopolitical interests of Asian, European and North American governments.

What these and many other artists from both regions achieve is to confront us with the very means of representation of the two regions considered at large, compelling the viewer to denaturalize these paradigms. This in turn prompts us to pose seemingly naïve, or unscientific questions: Why not reconceive the Caribbean (and Oceanian) archipelagos as an "unrecognizably microscopic animal that constantly mutates, [or as] a metaphor for sociopolitical transformation"? to use the words that Miranda himself uses to refer to Cuba. Or why not re-inscribe the multiple layers of Niuean histories in a palimpsest-like surface made of objects taken from its diverse moments, thereby actualizing them in the same space? Why should the Caribbean and Oceania be primarily figured by us in terms of degrees, numbers, parallels and latitudes, the meridian of which lies somewhere far off in the Atlantic East? Is this not the kind of spatiotemporal centrism that we unwittingly replicate by referring ourselves to it? Why not rather spatialize both regions as literally the materialization of modern historical time in all its

deterritorialized, flux-like qualities, a place where all times coalesce in a residual now that is as unstable and spectral as the actualizations upon which they are based?

This set of questions relates to an undoing of the perverse knots that are tied to particular representations of the region, as well as to our collective and individual self-perception, as materially inscribing the region within ourselves, as much as they impinge on the forces and mechanisms by which we have been symbolically inscribed in the region. What the work of Miranda and Pule forces us to realize is that reducing and delimiting the representation of our physical space to the preeminent objectification that is inherent to cartographical, expansionist, profit-oriented paradigms, condemns us to forever seeing ourselves in terms of a set of organizing referents that frequently undermines our agency and our self-worth. Moreover, by focusing our attention on an ungraspable 'beyond' and 'outside' of our sensorial here and now, the supposed permanence and fixity of the islands' borders becomes a precondition for the regions' historical balkanization into geopolitical enclaves, and their dissection into regions according to marketable linguistic, racial, historical and other identity divides. Further, their zoning into spaces is often according to foreign economic imperatives, sociological and other statistic markers of 'development', if not into ostensible signs of potential touristic 'productivity'. In other words, the underlying cartographic structures challenged by Pule and Miranda shape perception and condition archipelagic people to see themselves and their islands as limited spaces only fit for consumption by wider external powers. These artists' works therefore provide a means of untying these conceptual knots that bind our imaginaries and potential.

This leads us to the conclusion that it is not that Western cartography has enabled us to see ourselves for what we have become, that is, in terms of marginality, underdevelopment, ghettos of identities, smallness, fragmentariness and isolation, but rather, and to the contrary, that it is cartography and its adjacent sciences that condemn us to see ourselves according to those terms. As a result, we stubbornly remain blind to ourselves, not because of our failed encounter with modernity, but because we insist on seeing ourselves from and for capitalistic paradigms of modernity. In actual fact, however, the case is that Oceanian and Antillean realities have always been European's modernity's constitutive and foreclosed blind-spots, where amnesia, constantly reiterated as Edenic idyll or apocalyptic dystopia, is a defense against the threat of history's unraveling return.

Epeli Hau'ofa's Tales of the Tikongs: Taking colonial space from behind

Hau'ofa's interest in the re-conceptualization of colonial space is a recurring motif throughout his essays and monographic works. In 'Our Sea of Islands' (1994), his most oft quoted essay, the modern history of space is treated as the epistemic product of colonial devices of subjection. The reconceptualization of space also figures as an overarching theme that pervades his other sociological and earlier anthropological work, framing as it does, his central concern with the colonality of space within Oceanian archipelagoes. For Hau'Ofa, space has been a key concept at the center of his attempts to reimagine spatiality in Oceanian islands since his ethnographic research on the Mekeo, in which it figures prominently as an organizing trope structuring hierarchical social relations. Yet, in spite of this interest in the historical,

colonial, and spatial overdeterminations of the Oceanic modern imaginary, Hau'ofa's fictional works are more attuned to subjective temporal concerns; both in terms of their structuring function of the plot, and the ways in which these stories narrativize the systems of knowledge inherited from an ongoing history of colonialism. At the same time, the stories also provide eloquent documentation of the underlying religious beliefs that subtend, and thereby impart legitimacy to, colonial bodies of knowledge.

It is my contention that the centrality of Christian religion in Hau'ofa's tales allows for their critical reading. Such a reading begins by exposing the obscene undertow to which Capital submits its periphery. It then articulates the dialectical relationships between Christian belief systems as they correlate to the epistemic formations that inform Western Modernity, and their tactical appropriation by Hau'ofa's characters. Finally, it is suggested that although these dialectics keep colonial spatial regimes in check, they do not overturn them completely. This last situation reveals itself to be particularly evident when such overturning is examined in the light of the self-contradictory relationships that characters sustain with respect to official narratives of progress and development, particularly when the latter are revealed by the characters' actions to be influenced by local pre-modern paradigms and practices (as well as their corresponding linguistic usages). Accordingly, I contend that this signals in Hau'ofa's tales an opening up to the possibility of the transformation of colonial space, which forces readers to examine the intimate relationship between subjective belief systems - such as organizing narrative temporalities - and their effects on the coloniality of space.

Johannes Fabian's critique of what he termed the 'denial of coevalness' - an attitude typical of the ethnographic and anthropological gaze that is rhetorically impregnated with discursive remainders of colonialist supremacy - acquires here its full import (Fabian 1983, pp.25-35). Very much present in, and constitutive of, a certain literary and critical gaze in both regions, the denial of coevalness characterizes a literary and visual current belonging to Oceanian and Caribbean cultural traditions.

Within this discursive current, the reality represented, either in verse or in prose, is the effect of two superimposed, but never actually coalescing temporalities. On one hand, there is the time of the ethnographer / narrator, which is, almost without exception, equated to contemporariness and a diegetic time of a 'now' that is synonymous with a synchronicity between one's body and the rhythms and tempi of change in objective reality proper to capitalist modernity. On the other hand, there is a pre-modern time, the time of the characters' being localized in a past that is often spatialized as 'underdeveloped', 'third-worldly', and carrying the traces of many other historical markers of 'backwardness'. The modern and the pre-modern temporalities do not map neatly onto to one another, but co-exist awkwardly. Thus, at the core of Fabian's argument lies the insight that, rather than having ontological consistency, these two times, and most important for our analysis, the differences they display in their spatializing power, presuppose one another, as much as, far from being a given, they are the retroactive effect of this denial of coevalness; a denial that, I would claim, is constitutive of the modern narrator, and not only of the ethnologist's gaze.

Recognising this productive misalignment is of vital importance to properly understand colonial spatiality as it unfolds in the tales. In fact, it is this denial of coevalness that underpins the conflicts in Hau'ofa's narrative, and ultimately what the narrator purports to expose and subvert, usually by way of Manu's skeptical remarks. The subversion of the denial of coevalness marks the moment when colonial space, understood as the materialization of the temporalities put in motion by such dialectics, is 'taken from behind', which is to say, subverted through the explosion of the metaphysical hypostases of time differentials that lie at the heart of the subjective practices inherent in its (per-)formation. In other words, Hau'Ofa uses Manu's skepticism to reveal the gap between the two temporalities and their corresponding spatialisations that would appear to correspond to one supposedly agreed upon reality that feature a pre-modern past and a modern present. And yet, the exposure of the gap, the exploding of the denial of coevalness, exposes a present infused with the past; one that inherently and effortlessly undermines colonial modernity through its very persistence. Manu's skepticism rips through the pretence of the modern and reveals an alternative now steeped in an immanent past.

This kind of narrative intervention must be related to the practices that spatially reflect this kind of disruption. What follows is a description by Michel de Certeau of the art of 'making-do', which he calls 'availing oneself of' (invoking incidentally the Lacanian distinction between *savoir* and *connaissance* - also rehearsed by Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space*), in order to highlight how individuals subjected to the regimes of capitalist production and consumption, derange the spatial dispositions prescribed by the administrative and urbanistic rationality of the State:

Unrecognized producers, poets of their own affairs, trailblazers in the jungles of functionalist rationality, consumers produce something resembling the "lignes d'erre" [wandering lines] described by Deligny. They trace 'indeterminate trajectories' that are apparently meaningless, since they do not cohere with the constructed, written, and prefabricated space through which they move. They are sentences that remain unpredictable within the space ordered by the organizing techniques of systems (de Certeau, 34).

If strategy, following closely upon de Certeau's remarks, is a science of (ideological) illusionism (closely related to cartography), tactics is an art of constant camouflage, disappearance and escapism that undoes the cartographer's codes. They are ways to avoid a direct confrontation that would inevitably entail someone's obliteration.

Returning to Hau'ofa. Each of these tales are in fact emblematic of a spatialization of their narrative settings, as it unfolds to the reader following the description of characters' displacements through them. They are indeed a function of an unresolved tension between two systems of belief, and therefore between two worldviews.

In the following pages, I will narrow in on two tales from the collection, 'Paths to Glory', and 'The Glorious Pacific Way', in order to highlight what the spatial source of the conflict is in both of them. This will enable a discussion around what kind of knowledge and ideological subject are disrupted, of which the different characters are the expression.

In the ambivalent figure of Tevita Poto, 'Paths to Glory' captures the predicaments in which many Caribbean and Oceanian subjects find themselves after returning from

advanced academic training in metropolitan centers. The tale can be divided into two clearly discernible parts. The story opens with a disaffected and unkempt Tevita Poto being constantly rebuked by his uncle and father for not being a useful and productive citizen, after having returned with a PhD from “the lands of learning and wealth” (Hau’Ofa 1994, p. 43). The second part shows Tevita, who now appears to be a well accommodated government official, having a conversation with a fellow islander in a bar. The interlocutor dismisses Tevita’s progressive ideals and his criticism of the unequal exchange of products taking place between Tiko and New Zealand. He does so on the grounds that privileged people like Tevita do not know how poor people live. Tevita then experiences the proverbial contempt barely masked as admiration that locals feel for their counterparts. For intellectuals like Tevita there seems to be no place and at the same time, no way out of the impasse described; other than either playing along to the scripts of clientelist cronyism and corruption that keeps Tiko mired in misery, and forces him to gradually renounce the more noble goals of working for the common good, or upholding the principles of honest work and collective effort, only to become outcasts like Manu. Either way, Tevita becomes the object of disdain and resentment for the common folk.

Equipped with the representational tools and ethical paradigms that are supposed to prepare them to lead their countries in their righteous journey through the ‘paths to glory’, intellectuals from the peripheries sooner or later have to come to grips with the fact that modern epistemic formations are also submitted to the same unequal spatial distribution that wealth is. Tevita Poto soon realizes that, under the international geopolitics of intellectual labor circulation put in place by capitalist modernity, scientific and cultural capital has a geography as much as it has a history. Finding himself back in one of the geographical wastelands of modernity, it does not take too long for intellectuals like Tevita to understand that at the global peripheries of Capital, modern knowledge is too often little more than a safe passage to a conformist insertion into the local offices serving as the bureaucratic and corporate outposts for the international mechanisms of dispossession, and for concurrent practices of nepotist and clientelist self-promotion.

The story exposes how, under neoliberalism, one cannot truly universalize knowledge, that is, one cannot democratize it (by distributing it along a horizontal geographic axis) anymore that one can do so with material wealth. Throughout the story, constant allusions to the University, Church, and the State acquire their true meaning, as these institutions are, again, turned inside out, revealing their farcical flipside, as places where the foreign political and economic stranglehold on Tiko is deepened by the local intelligentsia, that is, under the banner of ‘development’. As Derek Walcott observes (Cited in De Loughrey, 2005, p.130), under capitalism, to be wealthy and righteous poses an irresolvable dilemma. In other words, on this view, in urban centers in Western Europe or North America the incompatibilities between individual and collective wealth are necessarily achieved through morally questionable and backhanded means. The ethical conundrums underlying them simmer out of view. Nevertheless, although less apparent, such dynamics and dilemmas are no less present in the colonial margins.

In any case, stripped naked from the self, this ‘glory’ is at best a concept devoid of any meaning, and at worst one pregnant with a dark genealogy of oppression. That is, without the comfort of theological niceties that geographical and historical distance from material misery provides to individuals in ‘more developed’ countries, intellectuals in the developing world must face the reality of the ‘glory’ they have pursued. Drinking from the cup of victory turns out to be sipping from a poisoned chalice.

It is, to be sure, not that Tevita’s uncle and father have gotten things wrong, for their perspective articulates very clearly how things have been since the beginning of modern times: the whelm of cultural and intellectual capital in Europe and North America is the direct result of structures of astounding violence and dispossession that were put in place around the world by successive modern empires and are still very much intact. The straightforward equivalence between material wealth and knowledge that Tevita’s uncle suggests is thus very telling. It encapsulates at once the truth that maintains the order of things in Tiko, as much as its denial, which guarantees its actual effectiveness. By fetishizing knowledge as a spiritual means to transcend this world, it simply becomes equated to wealth. Reducing the causal link and the difference between the two, on the other hand, to one that forecloses the dialectical circularity of their relation, Tevita’s uncle and father reiterate for the story the disavowal of the material origins of historical western knowledge.

Tevita Poto’s predicament is an eloquent portrayal of the tragic choices that the disparities in the global distribution of knowledge impose on Caribbean and Oceanian intellectuals: either to kowtow to such mechanisms and lose their soul, or become militant critics of the promiscuous relation therein among Church, State and Capital, and in the process be “ground small by the Great Chiefs” (Hau’ofa 1994). Tevita’s uncle decries that he “even talks like Manu”, that he, like Manu, criticizes the Church and the State. Tevita would likewise have to suffer excommunication and live at the margins of a society that resents their privilege, and that alienates them from the fold, regardless of their choice. Faced with this conundrum, the movements imposed upon Tepita Poto reflect the attempts at negotiating the deadlock underlying this ethical choice: they can either constitute circumventions, deviations, roundabout trajectories from the straight and ‘righteous’ paths to development - in which case they become politically and morally marginal entities -, or they can choose the ‘straight’ paths to glory, by becoming part of the island’s corrupt elite of crony capitalism. The story thus strikes the right ironic note in the fact that the ‘glory’ to which the gospel refers does not ring with anything remotely resembling spiritual growth and transcendence; that in colonized spaces, instead of being an unmistakable sign of salvation, there is an unbridgeable rift between material well-being and moral integrity, which turn out to be mutually exclusive.

‘The Glorious Pacific Way’ tells the story of Ole Pasifikiwei (in clear allusion to the “old Pacific way”), who dedicates part of his life to collecting oral traditions from Tiko, and intends to turn this former hobby into a larger project where all the genealogies and oral traditions of the Tikongs are compiled and preserved; for that, he needs a typewriter and some filing cabinets. At the mercenary instigation from the officials for the Ministry of Environment, Religion, Culture and Youth (MERCY), and after much hesitation due to what he deems a degrading act of begging for what is, in principle,

offered as a disinterested gift, Ole is gradually drawn into the treacherous intricacies of foreign aid. With Ole's insertion into the bureaucratic maze of MERCY, and thus into the hypocritically liberating forces of Christian mercy, in the end he is consecrated as a "professional beggar", and the 'ole pacific way' is, quite literally, turned into a cultural fetish, instrumentalized in the service of the transnational mechanisms of capital exploitation. This is, without a doubt, the function that State-sanctioned culture plays in the Caribbean (except, perhaps, Cuba) and Oceania. That is, culture can become a form of the fetishistic performance of a group's identity. Indeed, it is in this sense that Walcott's remark must be understood, to the effect that in both archipelagic regions, "artists and writers are turned into little more than archeologists, folklorists and ethnographers" (Walcott, cited in De Loughrey, 2005, p.134), since this is how aesthetic experience is reduced to a lifeless cultural artifact that can be trafficked on: It is the mechanism of their insertion into the global market.

But to be precise, it is not that Pacific and Caribbean cultural identities - understood as the sum of state-sanctioned set of policies surrounding aesthetic and intellectual practices that somehow evoke foregone traditional forms of life for disembodied contemplation in the two regions - pre-existed ulterior modernization processes, but rather that they are the retroactive effect of such processes. Modernity does not so much encroach on those cultures, but to the contrary, depends for its functioning on the retroactive illusion of a (pre-existing) cultural entity suffering such encroachment. As a question of structural necessity inherent to its economic and geopolitical dynamics, modernity incessantly creates its own places of 'backward' traditional cultures, its own territories of Edenic timelessness that will have been forever lost, as much as it creates its 'own' spaces of material scarcity. From this perspective, international development programs and NGO's are not mechanisms of inclusion into the wave of modernization of previously undeveloped enclaves, but rather the way their inclusion therein is continuously reproduced, precisely as exclusion. As the history in the two archipelagic regions of such organizations has shown, the presumptive generosity and charity of international development programs and NGO's is the way such exclusionary inclusion is accomplished. The story is thus an eloquent commentary on the true role that cultural uniqueness - as an indirect effect of such 'denial of coevalness'- often plays in this geopolitics of underdevelopment.

The (essentially Marxist) insight that holds together this and other tales in the collection, one that also undermines from within the temporalities undergirding modern narrative forms, is that Modern History, conceived of as the ever-accumulating recounting of past deeds that describe a straight ascending line from a 'less' to a 'more' civilized state, depends upon a mythical construal of 'primitive accumulation' as something that took place in illo tempore (that is, through one's own hard labor and austerity). But since Nietzsche (and even before him, Marx) one knows that such temporal structuring of secular becoming covers up - encasing within what Nietzsche calls 'the wardrobe' of Western European spiritual development, what was first and foremost a geographical event -, the abject truth of enslavement and barbarous plunder that took place 'somewhere else'.

This tale exposes to the cold hard light of day the fact that the fairy tale of 'primitive accumulation' is the Ur-narrative that confers meaning to the fiction of modern progress. Therefore, what allows for a diachronic assessment of civilizational superiority is a disavowal of a logic constitutive of the modern subject's self-representation vis-à-vis the Other, whereby the latter is construed as 'backwards', at the same time that it is encroached upon and exploited through epistemic expedients of merciful charity. At its most fundamental, Fabian's 'denial of coevalness' is a denial of this logic time at work in the representational mechanisms of the modern subject, for what is contemporary, what happens 'at the same time', what is synchronous to such self-representation as culturally superior to others, is this ongoing process of accumulation by dispossession that, being originally material (read 'spatial'), is retroacted as a cultural (read 'spiritual', 'historical', 'temporal') difference. Simply put, there is nothing primitive about 'primitive accumulation', while everything in it is geographical; accumulation, conceived of ultimately as cultural achievement, is always already contemporary to (and dependent upon) an ongoing and expanding process of material dispossession.

In each of these tales, two types of subjectivity and their corresponding spatial relations, cohabitate within each individual, opening up a silent battleground which is but a reflection of the conflict that is already spatialized in the different relationships the characters entertain with the objects that constitute it: one the one hand, the abstract, empty forms of the modern, cosmopolitan, subject of calculated rationality. On the other, 'traditional' formations that lurk in the unconscious background, but which reappear in the most critical moments of the situation, to 'haunt' in decisive ways the outcome of the dilemmas the tales represent. But again, this unconscious, underdeveloped underbelly is nothing but the retroactive effect of this denial of coevalness that is constitutive of modern temporalities, as it is emblemized in the anthropological gaze. Moreover, this fetishistic disavowal of contemporaneity between human groups, is the subjective, temporal correlate of the spatial aspect of coloniality, of what I have called 'the denial of the corporeal' that is expressed as aesthetic disembodiment. Both are two mutually reinforcing sides of an intrinsic aspect of western modernity.

Slaying the ancient gods

That is why, what these tales ultimately teach us is that the modern dilemma between development and underdevelopment is a false one, since the production of underdeveloped spaces belongs entirely, from the moment of its historical inception, to the inner dynamics of western modernity as a historical phenomenon. In many crucial ways, the ubiquitous yet marginal Manu - a clear allusion to the word mana, the sacred energy some places and people irradiate in Polynesian belief systems -, incarnates the solution to this false dilemma. 'The Tower of Babel' begins with an intriguing conversation between Manu and an ancient preacher, over which of the gods, the ancient or the new, should be slayed:

'Tiko can't be developed,' Manu declared, 'unless the ancient gods are killed.'

'But the ancient gods are dead. The Sabbatarians killed them long ago,' countered the ancient preacher.

'Never believe that, sir. Had they died, Tiko would have developed long ago. Look around you,' Manu advised.

The ancient preacher looked around and saw nothing; he looked at himself, his tattered clothes, his nailed-in second hand sandals, and nodded rather dubiously. He wished to be developed. 'And how do you slay the ancient gods?' he inquired.

'Never try, sir, it's useless.' Manu replied. 'Kill the new ones.' And that, in short, is what Manu does. He wants to keep the ancient gods alive and slay the new ones. He pedals his bicycle to the International Nightlight Hotel, to the Bank of Tiko, and all over Tulusi, shouting his lonely message against Development, but the whole capital is a cemetery (Hau'Ofa 1994, 18).

The passage exposes this false dilemma from at least three interrelated perspectives that involve the equivocal mobilization of two archetypical tropes of modernity. First, by relating coloniality, represented in the text in terms of a constitutive blindness with relation to space, - "the ancient preacher looked around and saw nothing" (my emphasis)-, to the motive of dressing, the narrator inserts anticolonial literature directly in the tradition of the Nietzschean critique of industrial modernity qua nihilist ruination of experience, and therefore of the past, as the historic depository of (revealed) truths, troped in literature and art since Early Modernity as an act of unveiling/unmasking, and thus nakedness. It is thus that objective space (which accedes to the human perceptual field primarily through light and has been the privileged emblem of Western epistemology and aesthetics), the relative capacity to see something in it, also implicates questions of beliefs and mores (more often than not allegorized as clothing in Western tradition). Secondly, the dialogue is sustained by an equivocation that touches at the heart of this double motif, namely the one concerning the apparent value, the range of meanings mobilized by the word 'development': whereas the ancient preacher, perceiving himself as naked- or rather, what amounts to the same, as dressed in ragged clothes- desires 'to be developed' by killing the ancient gods, Manu actually meant to assert their persistence as a trump card against the ideological/nihilist underpinnings of 'development'. What he actually meant is that the ancient gods will never be killed - they will survive and eventually prevail, even under the set of beliefs - the clothing of the new ones. It thus recasts the inherent incommensurability between place and subject in colonized spaces in terms of an emphatic (dis-)articulation between two temporalities, those of the 'old' and the 'new' gods. It therefore dis-places the duplicity obtaining between colonized subjects and their space, towards a semantic oscillation between two orderings of time within the colonized subject's consciousness. In other words, by a sort of 'stripping naked' the word 'development' from its semantic clothing, by deflating it, to reveal the abyssal, inessential, performative nature of the word itself, the narrator, impersonated in Manu, opens up from within that suspension of the horizon of its possible other meanings, for further contestation.

The final result, at the end of this passage, is not so much a repression, disavowal, or even foreclosure, but rather a sort of hysterical bracketing, an (itself ambiguous) semantic deferral of the possible meanings around the word 'development'. The effects of this deferral reverberate

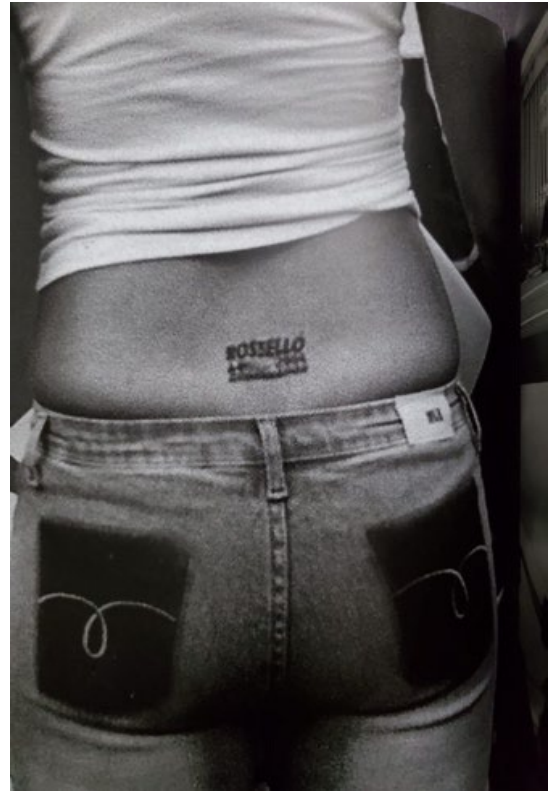


Fig. 8: The butt of a woman, over which a tattoo bearing the name "Roselló"

Source: *donde*, p. 39.

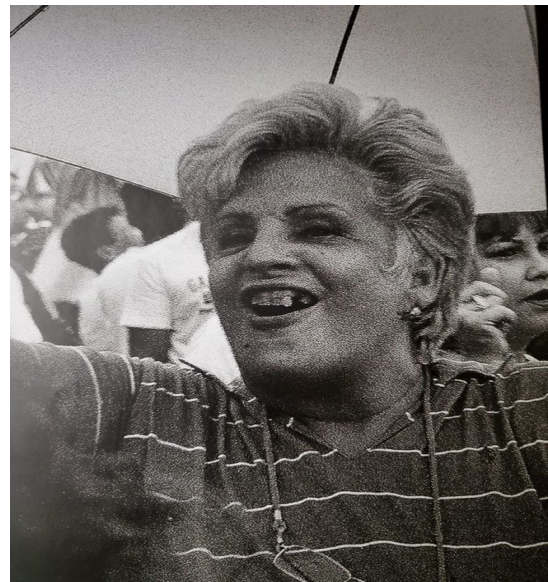


Fig. 9: A woman showing her decaying teeth enthusiastically attending a political rally.

Source: *donde*, p. 46

throughout the vicinity of other fields of the same experience that circumscribe closely related terms, such as 'progress', 'modernization', 'success', 'democracy'). It is ultimately

left to the reader to decide as to which gods are the ones considered ancient and worthy of being slayed, and which ones are worthy of bearing the cycles and rhythms that calendarize the coming development, and therefore, ultimately what should be the true meaning of that word.

The narrator brings to the surface, so to speak, the unconscious memory of destruction and erasure- the 'old gods'- upon which hinges the mobilizing power of the word 'development', as one of modernity's master signifiers. To re-historize means here not to validate one version of the past over another, but rather, to reactivate the lingering struggles from whose constant erasures modernity's times emerge as the conqueror's narrative, and thereby to open up for further contest, in the here and now, the radical undecidability of any of its given meanings, and with it, the subject's ideological implication in whatever decision it takes over its possible future meanings. Development, therefore, becomes itself an ideological battleground, a space where two versions of subject and community, one that relies on the constant forgetting of the injustices committed, and one that renews the call for their redress, themselves wage a battle to the death.

That is also why these tales display a structure closer to the static, mythical time more characteristic of pre-modern prose narration, such as Mircea Eliade (1959) has described. Moreover, what are portrayed as mythical, are precisely the arrow-like messianic temporalities implicit in the narratives of modern progress and development. Immobility and circularity are both spatial markers of pre-modern, mythical time, and the portrayal of Judeo-Christian linear historical becoming that undergirds developmental policies in Oceania, as itself mythical, closed upon itself, somehow ritualistic, carnivalesque and demonic, is perhaps the most forceful political message of the tales, and at the same time a telling sign of its imminent overcoming. Paradoxically, in order to surmount our subjection to the set-ups, pitfalls and deadlocks of colonized spaces, one would rather have to re-temporalize them, as de Certeau and Lefebvre have argued. Consequently, the only ways to be able to envision imperial space concretely in the full force of its colonial breadth, as it exerts its influence locally over places far off from its financial hubs, is to know its history, and to awaken the ancient gods, precisely at the most perilous moment, when they are actualized from the past as still confronting the new ones.

In the end, Manu becomes the solitary outcast living at Tiko's margins, indifferent yet attentive to the whirlpool of development unfolding before his eyes. That is, perhaps, the historical meaning of Manu's indictment against the barbarous priests of modernization: " WHY ARE YOU DESTROYING MY COUNTRY?" (p.19). It is as if his body were to retrace the meaning of his present to the most perilous of moments, which in spatial terms would be the emblematic place that Mary Louise Pratt calls the contact zone, where modern history meets modern geography, and where the spatial naturalization of Time, its transformation into abstract Capital, was concomitant to its radical de-historization (Fabian 1983, p.16). It is a gesture repeated throughout archipelagic political and literary history- from Saint John Perse, Virgilio Piñera, and Franketienne, to Brathwaite and Walcott - exiled artists and intellectuals turning, geographically and historically, away from the centuries-old cartographic illusions of modernity, and towards the indeterminate limits- marked in early modern

maps by the warning sign *hic sunt dracones* - that indexes the possibility of a different sphere of spatial-temporal relations.

History Spatialized: Eduardo Lalo and the Caribbean City as Hieroglyph

... facing catastrophe, particularly as a systemic and not an episodic feature of the Caribbean, life will depend on the shifting ability to both stand in place and float away, still in defiance of the emptying island.

Frances Negron-Muntaner, *The Emptying Island*.

The work of Puerto Rican writer and visual artist Eduardo Lalo represents a possible realization of the kind of archipelagic/relational subjectivity that is already prefigured in Hau'ofa's fictional character. Indeed, much in line with Manu's gaze, Lalo's authorial voices are those of the unbeliever. In his essay, appropriately titled 'Intemperie', Lalo lays out this attitude towards Western modernity in general:

Unbelieve. Unbelieving the world is equivalent to questioning the forms that sustain it.

Doing so is a form of abandonment, a renouncement of universal ideas, and the commitment to an adventure into the limits of the mind.

Unbelieving, then, to access the condition of survivor.

Unbelieve so that writing arrives as a gift (p.12).

This unbelief translates for Lalo into a constant unwriting, most emphatically of the territories symbolic and material- whether sexual, racial, ethnic, linguistic, or national-, under whose marks modern literature has institutionally authorized and legitimated itself. Of all these, it should not come as a surprise that the national mark occupies a special place, since a modern writer first and foremost becomes subjected to the signs of visibility imposed by the implicit consensus governing any recognition conferred under the banner of the sovereign nation-state. Still today, the national emblem summoned by these signs largely regiment the production, circulation and exchange of literary products.

It even subsumes the others. And this is what renders Puerto Rican literature fatally opaque, ambiguous and ultimately invisible to the international market. That is also why, for Lalo, this unwriting opens up, as its most natural imaginary referent, the non-places which are the main subject of his writings.

Indeed, his text-images are phantasmal evocations of a somewhat similar quality to that of Marc Augé's 'non-places', those anonymous places of human transience, linking one place to the next like modules in a factory's chain of production, places where human transience rules and dwelling is contracted to a minimum and conditioned like no other by the laws governing the abstract space of Capital: the maximum profit attainable in the least amount

of time expended. The crucial difference is that, by virtue of the steady disappearance of the Commons, these

inhospitable and downright characterless places are supposed, through practices that conjure up the communal totality of a 'nation', to give for Puerto Ricans effective content to the modern meaning of 'dwelling'. Countering the presumption of unquestionable, positive self-transparency of cultural artifacts that riddle the treatment of nationhood as allegorical annexations of the familial with the usual silences, identity hypostases and fictive reductions revolving around race, religion, language, and gender, Lalo begins his book *donde* with a commentary on the impostures undergirding every modern national enterprise:

The pretense of talking about those around me and the place that contains us. The burden of still thinking from a collective "reality", an all, a great family, without being aware, among other things, of the vagrancy that this implies (p.23).

The black and white, grainy photographs of the book depict half-built, already ruined governmental or residential buildings, turned into crack houses, badly run-down department stores filled with all sorts of abandoned miscellanea, obeying no discernible principle of design or taste, garbage patches, and from all that, indistinct, human figures emerge, barely recognizable. The butt of a woman, over which a tattoo bearing the name "Roselló" (Fig. 8.). A Spiderman inflatable figure hanging from the balcony of a public building project. A woman showing her decaying teeth enthusiastically attending a political rally (Fig. 9). It is as if the objects were submitted to a process of dilapidation that antedates their symbolic inscription in the city's unconscious. These images show, above all, the degree to which subjects in colonized spaces are denied the capacity to make their own places out of any given space. This capacity may or may not include, but decidedly goes well beyond mere legal ownership. This denial is expressed first and foremost as violent disruptions in the aesthetic field that challenge the sensorium's capacity to establish and nurture symbolic relations that link a subject's body to their space. Whether by allowing for the establishment of a visual continuum as part of a spatial whole, or as a coherent set of placeholders and signposts that demarcate the material confines where remnants of past experiences would take root and give rise to a community in the form of stories and images, this possibility of ritualizing representational acts that memorialize past events is crucial, for they are the cosmic seed from which affects and dreams from a possible future of togetherness can be shared.

Simply put, Lalo's work demonstrates, perhaps like no other intellectual in the region, the aesthetic, corporeal coefficient of colonial spatial practices, and it thus inevitably evokes, for me, Walter Benjamin. Again, Eduardo Lalo:

Why not think from the body, from its lonely smallness, from the only possible solitude, also knowing that this is an illusion? Perhaps that way the ghost is more real or, at least, less manipulated.

The biggest failure is not failing (p.23).

It is not surprising that this particular kind of urban writer is viewed rather as a 'talker', like Karl Shapiro does when referring to Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer*. Since this distracted gazing and talking is city strollers' main activity, whereby the stories and anecdotes are interwoven with the activities of the modern consumer and producer, as they relate with a landscape on the move- "The walker's body



Fig. 10: Bregar. Source: *donde*, p. 47.

absorbs the world, is consubstantial with space" (Lalo, 2016c, p.4.).

To contemplate non-writing. The substitution of the act of writing for sitting, walking, running, breathing, going to the bathroom, going to bed (Lalo 2016b, p. 21).

A literature done in transit, a writing of impermanence and drift. If the body serves as the perceptual membrane between subject and world, one can understand that an aesthetic aggression of the dimensions we see at work in Puerto Rico is a clear index of how coloniality ultimately refers to a denial of the corporeal that goes in both directions: the subject's sensorial rejection of the space which he inhabits, finds its counterpart in the centuries' long history of institutional spatial practices that deny Puerto Ricans their right to constitute and see themselves collectively. When Lalo's text-images present the reader with the real of Puerto Rican reality's irreducible irrepresentability, they demonstrate the degree to which this irrepresentability is an unmistakable sign that what is ultimately at stake in colonial spaces is their inhabiting subjects' inability to aesthetically constitute their own subjective places out of them, since the only spaces left where some kind of socializing is permitted and even promoted, are those exclusively associated with consumerist expenditure and low-wage labor. It is not surprising that the formidable and ever-accelerating disappearance of the Commons that characterize spatial practices in Puerto Rico has been accompanied by an increasing loss of any sense of communal life. Lalo lays this out in the following terms:

Puerto Rican society creates maximum distances in minimum spaces. Power, family, organization of the economy or culture drift towards this. This direction produces two effects: a claustrophobic intensification of space (the shrinking distance) and the creation of anti-solidary relations. Ironically, in a culture obsessed by the diminished dimensions of its island, its most common and most unconfessed product is distance, in other words, the size of what it separates. Puerto Rican society divides and, by doing so, goes astray, loses, exiles. In Puerto Rico everything seems to move away indefinitely (Lalo 2018, pp.33-34).

If Manu indexes for the reader the fissures of a reality where the space of Capital unravels in the colonial cacophony of

modernity's own aporias, the anonymous "narrator" in Lalo's work textually unfolds precisely an instance of this kind of interstitial practice, where narration comes to a standstill, in order to expose the disastrous becoming of a carefully planned and executed collective ecological and urban catastrophe. In a similar manner to Hau'ofa's stories, this temporal suspension that Lalo's work registers ultimately entails, by excavating the materials of modernity's mythical undercurrent to reveal the violence cyphered in the characters of a language that needs to be invented, a subversive evacuation of what Julio Ramos calls "progress's accumulative time" (Ramos 2019, p.2).

Contrary to Hau'ofa's tales, Lalo achieves this, not by parodying and thereby malfunctioning the narrative machinery upon which modernizing values are predicated, undermining it from within the contradictions of its foundational myths, but by a sort of epidermal writing/walking, casting his gaze at the city from the utopian possibilities that arise from the demonic stream of this very malfunctioning. It describes the unconscious current of the dirty, irrepresentable, unnamable folds of the city, where modern writing meets its representational limits. The images accompanying the text of two of his most explicitly visual works- *donde* and *Los pies de San Juan*- are thus like the spectral negatives of the transparent timelessness that the tourist industry most often associates to the region. By writing this very malfunctioning, this scriptural sub-traction of meaning turns the images of the Caribbean city, as it retraces its signs to its barbarous origins, into a hieroglyph.

There are certainly in those places practices also marked by the syncopated and seemingly haphazard rhythms- the kind of making-do we have seen at work in *Tales of the Tikongs*-, that also have become historically intrinsic to how Puerto Ricans relate with their space, not only among themselves, but with respect to those objects, which are submitted to usages that are in the best of cases only partially the ones for which they were supposed to have been made (bicycles that are also walking sound systems, old-cars that become living places, buildings designed for dwelling transformed into orchards or playgrounds, abandoned parking lots turned into open-air theaters). Arcadio Díaz Quiñones, calls it *la brega*, a word with a long ancestry that invokes incessant negotiation, to break through the *cul-de-sacs* of a situation, to dissolve it from within its own contradictions. The earliest ancestor of the word is the Old Germanic voice *brikkān*, 'to break'. Much like Lacan's "*savoir (faire)*", de Certeau's 'availing oneself of' or Lefebvre's 'making-do', *bregar* involves creativity, cunning, improvising, and a certain careless disposition for an unforeseeable outcome. In his textual inscriptions, Lalo *brega* (deals/makes-do) with a visual language that carries the inheritance of the spatial violences perpetrated on the archipelago by its governing classes. He thus inscribes the dislocation of this making do in his writing. The result is what he calls a scratched scripture ('*una escritura rayada*'), a writing that is as soiled, intervened, hackneyed and broken by this violence as the reality to which it refers:

Scratched writing. Behind these words there are others; the text contains ghosts of lost texts. The text is a residue [...] the scratched writing is the cynical patrimony of the defeated peoples that have formed the periphery of the West. We use the same language, the same alphabet, the same concepts, but these do not include us in the same way [...] our stench is a tautology, a non-word,

destruction in destruction, death in death. (Lalo 2005, p.121-131)

The scriptural becomes, in the case of Lalo, the realm where the practices of this *bregar* register the history of the subjective transformation of the human sensorium in the island. Indeed, in order to duly assess the place that his work occupies in the Caribbean literary tradition, it would be necessary to rehearse what Susan Buck-Morss calls Walter Benjamin's "Copernican Revolution" in historiographical research, regarding the political overtones of his artwork essay, in particular his appropriation of the theosophical concept of 'aura', in the context of a contemporary state of things that constantly replicates, at the global level, what originally obtained on occasion of the emergence of the capitalist industrialized city during the first half of the nineteenth century (Buck-Morss 1989, pp.x-xii).

To understand in its truly historical materialist weight Benjamin's idea that the role of aesthetic practices in late modernity is preeminently political- as opposed to the mimetic/documentary function it had during the preceding centuries-, the assertion should be taken in the sense that, at those moments where the very notion of storytelling is on the brink of losing its function of conferral of meaning, it is through those practices that humans can contemporize with the tumultuous sensorial influx that rapidly accelerating material changes in city spaces impose on their perceptual apparatus. These are for Benjamin the moments 'of greatest peril', since it is when the residual specter of past struggles- its victories and defeats- surges forth, untimely, to the present, on the occasion of a society mired in a political crisis whose conventional narratives, hollowed out as they have become by the imperceptible but inexorable gravity of what Theodor Adorno called their 'non-identity with the real', cannot cover up any longer the lingering trace of its antagonisms. It has been the calling of writers of the modern city, and this is even more true in the post-imperial, archipelagic margins of the contemporary neoliberal globe, to cast their perplexed gaze, on what were once 'artificial paradises', like a bewildered animal would stare at an infernal, hallucinatory spectacle of sameness.

It is because Edgar Allan Poe, Henry Miller, or W.G. Sebald wrote about them, that cities like Philadelphia, Paris, or Manchester become, not only more tolerable for their inhabitants, leaving one, thanks to the bridges towards a future carved on the history of its objects by this new language, feeling a little less lost in them, more 'at home', a little less threatened by what the vertiginous proliferation of all sorts of technological devices turned into an urban milieu that was as menacing as it was hypnotizing. A reassuring subjective sense of 'belonging to a place', which transcends the sedentary confines of a household is, after all, what differentiates dwelling from merely 'being there'. It is thus that a characteristic modern taste slowly but inexorably seeps through the crevices of the old one. Before it can be referred to its corresponding symbolic artifacts, this taste is expressive of a new kind of language of matter, a different grammar of the bodies human and non-human, a syntax of velocities of displacement, its rhythms, postures, gestural lexicon and modes of intonation, in short anything that a certain choreography, recognizable from the frenzied, increasingly automated reproduction of social life, defines in terms of spatiotemporal patterns, which will subsequently have been conceived of, for a subject-to-come, as 'natural'.

A new language of the senses, a body-language, or rather a language of the corporeal, must be invented, one where utterances, together with the senses they evoke, are one with the bodies uttering them, and every object a lighthouse that, by irradiating to the world their light from their dormant nucleus of human exploitation and misery, become signposts of the sacred.

It is in this sense that the literary history of a modern nation merges inextricably with the history of its senses. But to cast a truly contemporary gaze at this reality- and this is the experience to which Lalo, like all great writers of the modern city, submit us-, one has to be willing, in Buck-Morss' words, "to destroy the mythical immediacy of the present" (1989, p.x). The consensual symbolic means of experiencing the city as a present identical to itself, mesmerizing its citizens with the overwhelming power of its techno-aesthetic devices- such as are the ones sanctioned by the modern State which, with the authority conferred to its officers by habits and practices presumed to be 'ageless', polices in their interest the city's sensorial order under the institutional banner of a 'national culture'-, have to give way to ones that render visible, in the uselessness and invisibility of the material debris that falls from the unstoppable train of progress and development to the wastelands of official memory, the irrepresentable catastrophes from which the authority of its traditions draw their legitimating power. This means that, what has been theretofore considered 'beautiful' and 'pleasant' about this city and its objects, will be shown its irrepresentable correlative undertow, by seers who cannot help but be, themselves, both crepuscular harbingers of dying old ways, still harboring, as if they were halfheartedly contemplating a withered collection of dead seashells, the vestigial echoes of desires, rituals and tastes of the ruling classes, as well as wary (and weary) outsiders, acute observers who, in their obsessive search for this new language, tear through the phantasmal veil of an apparently monolithic reality, to reveal the invisible violence that imparts the city with the phantasmagoria of disembodied senses in the eyes of those who lack the symbolic (and therefore mimetic) means to navigate their bodies through it, nor can afford 'a space of their own' to realize them. If, for a growing fraction of those individuals, the modern city is a spectacular parade of narrative and sensorial artifacts that compels them to carry on their shoulders the full weight of its past by transforming their bodies into complying vessels of senselessness, it is the modern artists and writers' task to preserve the city's future for what is to come, by safeguarding possible pathways for these bodies' return back to their senses.

By virtue of the same regime of things that confers material expression to another, a rather small fraction of the socius embodying those same desires and tastes, against such a gaze, Lalo's work, in Duchesne's words, casts on its buildings, streets and everything that they contain "a stripped gaze that caresses what remains after the projects, the utopias, the progress, the developments and the babelization, once the human work collapses on the waste of its truth" (Duchesne-Winter 2009, p.66). Like the works of the aforementioned authors, Lalo's works do not constitute achieved examples of this new womb of symbols from which a new city and a new city dweller could be imagined, but rather they document its becoming, from the remnants of an old language in the process of its disappearance.

Writing therefore becomes for Lalo an act of constant erasures, unwritings, that make this triple marginality a coextensive condition, not only of all Puerto Ricans, but potentially of all Caribbean subjects and in a way, of all groups inhabiting enclaves submitted to the same dynamics of political exclusion and material dispossession. Like his European and North American counterparts, because of the historical and geographical singularity of being a writer of the Caribbean city, Lalo's work registers in his writing an experience of eccentricity that overflows with an excess of drift the territorial markings of national identities. His drift (deriva) increasingly becomes cosmic, impinging on the ecological substrate as the last frontier where capitalism, and the narrative machinery that sustains it, loses its moorings. It is, indeed, this excess that signals to the realization of a transnational archipelagic citizenship. A global citizenship dreamt of by Wolfgang Goethe achieves its culmination only by passing through the irreducible singularity of radical marginality and the diasporic disaffiliations to which Caribbean peoples have been submitted since the region's inception as a modern enclave of cultural confluences.

That is, also, why his gaze at the Caribbean city proceeds

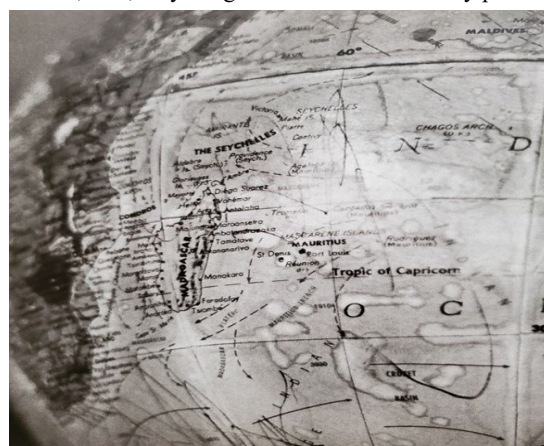


Fig. 11.: Source: donde, 228-229.

by subtraction, which in his writing ramifies along three conditions that function as motives that traverse the triple marginality of his writing: invisibility (mainly, although not exclusively, of Puerto Rican social space qua archetypal colonial enclave), uselessness (first and foremost of the text, of writing), and historical strandedness ('estar quedao' connotes the sense of having missed the train of progress, to have been brushed aside, but also it can refer to one's own body ex-posed to the elements, which makes this raw exposition, this homelessness, the condition for dwelling in the Caribbean city, but which also evokes the radical cosmic nakedness that is the existential condition of citizenship for this new globalized archipelagic dweller).

That too, is why one of the most salient features of Lalo's spatial (un-)writings is his recurring insistence on this oppressive, almost claustrophobic sense of historical paralysis- which visually translates into the motive of a grayed-out Caribbean. As the inscriptions of its erasures become materialized in space, silently inscribing on each of its surrounding objects the enigmatic trace of its

overwhelming drive, the largely unknown urban history of the island gives its places and its peoples the asphyxiating sensation of staring at an invisible wall, made in equal degree of mutual mistrust, ignorance and scorn. That ominous sensation of being swallowed by the unsurmountable weight of the culture of historical amnesia on which the island's social space has been built, and experienced by whomever has lived in a colonized enclave long enough to be able to decipher the sense of subdued paroxysm to which objective violence has infused every aspect of its reality. In an analog, yet altogether different gesture to that of W.G. Sebald's tortuous meanderings and perambulations, what Lalo's strolls throughout the dilapidated and dehumanized Puerto Rican urban landscape bring to light, is this objective spatialization of the island's urban history as a recurrent violent and systematic erasure.

Moving Landscapes: n Archipelagic Response

Being largely a response to Eurocentric imaginaries of the island as an isolated enclave with fixed boundaries surrounded by the pelagic desert, the population movements throughout Puerto Rico's modern history constitute perhaps the strongest refutation of such a claustrophobic image, in at least two interrelated ways: first, the rituals and practices that give concrete expression to these immigrational flows disprove the accepted notion that an island is an exclusively material-spatial concept, offering instead concrete instances that are eloquent of how this notion, the sum of its enabling and its constraining conditions, has, even in spite and against the grain of their own colonial fantasies, been internalized by Puerto Ricans' ways of relating among themselves and their space. Since its early modern birth, as part of a rhetoric and discursive domain bearing the imprint of the European medieval imaginary to accommodate imperial interests, the deceptive regime of visibility ordained by the 'Island' as a spatial trope, covers up as much as it is expressive of more than a five-hundred years' history of dynamic and recurring patterns of economic, political and cultural relations, as sociologists of the Puerto Rican diaspora like Jorge Duany, Juan Flores, Pedro San Miguel and Yolanda María San Miguel have shown (See Sepúlveda-Rivera 2004). It is by virtue of the relative engagement with this enormous ocean of left-overs from what subtended such relations, in the form of partial defeats and triumphs through which history becomes (both within and without) a landscape harboring spectral scenes of lingering, unresolved struggles, that an archipelagic subjectivity, with all its perplexing singularities and contradictions, actualizes its concrete reality, that is, with a greater or lesser sense of historical urgency. Second, the internal dynamics of such diasporic movements expose the degree to which the notion of impermeable fixity attributed to an island's borders is constantly undermined by the same forces that such a trope enables. In this regard, Lalo ironizes about the fact that, for an oceanic, sun-bathed island, to these days the two predominant architectonic types, which for the author still model human relations in Puerto Rico, are the medieval fortification and the monastery. But while this is undeniable and can be verified at every turn, the paradigmatic immobility and isolation of the fortress and monastery- which today gains its most eloquent urbanistic examples in the fantastic proliferation of privatized, CCTV-scrutinized enclosures such as controlled access residencies, heavily surveilled shopping malls and secluded hotel complexes- has since always come accompanied by the dialectical supplement of a submarine, centrifugal thrust that

is today becoming increasingly global in its reach, while still having its main historical gradients distributed along several urban enclaves of the U.S. mainland.

In her novel-documentary PR-13 Aguirre, (DATE) Puerto Rican writer Marta Aponte Alsina calls attention to the way the southeasternmost part of the Puerto Rican archipelago was the site of an underground and outlawed confluence of cultures that took place at the margins of two successive empires, an ongoing process that was simultaneous to the cartographic inception of the region as an agro-industrial "free market zone" *avant la lettre*:

...the southern coast was abuzz with reciprocal activities, in the old trade known as contraband, and which consisted not only of inert merchandise but also of human trafficking. This exchange of goods is inseparable from cultural friction, on a scale that is difficult to conceive, since it no longer exists... (Alsina 2020, Entrevista, p.5)

Evoking Glissant's Relation, Alsina appropriately calls this 'a moving landscape' ("paisaje móvil"), and one can hardly think of a more concise way to define in spatial terms the ever-changing multiplicity, in the realm of meanings and the places they designate, set in motion by the term archipelagic. But this passage also serves to illustrate how colonial enclaves have always been generative of a subterranean world of economic and cultural lines of exchange of all types, which imperial attempts to control and manipulate only resulted either in their geographical dispersal, intensification, or both. That is perhaps the reason why *donde* ends with a close-up on a spherical map covering the space comprised by the Indian Ocean (Fig. 11).

Significantly, this is not a political map, but a geographical one, yet its political overtones could hardly be ignored. Even through the squared grid of latitudes and longitudes that this deformed panoptic illusion by which we absurdly still measure distances and dimensions, ones sees the lines and arrows that indicate trade routes, together with sea and wind currents. One could imagine a map that takes this further, and also includes, for instance, periodic immigrational flows of both animals and humans, as well as, why not, the tectonic forces that slowly but inexorably continually redraw in equal measure climate patterns, topographies and littorals- inscribing human history into a geological timeline of perpetual change. To be sure, the image's most immediate effect, and perhaps the author's conscious intention, is to help us visualize in its true geographical dimensions our (the Caribbean's) historical invisibility, as well as the meaning of not seeing ourselves on that part of the globe, because of the simple fact that empirically, our archipelagoes do not figure in it. This suggests, of course, that our historical invisibility has been, after all, ingrained in our spatial memory since Columbus' founding navigational blunder, which was geographical in the most planetary and cosmological sense of the term. That this region has, throughout its history, come to designate what Benítez Rojo has called 'a certain way' of being that has had this representational dislocation as its foundational cosmic referent.

But the deepest meaning of this gesture would be lost if we did not consider the radical displacement of that drifted gaze that is historically inscribed in the Caribbean subject. We can approach the same problem by asking what kind of subject would be contemporaneous with the set of conditions

imposed by modernity on natural spaces, if it is not the kind of archipelagic subjectivity that Caribbean and Oceanian individuals often incarnate in their daily lives. This image, taken in the context of what preceded it, indeed makes us question whether humans throughout their history have not related to space in much the same way, and whether this kind of subjectivity, for whom nothing else than the whole planet constitutes the only spatial disposition that can truly accommodate for the range of possibilities that capitalist modernity has opened up, by virtue of the depth and breadth of penetration into the forces of nature that its unsurmountable technological power carries with it. At any rate, this 'dis-oriented' gaze (literally 'lacking the Orient') forces us to question whether the nihilistic, world-negating drive of Christianity, by virtue of which modern European capitalism would have become the only spatial regime at humans' disposal has, on the contrary, only achieved, in its attempts to obliterate it, the amplification to a planetary scale of the truly archipelagic nature of both space and the creatures that inhabit it. Indeed, as any dimension of experience relevant to their mutual relation, making it the way that increasingly dominates interactions among human groups today, as well as between them and their places, to an extent that overflows whatever understanding of the phenomenon is enabled by the spatial and subjective coordinates of dwelling and urban settlements set forth by current institutional configurations of modern nation-states.

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Keywords

Caribbean, Oceania, Relation, archipelagic, tidalectics.

What we Have (and Have not) Learned from Early Research on China's Engagement in the Pacific

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Abstract

Ron Crocombe, *Asia in the Pacific Islands: Replacing the West*, (Suva: University of the South Pacific Press, 2007).

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Culling a selective yet representative set of works on China's growing presence in Pacific Island countries (PICs), this essay reviews and critically assesses early contributions to the field. To date, these contributions have been motivated by two primary goals: a) gathering high-quality descriptive data on precisely what China does in individual PICs, in what amounts projects are funded, and by which actors' projects are designed, negotiated, and carried out, and b) attempts to theorise China's motivations for providing such aid and investment. However, we also find that research on the way local actors shape and influence Chinese engagement, and how China adapts to local norms and behaviours, is thin at best, as are appraisals of the impacts of Chinese aid at the local and national levels more broadly. We conclude that these extant gaps comprise an agenda for further empirical research, and that filling them necessitates attention to Pacific experiences of Chinese aid at the micro, meso, and macro levels.

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As attested by a growing body of research, the past decade has witnessed a dramatic expansion of China's diplomatic and aid presence in Pacific Island countries. In this brief review, we contend that the time is now ripe for a stock-take of scholarship on China's Pacific engagement, with a view to assessing what is known, what critical gaps exist, and how this research program might proceed in the near-to-mid range future.

On one hand, the works reviewed here were motivated by a desire to better understand the rationale underpinning China's growing involvement in the Pacific Islands, a task that has produced two tangible, laudable results. First, understanding China's intentionality has necessitated the application of explanatory frameworks to China's Pacific strategy, particularly development aid. Consequently, we have learned much about how and why these policies work the way they do. Second, investigations into the architecture of China's policy toward the Pacific has accumulated much high-quality raw data on precisely where in the region China focuses its efforts, how much it spends, and what types of projects it prioritises; indeed, the Lowy Institute's "Map of Chinese Aid in the Pacific" is the leading source of such data.

This kind of descriptive data is essential to building good theory, and will continue to be important for the study of China's activities in particular Pacific states and territories, and across the region as a whole.

The problem, however, is that by virtue of the focus on Chinese means and motives, we do not yet have a firm grasp on its outcomes. The local, national, and regional impacts of China's aid and investment have, in general, not been well studied, nor have the roles of Pacific Islanders in mediating those impacts. Moreover, the drivers of China's foreign aid and investment system have been well studied in the context of other regions, especially Africa (see Bräutigam (2011); Tan-Mullins et al. (2010); Rotberg, (2008).) Continued emphasis in this direction is unlikely to unearth anything novel without

tapping into the differential results and perspectives at play in the Pacific. We therefore argue for a shift in focus, not away from China, but toward a more interactive approach that captures the nuanced ways in which local institutions and norms affect the way China's Pacific incursions unfold, and indeed, are shaped by their intended recipients.

The works by Wesley-Smith and Porter, Yang, and Zhang undertake two worthy tasks—accounting for China's changing role in the Pacific, and providing details as to precisely how China goes about its Pacific engagement, both in individual PICs and throughout the region as a whole. Delivering what they promise, these books are valuable sources of descriptive raw data and foundational frameworks for understanding Chinese foreign policy. Both functions are essential to knowledge-building, albeit in different ways, and have furnished the wider field of inquiry with logical starting point for what will surely be a decades-long research program.

As a group, these books also lend themselves to grounded speculation as to the intentionality underpinning China's presence in the Pacific, or alternatively, the risk of unintended consequences associated with engaging a powerful, well-financed, and relatively novel regional player. One is tempted, therefore, to speculate also about the likely responses of Pacific Islanders and their governments. However, these are not works about Pacific Island countries or peoples per se, and the authors did not set out explicitly to document Pacific responses to China, though Wesley-Smith and Porter do engage in a kind of preliminary enumeration to this effect. Rather, the books are about explaining China's interests and foreign policy in the Pacific. It seems unreasonable to assess a body of research for failing to reach conclusions it never intended and was not designed to provide, or for failing to answer questions not directly posed.

At the time at which the Wesley-Smith and Porter and Yang books were written (2010 and 2011 respectively), China's introduction to the Pacific as a geopolitical hegemon and provider of development aid was so fresh that scholars were mostly concerned with identifying basic patterns or trends (or their absence) and in amassing reliable descriptive data. Some borrowed from generalised theories of international relations to impose some intellectual order on emergent trends, as in the case of Yang's book. Others drew from knowledge networks steeped in area-studies specialisation and deep contextual understanding, as Wesley-Smith and Porter did. Amid the newness, some well-reasoned guesswork about what China's regional rise might ultimately mean for Pacific Islanders was perhaps inevitable, but simply not enough time had elapsed for hard-nosed empirical assessments of local or national-level impacts to be made.

China in Oceania is notable as the first of the texts on China in the Pacific to include several Pacific Island contributors. In the editor's words, "a central purpose of [the] collection is to give to those from the region who view China's influence from a grounded and local perspective, and whose voices are too often drowned out by external observers with their own axes to grind and ready access to popular and scholarly media" (2). The book stresses that there is no singular view of China's Pacific presence, but serves to highlight intra-regional

variation, incorporating views on China's presence in Fiji (Sandra Tarte), Samoa (Iati Iati), Papua New Guinea (Hank Nelson), The Solomon Islands (Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka), Tonga (Palenitina Langa' oi), and Palau (Takashi Mita), and peppered with perspectives from other regional players, such as Japan. Attempts are made to find a loose consensus, however. The editors conclude that, among Pacific countries, there is a general and quite understandable apprehensiveness arising from a lack of experience with China, but an appreciation for China's policy commitments, notably the intent not to intervene in the affairs of other states, and a lack of insistence on the conditionalities characterising traditional aid relationships. Now that a full decade has elapsed, it may well be time to revisit the rhetorical tenets of Chinese foreign policy in the Pacific, and assess how or how well they have been upheld from Pacific points of view.

Despite a concern for representation and voice, Wesley-Smith and Porter are still primarily occupied with Chinese intentions and invite us to view its Pacific engagement in the context of larger geopolitical interests. One gets the sense that the editors envisioned their main audience as lying outside the field of Pacific Studies and much closer to political science or security studies, given the amount of attention that is devoted to understanding just how much a sparsely-populated group of microstates matters to an emergent superpower. Indeed, the central question, "what is China up to?" (p. 2) is posed in light of the perceived irrelevance of the Pacific in terms of national interests in general. This perception is acknowledged directly on p. 12: "Oceania's low profile in global politics owes as much to its tacit status as an 'American lake' as to its marginal importance in the global economy."

Wesley-Smith and Porter make the case that in fact the Pacific holds more importance for China and the world than the smallness of constituent states might lead one to think. Part of the allure derives from Pacific nations' natural resource reserves, including those that may be found in the more than 30 million square kilometres of ocean comprising total area of Pacific states exclusive economic zones, and the belief that harvesting these is likely to become increasingly viable commercially. Strategically, however, the Pacific Islands are a locus of great power competition, having traditionally viewed as "Australia's patch," "New Zealand's neighbour", or the United States' "backyard." China's growing presence in the Pacific could thus be interpreted as an effort to wrest or match influence from these old allies. What is perhaps most interesting about this analysis is the extent to which geopolitical interests are conceptualised from the standpoint of outsiders, rather than Pacific islanders themselves. Because "Chinese interests" are treated as synonymous with "national interests" in general, one cannot help but think that China may simply be another in a long line of foreign entities that view the Pacific at best as a competitive arena and at worst a possession.

Yang paints a similar picture, albeit from a different intellectual standpoint. By positioning the Pacific Islands within the context of grand strategy—i.e. the pursuit of material gains by states and the competition that arises from these pursuits—Yang largely elides the issue of Pacific representation and voice. Instead, Yang takes "regional order" as his dependent variable, a term which by its nature directs focus away from individual Pacific

countries' experiences and view them in unitary terms. The chief explanatory variable is referred to as China's "involvement" or "presence" in the Pacific, which Yang conceptualises as trade, aid, and diplomatic linkage. Key to Yang's analysis is that the regional security order of the Pacific consists of much more than Pacific Island countries, but historically has consisted of a range of other stakeholders, including the US, Australia, New Zealand, France, and Japan, as well as the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan. As noted above, the book is a snapshot taken as this involvement was ramping up, and much has changed in the intervening decade. Still, the appendices provide a strong sense of the state of China's Pacific activities as of 2011, meticulously documenting investment figures development projects, and government-to-government visits.

In contrast to the Pacific studies perspective of the Wesley-Smith and Porter volume, Yang draws from his training as a Sinologist to elaborate the specific nature of China's interests, and the way the Pacific Islands may fulfil them. Both internal and external security threats (or perceptions of these) inform Chinese strategizing in the world, and protecting territorial integrity tops the list of priorities. Thus, international recognition and support for the ROC is viewed by Beijing as a major threat to its security (since under the 'One China' principle no foreign entity can recognise or have diplomatic ties to both), and combatting it a vital component of grand strategy. Along with the Caribbean, the Pacific Islands reflect a clustered base of support for the ROC, and are therefore prime targets for Chinese influence, usually spread in the form of economic benefits. By matching or exceeding levels of development aid from the ROC, for example, Beijing hopes to win new allies and squash the global clout of its "challenger" in one fell swoop. The rivalry with Taiwan is as prescient now as when Yang wrote—in late 2019, Kiribati and the Solomon Islands severed ties with Taipei and normalises relations with Beijing, shrinking the total number of states recognising the ROC to fifteen globally, and just four in Oceania (Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, and Tuvalu).

Zhang's *A Cautious New Approach* is likewise a book about Chinese foreign policy and how it gets executed. The book includes Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea along with Cambodia in a purposive sample of trilaterally-delivered aid projects, in which China partners with recipients and a "traditional" third party provider—Australia, in the case of Papua New Guinea's malaria control program, and the United States in Timor-Leste. Trilateralism, Zhang argues, is a new approach to aid to delivery for China, and a puzzling one. What accounts for the emergence of this triangular model when China has principally favoured bilateral aid delivery? Why would China partner for delivery with "western" donor countries? Are motivations for providing aid trilaterally different from China's motivation for giving aid in general?

The book has many excellent qualities, just one of which is its handiness as a thumbnail guide on the current state of Beijing's aid programme. More importantly, however, the book demonstrates that trilateral aid serves China's interests in several ways. In addition to benefitting international aid practice burden-sharing among donors, Zhang argues for trilateralism as a tool of Chinese

interests, driven by a) a concern for its reputation globally, and b) a desire to crowdsource knowledge and experience from the international partner. Theoretically, this claim is both constructivist and strategic. As Zhang puts it, the Chinese government "has strategically used trilateral aid cooperation to build its global image as a responsible rising power since the early 2000s. Technically, China has aimed to learn selectively from traditional donor states and international development organisations so it can improve its aid delivery via trilateral aid cooperation" (p. 22).

By its very definition, trilateral cooperation gives a degree of ownership over aid projects to recipient governments, and therefore is inherently more inclusive of these voices, including those in the Pacific countries specifically enumerated by Zhang. Willing participation in trilateral initiatives lends an air of credibility to Beijing's talk of "South-South cooperation", common identification with the struggles of other colonised peoples, and expressed desire to distance itself from the conditionalities of conventional "western aid", all of which have an understandable appeal for Pacific governments. However, the author is quick to point out that states do trilateralism too—it is not altogether new, but it is new to China. He also notes that those examples explored in the book are one small slice of an already small universe of cases, and that bilateralism is still Beijing's preferred aid modality by far. As with the other works explored here, the emphasis is on the formation and implementation of Chinese interests, rather than the results these produce on the ground.

Notwithstanding the constituent chapters of Wesley-Smith and Porter's book, the absence or marginalisation of Pacific island perspectives and voices is a central theme across Western contemporary scholarship on China's engagement with the Pacific islands. The works by Crocombe and Powles seek to address this in two distinct but equally significant ways that foreground Pacific perspectives and in so doing subvert the conventional hierarchies of knowledge upheld within much of Western scholarship on the Pacific. These books, therefore, serve as critical reflection points – as reminders – to scholars and observers seeking to shape the conversation about China in the Pacific.

Crocombe's *Asia in the Pacific Islands: Replacing the West* is arguably the foundational text for scholarship on Asian engagement with the Pacific. The book's preface states that "a spectacular transition is under way in the Pacific Islands" (i) from 'overwhelmingly' Western sources of external influence, 'whether cultural, economic, political or other', to Asian. As historian Paul D'Arcy wrote, 'Crocombe was on a wave of academic and government interest in Asian influence in the Island Pacific.' This indeed became a defining feature of Crocombe's subsequent work. The book itself viewed the rise of Asian influence in the Pacific as of potential benefit to Pacific Islanders, providing they [Pacific Islanders] "remain flexible and attuned to new circumstances, new players and new opportunities" (D'Arcy, 2014). To that end, the intended audience for Asia in the Pacific Islands are Pacific Islanders, their leaders, and decision-makers. Alongside a meticulously crafted argument, Crocombe weaves story-telling and personal vignettes to reinforce the primary message. Crocombe warns in the preface that

“it will pay Pacific people to understand Asia more deeply” and writes that the balance of influence in the Pacific is shifting towards Asia, a trend he argues is “irreversible”. Crocombe’s bottom-line is that the region fails to recognise this trend at its peril.

The text is encyclopedic in both form and scope and was informed by almost half a century of research (Tuimalaali‘ifano, 2010, p.373). As a result, it reads as part instructive, part cautionary, part stream of consciousness. The volume focuses on four dynamics identified as shaping Pacific-Asia interaction: people; hardware; politics; and software. Crocombe’s underlying concern is the nature of these transactions, how transformational these transactions are, and the implications for the Pacific.

The first section, *people*, charts the waves of migration from Asia to Oceania and what Crocombe refers to as the “counter-current” of. The second section, *hardware*, examines economic transactions - both licit and illicit - from trade and the exchange of raw and processed materials, investment and services, tourism and investment, through to transnational organised crime and corruption. In a later section Crocombe notes that these activities have integrated the Pacific into the Asian trading system. The third section, *politics*, questions why Pacific Islands is increasingly “looking North” and begins by noting the vacuum created by the closure of Western diplomatic missions in the region and the reduction in aid and engagement with regional organisations, considers the evolution of the ‘new’ political economy of the region, the rise of ‘south-south’ regional cooperation including new actors such as Indonesia, and the emergence of cheque book diplomacy between Beijing and Taipei. This section argues that a new strategic paradigm is emerging and it is clear that Crocombe considers that China is a central driver of this new paradigm as he threads together various aspects of growing Chinese engagement with Pacific countries across the security sectors including capacity building and training, uniforms, the exchange of military attaches, and even the offer of an elite commando unit to protect Vanuatu’s government in the event of a coup and the Chinese dominated private sector. Here Crocombe emphasises shifting threat perceptions and the suggestion that geopolitical contests may draw the region into a ‘new Cold War.’ With some foresight in thinking over a decade later, Crocombe outlines two potential strategic outcomes: the shift of Pacific island nations into the increasingly influential Asian (read: Chinese) sphere of influence as allegiances are tested and greater opportunities to support development are offered; or, alternatively, the alignment of Pacific island nations alongside a loose alliance between Western and ASEAN countries to “constrain Chinese expansion.” The fourth section, *software*, is concerned with the transference and transformation of ideas, values and beliefs as well as religion, information, education and research, and sport and culture. The fifth and final section seeks to chart the future of the trends outlined in the previous four sections and carries with it a series of warnings. Crocombe argues that ‘China is laying the foundations for greatly enhanced influence and power’ and that unless Pacific governments and societies, including media and the public, are better prepared to meet this shift in the balance of global forces towards Asia, ‘Pacific peoples will be disadvantaged in the coming directions’ (p.470). Notably, Crocombe

includes four appendices which consist of a who’s who of actors from Asian diplomatic representation in the Pacific Islands to inter-government and non-governmental organisations involving Asia and the Pacific Islands, to journals and videos of the Asia-Pacific region. It would be useful to do a stock-take of these resources now to chart growth and areas of focus.

Published in 2007, Crocombe’s *Asia in the Pacific Islands: Replacing the West* has retained its relevance. For Pacific scholars and students concerned with the shifting geopolitics of the region, revisiting Crocombe’s work serves as a critical reminder that contemporary scholarship on China in the Pacific owes a significant debt to his meticulous documentation of trends and transformations and his own personal lifelong reflections.

Seeking to address the dominance of largely Australian, New Zealand and American views, *China and the Pacific: The View from Oceania*, edited by New Zealand former diplomat, Michael Powles, is the product of a conference convened in February 2015 at the National University of Samoa (NUS), in Apia. Led by the New Zealand Contemporary China Centre (NZCCR) at Victoria University of Wellington, the conference was a partnership between NZCCR, NUS and Sun Yat-sen University of Guangzhou, a model of academic collaboration that is increasingly difficult.

The objectives of the conference were twofold. First, it was in response to increasing interest in Wellington, Canberra and capitals across the Pacific, as well as further afield, about China’s growing role and influence as a diplomatic, development and economic partner to Pacific countries and territories. To that end, the conference drew together ‘more than 40 international academics, diplomats, politicians, experts and officials’ to discuss issues ranging from geopolitics, to regional security, development cooperation, trade and investment, and the Chinese diaspora across the region. Second, and most significantly, the driving objective and ethos of the conference was to provide ‘a platform for Pacific voices to be heard and the opportunity for engagement and discussion between Pacific and other participants’ (10).

The edited volume notes that Pacific Island views on the challenges and opportunities that China’s engagement in the region were ‘paid little heed’ despite Pacific Island governments quietly developing bilateral relations with China, or, in some cases, with Taiwan (15). In that respect, the conference aimed to ‘break new ground’ by prioritising views from the Pacific Islands; holding the conference in the Pacific itself – the first conference of its kind to be held in a Pacific country; and providing opportunities for perspectives to be exchanged between scholars and officials from the Pacific Islands and China.

Given the current climate of heightened US-China tensions and growing dissonance between Western and Chinese governments and universities, this edited volume capturing Pacific perspectives about the challenges and opportunities China presented to the region is especially valuable, including references to ‘the China alternative’ in terms of geopolitics and development cooperation, in particular. This term has since been adopted by Dame Meg Taylor, Secretary-General of the Pacific Islands Forum, who has unequivocally stated that ‘I reject the

terms of the dilemma which presents the Pacific with a choice between a China alternative and our traditional partners. Unfortunately, this framing remains the dominant narrative in the public debate about our region in the context of today's geostrategic competition' (Taylor, 2019).

The publication is a 'comprehensive compilation of presentations analysing the benefits and challenges of accommodating and managing China's presence in Oceania, and identifying areas for further policy development and implementation' (To, 2017). Powles, in the *Introduction*, echoes Crocombe writing 'China is in the Pacific to stay...its influence is likely to increase and...Pacific Island countries need to acknowledge and accommodate that' (16). This message is reinforced throughout the book with strong emphasis on constructive engagement and less attention paid to the increasingly popular 'China threat' discourse although security concerns are not wholly dismissed. Samoan prime minister, the Hon. Tuilaepa Lufesoliai Sailele Malielegaoi, directly addresses 'colliding interests and inevitable rivalry' (26) between China and the US and reinforces the Pacific as an 'ocean of tranquillity'. Others challenged the security implications of the oft-repeated mantra that 'the Pacific is big enough for all us' – directly quoting then US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, in 2012 (264).

A key theme throughout the book is the agency of both Pacific Island countries and the region itself in relations with China. Prasad suggests that Pacific Island countries 'use their sovereignty...as a resource' to negotiate Chinese participation in various sectors of their economies (178). Moreover, Prasad reflects that growing engagement with China is part of a broader trend of Pacific countries diversifying their foreign relations with a range of countries outside of the traditional donor relationships (178). Dulciana Somare-Brash expands on 'island agency' in the context of Chinese aid to Papua New Guinea, challenging the traditional aid donor approach and arguing 'the onus is on us as Melanesians' to 'enhance achievable governance ideals and standards in the face of increasing interest in our sub-region (180-181) including calling for Melanesian models and knowledge to be adopted (183-184). Peseta Noumea Simi cites the reforms Samoa has undertaken to strengthen how Samoa engages with development partners (184) and explores the challenges Samoa faced in the implementation and delivery of Chinese aid (185-187). To that end, Simi calls for building more durable development partnerships with China through trilateral cooperation with other development partners, a preference for grant assistance rather than concessional loans however greater involvement in the tender processes if concessional loans continue to be China's preferred financing modality (p.188).

Tarcisius Kabutaulaka suggests that because of China's role in resource sectors across the Pacific that it will ultimately impact Pacific Island countries' economies and politics, potentially even influencing regional geopolitics (231). This, Kabutaulaka argues will in turn influence how major powers conduct themselves in Oceania and 'Pacific Islands will therefore need to prepare to deal more with China as an economic and political ally' (231). He posits that the 'challenge for Oceania is to feed and tame the

dragon, and then ride it on the development voyage.' In response, then deputy head of mission of the Chinese Embassy in Suva, Yang Liu, responded by saying "...you do not have to feed or tame the Dragon to live with it. What you need to do is simply to treat the Dragon as a friend rather than a threat or pet, and then you can easily win its heart (21).

The conference, and book, was, after all, a talanoa between academics and officials from the Pacific Islands and China. This review has focused on Pacific perspectives on China's role and influence in the Pacific because these perspectives continue to be marginalised in current debates about regional geopolitics. The perspectives of Chinese officials and scholars captured in the book are similarly nuanced and were notable for the willingness of Chinese officials to engage with Pacific participants even on sensitive aspects of China's involvement in the region (262). Five years after the conference, Powles' *China and the Pacific: The View from Oceania* continues to offer critical insights into Pacific – and Chinese – perspectives on China's role and influence in the Pacific Islands region. For that reason, and because it is unlikely to be replicated in the short-term, it holds a particularly significant position within scholarship on China and the Pacific.

Our intention here is not to call out sins of omission. The works reviewed in the forgoing paragraphs have generated much of value, and indeed, Pacific perspectives and implications do figure in some of them. However, consideration of these has heretofore been uneven. Our principal aim is therefore to prod those exploring China's Pacific presence to think about the extensions of the field, and the central position Pacific voices and views must play in these. Their inclusion needs to be intentional and deliberate. After all, their elision in some of the above works was never driven by any desire to exclude but was a by-product of questions designed to probe the complexity of China's foreign policy-making at its source, as opposed to grappling with the impact of China's engagement on Pacific people and places, and the lessons they alone can teach.

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Keywords

China, Pacific Island Countries, Development Assistance, Foreign Aid, Belt and Road (BRI)

Exploring Sustainability through Chinese Study and Interest in the Sāmoan Language: A Situational Analysis Informed by Fa'afaletui

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Abstract

Sāmoa and the Pacific region has become an area of intense geostrategic importance of late. With a rising China expressing interest in the Pacific and a reposturing US, Australia and New Zealand, the success of all sustainability efforts in the region will be mediated through the lens of geopolitics. This paper intervenes in this conversation by focusing on the commitment to culture and cultural diversity articulated as part of the framework that guides the New Urban Agenda through the question of language. We explore potentiality in the recent rise of Chinese interest in Sāmoan language learning and studies as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) for the preservation of Indigenous Pacific languages like Sāmoan. To answer this question, we use a blended research methodology (Sāmoan fa'afaletui framework with Situational Analysis) to map the factors that have led to the rise of Chinese interest in the Sāmoan language. In doing so, we critique the present geostrategic explanation for the BRI through presenting a nuanced model of factors and explore what space there is for Sāmoan to be promoted in places like China. This is important, the Sāmoan language, like all Pacific languages, is intrinsic to the understanding and embodiment of cultural knowledge systems that bear major significance on the sustainability and diversity of Pacific world views and ways of knowing.

Introduction

An important part of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) for the Pacific and Pacific nations like Sāmoa, speaks to the centrality of culture and cultural diversity to sustainability efforts (Soini & Dessein, 2016). Culture plays an essential role in the dynamic construction of individual and collective identities, and it promotes social cohesion, inclusion and equity (Hosagrahar, Soule, Girard, & Potts, 2016). The cultural dimension of development has often been undervalued, or seen as an optional extra in comprehensive urban development (Duxbury, Hosagrahar, & Pascual, 2016). Thus its relationship with sustainability is not thoroughly understood. Recently, culture has been regarded as a critical component of sustainable urban development and innovated the definition of the NUA (Duxbury, Hosagrahar, & Pascual, 2016; Hosagrahar, Soule, Girard, & Potts, 2016). More specifically, there is growing acknowledgement that indigenous knowledge, cultures, and traditional practices can contribute greatly to the diversity and richness of civilizations, which collectively constitute the common heritage of humankind (Duxbury, Hosagrahar, & Pascual, 2016).

Language is a central component of culture, as cultural knowledge is inextricably tied to, and expressed through language (Taumoevalau, 2013) of which Sāmoa/Sāmoan is no different. Ensuring Pacific languages continue to thrive is thus an essential way in which the NUA speaks to a more holistic understanding of sustainability in the Moana-Oceania region. As a region, the Pacific has always been subjected to the whims of the geopolitical ambitions of outside forces through colonisation, falling victim to the race for colonies at the turn of the

20th century (Moses, Pugsley & Conference, 2000). More recently, the Pacific has become the focus of renewed geo-political posturing as a rising China has asserted itself more prominently in the region (Atkinson, 2010; Hansen & Fifita 2011; Thomsen & Jun 2018; Zhang 2007). Considering the complexity in this space, this paper enters the conversation from the position of language sustainability by exploring the potentiality for the promotion, and subsequent spread of the Sāmoan language in China through the mapping of nuanced factors and actors via an interpretive situated fa'afaletui analysis.

Sāmoan Language and the Impact of Colonialism

Sāmoan is the Indigenous language of the Independent State of Sāmoa (referred to as Sāmoa) and the US territory of American Sāmoa. In both countries, English is also an official language as the most commonly used medium of business, administration, media and education (Biewer, 2015). Sāmoa and American Sāmoa experienced colonisation in different ways. As its name suggests, American Sāmoa was and continues to be under American influence, whilst Sāmoa passed from being briefly in German hands to New Zealand hands before becoming the first Pacific Island nation to gain independence in 1962 (Meleisea & Meleisea, 1987). In both locations, the countries' connections to their colonial masters have led to an uptake of English that influences local language patterns. In American Sāmoa, research suggests that there has been a shift toward English, leading to increased attrition rates of native Sāmoan competencies (Huebner, 1989). Biewer (2015) also explains that there is now the existence of South Pacific English, where Sāmoans have modified English in everyday usage.

Sāmoa's colonial history begins with Dutch explorer Joseph Roggeveen being the first European to land in Sāmoa in 1721. By the 1820s, a significant number of Beachcombers lived in Sāmoa with some locals taken on-board by sailors (Meleisea et al., 1987). Significantly, when the missionaries arrived (1835), they subsequently translated the Bible into Sāmoan (Thomas, 1984), reflecting a preference to convert Indigenous populations in the Pacific using local languages (Biewer, 2015). As there was never any wide scale European settlement that took place in Sāmoa, significantly, the rise of English in the Sāmoan islands as means of communication came through colonial administrators that instigated British/American style bureaucracies and eventually an English-centric education system (Biewer, 2015).

In Sāmoa, the New Zealand administration (1914-1962) setup state schools whose medium of instruction was English-only, whilst all other schools retained Sāmoan as the medium of instruction. Up until 1945, the New Zealand administrators did not allow Sāmoans to receive secondary school education. When this ban was lifted, secondary schools in Sāmoa were taught with New Zealand teachers using a New Zealand curriculum. Biewers (2015) asserts that this combined with the increasing usefulness of English in business and outside trade, coupled with the demand for the United Nations to prepare Sāmoans to be part of a global community of nations, increased the attractiveness of English in Sāmoa. In American Sāmoa, a similar story unfolded, with the US administration setting up schools using English and American curriculums, directly enhancing the importance of English in the colony by instituting English-only classrooms (Huebner, 1986, 1989) and promoting work and education opportunities in America for local residents including through professional sports like American Football (Uperesa, 2014).

However, the prevalence of English language use in Sāmoa has been criticised as a quirky hangover of colonialism (Huebner, 1989), which undermines the importance of the local language. This is a significant point, as Sāmoan, like all Indigenous Pacific languages, reveals specific and unique worldviews (Taumoevalau, 2016) that are important to preserve the cultural diversity that exists in the region. This point becomes even more pronounced as Sāmoans are a mobile people (Liomaiva-Doktor, 2009; Vaa, 1992). Due to Western Sāmoa's historical colonial connection to New Zealand, many Sāmoans have moved to and established generational families there, and Sāmoan is the third most widely spoken language in New Zealand today (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). This is important as competency in one's heritage language has shown to be an important factor in one's cultural identity that impacts wellbeing for Pacific Peoples in New Zealand (Manuela & Sibley, 2015). Thus, considering the prevalence of English in the region and the dispersal of the Sāmoan population abroad, the Sāmoan language is at risk of being undermined further by global trends in English usage. As the NUA emphasises the need for cities and communities to protect both tangible and intangible cultural assets (Duxbury, Hosagrahar, & Pascual, 2016; Hosagrahar, Soule, Girard, & Potts, 2016), the issue of language sustainability in Sāmoa is an area of worthy consideration.

Little research has looked at the sudden rise of Sāmoan language studies in China. Recently, the Beijing Foreign Studies University began offering Sāmoan as a language option (BFSU, 2020). In the first semester, twelve students enrolled in the Sāmoan language course. Some scholars infer that China's current interest in Pacific languages is part of an attempt to expand its sphere of influence in the Pacific region (Blanchard & Flint, 2017; Blanchard, 2018; Rolland, 2017). And it is often discussed as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which can be characterised as an economic and geopolitical strategy that seeks to solve domestic and international challenges (Wang, 2016; Rolland, 2017). As such, in recent years, heightened scrutiny on its purposes, motivations, and implications have been discussed among scholars worldwide (Blanchard & Flint, 2017; Chan, 2017; Feng & Ma, 2019; Huang, 2016; Kolosov et al., 2017; Rolland, 2017; Wang, 2016; Zeng, 2016; Zhou & Esteban, 2018).

Since 2012, China's economy has entered the so-called "new normal" state with three major problems to solve, namely the overcapacity in labour-intensive industries, imbalanced development in different provinces, and excessive foreign exchange reserves (Wang, 2016). Therefore, the priority of the BRI is to create more economic opportunities for China domestically and internationally (Feng & Ma, 2019; Wang, 2016). This is especially true for the western provinces who are able to better access resources, energy, and infrastructure cooperation with neighbouring countries in Central Asia and South Asia (Feng & Ma, 2019; Rolland, 2017; The State Council, 2019). And in cooperating with other developing countries through the BRI, China has also sustained and continued its economic growth and changed its development paradigm from relying on imports and investment to domestic consumption and exports (Huang, 2016).

Meanwhile, China is also concerned by regional developments considering the geostrategic move by the United States (US), who are actively seeking to consolidate their influence in Asia and the Pacific through its Pivot to Asia (Feng & Ma, 2019; Haenle, 2019; Wang, 2016). In other words, the BRI has not only pursued economic fruition and cooperation with its neighboring countries, at the same time, it strives to achieve China's geopolitical and strategic expectations on a wider stage in order to ensure its status at an international level (Rolland, 2017). Blanchard and Flint (2017) argue that even though the main focus of the BRI is centred on economic projects and investment, China has intended to deliver its development narrative to BRI member countries as well. Specifically, instead of targeting and challenging the influence of the US, the BRI promotes mutual benefits, interests, and respect, which symbolises a new pattern of cooperation between countries in the globalisation era (Feng & Ma, 2019; The State Council, 2019; Wang, 2016). Meanwhile, one of the most significant narratives that China attempts to deliver through the BRI is the concept of "establishing a regional community of common destiny", which points out the same interests, concerns, and responsibility shared by all human beings (Zeng, 2016). Therefore, it can be seen that China is cultivating students with the capacity to tell a better China story to a broad audience (Feng & Ma, 2019; Wang, 2016). Those who are capable of proficiently speaking Indigenous

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languages will contribute to the further implementation of BRI. Thus the recently launched Pacific language learning projects in China's universities have attracted more and more Chinese students and teachers devoted to learning and teaching a third language besides Mandarin and English in China.

Considering the active pursuance of BRI by the Chinese government and the implied connection between the BRI and the rising interest regarding Sāmoan language in China, mapping the factors that connect the two must be undertaken as the BRI includes people-to-people exchanges driven by individuals who must then be resourced by institutions backed by state policies. Thus, the next section of the paper will focus on mapping the factors and their connections using Situational Analysis and Fa'afaletui. This is important, in order to explore the opportunities in the promotion of Sāmoan in China - which impacts the sustainability of Sāmoan language abroad - having a nuanced understanding of the interconnections between different actors should also be presented.

Situated Fa'afaletui Analysis (Methodology)

The methodology for this paper combines Adele Clarke's (2005) Situational Analysis (SA) with insights from Sāmoan methodological framework fa'afaletui (Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave, & Bush, 2005). We term this approach a Situated Fa'afaletui Analysis (SFA). SA in particular grounds qualitative analysis in the broader situation of inquiry, paying special attention to a wider range of differences in the data, and taking nonhuman elements into analytic account (Clarke, 2005). In SA, the situation of inquiry is empirically constructed by making three kinds of maps, namely the situational map, social worlds/arenas map, and a positional map. (Clarke, 2005; Clarke, 2015a, 2015b). In fa'afaletui, social arenas and differentiated perspectives encourage an analysis of social phenomena that map out the complexity of social relations, constructed using Sāmoan social hierarchy and metaphors from a Sāmoan worldview (Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave, & Bush, 2005).

A situational map aims to help the researcher to lay out all the elements which are needed to understand the social phenomenon (Kalenda, 2016). Social worlds/arenas maps emphasise the importance of actors at the social meso-level, providing an understanding of how individuals relate to various social groups, and how a situation is influenced and negotiated by the discourses constructed by society or social institutions. Lastly, positional maps cover the main relations of those involved elements in a given situation based on the semantic axes which can be found around central themes or problems identified within the situation being researched (Clarke, 2005; Clarke, 2015a; Clarke, 2015b). First articulated by Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave, and Bush (2005), fa'afaletui as a research method weaves together knowledge and experiences from different levels of people within Sāmoan communities for the "purpose of substantially enhancing and adding to the Sāmoan worldview" (Suaali-Sauni & Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2014, p.334). Sāmoan society is hierarchical in nature; therefore, people are consciously aware of their social status, which also provokes different positions to view any issue from (McCarthy, Shaban, & Stone, 2011). The research method fa'afaletui

differentiates three positions deploying Sāmoan metaphors to analyse the social phenomenon. Researchers gather opinions from three levels, namely "people at the top of the mountain", "people at the top of the tree" and "people in the canoe" (Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave, & Bush, 2005). These three perspectives not only represent Sāmoan social hierarchy, but also allow differences and connections to be drawn out between those with higher status like community leaders and matai (chiefs), to individual households and the community, and lastly, relevant individuals (McCarthy, Shaban, & Stone, 2011).

In this project, we use three situational maps that combine insights from fa'afaletui and SA to illustrate the complex nature of factors that impact the development of Sāmoan language studies in China. The three maps collect primary and secondary sources to build their content. We conceptualise these as a map from the top of the mountain (the government), from the top of the tree (social institutions), and in the canoe (individuals). The individuals in the canoe are two Chinese lecturers/students who studied Sāmoan in Hawai'i and New Zealand (author perspective) that responded to questions that probed the reason for their interests in taking up Sāmoan language studies. Their views will help us to connect the different layered elements to the rise of Chinese interest in Sāmoan language. Overall, the perspectives from these three levels will provide the potentiality to scrutinise the situation from different positions (Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave, & Bush, 2005) and more importantly allow us to examine what the implications are for Sāmoan language learning sustainability through the Chinese interest in the language.

The Map of the View from the Top of the Mountain

By the end of 2019, the Chinese government had signed 195 Belt and Road cooperation documents with 136 countries and 30 international organisations (The State Council, 2019). Through the BRI, those at the top of the mountain intend to foster a new approach to state-to-state relations, one that features dialogue rather than confrontation and seeks partnerships rather than alliances (The State Council, 2019; Belt and Road Portal, 2017; Global Times, 2015). China has presented itself as a promoter of a global, open, and dynamic international market for all countries to expand business opportunities. One way the BRI tries to achieve this is through the investment for infrastructure connectivity projects to developing countries where high-quality infrastructure is needed. By the end of June 2019, a total of 16,760 China-Europe freight trains had carried almost 1.5 million TEUs of goods, reaching 16 countries and 53 cities abroad (The State Council, 2019).

Economic globalisation has dramatically facilitated trade, investment, flows of people, and technological advances. Meanwhile, these market integration activities have been deployed by people from China and other countries. Hence, people-to-people interactions have been developing alongside these infrastructure activities as cooperation is extended to more areas.

Perhaps of greatest relevance to our research focus is the development of relationships as vital in promoting more

substantial exchanges and mutual learning through closer people-to-people ties (The State Council, 2019). In 2019, among the 136 countries that had signed BRI cooperation documents with China, China had concluded mutual visa exemption agreements with 113 countries covering different types of passports, which to a large extent is designed to facilitate the personal contact and communication between China and other countries (The State Council, 2019). In the coming future, frequent contacts and communication with people from China and other countries will be deepened with the extension of the BRI into a broader range of countries and regions.

The Map of the View from the Top of the Tree

The first social institution that plays a significant role in Sāmoan language development is a Chinese university which plans to establish professional language learning centres for Pacific languages. This university enjoys high prestige nationwide and abroad for its specialisation in language studies (Ministry of Education, 2016). As most Chinese universities are guided by the government, this university follows the guidance from the top of the mountain to implement teaching goals and establish language majors that are attuned with the BRI. One of its objectives was to establish language learning centres covering all BRI participating countries to cultivate language talents in response to China's future development (Ministry of Education, 2016). These language talents will facilitate communication with local people in BRI member countries. Meanwhile, they will

also take the responsibility of helping to tell the China story in a better way to a broad audience. In doing so, the frequent contacts and communications with local people are aimed at fostering deepened friendships and transmitting China's soft power influence to a wider range of countries and regions.

Another social institution that represents a view from the top of the tree is the China Scholarship Council (CSC). This non-profit organisation is affiliated with China's Ministry of Education that supports international academic exchange with China (Yan, 2018). CSC provides both funding for Chinese people to study abroad and for international students and scholars to study in China. Potential candidates can join various projects according to their educational background and research areas. In sponsoring a great number of students and scholars to study overseas every year, CSC requires the sponsored students and scholars to come back and work in China after finishing their studies. The rationale for this policy is that it will be conducive to the future development of Chinese academia and research quality. Also, as a non-profit organisation which receives most of its funding from the government, CSC has designed a series of programs to cultivate talents based on China's development needs. In this regard, it has connected the people from the top of the mountain with the people in the canoe as most of their programs reflect the government's development need for high-level talent.

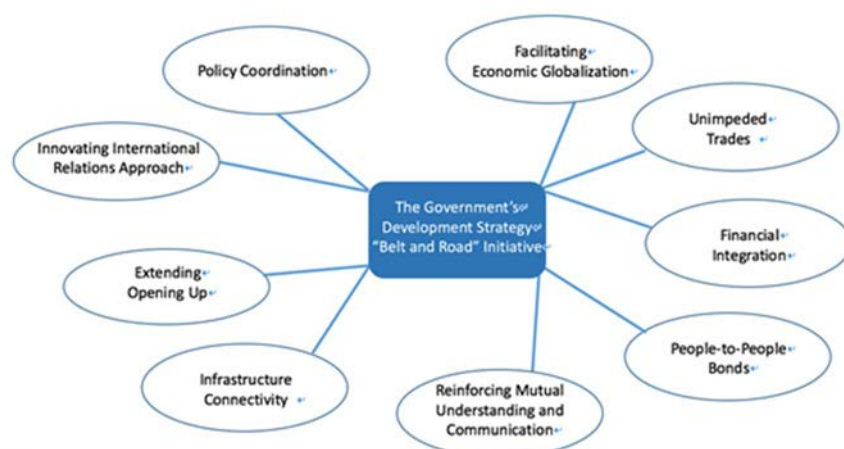


Fig. 1: The Map of the View from the Top of the Mountain



Fig. 2: The Map of the View from the Top of the Tree

The Map of Perspectives from People in the Canoe

The first perspective in the canoe comes from a Chinese lecturer who recently started teaching Sāmoan language courses at a university in China. In 2015, Zoe (pseudonym) was informed that the university she worked for would take steps to establish eight South Pacific language majors in response to the increasing need for China's communication and cooperation with the South Pacific countries after the BRI was launched. Later, Zoe was selected to participate in the discipline construction program. She was excited and interested in Sāmoan language studies when she heard about the new grand strategy, the BRI, and how it would extend its cooperation and connection to the Pacific area in the coming future. Also, she believed that this might be a significant opportunity for her career as a Chinese scholar in this newly-emerging research area in China, which requires the talents of more academics and researchers. In her words, she saw the "promising potential" and "unique position" in the Pacific studies as a research area and an inevitably important component in China's future development discourse. Hence she became determined to join and devoted to the construction of Pacific language majors.

Since then, Zoe has worked in a team to design a detailed development plan to establish the Sāmoan language major at her university. Meanwhile, Zoe and her colleagues searched for learning opportunities at foreign universities to study Pacific languages. Later, Zoe was offered the chance to study Sāmoan language at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, which she referred to as "a significant advantage" in her Sāmoan language learning experience. Meanwhile, Zoe prepared to apply for the China Scholarship Council (CSC) to sponsor her to learn the language at a foreign university. In 2017, she was successfully admitted to the scholarship project of the International and Regional Issue Studies to offer her a scholarship to study overseas, which, to a large extent, has relieved the financial burden required to take up this

opportunity. Later that year, she went to the University of Hawai'i at Manoa to study Sāmoan language for a year.

When asked about the motivations of studying Sāmoan language, Zoe talked about several aspects that have influenced her. China's new developing strategy, the BRI, allowed her to take interest in the Pacific region. Because of the BRI and its related programs, the Pacific has moved to the center of China's diplomatic discourse and is presented as a significant component in the Maritime Silk Road Construction (Blanchard & Flint, 2017; Pan, Clarke, & Loy-Wilson, 2019; Wang, 2016). Meanwhile, Zoe cites career development as a Chinese scholar and university lecturer as a personally motivating factor. As a recent area of interest in Chinese academia, Zoe believes that compared to other disciplines where numerous Chinese scholars have carved out careers in the past, this field (Sāmoan language and Pacific Studies) could provide her with space to explore her own academic development. In addition, Zoe also expressed how she wanted to utilise her Sāmoan language capacity to offer language courses to Chinese students as a teacher to contribute to the development of her university

Over the following two years, she worked on collecting study resources and contacting potential Sāmoan teachers. She went to the University of Auckland, New Zealand for two months and bought a lot of study materials for Chinese students, including textbooks, dictionaries, and storybooks. She also successfully recruited a Sāmoan teacher who has expressed a high willingness to work at her university. "It was quite a relief for me", she said, "as I have found a true companion who can face the challenge with me together". In 2020, the first Sāmoan language course was started at Zoe's university. It is offered also as an optional course open for all students to take if they are interested. In the first semester, twelve students enrolled in the elementary Sāmoan language course, including three international students. When she heard the news that she would have twelve students in the class, "I was excited to see them", Zoe said, "It's a very great start, isn't it?"

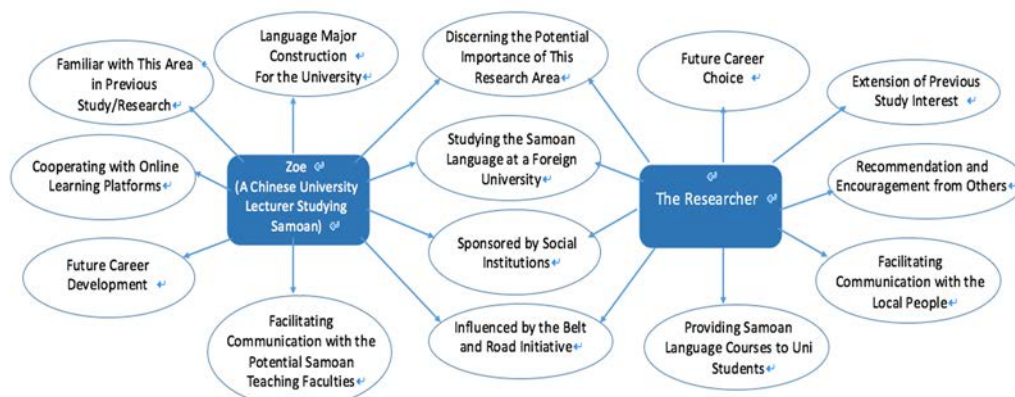


Fig. 3: The Map of Perspectives from the People in the Canoe

Zoe also indicated that her university would take steps to establish eight Pacific language majors, including Sāmoan, Tongan, Māori, Cook Island Māori, Niuean, Fijian and others. The language courses are just the first steps for the discipline's construction. With more teaching faculty on-board, they hope to not only increase teaching capacity but also enrich course content and expand their teaching and learning areas to include the cultural, social, political, and economic aspects of Sāmoa and the Pacific region. During the interview, Zoe expressed high confidence in fulfilling the goal of recruiting students to take up the Sāmoan language major at her university in the next five years.

When discussing the possible factors that may influence the future students' and teachers' motivations in learning the Sāmoan language, Zoe first addressed this issue from students' perspectives. She asserted that as long as the BRI continues, the South Pacific region would remain a relatively prioritised position in China's geopolitical, economic, and diplomatic discourse. In this regard, she expects that more students will express interest and willingness to know more about this area and learn more Pacific languages. Also, Zoe emphasised the significance of the university's contributions as the university can boost the students' study passion, specifically how the university will provide resources to help develop the Pacific language majors. She explained that students would be more interested in choosing these majors if they consider them conducive to their self-enhancement.

Secondly, from the aspect of Chinese scholars and university lecturers, Zoe suggested that they should consider their positions within the nation's and the university's future development. Most Chinese universities have actively taken on the task of cultivating specialised talents for the future development of the country. Therefore, university teachers should stay aware of the country's development goals and identify potential opportunities for their careers. In this regard, the BRI has provided a great opportunity for Chinese scholars to explore unfamiliar areas. Their knowledge, experiences, and views are of great value to China who is attempting to establish itself as a responsible stakeholder and committed to telling a better China story on the international stage.

In 2014, I was admitted to the same university as Zoe's and majored in English Language and Literature. In December 2017, I was informed that my school was recruiting participants for the faculty cultivation program in South Pacific Languages. This program intended to cultivate non-universal language teachers for the university's Pacific language majors, looking for candidates among senior undergraduate and postgraduate students. Fortunately, after a series of assessments and examinations, I was chosen as one of the five participants.

There are several reasons why I chose to participate in this program. Firstly, I saw it as conducive to my future career as the candidates in this program will be given a lecturer position at the university after studying the language at a foreign university. Becoming a university lecturer is a highly coveted position in China, which I also aspire toward. However, it is incredibly challenging to receive a permanent position at China's first-level universities, even with qualifications from prestigious foreign universities. This project provided a rapid pathway into academia, which heightened its attractiveness. Secondly,

as a newly developing field in China, Pacific language studies requires in-depth exploration by Chinese scholars from Chinese perspectives. The research and teaching possibilities here are rich. Further, my proficiency in the Sāmoan language, I believe, will be conducive for my future study and research career.

For me, despite my considerable personal interest in Indigenous Pacific languages and cultures, the motivations of learning Sāmoan language were more associated with pragmatic motives such as employment opportunity and career development. The opportunity to study at a foreign university on a scholarship was a massive motivator as well as the promise of a potential lectureship upon my return is a very attractive proposition for anyone. Indeed, though Zoe and I may have different standpoints and purposes when we participated in the program, we agreed that the influence of the Chinese government, the university, and other social institutions should not be overlooked in contributing to the rise of Sāmoan language studies in China. Their involvement has built up a foundation for Sāmoan language studies in China and attracted talented individuals to continue developing it further.

Concluding Discussion

Through the construction of the map of perspectives from people in the canoe, the reasons and motivations that have influenced relevant individuals' participation in Sāmoan language studies have been displayed in visual form. The views, experiences, and perspectives of the people in the canoe are very valuable as they are the main actors on the ground. At the same time, their experiences and perspectives reflect how people from the top of the mountain and top of the tree exert influence on individual choices. This suggests that there are layered complexities that impact the rise of interest in Sāmoan language learning and teaching in China and among Chinese students/teachers. In analysing the perspectives from the canoe, it is clear that their motivations implicate far more complex inter-relatedness among influencing actors including those on top of the mountain, and those who sit on top of the tree.

What this suggests then is that China's implementation of the BRI with its renewed focus on the Pacific will enhance the attention China directs toward the region. In developing further people-to-people contact, China will need to continue to develop a workforce that is competent in Pacific languages. With the establishment of language majors in Chinese universities, and as the Pacific region heightens in importance due to its geostrategic value, we can expect more Chinese nationals to take up the learning of Pacific languages like Sāmoan. In many ways, the geostrategic posturing in response to Australia, New Zealand and the United States, means that China has an opportunity to build Sāmoan language capacity that helps to challenge the centrality of English, whilst recruiting Sāmoan students to learn Chinese in exchange.

For the spread and sustainability of the Sāmoan language, this is a potential opportunity that will help to position the value of Sāmoan language beyond it being a mere accompaniment to English as the main lingua franca in the region. The fact that online learning is a major possibility for shifting Sāmoan teaching in China to wider audiences

also speaks to this potentiality. In recent years, the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and Small Private Online Course (SPOC) have worked closely with Chinese universities to offer courses to a more extensive audience. MOOC is an online course platform that offers lectures with unlimited participation and open access via the Internet (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2016). The creation of MOOC and SPOC has enlarged the base of learners and offers them the flexibility and choice to study courses based on their needs and conditions. This flexibility and convenience that these online courses provide also provides additional opportunities for students in China to learn more languages outside of formal institutions.

Another optimistic reading of this potential can be found in the way in which the different layers and perspectives of the maps are interwoven and mutually shape each other. It is clear that those at the top of the mountain have provided a grand strategy that resources those that sit at the top of the trees to build the capacity of those that are positioned in the canoe. This means that as long as the resources and strategic direction from China continues to focus on Sāmoa and the Pacific, that the potential for the learning of Sāmoan language will perpetuate. As a key focus of the NUA is to ensure that culture (of which language forms a central component part), there is the opportunity for Sāmoan as well as other Pacific languages to leverage this geopolitical situation to their advantage.

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Language; Sustainability; Sāmoa/Sāmoan; Belt and Road Initiative; Fa'afaletui; New Urban Agenda

Pacific Peoples in Tertiary Education in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Abstract

Even though Pacific peoples in tertiary education in Aotearoa New Zealand strive to achieve milestones which bring honour and prestige to their families and communities in New Zealand and the Pacific, socio-economic factors still hinder many from achieving their set goals. This article begins by relating the author's own narrative as a Sāmoan living in the Pacific diaspora and working in tertiary education in Auckland. It then outlines the diverse aspirations of Pacific peoples living in New Zealand, with a focus on the educational hopes of recent migrants as well as New Zealand-born members of Pacific communities. These aspirations are presented with reference to the existing literature on Pacific success within tertiary education in Aotearoa New Zealand. We discuss how education providers support Pacific students, and the ways in which institutions are working to improve Pacific educational outcomes. It is argued that even if the New Zealand Tertiary Education Strategy (TES), the Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020- 2030 (APPE), and Unitec's Pacific Success Strategy 2019- 2022 are aligned in their goals, more effort is needed to ensure that these initiatives are implemented effectively through multi-disciplinary and value-based approaches. This article adds value by providing an insider's perspective of migration and a first-hand account of the challenges facing students in higher education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Moreover, the analysis contributes to the repertoire of academic studies and publications that help to understand and improve the Pacific experience in tertiary education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Introduction

While acknowledging that Pacific peoples have historical ties with Aotearoa New Zealand that predate western colonization, this article focuses on Pacific peoples in New Zealand in the context of a more recent history dating back to the 1950s and 1960s. At that time, an economic boom in New Zealand led to the recruitment of low-skilled Pacific Islanders from Fiji, Tonga, and Sāmoa, which formed the beginning of the thriving Pacific communities visible today. Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand reflect the diversity of the wider Pacific. They are part of a complex world that calls for an in-depth exploration. Research into this broader context is essential to understanding and improving Pacific success in tertiary education. The perspective presented here are part of that body of research and reflect the author's experience within the Pacific diaspora living in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Accordingly, the article begins by briefly recounting the author's experience of migration to Aotearoa New Zealand. It is a narrative that may resonate with the stories of many others living in the Pacific diaspora. It is an important story to tell because it has informed the author's professional role in contributing to Pacific success at Unitec, a tertiary education provider based in Auckland. By telling this story, the author aims to provide a personal introduction to the many challenges faced by migrants to this country and provide insight into her own position within the diaspora.

Having done so, the article will define and position Pacific peoples within the New Zealand context with specific references to migration, diversity, and education. It will then discuss the participation of

Pacific peoples in tertiary education and explore various factors that impact Pacific success. The author discusses how education providers support Pacific students, and the ways in which the New Zealand government and other educational institutions are working to improve Pacific outcomes. The author suggests that although the New Zealand Tertiary Education Strategy (TES), the Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020- 2030 (APPE), and Unitec's Pacific Success Strategy 2019- 2022 are aligned in their goals, more effort is needed to ensure that these initiatives are implemented effectively. It is further argued that Pacific success can be enhanced through the adoption of multi-disciplinary and value-based approaches in higher education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

My Story

In early 2009, my husband, our oldest three children and I embarked on our dream journey to New Zealand, a place that we hoped would bring our goals and aspirations to reality. We CHOSE to move to New Zealand after considering many things, as do other migrants. While the migration journey is never an easy feat, it is sometimes undervalued by those in the receiving countries, New Zealand in our case. Also, there is a common assumption that peoples' choice to migrate was always forced because they struggled to make in to their home countries. However, this is not necessarily true. All migrants in New Zealand have come for various personal reasons and thus have different narratives behind their migration. For this reason, people should never make generalisations or assume that migration is the same for everyone.

Upon arrival, our sense of loss was tremendous, and emotions associated with leaving loved ones and our home were overwhelming. However, we were comforted because my parents and four of my five siblings were already residing in New Zealand at that time. Unlike many other Pacific migrants, we had a place that we temporarily called home while we started to look for employment and a home for just us. I would be lying if I said that our NZ dream was fast becoming a reality because it has not been the case. My husband and I assumed that we would be snatched up quickly because we had tertiary qualifications, good careers, and good references. Unfortunately, twenty-plus unsuccessful applications and six months of being unemployed brought feelings of defeat that made me feel as though we had made a mistake. We were not entitled to any government welfare benefits because we were new migrants. For a range of reasons, I felt that New Zealand's social services were not very helpful in our situation. As a result, my husband was forced to take up a low-income job to ensure we could support our three growing children at the time. He worked at a scrap-metal factory in Mangere, which was a far cry from his Manager position with Sāmoa Shipping Services.

Our faith in God's love and provision sustained us through tough times, especially when we felt New Zealand had not given us a fair go. We persevered in sending applications for roles similar to what we had had in Samoa, but without any luck. It reached a point where I knew the outcome before I sent the application in; always with the same response, "no relevant NZ experience", and "the calibre of applicants was greater" than what I had to offer. Hence, every time I received a response, it chipped away at my confidence.

In September 2009, our situation changed. I was called to attend the first of three interviews for a job supporting Pacific adult learners at a private training establishment (PTE) with a reputation as a Pacific education provider. We were ecstatic about the possibilities that lay ahead with this opportunity. I got the job! Interestingly, my three-plus years with the PTE was mixed with good and bad experiences. Although working with Pacific peoples was good, I found the PTE's processes and system challenging to deal with. I started to dislike the nature of the work as it went against my principles. My role was to see peoples' potential and help them realise it. The process and systems seemed to work according to a different set of priorities.

In 2013 I resigned and was blessed to find work as a Pacific Academic Development Lecturer (PADL) at Unitec. This new role restored my faith in systems and processes. As a PADL, I am now part of the Pacific Centre team tasked to provide academic and pastoral support to Pacific learners based at the Waitakere Campus. I quickly started to form relationships with my colleagues and Pacific students. My experience as an adult student and migrant living in the Pacific diaspora enabled me to recognize and understand the stories of struggle and resilience that students shared with me. Their experiences were similar to mine and I could understand where they were coming from. Hence my passion for the role.

I have always been an advocate for fair and just access to resources for the marginalized, and Pacific learners are clearly marginalized. But I also came to realise through my discussions with them that unless the current systems and processes are changed for Pacific by Pacific, successes will continue to be a challenge.

Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand

For many Pacific migrants, New Zealand offered opportunities that were not always readily found in the Pacific Islands. The lucrative offer of paid labour saw an influx of Pacific migrants working and settling in New Zealand (Bedford & Hugo, 2012; Sauni, 2011). By 1971, New Zealand's Pacific-born residents increased to just under 31,000 (Bedford & Hugo, 2012). The patterns of chain migration characterised how Pacific peoples migration to NZ, especially from the 1950s to the 1980s. Chain migration describes how a family would send one person to settle and find employment, send remittances and save for the next family member to join them. For many, the process continued until entire families were reunited. Pacific migrants chose New Zealand as a destination for multiple reasons, although one of the key reasons was education. Also, though physical distance separated the migrants from their homelands, their sense of cultural identity remained strong. Another factor was the strong spiritual practices of many Pacific migrants. Faith-based organisations ensured they remained connected with others from similar backgrounds. Chain migration strengthened family ties and increased the importance of the church in Pacific communities.

According to Fasavalu and Thornton (2019), the term 'Pacific peoples' refers to a concept that broadly describes those who identify with Pacific Island cultures. Previously, Pacific peoples were known as 'Pacific Islanders'. This term dated from a time when those in New Zealand were migrants who were predominantly born in the Pacific islands. In the New Zealand context, references to Pacific peoples are synonymous with the term 'Pasifika' which is a construct of convenience for government policy-makers that appeals to the sense of unity among Pacific peoples in the New Zealand context (McKenzie, 2018). However, this term is not accepted by many and is seen as problematic because it does not correspond to a word in any Pacific language, even though it is similar to the Samoan word *Pasefika*. Te Kete Ipurangi [TKI] (n.d.) explains that Pasifika is a collective term that refers to peoples from Sāmoa, Tonga, Niue, Cook Islands, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Fiji, and Kiribati who live in New Zealand. Despite the concerns, the term Pasifika continues to be used in New Zealand to group peoples from the Pacific into one population. In this article, the term 'Pacific' will be used to refer to Pacific learners in New Zealand and Pacific nations, their cultures, and practices.

This note on terminology is important because government policy-makers often view Pacific peoples as a homogenous group, whereas Pacific peoples see themselves as part of interconnected but distinct communities and nations. References to Pacific peoples should be made to acknowledge this diversity. Pacific peoples refer to peoples from the multiple Pacific islands who are practitioners of one or more of the living

cultures that exist in New Zealand. Macpherson (2001, as cited in Lee, n.d.) explains that references to Pacific populations, which insinuate Pacific peoples are of a homogenous culture, are often misleading. This paper acknowledges that Pacific peoples are not a homogenous group, despite shared similarities in social-cultural, economic, and political characteristics. These commonalities do not overshadow the unique nuances of the individual Pacific islands themselves. In other words, Pacific peoples comprise those who identify with one or more Pacific cultures. It also references those Pacific peoples living in NZ who belong to either Island-born or New Zealand-born groups (Anae et al., 2001). As mentioned above, peoples born in the islands migrated for various reasons and have considered New Zealand to be their home away from home. From the 1950s to the 1980s, they accounted for the majority of all Pacific peoples living in New Zealand. However, New Zealand's Pacific population has changed since then and is now comprised of a majority of more than 60% NZ-born Pacific peoples (Ministry of Pacific Peoples, n.d.).

In the past the use of the term Pasifika covered over the diversity of Pacific peoples. In more recent times however, the complex nature of the Pacific and its peoples, including their unique cultural heritages have been recognized and acknowledged as a permanent part of the New Zealand tapestry. New Zealand's recent (and current) governments have led social, cultural, economic, and political reforms that acknowledge and recognize Pacific peoples as "a significant, vibrant and diverse part of New Zealand society" (Pasefika Proud, 2020, p.8). This recognition is a positive step and allows for government agencies to capitalize on the shared values common to Pacific peoples: The values of love, family, collective, respect, spirituality, reciprocity (Pasefika Proud, 2020), and humility. Accordingly, government agencies have recently developed and implemented strategies that acknowledge the differences Pacific peoples represent, so it is increasingly possible to take advantage of shared values, principles, and practices (Pasefika Proud, 2020). These key Pacific values are reflected in multi-disciplinary approaches that ensure issues which impact Pacific peoples are addressed in culturally relevant and appropriate ways.

While much progress has been made since the 1950s in terms of recognition of Pacific diversity and access to different types of education and employment, there still needs to be a push for more participation. Pacific peoples are engaged at all levels of society, however, it may well be useful to develop Pacific ethnic-specific targets to ensure a thriving and diverse Pacific population. This type of issue, one that seeks to balance recognition of Pacific diversity and leveraging shared Pacific values and practices, is pertinent in the context of education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Pacific Peoples in Education

New Zealand's Pacific population is predominantly youthful, with a medium age of 23.4 compared to 38.0 for the general population (Ministry of Pacific Peoples, 2020). For this reason, Pacific peoples must participate

at all levels of education for a thriving New Zealand. Pacific peoples' migration stories typically reflect the desire to have a good education and the dream of attaining higher qualifications. Pacific peoples share aspirations of higher education qualifications that will bring honour and prestige to their families, communities, and Pacific countries of origin (NZ Human Rights, 2020), better employment opportunities, and improved health outcomes (Marriot & Sim, 2015). Despite a growing population and aspirations for educational achievements, Pacific peoples lag behind other populations in education participation rates and achievement at all levels. Success in education for many living in New Zealand has not been easy. As one researcher notes: "The journey to becoming a 'successful' person (whatever that might mean) continues to be a struggle in a competitive, multicultural and capitalist society" (Sauni, 2011, p. 53). And while Pacific peoples' participation in tertiary education is increasing, significantly fewer people attain a bachelor's qualification when compared with Europeans (Ministry of Pacific Peoples, 2020). Specifically, only 7.1% of Pacific peoples have a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 18.6% of Europeans (Marriot & Sim, 2015).

There are multiple reasons why many Pacific peoples commence tertiary studies; one key one is honouring their migrant parents' dreams and family, which also brings benefits for families as collectives (Samu, 2010 as cited in Boon-Nanai et al., 2017). Despite aspirations to acquire higher qualifications, compelling circumstances often impact their ability to do so. According to Mila-Schaaf et al. (2008, as cited in Bentley-Gray, 2021), Pacific learners' inability to access resources results from considerable economic disadvantages. Lee (n.d.) explains that financial pressures also result from Pacific peoples' involvement in cultural activities that need many to provide resources that enable the exchange of gifts at weddings and funerals.

In addition, despite the reasons for taking up tertiary studies, many Pacific learners encounter challenges that affect success and continuation. Toumu'a and Laban (2014, as cited in Bentley-Gray, 2021) describe it as a 'double-edge sword'. On the one side, acquiring a higher qualification will bring benefits, but on the other, family responsibilities make it unlikely for the person to continue, if support is not offered. Benseman et al. (2006, as cited in Boon-Nanai et al., 2017) reported that family pressure was among one of the factors that hindered non-traditional students' studies. For example, some learners are expected to care for younger siblings and other family members, as well as being responsible for the studies and work of others. Ultimately, juggling multiple responsibilities with studies becomes so difficult that giving up their studies becomes the best solution. Significantly, however, many Pacific learners who do manage to overcome the challenges while undertaking tertiary studies find that their perseverance pays off for them and their whole families; their success is not theirs alone but their families' as well (Samu, 2010 as cited in Boon-Nanai et al., 2017). Clearly, then, to overcome this difficult situation, Pacific peoples must have equitable access to resources and education where

their identities as Pacific peoples are embraced, and where their specific cultural context is recognized.

Education Strategies and Action Plans

The Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) ensures that all tertiary education organizations (TEOs) take responsibility for offering higher education to all, including Pacific peoples, who aspire to enter and be successful in their education experience. The TES establishes the “long-term strategic direction for tertiary education” (Tertiary Education Commission [TEC], 2020, para. 1). Accordingly, TEOs must demonstrate commitment to eight priorities in their respective investment plans (Tertiary Education Commission, 2020). The eight priorities include:

...the achievement and wellbeing of all learners, ensuring that places of learning are safe and inclusive and free from racism, discrimination, and bullying; reducing barriers to success and strengthening the quality of teaching to give learners the skills they need to succeed in education, work and life taking account of learners' needs, identities, languages and cultures in their planning and practice... (Tertiary Education Commission, 2020, para. 3)

If the TES priorities are followed, Pacific peoples should be able to access tertiary education and be more likely to achieve because they would be safe in their learning environment without being concerned about discrimination and bullying due to their cultural identities. Consequently, Pacific peoples' participation and completion rates could be expected to go up. Further, as Pacific remains one of four Priority Groups across multiple sectors, including tertiary education, TEOs are expected to commit resources to them and must demonstrate how they meet the needs of its respective Priority Group learners.

In addition, the Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020-2030 is a 10-year plan to ensure Pacific peoples “feel safe, valued and equipped to achieve their education aspirations.” (Ministry of Education, 2021, para. 3). The plan has five key areas in which it hopes to increase Pacific peoples' success rates at all levels of education in NZ. These include the following aims (Ministry of Education, 2021, para. 5):

- work reciprocally with diverse Pacific communities to respond to unmet needs, with an initial focus on needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic;
- confront systemic racism and discrimination in education;
- enable every teacher, leader and educational professional to take coordinated action to become culturally competent with diverse Pacific learners;
- partner with families to design education opportunities together with teachers, leaders and educational professionals so aspirations for learning and employment can be met;
- grow, retain and value highly competent teachers, leaders and educational professionals with diverse Pacific whakapapa.

The government and its agencies have endorsed (and are committed to) implementing the Action Plan for Pacific

Education 2020-2030. Importantly, it includes resources that will lead to positive educational outcomes for Pacific peoples (NZ Human Rights, 2020).

Unitec

Formerly known as Unitec Institute of Technology, Unitec New Zealand Limited, is one of the country's 16 institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITPs). ITPs have provided vocational and technical skills training on a competitive model under which the number of courses increased. However, these courses were found to be of limited employability value and student enrolments began to fall. In 2018 it was reported that the viability of ITPs was in doubt: Radio New Zealand News reported that “the government warned that institutes of technology and polytechnics were struggling and began work on a new structure to make the sector less vulnerable to swings in student enrolments” (RNZ, 2018).

The current Labour-led government aimed to create one national ITP, of which the previous 16 ITPs would become subsidiaries. Through the Reforms of Vocational Education (RoVE) initiative, they aimed to centralise and coordinate vocational education so that it would become more meaningful for learners, employers, and communities (Tertiary Education Commission, 2021). The national ITP, Te Pūkenga - New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST), is planned to be fully rolled out in 2023 and should implement the priorities identified in the Tertiary Education Strategy and the Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020-2030.

The bail-out and restructuring of vocational training and skills education have been significant. It is now more critical than ever Pacific peoples are included in all discussions to ensure their interests and needs are reflected. In this new framework, Unitec aims to maintain what it currently provides well and improve other ways to ensure Pacific interests are prioritised.

Te Noho Kotahitanga (TNK)

Embracing Māori values is a key to this new strategy. Unitec's foundational document, Te Noho Kotahitanga (TNK), is premised on core Maori values which hold that all peoples, including Pacific peoples, are acknowledged through Rangatiratanga (Authority and Responsibility), Wakaritenga (Legitimacy), Kaitiakitanga (Guardianship), Mahi Kotahitanga (Co-operation) and Nākau Māhaki (Respect) (Unitec, 2020). TNK demonstrates Unitec's commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in which it acknowledges Māori as tangata whenua. Students are “invited to embrace these principles because there is evidence it will add value to the career path...chosen” (Keelan, n.d. as cited in Unitec, 2020, para. 15). In line with these values, all learners, including Pacific learners, at Unitec are welcomed to the Unitec community through a traditional Māori ritual, a pōwhiri which signifies members' commitment to each other (Unitec, 2020). The adoption of these values as guiding principles and practices should support Pacific learners in their studies and help to make their experiences at Unitec more meaningful. Also, the values-based system embraces multi-disciplinary

approaches to ensure Pacific learners are supported to achieve set goals.

Unitec's Pacific Success Strategy 2019- 2022 aligns with the Tertiary Education Strategy (2020) and the five goals of the Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020-2030. This alignment ensures its commitment to Pacific learners at the Institute. Unitec's Pacific Centre plays the role of modifying, advocating, and championing the four goals of the Pacific Success Strategy 2019-2022. The goals provide a clear direction in ensuring all staff contribute to Pacific success. The goals stipulated in the Pacific Success Strategy 2019- 2022 (Unitec, 2021, para. 15)

Are the following:

- 1) Increase Pacific student success, completion, and participation rates.
- 2) Grow Unitec staff capability and capacity to empower and support Pacific students
- 3) Grow Pacific knowledge and awareness in Learning, Teaching and Research.
- 4) Develop and maintain partnerships with Pacific communities and stakeholders.

The Pacific Success Strategy (2019- 2022) goals are actioned under the Pacific Success Strategy Operational Plan (2019- 2022). This strategy aims to address the concerns raised earlier in this article around ensuring accountability, providing culturally appropriate support, and ensuring the diversity of the Pacific is respected and acknowledged. With these challenges in focus, the Pacific Centre acts in good faith with the various parts of the institution to make sure all staff are responsible for Pacific success. In partnership with Pacific and non-Pacific staff, the Pacific Centre works with specific groups to ensure multi-disciplinary approaches provide Pacific learners with optimum opportunities to succeed. To ensure effectiveness, the Pacific Centre Director, alongside the Deputy Chief Executive (DCE) Pasifika and others, reports to the institution's Pacific council, Fono Faufautua whose members hold Unitec accountable for progressing Pacific learners' goals and aspirations (Unitec, 2021). Additionally, the Pacific Centre comprises staff from diverse Pacific ethnic groups who contribute to the overarching goal of Pacific success at Unitec by incorporating ethnic-specific and pan-Pacific approaches that best support Pacific learners. Therefore, at Unitec, Pacific learners are valued as are other learners, and the Pacific Centre actively engages to ensure the best possible options are provided to improve Pacific success and retention.

Conclusion

Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand reflect the diversity of the Pacific, whether they be migrants or NZ-born. The richness and depth of experiences that Pacific peoples have provides insights as seen and experienced by Pacific peoples themselves. The reasons for migration and their presence in this country are different and need to be acknowledged and respected; all allude to making a change and chasing opportunities, including

acquiring higher education qualifications. The Pacific diaspora communities in New Zealand have historically experienced challenges that undermined and displaced peoples and cultures, which was symbolised by the catch-all term 'Pasifika'. Still, resilience and perseverance have been shown to change the path of Pacific peoples today and the ones they will traverse in the future. The government-led strategies and action plans illustrate this new situation which is being implemented throughout the country. Pacific migrants and their children should all have equal access to resources that enable every person to succeed; the policies and systems that are being created to improve people's livelihoods should value the differences as much as the similarities. However, although efforts and resources have been invested in closing the gap, much more needs to be done to ensure a more equitable and responsive New Zealand for Pacific peoples. The transformation in the ITP sector is currently being worked out; thus, it provides a prime opportunity for Pacific peoples to negotiate and implement what is being learned, and how that learning should be done to ensure wider and more meaningful engagement. It is hoped that this will ultimately lead to more success for all Pacific learners.

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Keywords

Pacific, Education, Unitec, Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020- 2030, Tertiary education Strategy, Māori Values

Outside in the Moana? Chinese International Students' Experiences of Studying in Pacific Studies at The University of Auckland, New Zealand

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Abstract

Scholarship that explores the experiences of Chinese International Students in New Zealand have identified language barriers, differing rationale in classroom participation and “face” as a concept that mediates their scholastic journey. At the University of Auckland, New Zealand, the majority of Chinese international students take up majors such as finance, computing and engineering. This paper is the first to explore the experiences of Chinese international students majoring in Pacific Studies at a postgraduate level. We make use of data gleaned from critical autoethnographic and talanoa interview methods to explore the uniqueness of this positionality through a thematic talanoa. In doing so we argue their experiences are similar but also differ in important ways from other Chinese international students, in that those in Pacific Studies were also presented with a greater awareness of the need to negotiate their lives between multiple cultural contexts: Mainstream New Zealand society, Pacific Studies – a learning environment that emphasises decolonisation and Indigenous knowledge – while living as Chinese students in a foreign land.

Introduction

In July 2018, three Chinese students arrived in Auckland, New Zealand to take up studies for a master's degree at the University of Auckland (UoA). They were among almost four-thousand Chinese international students that joined the UoA in 2018, however, these three were unique in that they were to join the Centre for Pacific Studies (CPS). They would be the first Chinese international students who had been sent to New Zealand to take up a Master of Pacific Studies degree at the UoA from a Chinese university and sponsor.

Their ability to study at the UoA was made possible through sponsorship by the Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU). The BFSU is a top Chinese university that offers the largest number of foreign language majors at different levels in China (BFSU, n.d.). Proclaimed on its official webpage, BFSU teaches 101 foreign languages including Māori, Tongan, Sāmoan, Cook Islands Māori and Niuean. These five Pacific languages, however, are under a Newly Established Language Major Program and the university is actively recruiting staff that can facilitate the teaching and research of these languages. The interest in these objectively less commonly taught languages in China is driven by a key objective of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to have the ability to teach official languages covering all countries that are in diplomatic relationship with China (BFSU, n.d.).

According to the UoA, In 2018, among the 8020 international students who enrolled there, 3870 of those came from China. This greatly outnumbered the second-place country in terms of international

students: the United States (US), which numbered 630 students (UoA, 2018). Among those Chinese international students, the most popular majors are finance, computing and engineering (EIC Education, 2018). While China is clearly one of the most significant source markets of international students for the UoA, no Chinese international students have enrolled in a postgraduate program in the CPS at the UoA prior to 2018. Being one of the global leaders in Pacific Studies, the CPS works with and for Pacific communities to sustain and create valued ideas and knowledge about histories, identities, mental health and wellbeing, cultural exchange and languages (UoA, n.d.). The CPS at the UoA presents a different classroom context as it was the first academic centre focused on Pacific knowledge, languages and scholarship to be established in a New Zealand university (UoA, n.d.). Besides its interdisciplinary nature, the CPS centres Pacific approaches to teaching and learning methods, which promotes the decolonisation of Pacific Studies in New Zealand and abroad.

As such, until now, there has been little opportunity for work to be conducted into the experiences of Chinese international students in this space. This paper presents one of the first attempts to begin to plug this empirical gap and is based on a study conducted as part of graduate work that explored the experiences of Chinese international students studying Pacific Studies at the UoA. This study aimed to explore two underlying mapping research questions: 1. what are the main themes and characteristics of Chinese students' experiences of studying in the CPS at the UoA? 2. How are these experiences different or

similar to other Chinese students' studying in New Zealand? We conclude that although certain similarities exist in the challenges experienced by this cohort in the CPS and other Chinese international students, those in the CPS found themselves uniquely placed, having to navigate three worlds: Mainstream New Zealand society and classrooms based on foundational whiteness (Kidman and Chu 2017, 2019), a Pacific-centred worldview that emphasises decolonisation in learning and praxis (Thomsen et al., 2021) and negotiating relationships with other Chinese international students who lived in a Chinese social bubble in New Zealand. This paper reports the study findings using a thematic talanoa (Thomsen 2019; 2020, Thomsen et al., 2021).

Selected Literature Review

Scholarship that explores the experiences of Chinese students as International Students in New Zealand have identified language barriers, differing rationale in classroom participation and "face" as a concept that mediates their scholastic journey. This selected literature review presents some of the work that has helped to inform our understanding of Chinese international students' experiences of studying in New Zealand.

A key feature of studies that have attempted to theorise Chinese international students' experience in New Zealand identify language barrier as a major intervening variable. In Holmes's (2007) study, which was based on interviews with thirteen Chinese international students as participants, it was demonstrated that participants' listening and understanding skills did not equip them well for extended native-speaker delivery in lecture contexts. Similarly, Du-Babcock (2002), in a study of Hong Kong students found that the students' listening skills were not sufficiently developed to sustain a 50-minute lecture given by a native English speaker. Other studies also reported Chinese students encountering difficulties within New Zealand's classroom (Butcher and McGrath, 2004; Ho, Li, Cooper, and Holmes, 2005; Zhang and Brunton, 2007; Zhong, 2013). Reasons participants gave were the variety of accents exhibited by the multicultural faculty. They became confused when teachers departed from notes projected overhead and began to enrich lectures by using humour and examples.

Related to this, prior research has also found that Chinese students are exposed to different pedagogical approaches in Chinese classrooms in comparison to Western and more specifically New Zealand classrooms. According to Holmes (2006), Chinese education is characterised by memorisation, rote learning, and repetition. Ballard and Clanchy (1991) labeled this approach: a conserving attitude to learning, and Greenholtz (2003) described this method as surface learning where knowledge is treated as a commodity between teachers and students. By contrast, Greenholtz (2003) claims that Western education is generally described as Socratic, where knowledge is generated, or co-constructed, through a process of questioning and evaluation of beliefs. Problem solving and critical thinking skills are also considered to be important (Greenholtz, 2003). Ballard and Clanchy (1991) described this approach as an extending attitude toward learning.

In terms of local integration, according to a survey run by the Chinese embassy in New Zealand (2012), 83% of Chinese students in New Zealand say they mainly interact/make friends with other Chinese. Despite this, 67% of respondents agreed that there is a need to be engaged in communications with local students (Education Office of Chinese Embassy in New Zealand, 2012). Interestingly though, 35% of participants intimated that they had never interacted with local students. This demonstrates that despite Chinese international students acknowledging a need to develop stronger intercultural interactions and communications, other factors were preventing them from doing so. Those factors according to prior research related to (but are not limited to) language barrier and cultural gap (Ho, Li, Cooper, and Holmes, 2007). Similarly, in Holmes's (2006) study on Chinese students' competency of intercultural communication, mutual understanding and goal achieving are two key factors to describe the competency of communication when facing a diverse society which Chinese international students encounter in New Zealand.

An interesting concept which has been identified as impacting the experiences of Chinese Students' studying in New Zealand is that of "saving face." In Chinese culture, face is an abstract concept. The definition of face is constantly negotiated, however, scholars tend to agree that the concept of face is related to shame, respect and honour (Wu, 2004). To give face is an important social manner in Chinese tradition. In short, when one encounters a person they are not so familiar with, one should create a low profile and try not to make the one they are interacting with feel embarrassed or to "lose face" (Wu, 2004; Jiang, 2006; Holmes, 2007). When it comes to classroom interactions in New Zealand, it is often manifested in politeness, friendly silence in conversation in order to avoid confrontation of opinions and discouragement to compete with others (Wu, 2004; Jiang, 2006). The fear of making mistakes and losing face further discouraged Chinese students from speaking up in New Zealand classrooms (Holmes, 2006; Zhong 2013).

Methodology

In this article, we make use of critical autoethnography combined with talanoa dialogue to build the analysis of the paper into a thematic talanoa. Critical autoethnography as a method provides the researcher a start with a familiar topic: the self; whereas other methods dealing with ethnography usually start investigation with an unfamiliar topic: the other. By adopting autoethnography, we will have direct access to intimate information that can investigate the author's own experience in depth (Kennett, 2010). The benefits of this method includes (1) a research method friendly to researchers and readers; (2) it enhances cultural understanding of self and others; and (3) it has the potential to transform the self and others to motivate them to work toward cross-cultural coalition building (Kennett, 2010).

Kennett (2010), however, also cautions that the data extracted from the self needs to be put into cultural context and its analysis and interpretations must be appropriately situated in theory in order to avoid creating a mere

autobiography. Critical autoethnography is often also criticised for an excessive focus on the self in isolation from others; for its overemphasis on narration rather than analysis and cultural interpretation; an exclusive reliance on personal memory and recalling as a data source; a somewhat negligent consideration of ethical standards regarding others in self-narratives; and an inappropriate application of the label “autoethnography” in certain instances (Kennett, 2010). To ameliorate these limitations, the autoethnographic data will be balanced with insights from another participant who was interviewed using the principles of talanoa, and all interpretations and themes were cross-checked by another researcher to bring a more impartial perspective on the arguments and interpretations presented here.

Moreover, we argue that autoethnography in this case is a valid method to collect data as the research questions relate to experiences of Chinese international students. As one of the authors is a member of the small cohort of Chinese international students studying in Pacific Studies, self-reflective pieces are still valid sources of knowledge, whose validity must be judged with these limitations in mind. All data in qualitative social research carries limitations, and the first step is always acknowledging them transparently (Thomsen 2020). Furthermore, as this research follows Pacific Research Methodological insights, there is an inherent acceptance that the ontological and epistemological position this research takes is based on a social construction of reality that is open to further interpretive conjecture (Thomsen 2018).

Talanoa, according to Vaoleti (2016) is linguistically in Tongan made of two parts: “tala” meaning to inform, tell, relate, command and ask; and “noa” meaning of any kind, ordinary, nothing in particular, purely imaginary or void’ (Vaoleti, 2016). Thus, it is roughly translated into talking about nothing in particular (Vaoleti, 2016; Suaalii-Sauni and Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2014). The method of talanoa is described as a “personal encounter where people story their issues, their realities and their aspirations” (Vaoleti, 2016). Furthermore, talanoa is the “process in which two or more people talk together, or in which one person tells a story to an audience who are largely listeners. Talanoa is guided by rules of relationship and kinship” (Vaoleti, 2016). Therefore, in talanoa, the participant as well as the researcher is encouraged to participate actively and add their own opinion and stories to the data. This runs contrary to conventional interview protocols where participants are usually placed as subjects of the study and will only reply to a set of fixed questions predetermined by the researcher (Suaalii-Sauni and Fulu-Aiolupotea, 2014; Vaoleti, 2016; Tecun (Daniel Hernandez), Hafoka, ‘Ulu’ave and ‘Ulu’ave-Hafoka, 2018). These principles that guide talanoa were used in the generation of data that is reported in the thematic talanoa below.

The participant is considered a junior master’s student in Pacific Studies who is in the same BFSU Pacific Island Language programme as one of the authors. This means that there are similarities and specific differences to how both came to be in Pacific Studies. It was this shared genesis in the field that we find an appropriate starting point for the development of a talanoa that is rooted in shared experiences. This is important as the research project aims to map out what the experiences of Chinese

international students may look like in Pacific Studies and use this approach as the starting point for theorisation.

During the conversation, which was conducted in Mandarin then translated into English by the researcher, the researcher participated actively and was involved in an iterative discussion with the participant to generate an organic environment that does not place the participant as solely an object of the study, but rather an active contributor to co-constructed knowledge (Thomsen, 2019). This contrasts with conventional Western methods of qualitative interview principles popular in disciplines such as anthropology and sociology, where often the predominant goal of the interview is to excavate data to glean contextualised (but still objective) truths (Thomsen, 2020). These semi-structured interviews were informed by the talanoa methodology. While key points of interests were listed prior to the talk. It was made known to the participant that the researcher would offer personal views and experiences that they could challenge and/or legitimate at their discretion. This is important, as Vaoleti (2006) points out, in a talanoa participants must feel free to question and challenge the researcher during the session. The following section presents the thematic talanoa, which according to Thomsen (2019, 2020) uses participants’ words as anchoring points, centred in the pages whilst interpretations and theory are built around them in conversation with prior literature.

Thematic Talanoa

Theme 1: Language Barriers

An important recurring theme was how encountering language barriers impacted experiences of studying in CPS. Both researcher and participant conveyed disappointment that their level of academic English skills inhibited full participation in classroom discussions and activities. The participant expressed concerns around the multiple times that they could not understand class content. This finding sits in-line with many studies on the experiences of Chinese international students’ in New Zealand that have identified this previously (Holmes, 2005; Ding 2006; Holmes, 2006; Zhang and Brunton, 2007; Ho, Li, Cooper, and Holmes, 2007). Language level also resulted in discouragement from asking questions for clarification, while language barriers continued to affect the study experience. When asked about concerns over communication experiences, the participant stated:

PARTICIPANT: What I am missing now is daily communication skills. For example, the simplest “Hello, how are you?” “I’m fine, thank you” that was taught to us over and over again in school. Do you think native speakers of English actually greet each other like this? It is totally impractical and dogmatic. Through my learning process from elementary school to college, I felt a strong fixation on grammar and model answers. There was not much “fluidity”. Language itself is fluid and developing. If you use model answers to reply to someone in daily communication, it is very awkward. There are lots of slang words in spoken language. We don’t have any exposure to that at all. At school the emphasis was solely on grammar.

To start an English conversation with “Hello, how are you” and then reply with the model answer “I am fine, thank you, and you?” is included in perhaps the most widespread English starter lessons in China. While being

acknowledged as dogmatic and mocked by later generations, it remains a symbol of Chinese English teaching pattern which emphasises model answers. In Holmes's studies (2005; 2006), this is often exposed by English speaking classroom environments which emphasises self-elaboration and non-moderated discussion. Previous studies on differences in classroom teaching between Chinese classrooms and Western classrooms suggest that this makes it difficult for Chinese students to learn in Western classrooms (Greenholtz, 2003; Ho, Li, Cooper, and Holmes, 2007; Zhang and Brunton, 2007). In contrast to previous studies, the participants indicated that they were not unfamiliar with Western style classroom activities, nor were they incapable of being active in a Socratic teaching context.

PARTICIPANT: I think the seminar-form classes are quite common at postgraduate level in China. When attending postgraduate school in China we had seminar classes. That's basically in all the classes, you do need to express your opinions or deliver a presentation. It was very helpful. And I would definitely be more critical when using Mandarin.

This is an important finding as it runs contrary to Greenholtz's (2003) assertion that dislocation of Chinese learners in a Western classroom was caused by the differences of nature between Chinese and Western education. The participant specifically acknowledged the language obstacle of being more critical in participating in classroom discussion, whilst the format in which classes are being run is not unfamiliar to them. This suggests that Chinese international students are not unaware of the differences in learning styles, nor are they coming completely blind into the New Zealand classroom. This means that the language barrier and cultural gap may be a more significant factor.

Theme 2: Cultural Gap

When talking about experiences of studying within Pacific Studies, both acknowledged a lack of understanding related to general information about daily life including transport, urban layout and lifestyles in New Zealand which echoed previous research (Holmes, 2006). Furthermore, there was a lack of understanding of the unique cultural context that exists in New Zealand. This was exposed when encountering Pacific and Māori culture for the first time. The knowledge gap (which was also a cultural gap), upon entering Pacific Studies, was so wide that we argue it impeded the process of acculturation into the department and study environment. In a practical sense, for the researcher they felt they were simply missing core contextual knowledge that one would be acquainted with growing up in New Zealand. Such things include the history of the Treaty of Waitangi, and the concept of biculturalism that involves Pākehā and Māori peoples, and the special relationship that the Pacific has with New Zealand being something they were oblivious to.

RESEARCHER: In one of my Pacific Studies classes, my Sāmoan classmate shed tears when talking about reasons for her to choose the topic of wellbeing of Pacific kids. I could only sympathise with her strong emotion but could not relate to her experience of seeing those children struggling in difficulties as I had never experienced it and was learning about it for the first time. Thus, upon my first arrival to the department and classroom context, I felt I was restrained by my own knowledge gap to a very large extent.

The inability to connect with classmates' lived experiences was profoundly important for cohort members. The researcher claimed that: "none of us really had an appreciation of the depth of impact that colonisation has produced on the lives of Māori and Pacific peoples." But even more importantly, admitted that they had very little knowledge on the difference between Māori and Pacific communities in New Zealand. In addition, they claimed that: "a lot of us had very little understanding of the difference between Māori worldviews and Pākehā worldviews." Without this cultural knowledge, without the context to understand the cultural contexts they were learning about and in, it made it difficult for this cohort of Chinese international students to be sure of the right approach to academic learning and success in the CPS. This was especially evident when they were introduced to Pacific ways of knowing through Pacific research methodologies.

PARTICIPANT: The methodology of talanoa gave me a headache. It's not that easy to apply methodologies with unfamiliar cultural meanings. The theme of decolonisation surprised me at first. I thought Pacific Studies would probably use the same patterns of other social/human science disciplines.

Pacific Studies as a discipline is more than just about "studying" the Pacific. It is also about centring Pacific ways of knowing, highlighting the value of Indigenous-centred research methodologies and actively trying to decolonise classroom and research (Wesley-Smith, 2016; Teaiwa, 2017; Thomsen et al., 2021). Without this grounding, it is difficult for those who are not Pacific Islanders or Indigenous to understand the importance of Pacific research methodologies like talanoa. This was clearly evident in the way researcher and participant talked about their surface-level understanding of Pacific and Māori cultures in the previous excerpt. In order for any non-Pacific students to succeed in Pacific Studies, we argue that there must be an acknowledgement of this knowledge and cultural gap early on and attempts to assuage this must be taken early and intentionally to ensure an ability to learn effectively in the classroom.

Theme 3 Insecure Identities

RESEARCHER: When I first came to this department, the researcher's positionality was really emphasised. For example, in Kaupapa Māori Research, a key learning is that Māori research should be "for Māori with Māori and by Māori". At first, I thought, I am not and can never be Māori. So, what am I doing here then? I had a hard time accepting it in my heart, and I felt perhaps I would never be able to do research well enough in that way.

PARTICIPANT: Pacific researchers and academics want to focus on research indigenous knowledge and methodologies. Then what kind of positionality do we hold as outsiders to Pacific Studies as Chinese students? We were required to think about this when we came to study.

Neither researcher nor participant had experienced having positionality highlighted in this way before. It forced both to think about their position as "outsiders" in not just the makeup of the classroom, but also to the theoretical and foundational values of a discipline. Initial encounters with this issue were framed in a pessimistic light when thinking about future academic performance. The researcher

initially interpreted the emphasis on Kaupapa Māori principles as “only Māori researchers can be seen as qualified” to conduct research using these frameworks, rather than understanding the core message of valuing indigeneity and centring Indigenous ways of knowing when trying to conduct research. As this lack of awareness extended beyond the classrooms, the researcher was unsatisfied with their interactions with Pacific cohorts.

RESEARCHER: One thing I learnt about Pacific Studies was that it is not just about the classes but also community experiences. Say, when you walk into someone’s house and join for dinner, this is also part of learning. That is also our learning privilege in coming to Auckland as a Chinese international student. But I realise now that it seems that I have been missing this part (relationship building) of Pacific Studies.

Zhang and Brunton’s (2007) report indicated that local students usually do not tend to take the initiative to interact with international students. This was not the case with Pacific classmates. Both researcher and participant shared memories of Pacific peers’ attempts to include them in Pacific Studies events. The researcher indicated that they did try to maintain friendships by spending more time with Pacific peers than Chinese fellows. However, this led to an “out-of-place” feeling, or in-betweenness which is common for Chinese expat students to experience (Education Office of Chinese Embassy in New Zealand, 2012; Huang, 2008). A large part of this is due to inside forces of a Chinese social bubble. The forming of this Chinese social bubble and its strong impact on experiences reported here indicated that factors influencing the maintaining of friendship of a Chinese student often extend to their Chinese side of the social realm.

For a newcomer in a foreign country, the researcher stated that: “I wanted to make acquaintances that were both Pākehā and Māori/Pacific.” They indicated that they also had a shallow impression that New Zealand had put much effort into cultural revitalisation of Māori and Pacific communities, I had imagined it to be a perfectly balanced society where Pākehā and Māori/Pacific people share little segregation. However, upon arrival and study within the department, they realised that Māori and Pacific people are actually marginalised in New Zealand sharing features of many minoritised groups across many societies in the world. There were racial tensions between classmates and the dominant White hegemony in New Zealand society that the Chinese cohort was not aware of and was surprised to encounter during conversations that some Pacific classmates were having while they were present.

RESEARCHER: There was a time I was eating with my classmates when one of them suddenly started condemning Pākehā for exclusively occupying certain campus facilities, using phrases like ‘damn these white ladies’. At that moment I was confused and remained silent since I didn’t totally understand the long oppression posed to the Māori/Pacific people from Pākehā.

In this excerpt, the researcher was privy to an in-group conversation where Pacific classmates were expressing frustration of experiencing marginalisation on-campus. In this situation, the researcher came to understand that there were still issues around how classmates were feeling excluded at a university despite seeing them as local

students and the Chinese cohort as outsiders. In fact, because they did not have any cultural understanding and did not have a deep understanding of the history and legacy of colonialism in the Pacific and in New Zealand, they failed to understand that classmates were also outsiders, too. They were outsiders to the dominant culture, and the Chinese cohort were outsiders to Pacific Studies.

RESEARCHER: In my Māori language course the lecturer asked students’ what their motives were for studying Māori. The answers my fellow classmates gave made me feel ashamed. Someone said: “Because I want to understand my grandparents”. Another said: “I want to do something for the community.” Such reasons to me sounded so powerful and selfless, this made me question my motives for Māori language studies, since I didn’t come to the classroom with such specific personal reasons.

As a student, the researcher realised that the varied motivations of classmates was something they could not emulate to such a personal level as those who were closely related to what they were studying. This made the researcher realise that there are divergent motivations for students to study Māori and Pacific languages and cultures. For local classmates, these motivations were very personal and related to their experiences of feeling like their cultural identity may have been excluded in their learning experiences up to this point in their academic journey. Meanwhile, for the Chinese cohort, they were motivated to study Pacific Studies and Pacific languages because according to the researcher, they represented: “a way for us to improve our employability as well as to learn about new cultures and societies.”

Concluding Discussion

As China’s interest in the Pacific will only continue to heighten over the next few years, it is important for us to track new phenomena in an array of areas that may be impacted by this rising presence. One way we are seeing this manifest is the arrival of Chinese students in Pacific Studies programs and universities that may not have hosted Chinese international students in the past such as the CPS at the UoA. The experiences of these students in a unique study program like a Masters in Pacific Studies are deserving of more scholarly attention as the generative impacts on teaching, learning, relationship-building and scholarship, not just geopolitics must also be the focus of our research endeavours that maps shifts in the Pacific and Asia-Pacific region as has been demonstrated in this paper through this brief thematic talanoa.

Overall, it appears that after years of Chinese students coming to New Zealand for education, some recurring themes of their experiences remain unchanged: The impact of the language barrier, cultural gaps, dissatisfaction of having and maintaining friendships with locals, as well as experiencing difficulty in being able to acculturate effectively. But also, this research demonstrates that Chinese international students’ experiences may vary individually by department as well as due to factors not limited to their education background, early arrival experience and largely, language proficiency. While some of these themes were highly overlapping with this cohort’s experience in Pacific Studies, some were unique to them.

A significant finding was the unconventional in-between and otherness reported from this cohort. The triangular shape among Chinese culture, New Zealand's Westernized mainstream culture and Pacific cultures created a multi-dimensional self-identification for individuals negotiating life within it. For incoming Chinese students, it is crucial to bear the cultural awareness including awareness of the Chinese-Western binary when coming to live in New Zealand. More importantly, Chinese students should be aware of the persisting effects of colonisation and its impact on the discipline of Pacific Studies. Only by enhanced knowledge and cultural understanding of the reasons to re-centring Pacific ideologies and methodologies prior to arrival, one can better locate and accommodate themselves into Pacific Studies.

A point that bears repeating from this research is that Chinese international students must learn that the imprint of colonisation can be traced deeply in the preference of research methodologies and epistemologies that have marginalised Pacific ways of knowing in conventional humanities and social science disciplines. Further, Pacific Studies compels us to value Indigenous knowledge and research principles and deal with the question of a researcher's positionality in meaningful ways. This is a key difference between being a Chinese international student in Pacific Studies, to what currently exists in the literature regarding the experiences of Chinese international students studying in New Zealand.

Also, to create and maintain relationships with Pacific peers requires an acknowledgement that they live and experience life differently from local students of European or Pākehā descent. Therefore interactions with Pacific classmates will necessarily be different. It is clear that Pacific communities share similar values to Chinese communities, which includes valuing community connections, family, support for kinship, filial piety and so on. On the other hand, this may need to be balanced with the rise of individualism in China and an awareness of how this may be occurring within Pacific communities in New Zealand too. The lesson is to not presume Pacific peers to be the same as Pākehā students despite being members of the New Zealand nation, and to explore ways of interaction individually.

In Pacific Studies there is a great emphasis on researchers' positionality that relates to one's ethnic/cultural and racialised background in conversation with one's research questions, community and context. This presented real issues for the researcher and participant as Chinese students, especially for the researcher who was studying Kaupapa Māori research. This made them question their legitimacy to conduct research using this approach. Both participant and researcher were unsure as to how Chinese international students enter this conversation. The same can be said in regard to other Pacific research methodologies and ethical praxis. This is a separate issue from insider-outsider positionality as the researcher argues that this speaks to the work Chinese international students will also need to undertake in positioning themselves in adjacent conversations of allyship and relationship to Tangata Whenua and other Pacific peoples that do not reproduce colonial configurations. This is an on-going conversation that more Chinese international

students will need to have as future students continue to arrive in New Zealand to study in programs like Pacific Studies at UoA.

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Keywords

Chinese International Students; Higher Education; Pacific Studies; Intercultural Communication; International Education; China; Pacific

Yuki Kihara's 'A Song about Samoa サーモアについてのうた': Reimagining the Pacific through Japanese Relations

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Abstract

Yuki Kihara's work 'サーモアについてのうた [Sāmoa no uta] 'A Song about Sāmoa' (2019) is a series of five installations, each made up of garments blending two traditions into one new medium: the siapo-kimono. Focussing on the first two series, 'Vasa' [Ocean] and 'Fanua' [Land], the present article discusses the ways in which this hybrid medium should be understood in terms of kimono culture, and in the context of other aesthetic appropriations of kimono, such as Serge Mouangue's WAfrica Project (2007-2017) and the 'Imagine Oneworld Kimono Project' (2005-2020). The siapo dimension of Kihara's work is subsequently explored with reference to Visessio Siasau's tapa installation, 'o onotu'ofe'uli- onotu'ofekula' (2014), and Dame Robin White's ngatu work, 'To See and to Know Are Not Necessarily the Same' (2021) which was created in collaboration with Taeko Ogawa and Ebonie Fifita. On the strength of this analysis, it is argued that Kihara's work does not seek to innovate the traditions of siapo and kimono so much as to engage with the contemporary political issues depicted on the siapo-kimono's surface. Kihara's work should thus be understood in terms of its political message and as a form of mural. The latter part of the article explores the implications of this idea, highlighting the way Kihara focuses on the Japanese influence in the Pacific, and asks finally whether 'A Song about Sāmoa' is in fact, Kihara's 'Guernica'.

Introduction

In the preface to *The Social Life of Kimono* (2017), Sheila Cliffe describes how she had always considered herself "handicapped as a kimono wearer" because she had "no memories of family members wearing kimono", nor had she worn them "on Japanese ceremonial occasions when kimono is de rigueur" (xv). In fact, the kimono researcher prefaces her research by highlighting her position in 1985 as a newcomer to Japan and the world of kimono; underscoring her outsider status by noting that she had never inherited a kimono collection from "a grandmother, mother, or aunt" (p.xv).

In direct contrast, polymathic artist Yuki Kihara, when interviewed about the first phase of her work 'サーモアについてのうた [Samoa no uta] 'A Song about Samoa', tells the story of how she discovered her grandmother's kimono and was struck by the similarity of its brown fabric to that of Siapo, an iconic textile in Sāmoa. This connection proved to be the origin of the work as Kihara decided to create a series of kimono that combined the two backgrounds of her heritage. 'A song about Sāmoa' is founded, then, on her mutual belonging to Japanese and Sāmoan cultures through her father's Japanese and mother's Sāmoan backgrounds.

In the interview that features prominently on the Milford Gallery website (Milford Gallery, 2019), 'サーモアについてのうた [Samoa no uta] 'A Song about Samoa' is presented as an engagement with Kihara's personal heritage from an insider's perspective. This position of authenticity is reinforced by details of the research she undertook to create the hybrid siapo-kimono, rigorously engaging with craftspeople in both Japan and Sāmoa. Moreover, the making of the work is rooted in these traditional crafts, including working from home, alongside members of her family, and with skilled craftspeople from both the siapo and kimono traditions. In the same interview, Kihara explains the origins of the work's title. Referring to a Sāmoan melody dubbed over

with Japanese lyrics that was used in an NHK documentary about Sāmoa, Kihara describes how she found it ironic that this Sāmoan song was adapted for Japanese audiences. This is a polite way of indicating the cultural appropriation used by NHK to effectively domesticate the foreign song for its audience. Using a Sāmoan melody dubbed with Japanese lyrics is the perfect way to assimilate a largely unknown country in the South Pacific for Japanese consumption. Equally apt however is Kihara's reappropriation of this title for a work that presents a counter-vision of Sāmoa (and Japan) from what the artist describes as an "indigenous perspective" (Milford Gallery, 2019).

The title: 'サーモアについてのうた [Samoa no uta] 'A Song about Samoa' reminds viewers that Kihara's work belongs to both heritages, a position in relation to the work and its materials which is key to its functioning. Significantly, through Kihara's use of kana in the bilingual title, this act of reclaiming is inscribed with the mark of a cultural insider to both heritages. In other words, only Kihara could have made this work, and it is her deeply personal song that we hear expressed by it. By taking back the title, Kihara asserts her voice and uses it to sing a new song about Samoa (and Japan).

Replacing NHK's use of the Sāmoan melody, Kihara's work is the song of a mature artist whose nuanced message is precisely articulated. Not only is it a pointed reply to outsiders' views of Sāmoa as a timeless island paradise, but the work also challenges both Sāmoan and Japanese viewers to reconsider their relationship to one another. This challenge is articulated through the materiality of the siapo-kimono works, the panoramic imagery displayed on them, and their display as an installation within a gallery context.

This article explores these three dimensions of 'サーモアについてのうた [Samoa no uta] 'A Song about Samoa', arguing that Kihara presents a complex visual language that engages with multiple audiences in such a way as to surpass debates around identity. With its

strong ecological focus and historical reference points, Kihara provokes viewers to engage with contemporary political issues facing the Pacific in the fullness of their deeper historical origins. Moreover, through its use of nihonga style and the gallery context, Kihara engages with the very institutions within which her work is shown, transcending typical approaches to cross-cultural or ‘East

meets West’ hybridity. The aim of this article is therefore to explore the meanings and context of サ-モアについてのうた [Samoa no uta] ‘A Song about Samoa’ with the goal of amplifying its song and contextualising its various calls to arms within Kihara’s wider body of work.



Fig. 1: サ-モアのうた (Sāmoa no uta) a song about sāmōa - fanua (land) (2020/21)
5-piece installation; samoan siapo, textiles, beads, shells, plastic, kimonos: 1750 x 1410 x 250 mm each, installation dimensions variable. Source: Courtesy of Yuki Kihara and Milford Galleries Dunedin.



Fig. 2: サ-モアのうた (Sāmoa no uta) a song about sāmōa - fanua (land) (2020/21)
5-piece installation; samoan siapo, textiles, beads, shells, plastic, kimonos: 1750 x 1410 x 250 mm each, installation dimensions variable. Source:

Siapo-Kimono

Lisa Wilkie (2020) presents the first appraisal of Kihara's work in a commentary in *Art News New Zealand*. In her presentation, the first five parts of 'A Song about Samoa' are described as the deliberate combination of two traditions: kimono and siapo.

Wilkie is attentive to Kihara's focus on the process of selection that such a combination involves, and the traditional contexts to which each craft belongs. The article presents a brief but careful account of the respective traditions; kimono tracing its origins to the Heian Period, siapo recalling its roots in South-East Asia and Pacific migrations. While kimono is presented as a "rich visual language" "retained and developed" since the 9th century, and whose wearers were involved in choices of fabrics and motifs would help them communicate within social codes, siapo "possess and display forms of knowledge that may be 'read' by those familiar with its cultural language" (2020, p.75). The work is thus described as a singular example of the blending two visual languages whose traditions must be negotiated. Wilkie presents Kihara's work as a hybrid that translates two distinct traditions into a unique form described as a combination of two codified visual languages.

As of writing, 'A Song about Samoa' is a collection of ten works exhibited as two series. Within the overall project, which forms a single work, one can imagine a further two phases composed of five *furisode* (long-sleeved) kimono each. The kimono are made of siapo and feature embroidered and beaded sections. They are exhibited on frames which display kimono as typically used in boutiques, departments stores, and museums. Each kimono is made from a single piece of siapo, but forms part of a wider image. Significantly, each series of five kimono forms part of one panoramic image. The first phase (Fig. 1) is called *vasa* (ocean), depicting the oceanscape off Saleapaga village in Upolu, a tourist destination and one of the hardest hit areas by a tsunami in 2009. The second phase (Fig. 2) is called *fanua* (land). It features landmarks in Apia being inundated by a combination of heavy rain and high tides (Milford Gallery 2021), an image of a bull on the Vaisigano bridge, and endangered species amid rising waters. The landscape is contiguous with the oceanscape, forming a collection of symbolically and historically charged images. The work commands attention at the level of the siapo-kimono fabric, at the level of the individual kimono, and as a panoramic vision.

At the level of the siapo-kimono fabric, as Wilkie notes, the combination of material and form involves the selection of traditional motifs that are integrated into the overall design. This process requires deliberate inclusion and exclusion of certain motifs and designs. Wilkie describes the combination of these designs to underline the affiliation of the work to both kimono and siapo traditions.

Kihara works with the symbolic representation of flowers (Fig. 3): the chrysanthemum being the symbol of the Japanese Imperial family, and the siapo designs of leaves and shells. However, when interviewed (Wilson 2019), she makes a point of explaining how the



Fig. 3: Kimono 3 of series 1, *Vasa*. Sky and ocean are composed of traditional Japanese and Sāmoan patterns. Source: Courtesy of Yuki Kihara and Milford Galleries Dunedin.

designs are a fusion of motifs used in siapo and kimono. For example, the siapo design incorporates cherry blossom leaves to create a hybrid interstitial form. Kihara's selection of motifs identifies her work with siapo and kimono traditions, marking them as both Sāmoan and Japanese, whilst intermingling them with hybrid forms that create new idioms within her dialogue with the two traditions. The effect of this approach creates an object that is both strange and familiar at the same time.

Rethinking exoticism and the Siapo-kimono as an exotic object

An early theorist of exoticism, poet Victor Segalen (1878-1919) despised typical 19th century exoticism. His aversion to the cliché and superficial renderings of the world's diversity led him to theorise a new form of exoticism that he described as "*une esthétique du Divers*" or an aesthetic of Diversity. In his notes for a comprehensive essay on the subject, Segalen rejects the notion of the exotic as limited to tropical scenes or *couleur locale* and sought to define it as "that which shakes us from our everyday understanding of the world" [my translation] (Segalen, 1995, p.748). This process, however, relies on a recognition of something familiar and recognisable in that which we encounter, accompanied by a confrontation with something unrecognisable and completely other (p.767). It is this combination of partial identification with an object and the subsequent recognition of its alterity, which, according to Segalen, makes something exotic. It is this type of encounter that inspires the sensation of exoticism, in life as in art or music.

Segalen's conception of exoticism developed in opposition to typical 19th century images of the South Pacific. And his own depictions of Tahiti stood in opposition to Loti's idyllic scenes of Polynesia. Segalen's depiction of Tahiti in his novel *Les Immémoriaux* (1907), translated as *A Lapse of Memory*, undermines mythical imaginings of Tahiti as an Eden through its politicised and historical depictions of pre-contact Maohi society. His definition of exoticism can help us to articulate the sensation of familiarity and strangeness when encountering Kihara's work. On one hand, for some viewers the form of the kimono is recognisable, on the other, its siapo material is strange. On the other hand, for other viewers familiar siapo patterns and the image of a local beach are recognisable and familiar, yet they are portrayed on a kimono, which is strange. The siapo-kimono is therefore 'exotic' in the way that Segalen defined the term.

Moreover, as an exotic object, it functions to disrupt the viewer's habitual ways of seeing the world. For Segalen, such disruption was a revitalising force against the homogenisation of the world under the influence of colonialism and western modernity taking place at the turn of the 20th century. For Kihara, making work in a 21st century context, the multiple points of reference and hybrid forms thoroughly disrupt the viewer's understanding of both kimono and siapo, whilst presenting a confronting image of Sāmoa. The image of the oceanscape is an example. For some viewers, the wave, as Wilkie notes, recalls Hokusai's Great Wave of Kanagawa, and the fe'e octopus is recognisably Japanese in a distinctive nihonga painting style. For others, the eel recalls the myth of Sila and the eel, an association reinforced by the floating coconut in the water. However, for yet other viewers, the coconut featuring on the same kimono is also a symbol of the Sāmoan diaspora resiliently migrating around the Pacific; a motif referenced by Kihara in her show *Coconuts that grew from Concrete* (2017). In this way, each part of the work engages different viewers in multiple ways, all of which are both strange and familiar. This is a feature that we contend can be understood as exotic in the Segalenian sense of the term. In response to this exoticism, one may ask how viewers are expected to engage with the work. Being at once a form of siapo, a type of kimono, and an art installation, how can the work be understood?

Fashion systems and traditional dress

Cliffe's study of kimono mentioned in our introduction is helpful for answering this question. Cliffe approaches her study of kimono in terms of fashion. Her study is an analysis of historical and contemporary kimono as a 'clothing system' that aims to prove that kimono functions as a form of fashion, not as a form of traditional dress.

This project developed in response to art historians and fashion theorists, such as Liza Dalby (1993), who argue that traditional forms of dress cannot be considered fashion. The articulation of this position (Dalby, 1993, 65) is presented in her account of how kimono shifted from being everyday wear to 'traditional' attire in the Meiji period (1868-1912):

As Japanese politicians became disillusioned with European and American civilization in the 1890's, kimono staged a triumphant comeback as an expression of Japaneseness. In the end, however, the rehabilitation of kimono was only half a victory- its revival was primarily for women, and an expression of tradition rather than fashion. An official, national version of tradition, transcending regional variation, began to radiate from the Meiji regime, centred in Tokyo, Japan became obsessed with its 'national essence' and, in looking for essence, in effect created it. Language and education were becoming standardized. So was clothing. During the late Meiji, the kimono could still assert itself, yet in taking up the banner of tradition, kimono pointed the way to its future fate.

In western fashion theory, 'traditional' dress styles have been considered to exist as the polar opposite to 'fashionable' clothing. Whereas European clothes change shape rapidly within a system of modern industrial production, non-western traditional styles of clothing do not alter their shape and are produced through craft (Cliffe 2017). Cliffe's study is thus a direct challenge to this opposition between modern European fashion and traditional non-European dress. This is significant because African, Indian, and East Asian clothes, as well as Pacific dress, are considered to express traditional craft and folk identity that excludes fashion by definition. This fashion-tradition opposition was then deployed in accounts of non-western dress styles to attribute their modernity to the influence of European cultures. Kimono and Siapo could then be grasped as typical examples of 'traditional', 'premodern' and distinctively 'non-western' forms of dress that became symbols of traditional dress in a nation that modernised through contact with the West. Part of the ongoing definition of these dress styles is that they are not subject to changing fashions but remain unchanging and consistent, making them capable of communicating the essence of a culture.

This familiar dichotomy informs Wilkie's presentation of Kihara's work in *Art News New Zealand*. She aligns the work with traditional dress – which is considered as non-western traditional craft. Quite correctly, this approach highlights Kihara's integration of her work into the two traditions from which it has developed. Discussion of the work's origins in the kimono in the Heian period and the heritage of Siapo as a traditional craft provide a neat account of the work as the harmonious melding of two compatible systems that belong to non-western traditional crafts. Part and parcel of this traditional heritage is their functioning as a form of highly contextualised visual communication. Wilkie presents Kihara's work as exploring the in-betweenness that such a hybrid siapo-kimono can embody. She argues that, for Kihara, this is an expression of the Pacific way of conceiving of the space in-between as the *vā*, which is compatible with the Japanese concept of *ma* 間 or space in Japanese. This presentation of Kihara's work is effective in drawing our attention to the complementarity which exists between the Sāmoan and the Japanese dimensions of the work, and in their underlying epistemologies, both of which view space as relating rather than separating objects. It is indeed true that Kihara's work brings Japanese and Sāmoan culture into relation to one another causing viewers to rethink

their understanding of the relationship between both cultures.

Nevertheless, Wilkie's reading, continues to rely on the underlying opposition between modern western fashion, and premodern non-western traditional forms of dress. This means that, by focusing on Kihara's work as a hybrid between two traditional cultures / visual languages, kimono are treated as "traditional" and "timeless" carriers of an essential Japaneseness, which, historically speaking, was a product of the Meiji era efforts to define Japanese "traditional" and "modern" national identities. To better understand how Kihara's work avoids falling into the familiar grooves of such established oppositions: East-West, art-craft, modern-traditional, it is instructive to compare the siapo-kimono to other hybrid forms of kimono.

WAfrica Project – Serge Mouangue (2007-2017)

In 2007, a designer and artist from Cameroon, Serge Mouangue developed a hybrid kimono design. Describing his work, Mouangue states (2017):

As a designer, I give shape to things. My official job in Japan was creating concept cars for Nissan, but the artist in me thought, I can't leave here if I haven't produced something that tells the story of my life in this country. The first thing I did was to take something iconic from Japan — a kimono — and something iconic from West Africa — brightly patterned wax-print cotton — which I merged into an item that would tell not just a story of two cultures, but a new story in and of itself. It doesn't belong only to Africa or to Japan, but carves out its own new territory, a third aesthetic.

Mouangue's combination relies on the introduction of West-African fabric into a kimono form, with additions to the *obi* or belt. The designer describes the areas of compatibility that he exploited in the creation of his collection (2017):

When I lived in Japan, I was often astonished at the many things that felt familiar to me. Animism — the belief that a living spirit is in nature, a god is everywhere — is very strong in both cultures. Social hierarchy and understanding a person's age and rank are also very important, along with the use of ceremonies and rituals to hold society together. Of course, there are also major cultural differences, like with planning. I found that life in Japan is typically scheduled, where Africans are much more spontaneous.

For Mouangue, the compatibility of traditional cultures and the resonances between their forms of visual communication allows for the creation of a third-aesthetic expressive of his identity and experience across cultures.

The WAfrica project potentially engages with Hommi K. Bhabha's notion of the "third space". It could present a critical approach conceived to reveal the socially constructed nature of identity and challenge exclusions based upon their supposed naturalness. It could create a third space that presents an alternative and counterexample to what one imagines were natural or essential qualities of kimono. And yet, in Mouangue's case, although the kimono is reimagined using West-African fabric, it does not question the idea that the kimono is essentially Japanese. Rather, it is an expression of his West-African encounter with Japan



Fig. 4: Serge Mouangue Kimono made of wax-printed cotton. Source : <https://ideas.ted.com/a-deft-beautiful-blend-of-west-african-and-japanese-design-and-culture/>

which has resulted in a happy synthesis of two distinct cultures. The kimono (Fig. 4) is West-African in its materiality, whilst retaining the traditional form of the kimono. Consequently, it does not express an in-betweenness designed to highlight the constructed nature of conceptions of 'Japaneseness' but explores the complementarity of traditional aesthetics and culture. In other words, the Cameroonian designer uses the term 'third aesthetic' to describe a synthesis of two largely complimentary fashion systems that says 'Look, a West-African kimono is possible'. It is thus an example of an exotic form of kimono.

This approach is evident in two further works; the first being a carving of a West-African figure supplemented with Japanese lacquer, the second being the introduction of elements from West-African shamanism into a performance of Japanese tea ceremony. Significantly, in describing these two works, Mourangue (2017) points out his collaboration with a Japanese master craftsman:

Next, I decided to combine two specific cultural treasures: thrones and lacquer. In a series called "Blood Brothers," I took vintage wooden stools — a traditional African item — that had been hand-carved by Pygmy sculptors in southeastern Cameroon and brought them to Masaru Okawara, a ninth-generation lacquer artisan in Japan. The lacquering, which involved applying layers of tree sap followed by rounds of polishing, was a 21-step, two-year process. To me, the project represented the new and enlightened international consciousness that can emerge when unique treasures are juxtaposed.

The synthesis of the traditional crafts was created to highlight "an enlightened international consciousness". In the same way, the integration of shamanism into a performance of the Japanese tea ceremony highlights the similarity and complementarity to ways of seeing the world in animism, Shinto and the type of esoteric experience possible through Zen Buddhist elements of the tea ceremony.

The synthesis of materials and techniques from different traditions certainly produces interesting effects and yet, it only appears radical when traditional arts and crafts or folk cultures are assumed to be pure unchanging forms that reflect the essential aspects of a national culture. This understanding of kimono and arts such as tea ceremony (Chanoyu), fails to appreciate the former as a living contemporary form of fashion, and the latter as an



Fig. 5: Independent State of Samoa. Imagine Oneworld Kimono Project (2005-2020) Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/Samoa/comments/opz0em/samoa_design_for_the_imagine_one_world_kimono/

ongoing practice with contemporary forms. Cliffe's research into historical and contemporary kimono demonstrates this fact that kimono is not a static form of traditional dress but has evolved in multiple and dynamic ways as part of a Japanese system of fashion which continues to grow today. The significance of this point is that the use of kimono as a shorthand for Japaneseness is a reflection of the view that kimono are iconic, traditional and static. Kihara is not using the Kimono as a short-hand for Japaneseness, but in the same breath, her siapo-kimono are not engaging with kimono as a form of contemporary fashion. In this regard, the hybrid nature of the kimono, and its display become increasingly important to the work.

Mourangue combines one traditional element with another to create a hybrid 'third aesthetic' that displays the complementarity of the two cultural elements. It is an expression of sythnthesis and a transcendent perspective. However, in the history of kimono, it can be viewed as simply the addition of one more dying technique, pattern, and fabric. In other words, Mourangue's West-African kimono could equally be described as kimono with African designs. Thus, although Mourangue argues that the "enlightened international culture" made conceivable through his works is more necessary than ever to combat rising nationalism, his work serves to demonstrate the way that kimono, and Japanese culture more broadly, can incorporate other cultural elements, and assimilate them to its own forms, as it has done throughout its history.

Imagine Oneworld Kimono Project (2005-2020)

The Imagine Oneworld Kimono project was inspired by the 2020 Tokyo Olympic games. A private organisation based in Japan set out in 2005 to design 213 kimono, representing each nation competing in the Olympics, and some additional categories. The kimono have a standard long-sleeve shape (furisode), but were designed by different Japanese kimono designers who were given broad guidelines. Each kimono is effectively a themed garment and makes up part of the collective.

In one sense, this project is paradoxical. Inspired by John Lennon's song "Imagine", it seeks to go beyond national, ethnic, and religious boundaries to posit a singular unified world. On the other hand, each design reinscribes national boundaries and symbols through their incorporation into the kimono's design. The project demonstrates an extraordinary assimilation of national symbols into kimono fashion. Samoa, for example, is presented using shades of blue, hibiscus flowers and the southern cross motif. The obi belt features red ginger flowers and panadus leaves.

The thematic nature of the Oneworld Kimono project allows Japanese kimono designers to display their craft, while drawing inspiration from their imagined source country. As in typical use of exotic external elements, the periphery stimulates and reinvigorates the centre. The criticism here is not that the Oneworld project is appropriating other cultures, or that its attempt to transcend national differences effectively reinscribes them. It is that the approach adopted by the Oneworld Kimono project is ethnocentric; subtly asserting the centrality of Japan and the fundamental importance of kimono. Its attempt to transcend national boundaries basically incorporates a vision of the world of nation states and their symbols into a distinctly Japanese national form, the Japaneseness of which is at once downplayed and celebrated. To clearly see this, one may imagine two alternative approaches to achieving the same goal. The first is the opening ceremony of the Olympics when athletes enter the stadium wearing national uniforms. All united and yet all distinct through their national identities. The other would be a project that, in celebrating the Tokyo Olympics, would invite designers and crafts people from around the world to design a garment that reflected "Tokyo 2020" from diverse perspectives. In such a project, one might imagine a west African kimono that combined Cameroonian printing on cotton and the highly recognisable form of the kimono. As it turned out, the Oneworld kimono for Cameroon featured tribal designs printed on silk, with an obi featuring indigenous butterflies (Koikishu, N.D.).

The point of this critical discussion of attempts to create an international consciousness through hybrid forms of national dress is not to cynically strike down their idealism, but to highlight how they actually reinscribe the importance of national identity and its symbolism, as well as reinscribing oppositions between western and non-western, art and craft, modern and primitive. In this regard, they represent the contemporary variant of a very old form of exoticism that uses the periphery and the 'other' to reinforce the centre and the discourses that sustain it. Although the Oneworld Kimono project is a wonderful platform for kimono designers on the global stage that highlights the beauty of traditional kimono design, it also distracts from the contemporary and more innovative forms of kimono that are highlighted in Cliffe's study of kimono understood as a clothing system, as fashion. For the traditional image of kimono, the one linked essentially to 'Japaneseness', is but one narrow tradition whose importance and links to nation were solidified in the Meiji period (Cliffe, 2017).

Siapo-kimono: Materiality and Form

Returning to サーモアについてのうた [Samoa no uta] 'A Song about Samoa', it is immediately clear that Kihara's work is not part of this type of this exoticism or the idealised internationalism that it promotes.

One detail that demarcates the work is its presentation of the kimono as a series of interrelated art installations. In Morangue's WAfrica project and the Oneworld Kimono project, the kimono are modelled by non-Japanese and Japanese models, presented on fashion runways and displayed as exhibits. This presentation reveals the different elements of the kimono, including the *obi* or belt and the under garments. In contrast, Kihara's kimono are deliberately not modelled, and it is only the single outer layer of the kimono which is on display. It is not known to the viewer which colour undergarments will be worn, or how the siapo-kimono will be combined with a belt. Though it is common for kimono to be displayed on their own, without under garments or obi, such presentation is used in boutiques, museums, and exhibitions. It transforms the kimono into objects of visual consumption and separates them from the clothing system of which they were or are potentially will be part.

In the Milford Gallery exhibition of サーモアについてのうた [Samoa no uta] 'A Song about Samoa', the first five kimono were installed with her grandmother's kimono displayed within the same space. The work is therefore presented with its origin story, including a photograph of her grandmother wearing a crested family kimono. Such a curatorial choice is important for our understanding of the work. The kimono are presented as descendants of authentic kimono, and the hybrid nature of the siapo-kimono fabric is highlighted. This new form of kimono has its roots in an authentic garment with patrilineal origins. The viewer is encouraged to see the work as a form of hybrid kimono, and not as a radical form of siapo. Accordingly, examples of authentic or traditional siapo are not displayed in the gallery, nor are images of Kihara's Sāmoan family.

Clearly, the origin story that accompanies the work provides an accessible and important key to the work. However, this story nevertheless influences our view of the work as an art installation. The viewer is encouraged to see サーモアについてのうた [Samoa no uta] 'A Song about Samoa' as a series of kimono, made of siapo, that use a fusion of traditional designs from two traditions to create a unique vision of Sāmoa and Japan. And yet, the work is not presented as a collection of garments within a clothing system with distinctly Japanese characteristics, but as a surface on which a broader image is presented. In this respect, the kimono is reduced to the formal dimension, while siapo provides its material aspect.

This raises the question: Should we view Kihara's work as siapo in the form of kimono?

Contemporary Installation and Painting using Tapa and Ngatu

Winner of the Paramount Award in the 2015 Wallace Art Awards, Visessio Siasau is a Tongan artist working with ngatu, a form of bark cloth or tapa, akin to siapo. His work 'o onotu'ofe'uli-onotu'ofekula' completed in 2014 is an example of a contemporary installation drawing on traditional materials and Tongan epistemology. It is a large-scale installation that confronts the viewer by its scale and the depth of its



Fig. 6: Visessio Siasau Tongan Tapa Cloth 'o onotu'ofe'uli- onotu'ofekula Tongan customary pigments and dye on bark cloth, 18060 x 4040mm, Wallace Collection, Auckland.

subject matter: creation. As Lisa Wilkie's interpretation of Kihara's work discussed above illustrates, Kihara's work can be encountered as the deployment of traditional siapo and Sāmoan epistemology in the modern gallery context. However, in contrast to Siasau's work that presents the tapa suspended on the wall and able to be unrolled, Kihara uses siapo within its function as material for clothing.

While Siasau's work leads to an encounter with an almost overpowering scale of ngatu, Kihara integrates the siapo into the form of the kimono, combining the traditional designs with her new combinations. The materiality of the siapo is therefore contained in its role as support for the patterned surface, onto which the broader image is painted.

This submission of the material of the siapo and the form of the kimono to their supporting role for the broader image establishes a clear hierarchy in the encounter with the Kihara's work. It is first and foremost an art installation, and in this respect, is comparable to Siasau's work. However, due to the use of nihonga style painting and the creation of a series of contiguous images, it could be argued that Kihara presents less a series of kimono, than a collection of large-scale paintings on siapo.

Another artist who combines ngatu and painting is Dame Robin White. Her work provides yet another

informative comparison that allows us to consider how to approach *サーモアについてのうた* [Samoa no uta] 'A Song about Samoa'.

Kihara's use of siapo is similar to the use of ngatu by Dame Robin White's works shown in the McLeavey Gallery in Wellington, as part of her exhibition *Aio Ngaira* (*This is Us*). As Robert Leonard (2022) notes:

White's eclectic ngatu combine different traditions (Fijian and Tongan) and draw their imagery from here and there. They bridge the customary and the contemporary, the individual and the collective. While they have a cross-cultural dimension, they are also a product of the artists' Bahi'i faith, which stresses the fundamental human unity underpinning cultural diversity (p.85).

Leonard's account of White's works explains the familiar process through which they were created from a collaboration between the artist and a group of master craftspeople. Moreover, the work itself has been created in a dialogue with Matisse in reference to that artist's sojourn in Tahiti. This context is important because Robin White's ngatu engage in a dialogue across time and space that integrates memories, imaginaries, objects and materials to create works that reinterpret White's own prints from earlier moments in her artistic journey. The collapsing of time and space into the images, which depict rooms filled with objects painted on ngatu, whilst incorporating elements of customary design into the picture, results in a painting that resembles overhearing a conversation. The works depict hybrid spaces into



Fig. 7: Robin White with Taeko Ogawa and Ebonie Fifita, *To See and to Know Are Not Necessarily the Same* 2021, earth pigment, ink, plant-based liquid medium, and soot on barkcloth (masi), 1860×2200mm, collection Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Source: <https://www.artnews.co.nz/profile-spring-summer-2021/>

which the viewer is invited, and which one must explore and decode. One striking work, created with Taeko Ogawa and Ebonie Fifita, *To See and to Know are Not Necessarily the Same* (2021) provides us with a striking comparison with Kihara's サーモアについてのうた [Samoa no uta] 'A Song about Samoa'. Both works combine siapo and ngatu traditions in distinct ways that are exceptionally well integrated into the work. Both works use perspective to present an image of a space. However, whereas White presents enclosed, almost, timeless rooms, Kihara's spaces are rich in their particularity and familiar in their use of symbolic locations and landmarks. Both works are highly readable and invite the process of visual decoding. Moreover, both works insist on their materiality whilst reducing its role to support of a larger image. In other words, White's world of enclosed rooms serve as a contrast to Kihara's broad vision of Sāmoa and Japan which jump out at the viewer through their use of colour, dramatic imagery, and nihonga painting style. Rather than intimate and closed spaces, Kihara presents an expansive vision that is distinctly political – images of bleached coral and flooding highlight the effects of climate change, while floating coke cans and the image of the bull point the finger at global capitalism.

In this article so far, we have briefly compared Kihara's siapo-kimono with other adaptations of kimono and artworks that have used ngatu. The point of this contextualisation has been to better understand how to approach the work. In this respect, it is argued that Kihara's use of the siapo-kimono material-form, and its installation within the gallery space should lead us to

consider the work as a form of large-scale painting featuring distinctly political content. Accordingly, rather than a collection of kimono or an artistic appropriation of siapo depicting a statement about hybrid identity, we argue that Kihara's work should be understood in the context of another type of large scale politically informed painting genre: the mural.

Kihara's *Guernica*?

The viewer encounters サーモアについてのうた [Samoa no uta] 'A Song about Samoa' either directly in an exhibition space, or indirectly via images and videos of the work online. In both types of encounter the kimono are presented as a series whose visual impact is reinforced by the mounted display which transforms the individual garments into one mural-like picture plain. The material dimension of the works also becomes secondary to the surface created, especially when viewed online where viewers have limited ability to examine the detailing of the *siapo* material. The question thus becomes: If read as a mural, what is Kihara's message and how can it be understood?

In the study *Mural Painting and Social Revolution in Mexico, 1920-1940*, Leonard Folgarait begins by situating his analysis within a global context. In Europe in the 1920's and 1930's nationalistic and revolutionary forms of cultural processes which relied on promotion and distribution by and for the state developed in Italy, Germany, the Soviet Union. While Italian fascism developed its nationalistic aesthetic through an all-encompassing mix of architectural modernism and various other art forms, German national socialism



Fig. 8: 'Mural combining the origin narrative and the experience of the dictatorship'

Source: Cortés, A. (September 2016) *The Resurgence of Collective Memory, Truth, And Justice Mobilizations: Part 2: Artistic and Cultural Resistance. Latin American Perspectives*, 43(5), 71.

(nazism) focused on themes that valorised the Fatherland, and enforced hierarchies based on race, gender, and class. These were depicted within strict forms of classical realism and cinematic propaganda. In the Soviet Union, an early period derived from Cubism and the avant-garde gradually gave way to an academic realism considered to best express the ideals of communism. In the United States, state-sponsored art in the 1930's provides both a contrast to and convergence with the nationalist propaganda in Europe. As Folgarait notes: "As a response to the Depression, official policies of President Roosevelt's New Deal, especially the Federal Art Project, addressed a nation in need of social, economic, and cultural healing" (p.3). This translated into a combination of nationalistic posters, mural paintings, and other types of public art that were distinctly political in their motivations and distribution. They expressed patriotism and nationalism in a style described as "modernist realism" which "conflated traditional and progressive strands of state ideology" (p.3).

What this brief contextualisation shows is that whether on the political left or right, in the 1920s and 1930s a range of nationalistic forms of public art were developed by states that sought to consolidate "new" national identities for themselves. Public art was therefore created and distributed in myriad intertextual forms. The mural was central to these multidimensional combinations of media.

The mural, however, is by no means exclusively linked to state sponsored institutional artwork but has a counterpart in grassroots political movements and graffiti. In the Chilean context, for example, though inspired by the Mexican post-revolutionary works of Rivera, Siqueiros, and Orozco, murals in La Victoria, a

blue-collar part of Santiago, play a key role in what Alexis Cortés calls "a politics of popular memory" (2016, p.63). This term describes an ongoing process in which murals originally painted under the Allende dictatorship (1973-1990) are repeatedly painted to reinscribe the memory of those who were disappeared, as well as to signal the resistance of those locals still engaged in ongoing political struggle. Cortés demonstrates how the murals form a central part of the local imaginary, and while forged in opposition to the dictatorship, they have continued to be painted in the struggle against "mechanisms of amnesia set in motion by the official truths imposed by the compromised democratic transition" (p.63). Cortés describes the role murals play in an ongoing struggle within the community to preserve its understanding of the past, one that the ruling elites and government officials would most readily have the public forget. By maintaining the practice of painting and then repainting the erased murals, locals in La Victoria are engaged in a symbolic struggle for ideological control. One key battleground for such struggles is the field of collective memory, another is the field of collective dreams and aspirations. As Cortés concludes:

The murals of La Victoria may be seen as a permanent source of creative renovation of muralism in general for their special role in the re-creation of the territorial identity of the neighbourhood, proposing a particular signification of the relationship between the past, present, and future, acting as one of the main repertoires in pobladores' politics of memory. On the walls of this neighbourhood, a new graphic discursive style problematizes the present and even provides direction for the future (p.75).

Although the viewer encounters サーモアについてのうた [Samoa no uta] 'A Song about Samoa' as an installation in a gallery or online, the mural-like effect created by the combination of the works simultaneously recalls the state-sponsored institutionalised artworks of the 1920s and 1930s, as well as the grassroots activism of urban street art illustrated by muralism in La Victoria. In other words, Kihara charts a course that draws on both high and low forms of artwork and craft (the street and the institution) to engage in an aesthetics / politics that is rooted in her own personal idiom, the siapo-kimono. Her work is engaged with questions of Sāmoan identities and grass roots ecological struggles.

In this respect, it is worth casting our mind's eye back to Kihara's first major work called 'Bombacific', which was purchased in 1995 by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Known as the "Graffiti Dress", the work performs the same high-low combination of street wear and high fashion through its materials and form. The dress, made of Dupont Lycra and other fabrics, features fabric decorated with graffiti bands by artist Vito Malo. For Kihara, the text and images in the graffiti reflect the negotiation of two-worlds: "Aotearoa's urban Pacific subculture and the life and customs of their home islands" (Arts online TKI). The dress is, in fact, a reimagined mu'umu'u (a long, loose-hanging dress) that reflects the negotiated identities of urban Pacific youth who are part of Pacific diasporas in New Zealand. Kihara designed the dress for a Dupont sponsored competition and the work was subsequently purchased by Te Papa. The importance of the work is signalled by

its inclusion on an official New Zealand Ministry of Education website, which features the work in teaching materials for high school students. 'Bombacific', which plays on the idea of a graffiti bomb and evokes nuclear testing in the Pacific which was still being undertaken by France in the mid-1990s, was a provocative statement by the then emerging artist. Through this work, Kihara asserted the dynamism of Pacific youth and affirmed their dual identities. The intersectional nature of the dress – somewhere between urban streetwear, conventional Pacific dress, and high fashion – allowed Kihara to voice her own identity as a young person from the Pacific living in urban Aotearoa, and hence, astride worlds.

In a more nuanced fashion, through the evocation of the mural, サーモアについてのうた [Samoa no uta] 'A Song about Samoa' performs a similar type of intersectionality that is no less political in its message. Moreover, in both the Graffiti Dress 'Bombacific' and the siapo-kimono, Kihara succeeds in creating her own distinctive idiom through which to express her aesthetic / political vision.

Vasa - the first phase of サーモアについてのうた [Samoa no uta] 'A Song about Samoa'

'Vasa' presents an oceanscape that inspires reflection upon identity, migration, and the effects of climate change in Sāmoa. Despite the beautiful colours and sequined adornment of the kimono, this series of five kimono forms an image permeated by death.

The fifth kimono in the series (when viewed from right to left) features Saleapaga beach with its palms, beach *fale*, *tuli* birds, and the image of a sea turtle. It contains the elements of a tourist destination, which at first glance, offer the unwary viewer a stereotypical image of the Pacific islands. On closer inspection, however, the turtle is attempting to eat a plastic bag.

A foundational piece of symbolism in Polynesia, the turtle could be read as a reference to the legend of Fonueau and Salofa, a sublime tale of how a blind woman and her daughter are forced into the ocean to escape starvation, but ultimately return to the beach in the form of a shark and turtle. As Nina Jones (2022) recounts in one version of the story:

One year, villages near her home suffered the effects of a great famine. Because of her blindness Fonueau was not able to find food. After many days of intense hunger, she and her daughter smelled the wonderful aroma of soi as it baked in the ground ovens of the village. Foneau and Salofa waited for food to be brought by villagers, but it never arrived.

The woman and her daughter were so desperate, they decided to cast their fate upon the sea. The mother took her child by the hand and together they jumped off the cliff into the surf below.

As they swam to the surface, their bodies transformed. One became a turtle and the other a shark. They swam away from the villagers who did not care for them. When they arrived in Vaitogi, a village in American Samoa, they resumed their human forms. They were welcomed with food and clothing by Chief Letuli and his people.

The two women were so appreciative of the chief's tender care that they vowed to return to the ocean to live just beyond the cliffs, returning when called upon to dance and entertain the villagers.



Fig. 9: Graffiti Dress 'Bombacific', 1995. Museum of Source: New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa number FE010561 TLF resource R3716.

They left a beautiful song with the Samoans that could be used when the shark or turtle were needed. Today, when villagers gather along the shore of that legendary site and sing the sweet melody, it is said that a turtle and a shark appear.

The bittersweet legend contrasts the cruel indifference of one set of villagers with the kindness of another. The kind villagers would sing a beautiful song to the ocean and in appreciation, the turtle and shark would appear in the lagoon. Though not a direct reference to the myth, Kihara may well be associating the sublime tragedy of the story with the reality for sea turtles in the waters around Sāmoa. Sadly, sea turtles often starve to death having eaten plastic pollution thinking it is food. Further, for those familiar with the story, the turtle can be understood as a reminder of the moral injunction of the tale to show kindness and solidarity to those less fortunate in difficult times. This image of the turtle is then a resonant one, provoking the viewer who is accused of indifference to the fate of endangered sea life. Indeed, it is the same sense of culpability one may feel when coming across images on the internets of sea turtles pursuing plastic bags, and other sea creatures trapped in plastic debris. Kihara invokes such imagery through her work, which presents a mix of symbolic traditional motifs and the popular western imaginary full of internet images of sea turtles (Fig. 6). The beautifully printed image of a turtle is, therefore, a haunting reminder of environmental degradation, and a sharp criticism of people's indifference.



Fig. 10: Part 5 of series 1, Vasa. Source: Courtesy of Yuki Kihara and Milford Galleries Dunedin.



Fig. 12: Part 4 of series 1, Vasa. Source: Courtesy of Yuki Kihara and Milford Galleries Dunedin.



Fig. 11: Change.org image. Source: <https://www.change.org/p/walmart-save-the-sea-turtles-by-banning-plastic-bags>

In a broader sense, the story of Fonueau and Salofa, can also be read as signalling another instance of misrecognition. Foneau was unable to find food despite being able to smell it. Her blindness could thus be interpreted as alluding to the contemporary fate, not only of the marine life in Sāmoa but also to a nation overdependent on tourism. The subverted image of the tropical paradise is, in fact, an easily recognisable tourist setting due to the beach *fale* depicted in the background. These shelters provide shelter for tourists but do not constitute a home for local people. In other words, tourism, like a plastic bag, presents the false promise of nourishment for Sāmoa, but could very well lead to the destruction of the nation's economic foundation.

Although this reading of the beach scene is possibly stretching the critical interpretation of the work, through her interweaving of myth and images from the global imagination Kihara questions two key aspects of life in contemporary Sāmoa (as it exists within a process of globalisation). Kihara fearlessly points out the

potentially catastrophic overreliance on tourism in the Pacific and accuses the wider tourist industry of indifference to the degradation of life in the moana.

The fourth kimono (Fig. 12) features a crayfish, a floating coke can, and Pacific golden plovers or *tuli*, migratory birds which fly from Sāmoa to Alaska via Japan. The entire series of the kimono can be read in conjunction with one another. These birds not only form a visual connection, but also link Sāmoa and Japan through their migratory patterns, underlining the connection that Kihara embodies in her own life. The *Tuli* thus remind the viewer that her work seeks to point out the ongoing relationship between the two countries, one based on historical migration and more recently, international aid and development projects.

In the fifth kimono (Fig. 10) the *tuli* on the beach is scavenging on the remains of a crab, Kihara links this bird to the fourth kimono through her depiction of a crayfish. This comparison between the bird eating the remains of a crustacean, and its richer counterpart roaming on the reef with a *tuli* soaring above, suggests the riches and abundance available through migration. The *tuli* are migratory birds that leave the islands to breed and prosper. In this sense, they can be interpreted as symbolic of the success of the Sāmoan diaspora finding wealth in the Pacific rim and further abroad, whilst regularly returning home and sending money through remittances. The slim pickings on the beach (crabs) are contrasted with the rich wealth available overseas (the crayfish).

This migratory imagery highlights the role that remittance payments play in the Sāmoan economy and the importance of the diaspora, which is part of this



Fig. 13: Part 3 of series 1, Vasa. Source : Courtesy of Yuki Kihara and Milford Galleries Dunedin.

migratory dimension to Sāmoan life. Finally, in contrast to the non-descript plastic bag causing harm to the sea turtle, the red can with a logo is without question Coca-Cola. It therefore symbolises American or Western corporate interests and globalisation more broadly. In this respect, it is possible to read the floating can as a source of wealth (as symbolised by the crayfish), but also as a recognisable form of pollution.

Extending her reflection on the influence of Western culture and the globalisation, Kihara juxtaposes the floating can of coke with the floating coconut. The dialogue between the two objects is important. Kihara nuances her symbolic representation of the West, by indicating that the US is not simply a source of cultural and material pollution, but the destination country for members of the diaspora who are represented by the floating coconut drifting away to take root abroad and subsequently becoming suppliers of Western influences from corporate America. The material and cultural pollution is part of this complex image of Sāmoan identity which exists within global networks, one that is inextricably bound to migration in search of opportunity, and to the creation of a diasporic nation entangled with Western influences, both positive and negative.

The ambivalent image of the West is compounded in the third and central kimono of the series. What the western viewer may have anticipated to be a rich seascape of tropical fish replete with multicoloured corals, turns out to be an image of death. In an interview discussing the work (Milford Gallery, 2021), Kihara points out that the skull is, in fact, recalling a local rumour, according to which the bodies of the victims washed away from Saleapaga in a major tsunami in 2009 may still remain lodged in the reef. Kihara completed research into the extent of coral bleaching and hence imagined the



Fig. 14: Part 2 of series 1, Vasa. Source : Courtesy of Yuki Kihara and Milford Galleries Dunedin.

seascape as a site of “devastation”, which (needless to say) is due to the impacts of climate change in the form of rising temperatures and more frequent and more intense weather events.

This central image in the series reflects Kihara’s desire to undermine the rose-tinted visions of tropical island paradises in the minds of tourists. The reality that she wishes to highlight is one marked by death and decline due to global processes that have disproportionate effects on Pacific-island nations. Coral bleaching is an excellent example of a pernicious and widespread issue that remains obscured by promotional images for the tourism industry. This imagery is important then, as it highlights Kihara’s concern for the environment and her mission to confront viewers with such uncomfortable realities. Though much less visible than imagery of the destruction caused by tropical cyclones and tsunamis, coral bleaching and plastic pollution are no less devastating. The seductive colours and the beautiful design of the siapo-kimono surface attract viewers who are then disabused of their illusions.

The second kimono can be read in terms of the myth of Sila and the eel (Fig. 14). A foundational story throughout the Pacific, Sila and the eel is told in many versions. While the tale explains the transformation of the eel into the coconut palm, it is also an image of death in the sense that the eel transgresses his relationship with Sila, with whom he falls in love, and is killed. Clearly, the eel is not a symbol of death and devastation as depicted in the third kimono, but it presents a deep mythical root that unites the Pacific. It is instantly recognisable to Pacific viewers, in the same way as the playful dolphins in the waves are for global audiences. If the eel evokes a clear mythical and familiar story, the image of dolphins in the waves is another image that



Fig. 15: Part 1 of series 1, Vasa. The Fe'e or Octopus.

Source: Courtesy of Yuki Kihara and Milford Galleries Dunedin.

recalls copious tourist brochures and promotional videos throughout the Pacific

Finally, we can turn to the fe'e or octopus, that intelligent and sensitive creature renowned for its transformative abilities and flexibility. Could there be a more fitting metaphor for the artist herself? Or alternatively, a joyous and optimistic image of a creature and a people that has demonstrated its ability to adapt and transform its traditions and culture throughout the diaspora? Speculation aside, if viewers turn to Sāmoan mythology to understand the connection between the Fe'e and the underworld, they will discover that the fe'e is roaming the depths looking for the ungrateful rat who insulted him; and that it can harness the powers of the underworld. In this respect, the fe'e represents the passage to the underworld, that dimension coexisting with our own familiar world.

Earlier in this article, it was suggested that Kihara's work presents viewers with an installation that is 'exotic' in the Victor Segalen's sense of the term. Segalen was not interested in "mystery" or cliché notions of difference that characterise the Other as strange or mysterious. Rather, Segalen theorised the exotic as an encounter with a source of alterity, the depths of which could not be fathomed. In his reflection on the exotic encounter, one that he understood as an engagement with 'Diversity', Segalen describes the experience of encountering something which is momentarily recognisable but then undeniably different. The Other reveals itself in its difference, as a source of alterity, which lies beyond the comprehension of the subject. For Segalen, the effect of such an encounter is a feeling of deep shock that marks one's recognition of the unbridgeable distance which exists between oneself and

the Other. The French poet elevates this experience to the realm of the sacred, likening the experience to a religious encounter, a revelation. The encounter with the exotic is a source of revitalisation and recognition of the self. Indeed, for Segalen, it is only via an encounter with such sources of alterity that one can truly glimpse the self. For Segalen, diversity is thus described as "*le Divers*", which, as Marc Gontard has argued, should be understood phenomenologically as a passing from the dimension of particulars of being to an encounter in the realm of Being itself (Gontard 1993). Segalen theorises this realm of Being as an "*arrière-monde*" a world-behind-the-world. The term "exoticism", according to this philosophical conception, refers to the aesthetic encounter with that which enables a glimpse of the otherworldly, this dimension of Being. It is an encounter that sheds light on one's own identity, and more deeply, the Being that underpins the self. When encountering the fe'e roaming the depths of the siapo-kimono, the viewer can potentially experience this type of aesthetic encounter with a creature whose familiarity and strangeness work in tandem to suggest this otherworld of myth and shadow, the alterity of the depths of the moana and of other subjectivities. On this reading, it is appropriate that the fe'e anchors the beginning of the series as well as the entire work: It points to a primordial origin and the depths of Being. The first kimono in the series presents an optimistic and strange image of this octopus that anchors the work in all its strange complexity. Beneath the typically exotic image of dolphins in the waves, swims an altogether more mysterious and exotic (in the Segalenian sense) creature of the deep.

Fanua (land)

Having established a nuanced portrait of a Sāmoan identity rooted in myth and adapting to globalisation, the second series of kimono continues Kihara's engagement with environmental issues. At first glance, the viewer readily assumes that the wave from Vasa crashes ashore as a tsunami. However, on closer inspection, one realises that there is a more local and specific explanation. As Kihara indicates, when interviewed about the work (Milford Gallery, 2021), the image depicts localised flooding caused by a combination of high tides and swollen rivers; the excess water from heavy rainfall cannot effectively disperse into the lagoon, which results in flooding. On the siapo-kimono's surface the brown river water collides dramatically with the rising tides of the lagoon. Both the increased bouts of heavy rainfall and the higher tides due to rising sea levels are a direct consequence of climate change (Hugo 2010; Jolly, 2018). This dramatic image thus represents a specific and local effect of the more broadly understood, but often vaguely referenced, 'effects of climate change'. This specificity adds weight to the critique, which explains why Kihara is so careful to provide interviews that help viewers recognise what is being depicted. It is the combination of the work plus its commentary that is fundamental to the successful transmission of its political message.

Emphasising this collision are the collapsing governmental institutions, represented by the leaning fale, the upturned kava bowl on the riverside, and the



Fig. 16: Part 2 of series 2, Fanua. Described in the text as kimono 7. Source: Courtesy of Yuki Kihara and Milford Galleries Dunedin.

colonial era clocktower as well as the damaged hotel on the oceanside. The clocktower is a symbolically charged icon linked to New Zealand colonialism. It was erected to commemorate Sāmoan soldiers who fought in the first world war (RNZ, 2020), and is a sacred civic monument in Apia town centre. The toppling of the clocktower and the damage it is causing to the hotel suggest that the effects of climate change are going to undermine tourism, as well as other efforts by both the local government, and external influences from New Zealand to shape the country.

The connection between climate change and migration is also a feature of the two kimono, as the toppling structures lead the viewer's eye towards a departing jumbo jet. Sāmoa is deeply affected by migration patterns and its diaspora, which are linked to the effects of climate change. In his study of displacement and migration under the influence of climate change, Grahame Hugo notes that mobility and displacement form two ends of a spectrum which encompasses a diverse range of responses to climate change (Hugo, 2020). Although it is often assumed that small island populations will inevitably be displaced as sea-levels rise, the reality in the Pacific is far more complex. Not all communities that move are displaced (forced to move due to the impossibility of remaining), and not all communities that are able to move are willing, those villages situated near frequently flooding rivers, for example. The capacity to adapt to changing conditions (resilience), the ability to move (mobility), and the willingness to do so (agency) are all influenced by complex factors relating to older patterns of migration, relationships within the diaspora, gender related factors, sense of place, and economic concerns (Hugo, 2020). Kihara draws the viewer's attention to these complexities through the image of the departing jumbo



Fig. 17: Part 1 of series 2, Fanua. Described in the text as kimono 6. Source: Courtesy of Yuki Kihara and Milford Galleries Dunedin.

jet which embodies them. Not only is Kihara adept at creating such simple symbols to denote complex problems; her work systematically develops a short-hand vocabulary for referencing such problems.



Fig. 18: Part 3 of series 2, Fanua. Described in the text as kimono 8. Source: Courtesy of Yuki Kihara and Milford Galleries Dunedin.

In the central kimono of the series, a Madonna statue floats off-balance, leaning towards the Apia clocktower and the jumbo jet. While the inundated religious icon indicates one side of the wider scene, it is also caught in dialogue with the bull placed just above it. This symbol of the churches' influence in Sāmoa is central to the series. That is, the central kimono in the Fanua series features this statue of the Virgin Mary being caught up in the turmoil. It is pictured beneath two other symbols: an on-the-loose bull and the Vaisigano bridge. The imagery of the Virgin Mary being swept away not only extends the message from the first two kimono, as the Catholic church plays a major role in local governance (MacPherson, 2011), but it also shifts the focus from primarily environmental to political and economic considerations. Through her placement of the religious icon, Kihara notes that climate change is not the only broader force affecting local life. The Madonna is represented as being inundated by the effects of climate change as well as being under the influence of wider political and economic forces represented symbolically by the bull and the bridge. In fact, as Macpherson (2011) describes, the church plays a key role in village governance in Sāmoa, but this role comes at a certain price (306):

...contributions made to churches impact both village and national economies. Our interest in the issue arose from casual discussions with relatives and friends in Sāmoa who outlined plans for agricultural development projects and small businesses that they claimed they were unable to start, and in some cases to operate, because of ongoing financial commitments to their churches. Some expatriate Samoans expressed frustration that remittances they sent to provide investment capital for family and friends had been given instead to churches. They noted that attempts (some over many years) to provide relations with means of becoming economically self-sufficient were routinely frustrated by church-related demands and that their relations remained dependent on remittances to live.

Kihara is not suggesting that the church is corrupted by external influences, such as international aid, but more pointedly, she is suggesting that the churches are implicated in the maintenance of a local-global economic system which keeps Sāmoan people economically dependent.

In this regard, the siapo-kimono constitutes a return to a theme that Kihara explored in 'Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?' (2013), a series of large photographic works that while drawing its overall title from the soul searching work of Gauguin, is focused on documenting the then recent effects of cyclone Evan. In these photographs, she adopts the persona of Salomé, a young woman in a Victorian era mourning dress which was inspired by a 19th century photograph (Poland, 2013). In character, she contemplates symbolic scenes of beauty and devastation. In the works of this and later photographic series, the character Salomé is always pictured with her back to the viewer, as she contemplates sites and situations from the past and present. The monochrome images invite the viewer to reflect on their historical significance and contemporary relevance. The images themselves are often sublime and poignant, at other times they make



Fig. 19: Agelu i Tausi Catholic Church After Cyclone Evan, Mulivai Safata (2013). Source : Courtesy of Yuki Kihara and Milford Galleries Dunedin.



Fig. 20: Aquatic Centre, Tuanaaimato (2013) Source : Courtesy of Yuki Kihara and Milford Galleries Dunedin.



Fig.21: Fearless Girl by Vialo State Street, New York. Source : <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/nov/28/new-york-fearless-girl-charging-bull-wall-street>



Fig. 22: Part 5 of series 2, Fanua. Described in the text as kimono 10.
Source: Courtesy of Yuki Kihara and Milford Galleries Dunedin.

pointed political commentaries by highlighting uncomfortable historical truths to unaware contemporary audiences. New Zealand's role as a colonial power in Sāmoa and its repression of the Mau independence movement are examples. A key work in this series, features Salomé in an inundated church which has been stripped of its roof in the cyclone; the flood waters from the cyclone remain, forming a reflective pool (Fig. 19). In another, Salomé contemplates the Aquatic centre which forms part of the Faleata Sporting Complex. Constructed for the 2007 South Pacific Games (Fig. 20). Significantly, such high profile facilities are made possible by international aid, but often result in ongoing running costs that commit Sāmoa to ongoing international assistance (Tupufia. 2016). The politics surrounding development and international assistance are a complex feature of the Pacific. Kihara specializes in provoking the viewer to reflect on these issues. The statue of the Madonna on the surface of the siapo-kimono is another example, and its juxtaposition with the bull-on-the-loose and the Vaisigano bridge is therefore the continuation of the political project initiated in this earlier photographic series.

Equally powerful is how this dialogue with locally significant imagery becomes interwoven with globally recognisable icons: Above the Madonna statue is a bull, which in the local context refers to the importation of Australian cattle since 2015 to boost numbers and improve the genetic stock of the herds. This seemingly positive response to declining numbers of local cattle numbers was sponsored by the World Bank (The World Bank, 2015). However, Kihara highlights in her interview about the siapo-kimono that this policy has



Fig. 23: Part 4 of series 2, Fanua. Described in the text as kimono 9.
Source: Courtesy of Yuki Kihara and Milford Galleries Dunedin.

raised the issue of exotic weed species introduced along with the animals (Milford Galleries, 2021). Environmental problems associated with agriculture sponsored by external parties, the need for imported fertilizers and pesticides to control, for instance, thus form a central concern of the siapo-kimono. The bull becomes the nexus and symbol of these issues where the global and the local intersect. Moreover, through its colouring and off-balance pose, Kihara's bull mirrors Arturo Di Modica's bronze sculpture, *Charging Bull*.

Since its placement in New York in 1989, the *Charging Bull* sculpture has become an icon of Wall Street, home of the US stock exchange. Kihara's inclusion of this reference can be read in terms of the local impact of imported fertilizer for grazing on the eco-system (Milford Gallery, 2021), or more searchingly, in terms of the destabilizing influences of global financial institutions on the role of the church in people's economic lives. Irrespective of the reading viewers may favour, the overall structure of the image on the siapo-kimono recalls the statue *Fearless Girl* (2018) by Kristen Visbal (Fig. 20), whose placement and attitude defied the charge of the charging bull: Youthful, feminine power standing up to the male-dominated financial world. Though addressing local climate issues rather than feminist ones, Kihara's reference is important as political movements such as #Occupy Wall Street, continue to appropriate images of the *Charging Bull* (and the since removed in 2018) *Fearless Girl*, to



Fig.24: *Guernica*, oil on canvas by Pablo Picasso, 1937; in the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid. 3.49 × 7.77 m. Source : <http://www.picassotradicionyvanguardia.com/08R.php> (archive.org)

communicate their own agendas (Ritchel, 2018). By placing the Madonna in strife below the bull, Kihara could be considered as suggesting that these external forces are contributing to the effects of climate change in destabilising local institutions and values.

Further, by placing the bull in front of the recently completed Vaisigano bridge, Kihara frames this icon of global capitalism in specifically Japanese terms: Identifying Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) with global capitalism, the World Bank, and their potentially negative impact, which is to say, the corruption of local institutions and the creation of ongoing economic dependence. As Masami Tsujita observes (2012, p. vii):

Among academic observers, crucial aid studies view foreign aid as furthering dependency assuming that aid primarily facilitates the donor's interests while undermining the economy, social fabric and accountability of recipients.

Tsujita's commentary is important for at least two reasons. On one hand, Kihara explicitly refers to Tsujita's work in her description of the scene depicted on the siapo-kimono, on the other hand, Tsujita took the above observation as the starting point of her research that sought to reconceptualise how foreign aid, and Japanese aid to Sāmoa in particular, could be understood. She coined the term "aidscape" to represent the complex role aid plays in the Sāmoa and the Pacific. The term denotes a shift away from the paradigm that criticised foreign aid as an effectively self-serving enterprise for donor countries, towards an appreciation of the myriad ways that aid not only affects recipients but serves to redefine physical worlds and their imaginaries as complex multiple hybrid spaces. As Tsujita explains (2012, pp. vii-viii):

Borrowing ideas from Appadurai's "s-cape" and Soja's concept of Thirdspace, I coined the term 'Aidscape' to conceptualize foreign aid as a spatial practice that produces culturally hybrid, politically connected, and socially reflective space composed of constantly changing realities in both lived and imaginary worlds. I use human geography concepts of *situated knowledge* and *lifeworld* to explore the multiplicity accounts of aid constituting the Aidscape.

This conceptual shift is designed to better grasp the intersectional nature of aid's influence in people's lives. It is also the frame through which Kihara's should be viewed. That is, the central image of Fanua is composed of three key elements, the Madonna, the bull, and the bridge. Through their juxtaposition and framing, they enter into a dialogue that can point to the erosion of institutions, and their transformation as they are undermined by the effects of climate change, and the impacts of international aid and investment on local economies and values. The strength of Kihara's work is that it is very specific in this argument, pointing to the issues related to agriculture and international assistance projects, such as the Vaisigano Bridge. The impacts of these projects are ambivalent as they produce a mixture of economic benefits and dependency, while changing the social fabric and the landscape.

The final two kimono in the series present the relationship between economic development and the natural landscape. Kihara again offers the viewer a highly symbolic scene. In the foreground stands one of the most endangered birds in Sāmoa, the Manumea. According to the Sāmoa Conservation Society, with only 150 remaining in the wild, it is suffering from habitat loss, predation by cats and other introduced animals, and is often a by-catch of local hunters. The manumea is unique to Sāmoa and was chosen as the national mascot for the 2007 South Pacific Games that

Sāmoa hosted (N.D). Significantly, efforts to study and protect the manumea require funding from international aid donors, such as the BIOPAMA program, and universities in New Zealand and Australia, which highlight not only the precarity of their existence, but also their dependency on external funding for survival. Furthermore, the manumea is a type of pigeon which consumes large tree seeds ignored by other birds. It is thus a fundamental support for the propagation of large forest trees. This indigenous bird and symbol of Sāmoa itself, is key to the survival of the forest itself.

As Kihara points out in her interview (Milford Gallery, 2021), the manumea stands on the leaves of the foifoisefua vine, whose leaves are used in traditional medicines to treat measles. The veiled reference to the 2019 measles epidemic, which caused 5707 measles cases and 83 measles-related deaths (Craig et al. 2020) affecting mainly children, is another example of a highly local reference. However, what Kihara is pointing to through the juxtaposition of the foifoisefu leaves and the manumea bird is that the habitat for the birds is being impacted by the introduction of invasive species. The vine and the manumea are linked to the image of the bull. Moreover, Kihara also suggests more obliquely that the destruction of the environment through economic development is accompanied by the destruction of indigenous knowledge of medicinal plants and indigenous ways of life, which are symbolically represented by the manumea and the foifoisefu vine.

The aidscape encompasses both the literal and the metaphorical relationships depicted symbolically in Kihara's work. These symbols are important because they embody the ambivalence of various solutions to local problems. That is, the manumea is endangered by development and agricultural practices, but it also requires international support to help it survive. This type of ambivalence, where traditional practices are rendered secondary to introduced ones that require ongoing support from overseas, populate the aidscape throughout the Pacific.

Such dependency is represented by the blue lorry delivering imports (70 percent of beef is imported, for instance (The World Bank, 2015). The truck passes a yellow bulldozer which is clearing native vegetation for development on one side, and a landslide caused by forest clearing and road construction on the other. Crucially, it is not just any tree that lies in the path of the bulldozer. It is a banyan. The Samoan Conservation Society (N.D.) takes this tree as part of its symbol. In their description of the tree's role on the logo, they highlight its significance:

The banyan tree (aoa) and its roots on the left represent the green forests and land of Samoa and all the plants that are important in Samoan culture. The massive aoa itself is a "tree of life" – a host to a myriad other species of plants and animals including food and habitat for our native birds, flying foxes, reptiles and insects. Kihara depicts development as destroying the forest behind the tree of life. It is perhaps a hopeful sign that development has yet to threaten this core aspect of the Sāmoan ecological and cultural life.

Concluding discussion

The latter part of this article began with the title: 'Kihara's Guernica?'. This question was prompted by my first impression that the two series, Vasa and Fanua, present the collective image of a tsunami induced flood. That is, a large-scale rendering of a disaster with an overtly political message. And yet, closer comparison of Picasso's *Guernica* (1937) and Kihara's サーモアについてのうた [Samoa no uta] 'A Song about Samoa' reveals the works as opposites in key ways. Whereas Picasso's commissioned mural for the World's Fair in Paris in 1937 is painted on a single roughly 4 x 8 metre canvas in a brilliant lead white and matt black, Kihara's work is brilliantly coloured, adorned with sequins and other detailing, and is printed onto several series of siapo-kimono. Though both works present large-scale depictions of destruction, and though the content is political in nature, Picasso's monochrome abstraction innovates classical historical painting whereas Kihara appears to draw on socialist murals. If Picasso presents a universal cry for peace through the depiction of the horror of the Nazi attack on Guernica, Kihara uses a kind of socialist realism to depict the particularity of local situations in Sāmoa and their linkages to global forces. Further, the hybridity that courses through Kihara's work is reflected in its materials and form, and content. Kihara's depiction of the oceanscape and aidscape reveal complexity, ambivalence, and multiplicity, rather than Picasso's universal condemnation through an essentialised and symbolic vision of destruction.

Similar to Picasso, however, who references newspaper reports of the attack but abstracts them through his own idiom, Kihara draws on the imagery from mass media and the internet, references local news reports and issues, but translates them into her own symbolic vocabulary. サーモアについてのうた [Samoa no uta] 'A Song about Samoa' is thus unlike *Guernica* in many ways, but informative as a comparison which serves to highlight Kihara's originality.

Her work is an art installation but serves the function of a mural. It is composed of multiple inter-related parts whose collective impact presents a complex and ambivalent picture of contemporary Sāmoa. The destruction and desolation can be easily decoded as challenging the myth of the Pacific idyll, but Kihara goes much further in her message, which is made possible by her symbolic vocabulary. Kihara's ecologically focused lexicon presents complex issues in simple interlocking imagery that provokes shock and dismay. This vocabulary is not limited to 'A Song about Samoa' ・ サーモアについてのうた', but echoes similar concerns in other works.

Aesthetically, the beautiful colours of the siapo-kimono evoke an exotic object, one that is at once recognisable as a kimono or siapo, but which is simultaneously different through its composition as a hybrid siapo-kimono, and as an art installation functioning as a political mural. The scene portrayed is dissonant with the harmonious form, as it thematically links the influences of development projects and global capitalism with introduced problems and destruction.

The kimono form chimes in with the recognisably Japanese-constructed bridge in the centre, which allows Kihara to capitalise on this resonance: This is an unmistakably “Japanese” work.

Within her wider body of work, which has focused on the body, gender, Sāmoan-ness, colonialism, and postcolonial resistance to exoticism, サモアについてのうた [Samoa no uta] ‘A Song about Samoa’ introduces a new element to her oeuvre. Kihara boldly broaches the question of the region’s dependence on foreign aid and the impact it is having on the local environment. The work also inscribes Japaneseness more visibly into Kihara’s globalised identity as an artist. Both moves are important given Japan’s prominence in the Pacific aidscape and in relation to bilateral aid to Sāmoa, and in terms of Kihara’s ongoing exploration and affirmation of all aspects of her heritage.

When it was first suggested that サモアについてのうた [Samoa no uta] ‘A Song about Samoa’ should be read as a mural, we contextualised the work in terms of left and right wing nationalisms from around the world. This was then nuanced with a discussion of community murals in Chile, which carried on the struggle against unfulfilled promises of democratic reforms. These murals in La Victoria engage in a politics of memory, aimed at controlling historical narratives of the past, demonstrating ongoing struggle in the present, and nurturing aspirations for the future.

Interestingly, Folgarait makes the following observation with regards to the contemporary place that the murals of the post-revolutionary period in Mexico occupy today:

In a critical period of world history directly after major political revolutions and the first World War, it was important for nations to assert their global presence in terms of a stressed nationalism, but also to make loud cultural proclamations to the rest of the world of their political survival and territorial ambitions. Mexico did not share in these imperialistic interests, partly due to its underdeveloped condition and partly to its geographic location. In spite of this marginalisation, the Mexican paintings are today better known worldwide than official paintings of the Third Reich or the Soviet Union. This is perhaps because they come from a nation not loaded down with Cold War and post-Cold War implications, that they represent an exotic Other that the developed West has found easier to assimilate and appreciate, and that they do not threaten the world order (4).

Folgarait points to exoticism to account for the popularity and renown of Mexican mural painting. However, in a deliberate contrast to this use of the term ‘exotic Other’, in this article we introduced Victor Segalen’s conception of the exotic, understood as *le Divers* [Diversity] to articulate more precisely the way in which Kihara’s work provokes a sensation of exoticism; that is, an encounter with an object that is both partially recognisable and familiar, but which confronts the viewer with aspects of alterity, capable of provoking a sense of irretrievable distance, and consequently, a glimpse into one’s own sense of identity. For those viewers who think they know Sāmoa, or who consider themselves to be familiar with Japanese culture, the siapo-kimono presents an exotic encounter that disturbs and disrupts. It is suggested therefore, that

Kihara uses this form of Segalenian exoticism to entice the viewer and amplify their shock: The impact of the destruction represented is intensified by its beautiful combination of familiarity and difference. The siapo-kimono escapes classification and thus intrigues.

And yet, importantly, as an art installation / mural it is not designed to present some mysterious and exotic object for aesthetic consumption, but on the contrary, Kihara, through her interviews and commentaries, underlines the necessity of understanding the work and reading its message in the scenes and symbols. Her commentaries are an essential element to the work as they scaffold the viewer’s experience, thereby enabling its political message to resonate loud and clear. For it is this political message that is the true focus of the work, as it reflects Kihara’s genuine and profound engagement in the environmental, social, and political issues affecting Sāmoa, the Pacific, and the world. Kihara wants the viewer to open their eyes and to think, reconsider and act in response to the ambivalent challenges facing us all. It is this message that we should listen for when encountering Kihara’s サモアについてのうた [Samoa no uta] ‘A Song about Samoa’.

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Japan, Sāmoa, Pacific, New Zealand, kimono, siapo, aidscape, murals

Gender and Equity in Post-Haiyan Disaster Resettlement Communities in the Philippines: Reflections from Fieldwork in Leyte

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Abstract

Disasters impact genders differently but the most vulnerable are women, girls, and gender diverse individuals. Vulnerabilities continue post-disaster in resettlement communities and the issue of equity remains paramount for affected individuals, families, and households. I reflected on my field notes while conducting a summer field course in 2015 in Leyte and research in 2017-2018 post-Haiyan, the strongest typhoon to hit landfall in the Philippines and perhaps in the world in 2013. I focused on urban resettlement communities, gender and community life, and equity in post-disaster habitats.

Introduction

On December 17, 2021 super typhoon Rai, locally known as Odette, battered Visayas and Mindanao in the Philippines leaving death and destruction in its path. Eight years earlier on November 8, 2013 super typhoon Haiyan, known by locals as Yolanda, had made landfall in Leyte, impacting communities in the Visayas. It was one of the strongest typhoons ever recorded globally and it caused over 6,000 deaths and 11 million homeless in the Philippines (Howes 2021). The frequency of super typhoons in the western Pacific is a fact of life due to global climate change (Berardelli 2019). The aftermath of Rai, with its images of Southern Leyte posted all over social media, brought back memories of Yolanda, making it seem like only yesterday that the region had been devastated. Such events raise the key question addressed in this paper: What lessons can be learned from resettled post-disaster communities then and now?

Typhoon Haiyan flattened my home city of Tacloban, and since then, I consider myself to be an accidental sociologist of disaster. That is, as a transnational Filipino scholar based in Canada, the meteorological events in my home country have motivated me to expand the scope of my research program on gender and migration to include post-disaster communities in the islands of the Asia-Pacific region. Not only are islands highly significant in the discourse of the Anthropocene, but they are also the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change globally (Salem 2020; Veron et al 2019). The impetus for this paper is to encourage students in Canada and elsewhere to recognize that the realities of island communities in the Asia-Pacific will soon be a shared reality for many communities around the world, albeit on different scales and in various forms.

In 2015, two years after the Haiyan typhoon, I was leading a group of students on a field trip to the impacted area. The field trip aimed to learn from the people about local-global connections from diverse disciplinary angles. My students were studying the use of 'life texts' in sociological research, trying to understand how realities are shaped by interconnected forces. Thanks to the local importance

accorded to hospitality, Filipinos are at ease in free conversation with newcomers, and as we walked around, students engaged in 'free talk' with them. Though welcoming, these so-called 'free talks' were often accompanied by teary eyes as people remembered the loss of friends, family, and entire barangays; the mass graves adorned with kalachuchi (plumeria) that remind us of the early morning deluge that caused so much destruction. At the time, I did not write notes as people shared their stories; the focus of our research was not to examine the impacts of typhoon Haiyan, but to teach students about the methodology of 'free talking'. Significantly, however, even though growing up in the Philippines makes typhoons an expected part of reality from June to September each year, among the people I talked with during that summer field course, the catastrophic effects of storm surges were not fully understood. Throughout this paper, I share moments of these free conversations which took place as we passed by piles of debris on streets and coastlines nearly two years after the Haiyan storm surge.

In addition to these informal accounts, this paper is informed by semi-structured research conducted in 2017-2018 when I returned to the Philippines for a study on post-Haiyan reconstruction and development. This trip was developed using methods approved for human subject participants involving focus group discussions and interviews. Each participant signed a consent form and I consulted with barangay leaders, selected residents in the area, and key government officers. The views of the ordinary people, like those who shared rich narratives during the free conversation with my students two years earlier, were now mediated by the interview structure approved for standard ethical practice for Western social science research. In what follows, I reflect on these field experiences about post-Haiyan resettlement communities using the following themes: urban resettlement; gender and community life; and equity in post-disaster habitats.

Urban Resettlement

Super typhoon Haiyan obliterated about 90 percent of the infrastructure in Tacloban City (Athawes 2018). Poor residents from coastal barangays were eventually relocated and resettled in Tacloban North, situated on the margins of the city which included some agricultural land. As a result, resettlement provided housing to survivors but also displaced farmers in the area (Johnson and Mortensen 2019). Relocation sites are away from coastlines to avert the impact of storm surges (Luchi and Mutter 2020). During my field course in 2015, some privately funded resettlement housing projects like the GMA Kapuso Village were constructed and already occupied. However, government-funded resettlement housing was only made available much later; in fact, it needed the “pounding” order of newly elected President Rodrigo Duterte to government executives to make the permanent transfer of over 8000 families immediate. That was in 2017 (Gabieta 2017). Moreover, of the 14,433 target housing units in Tacloban, only 124 units were constructed in the 16 months after Haiyan (Arroyo and Astrand 2019). The funds were presumably generated from an unprecedented amount of international humanitarian assistance, and yet the total value of this aid (likely in the billions) remains unaccounted for (Magtulis 2015). I visited some of the temporary shelters and permanent housing areas in Tacloban City during this time of transition from the previous Aquino administration to Duterte’s popular “can do” popular leadership (see Fig. 1 and Fig.2).

In contrast to the natural materials used in constructing temporary resettlement housing units (Fig. 1), concrete materials define the construction of permanent small rowhouses like the GMA Kapuso Village (Fig. 2), which were built using community participation to instill ownership and a sense of attachment. In free conversations with residents waiting for water to fill up, they expressed gratitude for securing housing for their families after the destruction of Haiyan. Alongside this compliment however, was dissatisfaction with the quality of the water supply and access to basic services. Public transportation around 20-30 kilometers from the city was also noted to be scarce and expensive.

Tacloban City is the major commercial, financial, government and education centre in the province of Leyte and Region 8 (Eastern Visayas) that connects the three islands of Leyte, Samar, and Biliran. People converge in the city, as private and public administrative agencies deliver health services and social welfare among other provisions. With a population of 251,881 or 5.5 percent of the total population in the region (PhilAtlas) according to the 2020 census, Tacloban City is also a destination for ‘informal settlers’ or ‘squatters’ as described in the local lingo. These people build their dwellings from light materials or scrap found along the shorelines. As of 2018, there were 4.5 million Filipinos “living in informal settlements” in the country (Chandran 2018). After super typhoon Haiyan, over 40,000 households in Tacloban were displaced. Importantly, they have not been allowed to return to their original informal settlement areas which are now under a “no-build zone” mandate (Mathiesen 2016). Housing made of concrete is considered by locals as more durable and able to withstand some typhoon winds. It provides much safer shelters than those made of light materials, which explains the people’s sense of gratitude. Nevertheless, while I do not question humanitarian efforts and government resettlement planning,



Fig.1: Temporary resettlement housing units
Photo credit: Glenda Tibe Bonifacio, Tacloban City,



Fig.2: GMA Kapuso Village,
Photo credits: Glenda Bonifacio, Leyte,
Philippines@2015

I am concerned that such rowhouse-designed housing is not intrinsic to the culture and ways of living of local communities.

With over 7,000 islands in the Philippines, cultural diversity enriches our understanding of placemaking and the built environment. Capitalist ventures, urbanization, and modernization after Spanish and American colonization facilitated urban housing design, including post-disaster

resettlement. Colonization has contributed in multiple ways to how our cities are designed (Salomon 2019). One key legacy of colonialism is the “plaza complex” which has defined power relations between the centre and the periphery, mediating and controlling the dominant spaces for religion, politics, and the economy (Alarcon 2001). From this perspective, Tacloban City is viewed as the ‘central plaza’ where matters of importance in urban life converge. One impact of disasters is that it reinforces this centre-periphery opposition; displacement caused by disasters reproduces the core as a magnet for employment, social support, and economic opportunity. Therefore, regardless of the distance from the permanent relocation sites, survivors continue to seek out whatever provides them income and support. Typically, this eventually forces many to return to their original (pre-disaster) informal settlements (Matheisen 2016) rather than continuing to live in more secure but distant rowhouses.

I had the privilege of seeing the interior of rowhouses for Haiyan survivors in Tacloban and the surrounding areas in Leyte. These are literally square units with mini sinks and a small toilet-cum-shower for several members of a household. The years of delay in the construction of such simple basic units, which lack any architectural design features, suggests that corruption has played a role in their realization (Reyes 2019). Meanwhile, the displaced population remains vulnerable to the dangers associated with the precarity of temporary shelters.

A walk-through of the debris still visible two years after Haiyan raised many questions concerning the importance of post-disaster urban resettlement. If an average of 20 typhoons a year has ravaged the Philippine islands since time immemorial, lessons could have been learned that would proactively engage vulnerable populations and communities, building their resilience and encouraging sustainable types of dwelling, that could perhaps be rebuilt in the same area. While I admit that urban planning is not my specialization, the social markers of difference clearly manifest in how row housing is being used as the prototype of post-disaster resettlement. In other words, rowhouses, such as the ones we visited, construct the peripheral domains of the “plaza complex” now occupied by transient survivors who must negotiate the challenges of reconnecting back to the city centre.

Gender and Community Life

Gender is an organizing principle in different cultures and communities (Newman and Grauerholtz 2002). *Pagkalalaki* (masculinity) or *pagkababayi* (femininity) is demonstrated in tasks more than roles among Leyteños today. With relatively no traditionally restrictive cultural scripts, men and women tend to have egalitarian relations. The Philippines is the only Asian country with a top ranking on the Gender Gap Index across the four indicators of economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment (World Economic Forum 2021). However, disasters affect men, women, and gender diverse individuals differently. Studies in different contexts provide evidence of more vulnerabilities and risks faced by women, girls, and non-binary individuals (Enarson and Chakrabarti 2009; Kinnvall and Rydgstrom 2019).

Based on field notes in post-disaster resettlement communities in Leyte, gender does matter in households and community life. Who does what and when forms part of gendered processes sometimes unique in their own circumstances. An increasing number of female-headed households post-disaster due to death, migration, separation, and abandonment make tasks less gender-specific. In the absence of divorce in the Catholic Philippines, many opt for de-facto separation and women with children manage as sole breadwinners.

I remember the story of Juana in one of the free talks who supports a family of four (including her aging mother) by selling home-made delicacies known as *kakanin* to other families in the rowhouses. On weekends, Juana gets *labada* (clothes for laundry) for a family in the city, handwashing from 9 am until mid-day. She wakes up early morning to wait for a public transport to the bus terminal and then gets another public ride at the corner of the subdivision where the *labada* awaits. She walks for another ten minutes from the corner to arrive at her ‘workplace’. Sometimes she rides a pedicab on her way back after a tiring day. At times, Juana rides a pedicab from the rowhouse to the highway to wait for public transport to the city. Drivers of pedicabs and public transport are male; *labanderas* (laundrywomen) are female.

Another walk-through moment in the row housing neighborhood shows women around children playing. They collectively watch over the youngsters having fun, and a woman comes out from the rowhouse with *bananacue* (sweet fried banana on skewers) or *camote cue* (sweet fried sweet potato on skewers) to sell to other mothers and kids. Cash transactions occur, if available, but usually food is consumed with promised payment. *Tapod* (trust) is collectively expressed by women with other women in looking after children not their own. Women form altruistic bonds for the safety of children living in rowhouses. Community welfare, in general, seems to be shared by anyone, regardless of gender and gender identity. In later fieldwork, focus group participants representing barangay leaders were women and men.

From an observational standpoint, resettlement communities that lack social infrastructure develop their own ways of supporting one another. The shared experience of displacement and economic marginalization, for example, enable them to forge deep cultural connections of *kapwa* (fellow being) that enrich community life for Haiyan survivors. Similar aspects of community resilience after disasters are observed in other socio-cultural contexts, for example in Puerto Rico after hurricane Maria (Roque, Pijawka and Wutich 2020). Indeed, post-disaster communities are in dire need of all forms of assistance to rebuild and for social protection. However, the particular ways that culture and humaneness are expressed through difficult periods are not well recognized among survivors. These communities in Leyte, while marginalized and peripheral, find multitude and unique forms of rebuilding their lives.

Equity in Post-disaster Habitats

Homes are built and rebuilt after each calamity. The scale of super typhoon Haiyan, however, rendered millions homeless and displaced. International humanitarian assistance was

unprecedented in the Philippines post-Haiyan, with the outpouring of both private and bilateral aid. Based on my field notes, private humanitarian assistance directly impacted survivors when needed most through NGOs such as the Tzu Chi Foundation, Habitat for Humanity, and Save the Children. Bilateral aid, as a matter of practice, went to the national government. In this section, I highlight the issue of equity in post-disaster habitats as it relates intricately to local culture and practices.

Disasters reveal systemic inequalities in affected communities. Women, girls, and non-binary individuals, known as *bayot* (male effeminate) or *palakin-on* (manly female in local Waray dialect), have higher vulnerabilities and are more at risk to the impact of disasters. According to the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), of the over 6,300 people who died from super typhoon Haiyan, 64 percent were women, and a significant number of “claims of lifetime loss and damages for women” occurred in Leyte. Some of the noted impacts on women include economic loss and psychological trauma in a context where no counselling services or support are available. *Bayot* are an accepted gender identity that occupy niches in the beauty, hospitality, and entertainment industries in the country. In free talk conversations in 2015, *bayot* were positively spoken of as being included. Local people claimed “*waray labot it katawhan kay parehas man la*” (gender identity does not matter, we are equal). In other words, the trauma and suffering caused by disasters are experienced by anyone. And this claim is based on testimony from survivors at ground zero.

Despite the impacts of disaster being a great equalizer, the construction and allocation of post-disaster habitats reveal layers of inequities based on gender. Males with an income tend to be identified as the heads of households in barangay and government records. Death, migration, or abandonment of family post-disaster could have deleterious effects on the welfare of children left behind. Identifying the need for housing through documentary evidence adds to the burden on surviving women. Others simply rebuilt shanty homes in the “no-build” zones in coastal areas while waiting to be permanently transferred into housing units in relocation areas (Luchi and Maly 2017). A walk through the streets in rowhouses amid spontaneous conversations suggests anecdotally that the *kapit* or *palakasan* (social or political connections) system plays a key role in awarding units; evidenced by the presence of residents unknown to locals in the barangay pre-Haiyan.

Equity is both a goal and a process designed to provide fair or equal access to opportunities for marginalized populations, even in a post-disaster context. Equity, understood as a principle, should guide the allocation of infrastructure support. However, post-Haiyan this is a challenge as such equity seems to be lacking even under normal conditions. Not only is Region 8 one of the poorest areas in the country with one in every four families being poor (Philippine Statistics Authority 2020), but Leyte, together with Eastern Samar and Western Samar, were also among the 20 poorest provinces in the Philippines in 2019. The *palakasan* system, also referred to as the *padrino* system, a Spanish derivative of “patron-client” relations (Heywood 2018, 347), reproduces patronage at the most crucial point for survival. Securing permanent habitats post-Haiyan is an ongoing challenge for survivors. In a country where only a third of Filipinos own a dwelling (Ordinario 2017), disasters

exacerbate the scarcity of areas for social housing. The subsequent re-zoning of ‘no build zones’ into ‘no dwelling zones’ has allowed the development of commercial areas along shorelines in Tacloban City (Samson-Espiritu 2014) instead of the creation of sustainable habitats for local people. Access to land ownership is a historical issue, and with the creation of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development in 2019, alleviating the plight of the urban poor is a renewed objective of the Philippine government. However, given the increasing frequency and severity of typhoons, the limited resources available will soon outstrip demand.

Since typhoon Haiyan hit in 2013, two more of the world’s super typhoons have occurred in the Philippines: Meranti (2016) and Goni (2020) (Madarang 2020). The warming of the Pacific Ocean due to climate change increases the likelihood and the risks of such storms. The impacts of these weather events exacerbate the vulnerabilities of millions who live in the path of super typhoons.

During one last walk through the rowhouses in Leyte, it seemed like only yesterday that Haiyan struck. The remaining debris is a constant reminder to survivors to prepare again. They say “*mag-andam otro*” (prepare again) for another typhoon may make landfall anytime.

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Keywords

Haiyan, Tacloban, Post-disaster, resettlement

the second friday of the week

for tiffany and maylee

flying east into the darkening
deepening velvet sky
the glitter and blink of stars suspended
above the shapes and shadows
of reefs and atolls, of archipelagos
scattered across the salty skin
of the body of the mother of us all:
the pearl-black pacific

leave at the right time
and you'll arrive before you left
on the second friday of the week

above the infinity pool of the lagoon
sleek birds swoop and flit
in the infinity above
as the fragrance
of a single
fallen
tiare
floats by

whoever said 'Polynesia' got it wrong
it's not many islands
somehow
it's all
one.

fiona chivers sherriffs

'Walking to Work' Extract from *The Backyard Adventurer* (2021)

Beau Miles

Award winning filmmaker, poly-jobist, speaker, writer, odd. Melbourne, Australia

Abstract

This paper is an extract from Beau Miles's *The Backyard Adventurer* (2021) published by Brio Books. It is the text of the voiceover for the corresponding film 'Walking 90 Kms to work' available on Youtube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-Zyud8xh2c> – Miles redefines adventure through his attempts to transform a mundane part of his life into an adventure. The first part of the text details missing travel and adventure when increasingly locked into a regular lifestyle, before deconstructing the necessity of travelling great distances or pushing oneself to extremes in order to experience adventure. In an attempt to demonstrate his argument, Miles decides to walk to work instead of driving. He documents his mindset and experiences when completing his daily 90km commute from a semi-rural lifestyle block to the inner city campus of the university where he works. The simple idea of "walking to work" reveals how distanced we are from the spaces that surround our transport routes; how insulated we have become from the world around us. The text and film provides an intriguing performance of the philosophy that it articulates.

Alwaysick

When you find yourself bored of cashews, your pen is running low on ink, and the book you've read three times is starting to wear thin, you're likely in the midst of a long expedition in a place where the nuts are cheap. For me, this was Africa, paddling from Inhambane in Mozambique to Cape Town, South Africa. I've done other trips where the cashews were beer, the book is myself, and the expedition has no set destination and no boundaries other than the outline of a continent. Each adventure, like others, are prescription drugs of the vagabond - a wayfaring, beachcombing type that drifts. Sometimes there's a clear objective, but it's often unclear what the objective means, or where it will get you beyond a longitude-latitude bearing of a dreamed up starting point. Home life shackles of habits and routine are shed for a transient role of being on the move, a meagre budget, and for some- which has more recently become me, a loose script encouraging forks in the road. Hello new lands, new waters, unmet humans and inevitable cock-ups. Arms and legs set the cadence, and the desired experience- whatever that may be, simply follows. Chafe tells you how far you've gone, over time.

Then a chunk of dumbass porridge gets caught in your beard and all of a sudden, the very act of adventure and expeditioning becomes as routine as home life. A fork in the road, or a rough landing on an unnamed beach in a foreign county becomes immediately no more or less engaging than having your shoelaces tied by 06:46 in order to make the 06:52 express- putting you at your desk by 08:05 and drinking your 3rd cup of coffee by 08:15. In your mind, like a distant beach at a particular latitude in a particular county, seeing and experiencing the routine of the 06:52 becomes a place of fixation. All roads lead to it. In what may be a moment, your steely sense of adventure shifts. Wants and desires dictate a new, yet familiar set of day to day. Adventure has not changed, but something in you has.

Eating porridge through the unkempt snags of a five-month beard, posted up in the dunes of a beautifully wild beach you'll probably never see again, has ironically become the new norm. Surprises are hard to come by, as if a constantly different day to day is in fact much of the same. Remarkably, your fluid, changeable life, reaches homeostasis. Pilfering your salty, almost untouched first aid supplies, you barter with the locals for a mirror. The reflection is not a zinc smudged, porridge bearded man with a cracked lip, but instead a cleanly shaved face with diluted freckles framed by the clean collar of a shirt. Of course, I didn't see this reflection- mirrors have no place on an expedition, nor did I barter for a mirror with first aid supplies (I had long ago already bartered the first aid supplies for drinking water). No, my reflection was felt. Actually, I smelt it, unmistakably, 5k offshore in South Africa when a strong westerly brought the smell of eucalypts from plantation forest. Sharing the same latitude and reddish soils of home, the scent was a genuine bolt of sentimentality. For the first time in my life I felt homesick. Deeply. More so, crystal clear, I felt a sickness of being away.

Seven weeks later, in company again when Kiwi mate Jarred Sharples who re-joined the expedition, the harbour master in Cape Town wanted to impound us when we paddled into town via the industrial wharf. Weaving between freighters the size of city blocks, horns blew and sirens rang. 'Fair enough, mate', I said to him on the radio, 'Take me in. I'm done'.

You return home and sit long and still in your favourite spot drinking tea, thinking about your former self. Then shower, which I've long thought to be a place of shedding. In the same 900x900mm capsule of timelessness, looking at the same cracked tile, you're amazed that the last four, fourteen- or five-months' worth of days took place in an immersive chunk as if some kind of hypnotic, drugged-up, ridiculously long day. You watch as your experience goes down the plug.

Regular work resumes and you look at that cracked tile repeatedly without seeing it.

Familiarity and ease take over, as do your old frustrations, which never left home, or you, but are somehow different now. Brushing your teeth at a similar time and heading to the level three toilet at work (where you can leave the stall door open and look through the mid canopy limbs of gum trees) replaces weeks of no toothpaste and an everyday-different, often-edgy place to squat.

Your shadow returns one morning when the 6:52am is cancelled and they replace the rail service with buses, in peak hour. You suddenly yearn to have made the godly gesture of the train not running, not having relied on a big city to do it for you.

Moving parts

Train cancellations can be biblical experiences. When wandering away, miffed at the uselessness of being annoyed, I can't help but think there's a better way. I curse myself for not listening more intently when a large and systematic process changed the shape of my day last time. I ask the flouro people for information about the cancellation, and they tell me, like last time, that they're not sure. I'm left wanting more. Suicide attempt, derailment, train driver left his train keys in his wife's car, I don't really care what the reason is, but I detest not knowing. Blockheaded industrial relations get in the way and ill-communication flows down long lines of temporary bollards and ad-hoc signage. Buses roll in, stinking up the place. People are generally, incredibly, patient, and I'll admit, I see more humanity in train cancellation events than any other kind of social phenomena.

I find myself wanting to run away, literally, from the crowds and the limp procedures that stumble into action. Backing my own body to fix the situation- on foot, by bike, kayak, rollerblades, powered by a hand of bananas and thick loaf of bread by retreating to my animalistic capabilities. Jumping in the car doesn't get much of a thought- knowing fully well that roadblocks, highway patrol, traffic lights, and honking others is much the same as taking the bus in the company of 100 armpits.

At about the same time I started getting antsy about my reliance on a big-city way of thinking- even as a part time urbanite, I began shirking the well-trodden ideology of adventure. Embroiled in the PhD process of being critical of everyone and everything, including yourself, you end up spreading yourself thinly, as if trying to see some kind of self-transparency. Becoming thinner is of course metaphorical, because in reality I was getting considerably fatter; sitting, thinking, writing, not-doing. The thinner and fatter I got, the more I came to rely on the thinking of a few heroes, spreading them thickly across my entire worldview in order to shore up my balding ideas. A feeble balance restored, a season of train cancellations tipped me over the edge again, as did a particular school presentation. What you might call 'Identity fog' rolled in thick and fast, right about the time an emcee for a school assembly introduced me as Beau Miles, Adventurer-pronounced with a hard, capital A. Not outdoor educator, hobby farmer, writer, filmmaker or inventor of the liquorice sandwich. No, I was a bearded outdoor type, skin

full of scars, who gets about in beaten-up woolly jumpers and ties knots in his sleep. Hearing the hard A, kids in the front row stopped playing with their faces and looked vaguely interested, presuming a story would be told about losing a finger to frostbite, or crossing a desert without water or a hat. Lads with messy-on-purpose hair searched me out, finding me in the wings of the stage. I imagine they wondered why I wasn't more tanned. Word for word, the emcee read my bio from an old website, delivering a well-trodden 268-word paragraph to 800 students, a chunk of words I'd written 10 years earlier. It struck me that I'd spent almost two decades as this mystical, self-prescribed figure; an embellished character who runs and paddles, chafes, tells stories and eats roadkill on weekends. At least, that's what it sounded like.

It was strange hearing my words fill the auditorium, voiced by another man. I pictured my younger self pitted against mountain ranges and coastlines testing how far I'd get on a few biscuits and a tube of sunscreen. I sounded clichéd, in search of something or someone, rubbing together sand and dust and salt with body fluids as if some kind of alchemist embalming a thick coating of adventurous spirit. My two great rocks in adult life are being sun smart, and animalistic in flight. Not always wise in my decision making, and never brown, I would cover up, go, and keep going.

Hocus, pocus, adventure

Self-searching journeys of the adventurous kind, like my past expeditions of paddling around the southern coast of Africa and running the Australian Alps, are deeply perceptive, adjustable and personal. My colleagues of adventure education proposit that adventure is a balancing act of risk vs competence, pitted against one another to meet a required level of engagement. A sense of adventure, peak adventure, or misadventure are said to be felt, death being the tipping point of misadventure, and underwhelming experimentation being the precursor to adventure itself. Yet real risk is largely perceived, subjective and difficult to quantify. That is, real risk is not as objective as people make out. Driving to work, sharing air in train carriages, and tucking in to an all you can eat food buffets resonates with the statistical likelihood that you're more likely to die from the distracted hands of a texting driver, than landing through surf in a sea kayak. Genuine and unlikely risk of harm and death is around us at every turn. Participating in outdoor adventure programs in the U.S for example, is less risky for a student than turning up to their regular school day, and this data from the 90's is before school shootings were a thing. Ancient Greek ideology of aesthetics is to comprehend, see, feel and sense, meaning risk and beauty, as keystone aspects of the adventurer's sensory world, are as flexible as our socially constructed minds can bend.

The point here, on behalf of my academic voice, is that by thinking something is risky, adventurous, potentially misadventurous, beautiful and ugly, it is, regardless of it being true or not. Where we go, what we see, and how we shift and manipulate our understandings of what we're doing is an exemplary power of the human psyche. The trick, of course, is thinking along these lines if for some reason, perhaps having been struck with away sickness, a change is desired.

I'm learning to take notice of this epic power of perception, meaning I've come to the realisation that I can do more in less space, intensely, with fewer tools. Stripping back versions of my day to day, including needs and wants, has me whispering true lies to myself in order to retrain my adventurous vocabulary. I'm cornered into being a better version of my native self; looking, listening and feeling my way over land and water to get somewhere. As socially adapted liars, humans oscillate on a broad scale of how and when we lie. It makes sense to do ourselves a favour and convince our internal voice that home spun adventures can be challenging, insightful, dirty, intense, intimate and all-consuming, even when conducted in seemingly mundane, urban, unnatural, unhygienic, polluted, noisy, everyday places.

'Aye to Bee'

I'm a liquorice man, all the way. Like the Spanish, I'd go to war for the stuff. After a bike crash, I'm equally defensive of something I'm so fond of (me, my flesh), preferring I dig bits of road from my palm rather than allow some tweezer wielding medic needle about in the mess. Yet many prefer to not eat liquorice, or happily hand over their grazed limb to another, repulsed at either, or both. I don't understand non-liquorice people and people who prefer others meddle with their wound, but I'm starting to appreciate you can be either liquorice person or not, or a strange version of both. More so than this, questioning how and why I like liquorice and digging out bits of bark from my hand is a good train of thought to follow. What questioning certain personality traits of yourself does is to boggle yourself with what is truth, knowledge and reality.

Remember when a much bigger person let you win a running race? Never mind the fact that you were the size of the large person's leg at the time, being overwhelmed with and a watertight endorsement from a big person meant you must be the worlds-fastest human, which felt great. Meanwhile, what took place is a big fat lie, much like thinking liquorice is the best food, and self-would management is the only true measure of self-care.

I have a point. At the heart of my growing mid-30's predicament is exploiting my natural curiosity, and in fact questioning mundane non-curiosities within my everyday travel. Relationships with the moving parts of this A to B world is where I find myself chewing up time as one-on-one think tanks, especially on my way to work as I dip in and out of internal monologue as I half listen to the radio. Perhaps my ego wants to play God and strike myself with lightning, as opposed to being handed a playbook of uncontrollable inaction from metro train managers who are up the line and untouchable? In other words, we can subtly lie to ourselves about all manner of day to day presumptions and propositions simply because we can. In doing so, life affirming actions, adventures, curiosities, expertise and engagements can be cheap, close at hand, and have fewer moving parts. You can do more in less space because you don't have to go as far to find what you're looking for. Questioning everything from taste to colour to the concept of love is up for grabs.

The way I figure it, in much the same way liquorice-loving can be culturally inbuilt, wound management and pain thresholds can be taught, winning races (and life!) might be a big trick played on us by others. Of course, this means the trick is on us, the believers, mapping ourselves against fellow humans. The conundrum of 'who am I' and 'why am I me' is mind-boggling, feeling very much like 'I' is a construct that exists in a room full of mirrors, others, and some invisible biology we'll never see nor understand.

To trump myself, fellow commuters and adventurers, I wonder if I think long and hard enough, I can convince myself that commuting to work is high end adventure, laced with all the ingredients of far flung destinations, mountain tops, wide seas and specialised knowledge? Where every so often I set off to think and act in odd ways to challenge my taste, physical thresholds, and trumped up tenets of success? I wonder if the daft bastard responsible for the cancellation of the 06:32 morning would ever think that a bearded bloke down the line would kick off a form of self-serving protest by walking, paddling, horse-riding and wheel chairing his way to work? Is my early life crisis a cliché, half pissed off, half liberated adventure-to-work experiment? Actually, this is still a bit too simple, strictly speaking, as least in a cause and effect procession of one person's cock-up leading to my born again return to the roadside. Nothing is that simple, nor linear.

You see, I've recently taken to reflexivity, which doesn't put much stock in the idea that one thing effects another thing, and then that thing effects another, and so on. And no, it has nothing to do with cults, scientology, or acupuncture, although I'm sure it could. Rather, to be reflexive- and downright philosophical about things, is to consider that one thing affecting another can only take place if the other things exists, therefor both things (elements, aspects, whatever) are of equal value and effective of each other. In other words, cause and effect goes both ways, not in one direction, nor under the assumption that any 'cause' is hierarchically more potent than any likely effect. This means I'm cooking up a new form of adventuring, and adventuring is changing me, festering away in a mongrel, soupy, one-pot-wonder. It's complicated, and tastes like potatoes, which makes sense given my stock is from the mongrel Irish. And of course, Helen has a lot to do with my renewal, but I'll talk more about her later when we actually start dating. In the simplest of ways, walking to work was a curious, seemingly adventurous, practical and timely thing to do. I was ready to explore home.

Walking 90km to work, on purpose

Like all mornings, I take a leak from the deck. I'm relatively awake, as opposed to my night time efforts where autopilot rolls out a vaguely lucid routine, taking particular aim from a particular spot. Both night-time and daytime leaks require me to rest my toes over the edge of the deck from a board that's slightly raised with the bulge of a knot. Every so often, especially after a boozy night, I go for broke and leak into the citrus pots, usually encountering spray-back. When dogs come to visit, they're particularly weary at the front of the house, which, elementally, is as much pheromones as it is timber. They have it right too, the deck represents bipedal territory, a threshold to the human's home, a distinct and pungent in-

between space where green grass grows. A place of coming and going, departure and arrival. For a dog, much like me, it's a place of consequence.

I'm about to leave the marked territory and walk 90.4km to work. First, I will eat some breakfast, cake my exposed skin in a thick lap of sunscreen, drink a jug of water and a full plunger of strong coffee.

Rules for my commute are imperative. Arbitrary rules, tentatively scripting how the experience will unfold. An able-bodied fit bloke who's made the slightly odd decision to walk to work is actually pretty ordinary, so I must believe that the walk holds potential- for me the walker, and if I intend to tell my story, to you the audience. In order to be engaged, I must feel this sense of challenge and curiosity so that my story- passed on through words, images and film, might be told with a sense of artfulness, authenticity and insight. Naturally, I'd take care of myself during the walk itself (this is hard to unlearn), and keep an eye on the time, but not let it get in the way of tangents and weirdness that always happens when you allow it. Whilst I can't alter my course all that much, my freedom lies in thinking what I like, critical of myself, others and the intimacies of roadside life.

Leaving with only the clothes on my back, hat, shoes, and nothing else, I will find and make my own shelter and source all water and food- either found or purchased using money I find. Of course, my inventory, or lack of one, has layers and choices attached to it. The pants are my favourite; ones that bend well at the knees, and they're soft with a stack of loose pockets to store roadside loot; a long sleeve woollen shirt that has a long zipper for climate control; a big and heavy woollen jacket called Bluey, with deep pockets, big buttons and fat collar that is a bit hipster-come-Dracula. On my head will rest an oilskin hat I found on the side of the road in Alaska. My most treasured, important garments, are hats- they keep the sun off my ginger head in a country that bakes under a fierce bombing of UV. My chinstrap, tied through opposing air holes in the sidewalls of the hat is a lace from my first hiking boots. When the strap slides up and lodges under my nose, I'm convinced I'm smelling my feet from 20 years ago. It's a hot and heavy hat choice, but doesn't suffer from droopy-brim when it rains, and stays fast when a wind, or truck, passes by.

What I wear, which is the only kind of equipment I'll have with me, says as much about my walk/film/idea as the things I will not take. Left behind is a micro tent, goose down sleeping bag, sachets of dehydrated super-calorific food, water bottles, undies, socks, sunnies, sunscreen, eating utensils, head torch, knife, first aid, brew kit, liquorice, toilet paper. I'll take a whiteboard marker to deliver lecture material and a small Sony camera as my diary. Mitch and Brett, trusty filmmaking allies, will film me in guerilla ways as I saunter along. I'm not really one for taking breaks, or stopping, but when I do, it'll be for a reason. I expect to walk 50k on the first day, landing me somewhere near a petrol station to buy a snack or two with the money I find. The second day will be a mountaineer start, which is early enough to count as the day before, in order to make the 1pm lecture.

I suspect I'll encounter hi-viz people, to which I'll counter by also wearing hi-viz, or at least hope to, as there always

tends to be vests and flags littering roadsides- windswept from the back of ute's and trucker boxes. Regularly, my ute-commute from the farm to the university takes about 70 minutes, and the same when I walk-train-walk from Helen's city apartment. Walking alone, I allowed 30 hours.

'Stats'

My walking route is a hybrid mix of what I what I usually drive to work, and at a certain point, how a driver in 1985 would have driven to the same spot. The first 75k is same-same, walker/driver Beau heading down a country road and turning right onto a multi lane highway that heads to Melbourne. I then turn left onto the old highway at my childhood edge of Melbourne, a town now thoroughly part of a mega suburbia, leading me 15.4 km directly to the front gates of Monash. Amazingly, I make two turns for the entire journey. My regular driving route continues on the colossal new highway of 8 lanes, and more on the way. Such mega roads don't go anywhere directly, but you'd never know given how wide and smooth they are, undisturbed by geography or people, you get to where you're going twice as fast. The new highway is also illegal to bipeds given shoulder-less bridges, tunnels, and staggering usage that never really drains of traffic.

I guesstimate that a walker walks' 9% more distance than a car cars'. I'm saying nine instead of ten given I'm making it up and ten sounds too perfect, and nothing- even meat and potatoes walking, is ever that neat. As I'll spend 2900% percent more time walking as opposed to driving to work, what is a hard and unwavering line of intent for wheels is a zippered line of suggestion for the walker. Life afoot is to enact the privilege of the wayfarer, distracted because we can afford to be- smells and sights and sounds that take us slightly, always, off course.

A car travelling at 100k an hour, for example, takes a remarkably direct line given unhuman speed doesn't allow drivers to take incidental right angles to avoid a cardboard box, or non-human life. When a car kills something, drifts close to a corpse, or dismembers an animal they have done so with the slightest of deviation. By comparison, I make obtuse angles when I find myself atop half a fox, sheep entrails or a cat. Hand mashed over face I often stop, shuffling around the past life to satisfy bloody curiosities, gathering up distance in my feet. I'm also gripped by gold fever, obsessively deviating towards the glint of bottle tops in the hope of them being the one- and two-dollar coins of the Australian currency, given money hunting for this walk is much like foraging for blackberries, which I'll also do.

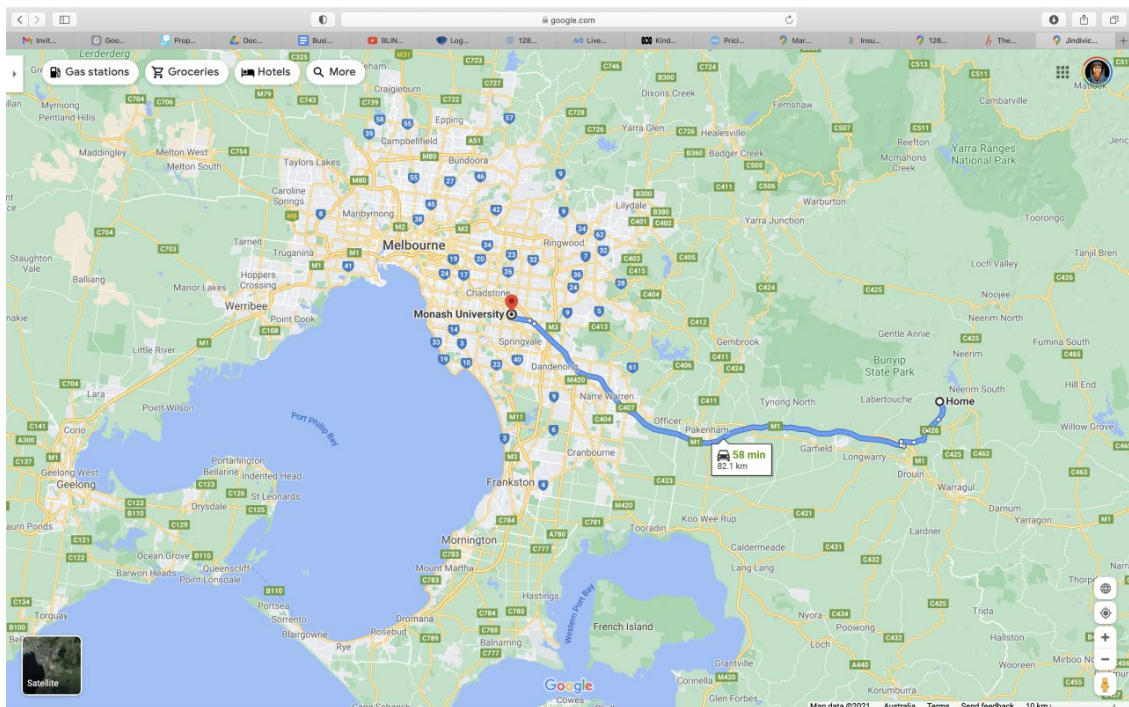


Fig. 1: Screenshot of my walk to work route.
Source: Google Maps.

As I wear a watch with three arms and 12 numbers, ticking along to energy kinetically sapped from my moving body, which I love the thought of, and I'm leaving the phone at home, I won't have a satellite mapping my distance or route. I'm not much into something so far away telling me about my presence, especially when I have a closer to home intergalactic measuring device that does much the same thing.

Knowing that my stride on flat ground, walking with a medium level of motivation, meaning I've got somewhere to go, but I'm not running late, averages out at 85cm per step, I will take 117,64 steps, give or take a few. Of course, this is another beausim statistic, but it's likely pretty close, and does say two things. First, I'm talking about a genuine step/pace that gains a staggeringly consistent chunk of forwardness. That is, my 117,000 thousand steps are sending me 100,000m forward, not three laps around a supermarket and an evening lap of the block with a dog. I once wore a pedometer during a lacklustre workday and clocked up 11,200 steps doing very little; leak from deck (12m); make breakfast (50m); check the rain gauge (100m); put on pants (8m); walk to car (50m); then to office (300m); take two dozen trips to the tearoom, photocopier and bathroom (let's say 1000m), back to car (300m); supermarket for bananas (150m); check rain gauge, then letterbox (250m); make dinner (25m); pace about the place wishing I'd gone for a run (100m); brush teeth (8m) leak from deck (12m). This comes in at 2361m, which at a mildly motivated pace of 85cm per stride, should have me at 2777.6 paces. I've come to mistrust pedometers for any great measure of forwardness, and instead think of them as going up and down, a lot. For me it must have been all that bouncing on a swiss ball and driving on a road with potholes in a ute that needs new springs.

The distance of the 'foot', needless to say, is a good reminder to how humans travel distance over time. I think a lot about paces and steps and the length of my stride because I'm a runner who counts without knowing, much like I hum to some songs and not others based on a secret algorithm I don't really understand. And, I was taught. My great mate Ponch, halfway up a hill somewhere in the deep bush of Australia instructed a bunch of students to easily, and deliberately, as if we weren't counting at all, count as we walked. It was double think, counting while trying not to count, which of course meant counting. Over the course of a few days, doing this in chunks, and referencing our figures against known quantities of landscape (distance, elevation, type of terrain), we started to understand what our bodies were doing through numbers.

I was taught the invaluable lesson of gauging how my particular set of legs travelled across various surfaces of the earth, over time. I have repeated this Metrophone way of thinking with my students for years. The guide must know where they are in the world at all times. No vagaries, not really, should enter their navigational world when you're charged with the care of others. You might not always know where you are, but you must never be lost. Like so many tacit forms of knowledge, acute and embodied navigation is felt, such as knowing how many paces you take in a minute, then an hour. At first you use a watch to learn this, and then you eventually know how far you've come based on perhaps the position of the sun, if chafe has set in on a particular spot, or if you feel like a banana, or not. By knowing your pace and shifting your pace-scale over different terrains, you can gauge with eerie accuracy how far your legs take you across shifting shadows of the day.

Like many runners, and in fact any human who pays attention to how long it takes their arm and leg wielding body to sweat themselves across the skin of the earth, I

have an intimate relationship to distance. In-touch at ground level means I often get turned about when getting off a plane, especially on long haul flights that cross the equator. When I land the sun is on the wrong side of the sky, and the air tells my skin it's the wrong season. I lose my sense of proportion, shadows going the wrong way and streams heading uphill. The world in opposites makes me feel a little drunk, and stupid, an indecisive version of myself. I eventually combobulate, but I can't rush it. I simply need to wobble around for a while bumping into things, handing the map to Helen.

The mile however has made it to DNA level, forever knowing what 1609m feels like through my feet, although technically, I think of the mile as 1.6km so have to think a little harder about the timeframe of a fraction. It comes in at about 1200 paces of medium paced run, or 2200 medium paced walking strides, altering this algorithm the faster or slower I go, the mile is like heartbeats that secretly dictate the music we like. I presume footfalls are counted and cross-check with time without knowing it, much like enjoying one song over another based-on a pulsating muscle in our chest.

'Leave, dammit'

Striding out across the lawn was genuinely exciting. First moves are always exciting. You tend to be full; energy, time, optimism, belly at capacity. If you've timed it right and the coffee was strong enough, only the bladder and bowel go along empty.

Like arms when paddling, I forgot about the key drivers of the initiative- my legs, by the time I passed the two concrete pillars either side of my driveway. We tend to be guided by our eyes when our body rolls out something ordinary like walking. I don't think about my legs enough, and how lucky I am to have a strong pair that take me wherever I care to go. As with the two pillars beneath me, I hadn't given the gate posts a lot of thought either, not since standing the heavy buggers upright years ago.

Passing through the great chunks of concrete at a walk, and not in the driver's seat of a car, aboard my tractor, or running, was unusual. I found myself still thinking about the posts 15 meters up the road, as if they were still within my aura, which they were. Slow to leave the property, I was thinking like a slowly pulled band aid, intensifying and lengthening what was usually so quick. I'd purchased the farmer-made concrete posts at a clearing sale a few years ago, busting my gut to get them into my trailer. Foot by foot thick, six feet tall, with gently sloping pyramids on each top, they were in fact pretty pompous. I thought this when passing them, tapping one on the way through as walkers do, signing off. Another slowism crept in fifty meters past the gates when I noticed a collection of a dozen or so beer cans, scattered within a two-metre radius of a road marker. I paused for a moment to scrutinize the crime scene, where I pictured a bastard on his way home from work, tossing repeatedly and habitually his empties out the window. I say 'he' because I've never thought of litterers as women. I just can't fathom the thought that a female would throw stuff from a moving car, which urks me, because it goes against the grain of feminism. That is, women can be as good and as bad as men, although I'm not sure I believe this. If I was to think of mid-20th century

innovations of war I struggle to think that any sane woman would ever create, then drop an Atomic bomb. It seems to go against every motherly instinct I've ever witnessed. By the same token, it worries me to think this, excluding big-evils to be made by men, but it's a compelling thought. The pile of cans reminds me of dead-end country roads that service half a dozen farms. lined with old Gums, dead end-dirt roads are the only kind of road I'll happily run out-and-back on given the company and shade of the trees. Otherwise, I run loops. I'm dumfounded when I see rubbish on the sides of such roads. Drains paralleling wheel ruts collect neat alleyways of flotsam makes no sense to me given the majority of road users are people who live on the road, occupying one of the farms. in what seems incidental rubbish on a dead-end road seems like a perfect tragedy of the commons.

Concrete posts and bad people occupy my thoughts for the next few minutes, warming me up. My legs meanwhile, forgotten again, truck on towards the tiny hamlet of Jindivick, over the hill and up the rise. Front posts to Jindivick is 2.2k. Jindivick to work is 88.2k.

Stepping out smooth strides on an unnaturally flat and linear surface, I travelled at an average of 5km an hour. As Rebecca Solnit so wonderfully wrote, 'mind and feet operate at the same pace', rhythmically, going somewhere. I narrated silently my one-act play, not realising the bubble I was in until a car honked or I left the highway for long enough to hear anything but the oppressive sound of traffic. It genuinely felt a little edgy, leaving with so little.

There were several farmers on tractors during the initial country roads, people filling their cars with petrol at service stations, and I noticed a woman tending her garden in the suburbs when I sit to eat a discarded orange. Yet the walking, social, sporting, out-of-doors and active human, was almost completely missing. Not even a pair of French cycle tourists passed by in either direction.

Danger, at times, is very real. When the roadside shoulder vanishes at bridges means I was three-feet away from high-speed traffic. Water was circumspect from all creeks, streams and drains, of which I constantly cross and were rarely named, whilst the always-present sun highlighted the fact that I walked in a world with no canopy, no shade for my fair skin. The modern road is stripped of vegetation each side, ready to take another swathe of lanes. Unlike many forms of wilderness, there was very little food on offer. I had presumed from thousands of miles of running that I'd simply stumble upon half eaten takeaway and bruised bananas, but I found almost nothing. Heading away from the roadside any great distance was fruitless also. Stark, often-treeless paddocks stretched either side of me offering only cock-foot and rye grasses, boxed away in countless barbwire fences. Discarded cola drinks containing their final moments of fizz were my principle form of calories and hydration. Having weighted up the likelihood of drinking down someone's trace elements of Hep C, I figured the carbonic acid in fizzy drinks would have long killed off any funk. Drinkable water, the most basic of human needs, was unavailable from natural means. The world of creek's, swamps and rivers were shifted, damned, sick, dry, or simply inaccessible. It was not lost on me that one of the busiest human thoroughfare zones in my country lacked the most basic element of sustaining human needs.

I felt immediately the effect of pace. Rarely do I walk on the roads I drive. I noticed the cracked edges of road several kilometres from my house, deep into dairy country- a result of milk trucks grinding up the road at 10-15 times faster than I was traveling. Never had I looked so closely at the glacial like qualities of bitumen, whittling away from the edges. Having run every road within 20km of home, many times, humping along at two or three times faster than a walk means that my underfoot knowledge of the world is slightly out of focus. A runner looks ahead, and a driver off into the distance. A walker looks everywhere, able to focus on the world at any length. To run is an act of mid-sight blur. I thought of this sight/focus vs insight/knowledge scale while walking, and it made sense why the baby crawls, taking in the surface of the world intimately, looking and tasting everything within range of their stumpy little arms in order to eventually look at the broad. The older we get, the longer our limbs grown and the faster our means of transport means we see wider, but not necessarily more..

Weird and wonderful, at times disturbing, items of roadside rubbish were everywhere. I collected and spent the entire Australian currency in coins, rummaged through a box of Arnold Schwarzenegger movies on VHS, and wondered who owned, momentarily, each piece of rubbish I picked up. When returning the rubbish to the roadside I felt as if I had violated my moral code, as if I was now throwing it away, having momentarily taken ownership. Bolts, bricks, milled timber, roofing tiles and drill bits set me off thinking about the world's material ages; stone to bronze to iron, before the overwhelming prince of darkness emerged in endless forms of plastic. Synthetic concoctions never before mixed by nature strewn along our pathways with irreverence was like a beautifully noxious, un-seasonal flower. The outfall was staggering, a full spectrum of packaging eddied into culverts and shaken into size order- the larger and blunt items layered on top. Shoes, mostly women's of a mostly medium size were common. A shiny object would attract my attention at times, as would a bold, unnatural colour. Pure shapes of a circle, triangle and square, or overtly lineal or straight items would divert my eye from the chaotic curves of the Australian bush. Picking through an assortment of porn, wallets, and ill humanity (asbestos, animal parts and suspiciously lumpy bags that I presumed to be chopped up humans) mapped the tale of one right turn and one left turn over two days, and how I, like the rubbish I found, am part of this complex mega highway.

Roadside sleep

During my dark night, strapped within a king-size duvet, layered in carpet insulation, housing wrap, and several towels, I slept in short but intense bursts. Soft rain felt oddly comforting when it passed by just after midnight. Small rivulets ran down the sides of my swag and collected beneath me in folds, as if tucking me in. Picking my place to sleep was not a fickle decision. Having hitchhiked laps of Ireland and Alaska on a micro budget in years gone by, whereby every penny goes towards food only, I was well versed at sleeping in obviously unseen places. That is, sleeping in places that no one would think a person would sleep, and thus garnering no interest from other sleepers, police, locals, publicans, posties or anyone else who tends to see what others do not. Knowing the

route I'd walk to work in advance, I'd picked out a few spots that provided me with blatant cover from occasional, chance bippers. Or, just as expected, a male driver pulling over to take a leak. If wild animals sniff me out, I'm likely doing something right, far enough from a beaten path while smelling earthy and raw. I have long thought about the sanctity of underwhelming, secretive, left alone places that are lucky enough to have a few key ingredients that make them of little interest to humans. First, such places have sketchy access; no path, no road, and are often blocked by the barbs of nature or wire. True enough, poor access can in fact make a place even more appealing to adventurous sorts, or dirtbags, especially when barriers hold back treasures like animals to hunt, chainsaws to steal and high places with wide view to lose your virginity. People sniff these places out to make loud noises and profit in some way, thinking that no one else in the world knows of their presence, which is often true, especially in Australia where many of our spaces are staggeringly vast, left to the few who care to visit on good terms.

An inviting place to sleep needs to get right to the point. You don't want to spend half the night looking for the perfect nook up dark cul-de-sac or forgotten creek. I aim for right under the nose of many, parallel to a path that leads somewhere, but far enough away to have full ownership of my sounds. Nesting should be carried out with minimal light, but without fear of being caught out if you fart in your sleep.

Go to a place that no one really owns- such as the wide variety of scrappy government lands that insulate roads, powerlines, drains, etc. Lay where you can see unlikely human approaches, but where they can't see you, meaning you're in a place of darkness and they're in a place of light. If someone does suspect a body lying in the murk and makes their way towards you, you've seen them long before they think they've seen you, retreating via a back route. Sleeping in such spots is often half-sleep, upward ear and eye half open to the world of unknowns as if you're a new mother coming to terms with the coos and cries of a shiny new infant.

I refined this simple set of rules while hitchhiking around Ireland, staying in a wonderful array of railway sidings, stairwells, roundabouts, and graveyards. After three weeks of odd sleeping places, my last week in Ireland was spent in a different lock-up each night at tiny, house-like, police stations. Sharing a pint one evening with a friendly gentleman, waxing on about cows and rock fences and lack of an ozone later in Australia, we got around to talking about my travels. Clearly, I was a blow in. When I pointed to my large back-pack in the doorway, the man – without turning to look at the bag, knew all about the flotsam hanging off the sides (camera kit), colour and brand. I suspected the bloke was a detective. He asked where I was staying, to which I responded 'somewhere out of sight', knowing fulling well it was the hulking shadows of unused train carriages I'd seen on the edge of town. 'I see', he says, before taking a long and breathless sip of his Guinness. 'Tell ya what, lad, I'm te loca coppa in town and can putcha up in ta clink if ya like?' 'Great', I say, happy that I'd picked my man, going onto sleep the night on the hard bench of a warm police cell. I repeated the act for another week as I got passed on from one plain clothed cop to the next.

Bedding by the roadside, halfway between home and work, was within a thick stand of gorse, a horrific introduced weed with torturous spikes, imported to keep stock within the confines of a paddock. It tends to grown in veins, much like a maze is planted, with slinky alleyways and tight bends that lead to a poked eye and swearing. Laying down my roadside-made swag, a crude but excellent roll of carpet underlay and housing insulation cut into shape using a shattered edge of a bottle as my knife, I lay down my roadside made swag in a gorse hallway with barbed wire fence angling off at the head of me. Purgatory is a perfect place to sleep. Godly green light spews from a giant advertising beacon of a BP service station, yet it's inky black at ground level providing me out looker eyes. I feel safe. Eyes half close at about 10pm and half open again at 3:40am. Time to go.

Fringe dwelling

Eight and a half hours later, arriving at the lecture-come-workshop, the always moving, continually onward experience took on a feeling of loss- stopping dead after so much forward motion. I rarely, for example, looked back. One doesn't tend to look behind them with the prospect of a destination and a long white line to follow. The indulgent capacity to stop and think beyond the moment exists mostly in the aftermath, and even then, you often have to make a mental note to do so. Having returned to a bed, food and company, my first instinct was a brief feeling of guilt for being idle. Inevitably, and rationally, this turned into appreciating that even at walking pace, and even in such a short space of time, the intricate, fragmentary and immersive nature of my commute would take time to decipher. Although I tried.

My lecture was full of immediacy. Sun cracked lip, blistered feet, I stank to high heaven. Heat radiated from my heel from a raised blister the size and thickness of a bottle top. I was beyond hobbling, owning the feel-good-pain, like a curious toothache that feels better when you bite down. Stories I told were as close to me as any storytelling I've ever done. It was as if my showerless state, soiled clothing and blooming freckles meant I looked like my words. I represented a mirror of the road, which was precisely the point, delivering a lecture about adventure from within the journey itself.

For the record, I was 45 minutes early, and would have been earlier if I had not sat beneath a pre-colony gumtree on the edge of Melbourne. Knowing that I'd walked all but 8k of the distance, and could slow down, or rest, the grand old tree with the perfect angle of growth-pushed away in the prevailing westerly wind, was too good to pass up. The great trunk felt heavy under my spine. I knew of course that I felt heavy against it, but as an older, somehow still standing tree among a cultivated landscape of sports fields, my resting spot represented a small piece of human atonement. And it felt good, really good, to take a short break in such company. I no longer expect to see trees with a long story to tell so close to a big road, especially nested in the suburbs. I reflected on the intimate transect I was currently embodying, farm to city, revealing a cross section of human actions over-time. Eras, led by particular ways of thinking is everywhere, and loud. Like my own habit of not looking where I've come from- especially when running and paddling, the cross-sectional

insight of my commute revealed a species getting fuller, faster, busier and bolder. But a species, I fear, that looks ahead with twice as much interest than behind. I've come to learn a lot more about myself, my family, and the world by being nosey of history, but popular culture and ego seems to set ourselves out in front with an endless supply of carrots.

Leaning against that old gum, wanting to stay, but fancying I wash my face before the lecture, I got to my now sore feet, and trotted on. Seeing a raven pick through the wrappers of an overflowing bin, spreading the contents in an artful smattering, my overriding thought was that humans sure were busy and industrious and capable, but I'm not sure such talents translated to being good.

My entire walking experience was an expose of sensory, human intervention, from noise to smell to vision. By the time I left the cowshit farmlands my unexpected impression was fakery of green and velvet beauty. My clear-felled home range kept pretty and alive by ancient dirt and high rainfall. At first glance, which is a view I've held for most of my life, farmlands are pretty and natural and nice, but they are far from natural, and a skewed version of pretty based on being a country kid that knew no better.. The highway was more obviously shaped; hard edged, sharp and loud. Every kilometre towards the city was another notch of in-your-face human activity and pressure. Every car, house, culvert full of rubbish, and blown out explosion of tyre rubber represented humans in a rush. Thin strips of land sandwiching black strips of road, owned by no one and everyone collects up accidental and on-purpose items of passing. People that don't know how to tie knots have flappy tarps spewing out flotsam so that only half a load remains when they arrive at their destination, which I often think is on purpose.

Highway noise is constant and oppressive, yet irrelevant when I wasn't thinking about it. Every so often the tinnitus moan of rubber and combustion was shattered with a car horn, often accompanied by a hooting jeer and fist pump from an open car window. I would swear loudly at the driver for having scared the shit out of me, telling myself I'd be happy to fight if they pulled over and half wishing they would I understood road rage from a completely new angle- not biker or fellow motorist, but a biped in categorized non-human space. When mindful of the noise, I shoved a small chunk of carpet underlay into each ear, as if blocking out road noise would encourage my inside noises come to the surface, which they did. Two soundtracks rolled out; a limitless and unsaid voiceover ticking over to the chug of my organs; heart/pulse, lungs/breathing; and the sound my clothes and feet repeating themselves. It turns out my own combustion was as noisy as the road.

A small sense of calm ensued until I came upon a penis. Stopping dead, wary of the object, I noticed immediately how interesting the moment was. The scene took on a fantastic sense of the Avant-garde. Hued morning sun poked through distant trees, providing clean wedges of light within a muted highway world of black and grey. I stood within a thin wedge of the new day, as if subtly illuminating man and object for a photo shoot: 'Man in red scarf holds penis aside peak-hour highway in first light of day'. I imagine Francophiles, enthralled by artfulness and oddity would buy a photo of that moment. Timing was

everything. Half an hour earlier I'd stopped long enough in the swale of an emergency pullover bay to notice the roadside light go out. As the light flickered, a raft of moths dissipated, no longer in lust for artificial Sun, dissipating in the diluted world of a cloudy day.

Bird spotters, wound up in their own silence and trance, see, and not just hear, trees fall in the woods, much like truckers and posties see stammering, or instant, street lights go out. Witnessing either as a walker is rare because you get caught up in your own sounds, often looking at feet, or ground where feet will land. When I saw the moths disband I wondered if I was a little off, reminding me of seeing a gigantic Gray Whale off the tip of Africa in rough seas, which was like an up-close mountain range coming and going in a moment, leaving me questioning what I thought I saw.

Seeing the real and fake suns compete for the collective pattern of a winged insect is an immensely interesting experience, as is seeing a phallic body-part that for a split second could have been real. Seeing a whale at sea is a little different, predictably shocking if it actually happened. By the side of a highway, artful, poetic blends of human-animal natures in the one scene is beautiful when you have time to see it, then think about it, which onward and simplistic focus allows. It turns out the famous piece of anatomy was a giant novelty straw, made I presume for a bride-to-be. No doubt a flock of close friends took photos on their phones when the impractical straw was in use, sending twerks and tweets via social media to people who didn't get an invite to the gig. I image the person on the other end of the straw had a pretty good time, but couldn't bear to take the rite-of-passage item home with them, winding down the window instead.

Pseudo swaggie among eight lanes of combustion offered an authenticated view of a world to compare close to the surface terms that I often think about, teach, or despise. After 24 hours by the roadside, I'd stumbled upon a profound sense of wilderness, converging beauty, nature, and a disappointed human reflection. Having stood in the depths of declared wilderness 'uninterrupted by human intervention', I compare the wild-nature scene to regular home life, and this commute, in much the same way. That is to say, I've come to compare versions of wilderness to cultivated forms of domesticity, which by most people's thinking, are at different ends of the spectrum.

Every scene we experience filters through as a comparison to something, somewhere or someone. I tend to do so with a strong sense of optimism, as I fear I'd slip into some form of depression if I didn't. Walking along a highway, for example, could be a horrible experience unless a street light, moths and one-persons bad choice didn't offer me moments of beauty, wildness, and insight.

Granted, I was hungry, which means I was looking for moments like this. With an overabundance of intent, I scrutinized the scene as a distraction, as if reaching out, making art. Doing so means I think less about my grumbling stomach. As the sun broke free of objects on the horizon, no longer splitting up light into hallways and spikes, one of the world's most rapidly expanding urban corridors gave me a sense of solitude no less powerful than a vast desert. Wilderness of some kind, the strangeness of this dichotomous, hard landscape engaged intimacies of a very different nature. It felt impossible to listen effortlessly, as tends to be the case in classical, natural wilderness. Not a single sign or sound of animal movement existed by the highway, although roadkill was everywhere, strewn and separated by speed. Instead, the occasional dog, not unlike the occasional dog owner, barked at me aggressively from the back of a ute. I yelled back at one stage and at the top of my lungs, insulted at the invasion of my bubble. A dog's bark was not long drowned out by the speed of its owner and the swoosh of rubber from another dozen cars. Yet remarkably, a sense of the wild remains in small left-alone chunks. Swamps and backwaters not worth draining or destroying hold on, saved perhaps as a future easement or human thoroughfare. These small and rare spots are where ancient ways still persist, a touch of biodiversity and chaos, which is ironically a place of order.

Malcolm Turnbull, one of our many prime ministers in the last 10 years, was about 12 hours away from being voted out of his seat the same day a photo spread of me walking 90km to work made the national papers. More people looked over my story than inquiring about poor Malcolm. 'Man walks 90km to work', was the most read article that day across the major news agency in Australia. Part chuffed, part surprised, it made me aware of how attractive odd non-news stories are to the scan, click and curios public. Guaranteed each day is a host of expected news in much the same form; gristly deaths, curious deaths, wars, environmental catastrophes, sports teams booming and busting, a storm, sun, good looking people doing good and bad things. A bloke walking a long way to work tends to get attention because it's not every day a bloke walks that far to somewhere so ordinary. By default of being just a little different, my walk stuck out.

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Backyard adventurer, commute, walking, phenomenology, 'Walking 90 Kms to work'

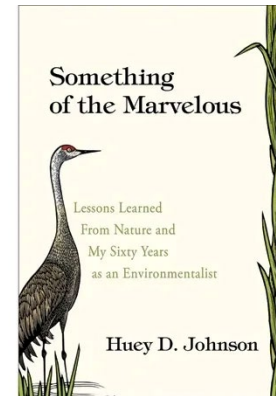
Book Review

By Peggy Lauer

Human Services program director and administrator, Marisla Foundation, United States of America

Something of the Marvelous: Lessons learned from nature and my sixty years as an environmentalist

By Huey D. Johnson
Fulcrum Group
284 pages



There was no way down.
I was alone on a boulder, out of rifle shells, and surrounded by ice. Paralyzed by fear, soaked in sweat, I thought this must be what it feels like to face a firing squad (xvii).

This is how Huey D. Johnson begins his memoir. His predicament as a young man of 24 foretells how he lived the rest of his life. He often took big risks. Presented with few options, he would listen to his inner voice, and the way through would invariably present itself.

Something of the Marvelous covers much of the ground and ideas Johnson nurtured over his 60 years as a conservationist, saving millions of acres of land and water habitat in the United States, and expanding environmental policy to address California's limited resources and the world's climate crisis. A first draft of the manuscript was completed a few days before he suffered a fall that led to his death at 87, on July 12, 2020.

Johnson was a biologist by training and believed in Western scientific reasoning. But he found that many scientists, who he would say know a lot about very little, were part of the problem. "As a confirmed generalist, I have seen time and again the disastrous consequences of specialization and the blinders it imposed on even the most brilliant minds". Johnson thought holistically and attempted to manage the environment more as Mother Nature does. He was by his nature a savvy promoter, and he used the capitalist economic system to the environment's advantage.

He also never completely shut the door on a good idea. He mulled over big ideas, sometimes for years, before finding alternative strategies for reaching his goal, which often led to positive changes for environmental policy. A case in

point: late in his life he reconstituted one of his early projects for saving ocean fish by raising forage fish in rice fields, much as the method in Asian cultures fed communities for centuries. A couple of years ago he and his team discovered this method could play a major role in mitigating methane and thereby climate change.

This book could seem inflated if not flat-out invented to a reader unfamiliar with Huey Johnson, his style, his devotions, and his achievements. Deborah Moskowitz, who worked with Johnson for eight years, and is president of Resource Renewal Institute, wrote in the Acknowledgements that his "accomplishments are so vast, they are difficult to enumerate. It's harder still to comprehend how he got it all done" (xiii). Like other highly motivated leaders, Johnson's mind was always at work, whether he was actually at his desk, or reading, fishing, hunting, or walking his dogs. He had an uncanny way of connecting problems and people in his mind and realizing solutions over time.

It is this quality, and the way he simply describes his lessons learned, that makes me believe there is something here for readers of *Ekistics* and *the New Habitat* to marvel at, beyond good storytelling in vivid, full color.

In his mid-twenties, Johnson had already become a highly paid "organization man," selling a new innovation for hotdog casings to the manufacturing industry. But the relentless pace and callous culture left him visibly shaken. In 1960, he decided the corporate world was not a good life for him and stepped off the ladder to success. For two and a half years, he travelled the world with little money, but with skills he considered crucial—salesmanship and the ability to tie a good knot among them. He picked up work here and there, like in New Zealand, where he went up on that icy mountain in pursuit of a thar, an invasive species that the Ministry of Environment wanted culled.

Once he returned to the States, he had jobs tagging salmon in Alaska and teaching debate at a secondary school in Idaho. He spent much of his free time fishing and hunting in those environments as he had done growing up in rural Michigan.

Johnson found his footing and his future when someone handed him a book of essays by Aldo Leopold, whose writing in the 1920s and '30s caused a shift in the field of game management toward wildlife conservation. Leopold wrote about the importance of a land ethic, which he defined with eloquence and clarity: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." The book, *A Sand County Almanac* (1949) was published a year after Leopold died from a heart attack while fighting a fire near his home. Leopold's land ethic became Johnson's holy grail. Johnson included in his memoir a photograph of his copy of the book, which he sent to his fiancée in 1962, announcing his epiphany: "Sue, Huzzah! This book may be the drum" (41). What struck him to his core was that this forester, a fellow Midwesterner, "urged us all to 'think like a mountain'. Leopold saw the natural world—including human beings—as inextricable parts of a single whole...[he] integrated environmentalism with philosophy, ethics, and pragmatism" (39).

With his new-found purpose, Johnson sought work with a number of conservation organizations. And then enrolled at the University of Michigan when he got no bites. Soon after, he saw a job listing on a bulletin board at UM and convinced someone at the 3-year old organization, The Nature Conservancy, to meet with him, although the job had already been offered to someone else. "Using all the sales skills I could muster, I somehow convinced him to hire me instead" (56). In a matter of 24 hours, he went from being a PhD candidate to TNC's Western Regional director responsible for the thirteen states west of the Mississippi River, and based in San Francisco, 3,000 kilometers away from TNC headquarters in Washington, DC. Johnson became the Conservancy's 8th employee, and began his career acquiring private land and protecting it as a public trust.

Johnson's means were often unusual for the era—any era—and the cast of collaborators he describes in this section of the book are particularly animated. They are passionate and driven. Two of the roundest characters we meet were driven by a sense of guilt and responsibility, and Johnson relays their stories with compassion. It is here that one of Johnson's underlying motivations described in the first chapter about his childhood comes up as a chord for indefatigable commitment. Tragedy.

Huey Denier Johnson was born in rural Michigan on January 6, 1933, during the Great Depression and he was shaped by the war effort at home. He was also shaped by the death of his brother who was killed by a car one year before Huey was born. Johnson recalls how:

Duane's death and my parents' grief could have cast a long shadow over my childhood, but for some reason it only helped me thrive. My parents made it clear that I was expected to live for both myself and my brother, and to always try harder in my endeavors.... It was a tough way to motivate a child, but I knew my parents loved me, and the responsibility they put on my

shoulders benefited me in my growth. I always wanted to fulfill their dream, and I think I did (3)

Within three years at The Nature Conservancy, Johnson found himself invested in a wild (certainly in the telling), complex effort to keep undivided and protected the land that includes the Pools of 'Ohe'o on the windward side of Maui, at the base of the indigenous Hawai'ians sacred Haleakala mountain.

Johnson's episodic style of storytelling is at its height here. And he is quite revealing of how American philanthropy worked related to real estate, land saving, and self-interest. But it was his political intuition and synchronous timing that had a major role in his success. In 1966, US Congress passed the Endangered Species Preservation Act and added protections in 1969 of those species in danger of "worldwide extinction". "I knew that twenty-eight species of birds—all lovely little honeycreepers-- were listed as extinct on Maui" (72). Hawaii's honeycreepers were unique to the islands. He brought over an ornithologist and his friend Dr. Martin Griffin, with whom he saved open space for bird habitat along the Pacific coast in Marin County, California. Johnson bought a couple a weeks' worth of food and arranged for Hawaiian guides to help Griffin and his team cut through the verdant and nearly impenetrable mountainside.

When the birders came down with photographs proving the existence of at least one honeycreeper, Johnson was ecstatic and relieved. He cared about birds—he had a deep commitment to Greater Sandhill cranes and revered Western bluebirds, among others—but he reveals in the book his main motive:

Why did I care so much about extinct honeycreepers? Because I knew that bird-watchers were—and continue to be—the largest and most passionate group of nature lovers in the country. And it didn't hurt that many of the board members of TNC were avid bird-watchers too. Some were authors of ornithological books and manuals. I was convinced that if we could galvanize the interest of bird-watchers, we would raise the million dollars to buy the land in Hana (72-73).

Soon after the seven pools were saved from development, it took little selling by Johnson for the government of Hawaii to extend the protection to include the canyon and valley nearby, which meant protection of Haleakala from the summit to the sea.

What he learned in helping save grand and sacred places with TNC, he revised to save open space in cities with an organization he named the Trust for Public Land (TPL). With Leopold's philosophy as his own, Johnson and a couple of attorneys started TPL with an initial donation from a wealthy friend living on Maui, and a Ford Foundation grant. He opened an office in downtown San Francisco.

We came up with a creative way to bring more open space to some of the poorest neighborhoods in Oakland [on the east side of San Francisco Bay].... I talked to one of my duck-hunting friends—the president of Bank of America—and showed him how it could work to everyone's advantage if the bank gave us the dilapidated buildings they owned through foreclosure. Using the land trust construct, we would turn them into gardens, playgrounds and parks. And BofA would get a tax advantage for 'selling' to us (135).

He collaborated with the Black Panther Party in saving parcels of land and buildings in the areas of Oakland with the least access to open space. He knew the group's leaders and what the Panthers were working toward. "Portrayed one-dimensionally by government and media as gun-toting anarchists, the Panthers actually believed strongly in the interconnectedness of all people, with one another, and with nature. And they were among the first advocates for environmental justice" (140).

A large section of the book focuses on his experience using his knack as a generalist ("and a general") as the head of California's Resources Agency. He was in charge of managing the environment of the large and diverse state of then-23 million people (1978) with 1350 kilometers of ocean coastline. Johnson took the challenge to show that government could be a leader in managing the public trust, and to institute the land ethic. He invested his time integrating the work and goals of the competing and contentious departments in his agency who managed water, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, air quality, parks, wilderness, and habitats on land and in the sea. And he created a program to have the department cover the cost of graduate programs for candidates from any agency in state government who wanted to work on his 100-year investment plan in the environment of California.

He hired a good number of women and minorities, which was unusual for the time. Something he says he did simply because he judged people as individuals. He quickly became a threat to extractors and politicians of all stripes—and a target. But he somehow could steel himself and bear the brunt of harsh, serious opposition and keep his job in an amazingly innovative time in California and the nation, turning against nuclear power to invest in alternative energy, among other things. Of course, it helped that his boss, Governor Jerry Brown, believed in him. He praises Brown's acumen in the book: "I attribute much of whatever success I had on the job to his confidence and support. I rarely saw him during my time in his cabinet, yet I knew I could always count on him, even in the most difficult times."

After Governor Brown's tenure ended in 1982, Johnson traded a staffed department of 14,000 in the state capital for an office of one in a small fort of World War II barracks tucked beyond the headlands west of the Golden Gate Bridge. Fort Cronkhite was a precious piece of the contiguous park system Johnson had been instrumental in creating. Within five years, he and a handful of others working with him at the Resource Renewal Institute [including this reviewer] learned that what he and the Resources Agency had accomplished for California's sustainable future was happening on an international scale. Most nations committed to Agenda 21 plans to be signed at the UN Environment Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The Institute beat the drum for the US involvement through the "Green Planning" program, which embodied much of what Greek architect and town planner Constantinos Doxiadis had launched with thought leaders decades earlier through Ekistics. For those new to the term, Ekistics is a single, adaptable framework for applying a multi-disciplined approach to improving human settlements.

Always the salesman, Johnson wrote consistently in his monthly newspaper column in the San Francisco Examiner that Green Planning was the key to solving the climate crisis because of the grand scope and its logic. "Green Planning follows the simple principle that to solve anything you have to solve everything. Not only that, solving everything is actually much easier to achieve than solving one thing" (234). In all his writings, including this memoir, he praised the visionary planners of the Netherlands, New Zealand, and initially Canada for just this pragmatic approach.

This book is an honest reflection of the time and effort this accomplished leader put into the work, and also the short cuts he took—including sending his complete but loose manuscript to a potential publisher before a final edit. Johnson knew the details, was undeterred by setbacks, but was openly irritated with any process he couldn't speed up. He was motivated to get his stories out in the world before his body's processes slowed any further, not to assure his place in history, but simply to thank his family and friends, praise everyone he could remember he had worked with, and to show young environmentalists how to avoid some rookie mistakes.

In the Introduction, Johnson summarizes his points in one succinct lesson that I hope he can sell posthumously as more populations search for resilience in the face of peril:

Sixty years ago on that icy mountain, I had learned a lot. Choose life over fear. Use whatever tools you have to survive, especially your own mind. Remember that you are more resourceful than you think. And never again forget to prepare ahead for the awesome power of nature (xix).

The logo graphic consists of a central white circle with eight lines radiating outwards to smaller white circles, resembling a stylized atomic or molecular structure. This is set against a large, faint white circle on a solid orange background.

Ekistics