A'OA'O LE TAMA E TUSA MA ONA ALA, A O'O INA MATUA E LE TOE TE'A ESE MA IA

"IF WE FAIL TO CONSTRUCT OUR OWN REALITIES,
OTHERS WILL DO IT FOR US"

Saint Andrew Palauni Matautia

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Saint Andrew Palauni Matautia

Thesis Supervisor: Nan O'Sullivan

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"O le ala I le pule o le tautua"

The path to leadership is through service

ABSTRACT:

Guided by both my own journey as a Pasifika student and the ideology of Tongan academic Dr. Hūfanga Okustino Māhina, this research seeks to identify ways in which indigenous knowledge can become an integral component within education, specifically design education in New Zealand. This research focuses on the struggles Pasifika students face within an aesthetic education that has within its history, a proud claim for the removal of cultural, religious and historic references from its aesthetic vocabulary. I will argue that the absence of indigenous culture, initiated by the early modernists to embrace the universal, is no longer an appropriate model within design education as it struggles to address cultural diversity in both its content and delivery. The solution, I suggest is not an "either or" scenario but a recognition that knowledge comes from many cultures and contexts. This thesis explores the indigenous beliefs of tā, time and vā, space. It identifies the relevance these and ideologies derived from them, offer design pedagogy. Using visual ethnography, indigenous research methods and photography, I investigate and document traditional indigenous ceremonies and undertake talanoa, oral histories, in order to discover the opportunities and relevance they offer design education.

Having compared and contrasted Eurocentric models and indigenous practices I identify and illustrate current initiatives that attempt to change the status quo. This thesis endeavours to tell the story of Pasifika students through a personal lens and identifies Moana ideologies that can be introduced to design curriculum that establish beneficial pathways forward for not only Maori and Pasifika students in design education but design education and thinking as a larger context. As a nexus to this research, I have designed and curated a selection of five photographs to illustrate the journey of indigenous knowledge, practice and language through design education. These photographs pay homage to my cultural ideologies, represent the narrative behind my motivations and illuminate the reciprocal need to nurture the space between Moana students and design education.

DEDICATIONS:

This work is dedicated to my mother and father who have sacrificed a lot for me and my siblings in order for all of us to live freely in this world without the struggles they faced. My mother, a constant inspiration in my life, and someone who has taught us the value of education and knowledge. Gaining a degree in Early Childhood Education from Victoria University of Wellington in 2003, while raising four children, cooking and making school lunches was not an easy task. For your love and your *tautua* to your family, I will always be grateful. We did not know at the time how significant it was for her to have gained that qualification but we do now. We acknowledge your strength and your love Mum. To my father, I know this wasn't your dream for either of your sons, but I hope this comes close to it. But I thank you for the many life lessons you have taught me over the years. I wouldn't be the man I am today if it wasn't for you; your unwavering devotion to God and to your family has been nothing but an inspiration in my life and I thank you for showing me the meaning of family and maintaining our *fa'asamoa* within our home. This is for you both.

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to light your way forward as leaders of a better tomorrow.

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*"A'oa'o le tama e tusa ma ona ala, a o'o ina matua e le toe
te'a ese ai"*

Proverbs 22:6

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GLOSSARY OF MOANA WORDS USED:

Aiga: Family

Ali'i: As described under 'Matai Ali'i' but also used informally to call an adolescent male e.g; E, ali'i e, ua piki luga lapisi lae paepae solo? – Hey boy, have you picked up the rubbish that is lying all over?

Alo'a: Island shirt

Alofa: Love

Aganu'u: Culture, conduct according to the customs of one's own country

Atua: God

Ie faitaga: Formal style of sarong worn by men

Ie lavalava: Sarong worn by both women and men

Ie Toga: Fine mat

Itumalo: District

Fa'aaloalo: Respect, to be humble, reverence

Fa'alavelave: Occasion such as a wedding or funeral, when family assistance should be given, in form of labour or goods

Fa'afetai: Thank you.

Faifeau: Minister/Paster/Preacher/Clergymen

Fafafine: Transgender

Fa'akigi: Ceremonial giving of a bride to the groom's family

Fa'asamoa: The Samoan way, in the manner of Samoans, according to Samoan customs and traditions

Fafau: To tie or to bind Feau: Chores

Feagaiga: Sacred covenant between brother and sister. "The traditional ideology of the fea-gaiga between a tuagane and his tuafafine has been subsequently applied to the relationship between the faife'au (Samoan church minister) and the 'aulotu (church congregation)" (Muaiaava, 2015).

Fono: Meeting

Fonua: Land

Fue: Fly Whisk

Gagana: Language

Lauga: Formal Address/Speech

Mana: prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power, charisma - mana is a supernatural force in a person, place or object. Mana goes hand in hand with tapu, one affecting the other. The more prestigious the event, person or object, the more it is surrounded by tapu and mana. Mana is the enduring, indestructible power of the atua and is inherited at birth, the more senior the descent, the greater the mana.

Maliu: Funeral

Matai Ali'i: Paramount Chief

Measina: Cultural Treasures

Mokopuna: Descendant/Child/Grandchild Nu'u: Village

Pāke: Drum/s

Pe'a: Traditional Samoan tattoo for men

Sā: Sacred/Tapu. Also means sacred village rules

Si'i: Gifts given during a funeral

Taualuga: Dignified dance, putatively danced by the highest-status person present

Taule'ale'a: Untitled male

Taupou: Village maiden

Tautua: Service within the nuclear family and also one's service to his/her village. In NZ that village then becomes the institution of the church they belong to.

Taonga: Cultural Treasures (Māori Translation of Measina)

Tagata: People/person

Talanoa: To talk, chat, converse with one another

Tapu/Tapuia: Sacred/ness - Further meaning found in Mana translations Tatau: Tattoo/Tattooing

Toana'i: Usually refers to Sunday lunch but can also apply to feast among many on a few people

Tofiga: To gather and appoint To'oto'o: Wooden Staff

Tuagane: What brother is to a sister. (Uso is used when one brother refers to another brother, same goes between sisters)

Tuafafine: What sister is to a brother

Tuua: Senior tulafale

Tuiga: Headdress

Tufuga: Master Craftsman

Tulāfale: Talking Chief/Orator

Tulou: To pardon yourself as you intrude into someone's personal space, either by walking in front of, or by passing something in front of someone else

Vā: Space

Kainga: Kinships ties Whanau: Family

GLOSSARY OF MOANA PHRASES USED:

O e nanai: Those who are specially selected for the transfer of knowledge

O le ala l le pule o le tautua: The path to leadership is through service

Ua 'a'au, 'a'au taunu'u i le nu'u o le 'Ape: Of an undertaking irksome whilst the issue was doubtful, but ending in success

Sui o le atua – God's representative

Tufuga ta-tatau: Master Tattooist

Teu le vā: To nurture the space

Tauhi Vā : To nurture the space

Vā Tapuia: Sacred space

Vā lelei: Good connections

Va'ai fa'alelei ou matua, o ou fa'amanuiaaga na: Take good care of your parents, through them you will be blessed.

Vā'ai ou mata ma fa'alogo ou taliga: Look carefully and use your ears attentively

N.B – All translations of non-English words used in this research have been from author's understanding as well as translations used by sources cited in reference list. I have adopted the use of the Samoan alphabet to order this lists.

"I belong to Oceania – or at least I am rooted in a fertile portion of it.... So vast, so fabulously varied a scatter of islands, nations, cultures, mythologies and myths, so dazzling a creature, Oceania deserves more than an attempt at mundane fact; only the imagination in free flight can hope – if not to contain her – to grasp some of her shape, plumage and pain" (Wendt, 1982, p. 202).

INTRODUCTION:

This thesis is inspired by my own personal journey while studying as an undergraduate at Victoria University Wellington (VUW), School of Design (SoD). Most importantly it illustrates the struggles faced by many Pasifika students. As a student of Pacific Island heritage studying at SoD I feel privileged to play a part in the relationships established through the sharing of knowledge. During the earlier years of my undergraduate studies, an absence of cultural relevance relating to my own Indigenous roots as a Samoan, or for that matter anything specifically Pacific, became a stumbling block. Supported by global calls to address, if not yet embrace diversity in education I will, throughout my thesis, argue that the use of Indigenous knowledge holds a number of keys to the successful inclusion of diversity in education and the improved matriculation rates of both Māori and Pasifika students. I will suggest that this can be a reciprocal relationship in which Indigenous knowledge enriches education for all those sharing this important educational space. In the face of calls for a broader acknowledgement of culture within education (Baskerville, 2009) I see my research as a timely, if not well overdue, contribution towards both positive and inclusive change.

In the Samoan culture, we have a proverb; *"O le ala I le pule o le tautua."* Translated into English, this means;

"the path to leadership is through service." Therefore, I dedicate my thesis as part of this service to my community as an act of the reciprocal respect practiced in *fa'asamoa* - Samoan way of life. Within my service I give back to my community for what it has encouraged me to achieve. My efforts are also not without contributions from faculty members and the wider university community and for this, I also pay homage. Using my culture as the backbone to my study I stand thankful and proud as a Samoan. At the outset of my thesis and in the spirit of my Pasifika culture and upbringing, I am thankful for the opinions and efforts of those who have come before me, offering me hope and encouraging success. My hope is that this research finds an audience within both the Pasifika community and tertiary design learning institutes. I hope that it adds weight to both the discussion and the action needed to help Pasifika students meet, achieve and exceed at what are fundamental skills of their ancestors – visual communication, learning by doing and making.

As a young Samoan growing up in a Pasifika community, my world was a very visual one. Learning was a very visual process, particularly through our Samoan church. We learnt our traditions by watching and listening to ceremonies, especially the elders or the matais of the church who would be participating in

the ceremonies. Our church also played a major role in the maintenance of our mother tongue, through Sunday school and extra-curricular activities where the Samoan language was always spoken. We also learnt some of our ancestral stories through song and dance and dreamt of the worlds before and beyond us. We learnt that, "to give was greater than to receive" and were taught that was a core principle of *vā* and that the space between individuals and all things is to be respected.

This research focuses on the struggles Pasifika students currently face within an aesthetic education. It has, within its history, a proud claim for the removal of cultural, religious and historic references from its aesthetic vocabulary. It is an education that has established the universal as the preferred practice. This thesis endeavours to tell the story of Pasifika students through a personal lens in design education and to identify Pasifika ideologies that can be introduced to the curriculum that will illuminate pathways that are not only beneficial to Pasifika students but to the rest of the cohort.

The contribution I will make to the discourse is to put a voice to the story of Pasifika students in design education. Having established the Pasifika predicament, I will in the spirit of reciprocity so fundamental to my Samoan

culture, identify what the Pasifika culture can offer design education, and in doing so, assist design to both strengthen the current pedagogy offered and add the diversity that global markets now seek. At the forefront of these endeavours are my aims of illuminating the need to find pathways within design education that are culturally inclusive, more amenable to the contributions Indigenous culture can make for design as a whole and not just for the Indigenous and, as studies tell us, endangered students. My aim, my service, is that this work can contribute in some way to graduating more Pasifika students and validate the contributions Indigenous, specifically in this research Pasifika, cultures can make to design and design thinking. In doing so, the global aim of diversification away from the models of standardization can also be met.

Inspiring this study are two things; my own personal journey as a Pasifika student through VUW School of Design during my undergraduate years and my meeting and as a consequence of that, reading the works of Tongan academic and the most esteemed, Dr. Hūfanga Okustino Māhina (2010). Driving my investigations are the difficulties I and my Pasifika brothers and sisters have faced during our tertiary studies in design. The initiatives introduced, and the Pasifika methodologies adopted to help not only

avert failure, but bring about success. By comparing and contrasting these ideals, I will illustrate that there are significant connections between traditional Pasifika ideals and the incumbent Eurocentric methodologies. I will demonstrate that although Pasifika practices contain tangible intersections to the incumbent practices, they are rarely acknowledged within mainstream design pedagogy. I will propose that Pasifika culture has much to offer design education. I will assert, there are numerous opportunities available to design education from the inclusion of Indigenous ideologies and methodologies. Central to the thinking, discourse and structure of my thesis, process and outputs is the work of Māhina. At this stage I would like to clarify that from this juncture I will refer to the Pasifika region as Moana but use Pasifika or Pacific where appropriate. This sits more comfortably with Māhina's (2010) discourse as he refers to *tā-vā* as a Moana theory and suggests the Pasifika/Pacific terminology is "problematic, foreign-led, externally imposed label (p.168).

A vital tool to this investigation will be my photography, which will aid the investigation, analysis and synthesis of this research. I am a passionate photographer and documenter of my cultural heritage and I use it to tell the stories of my community and my beliefs.

Within this body of work. I use photography to harvest research through ethnographic methodologies. I also use photography to present my viewpoint, to encourage cultural appreciation and the subsequent insightful analysis and reflection such visual inquiries offer. Holding a specific pride of place, supported by the written thesis but serving as the apex of my research, I will craft, design and curate a series of five creative portrait photographs. These photographs will pay homage to my cultural ideologies, represent the narrative behind my motivations and illuminate the reciprocal need to nurture the space between Moana, students and design education. The aim of this approach is to encourage cultural appreciation and the subsequent insightful analysis and reflection such visual inquiries offer.

In addition to visual research, I have also undertaken oral research. Both these methods are particularly relevant to my culture. To address the oral research required in my investigations I have employed the Indigenous methodology of *talanoa*. This approach gives voice to the thoughts and opinions of my fellow Moana students in a space that recognises and appreciates who they are as individuals and allows an honesty and respect to what can be a difficult conversation. This approach is also ratified in research done by Victoria

lecturer in Education, Delia Baskerville when she calls for new approaches to teaching that create culturally inclusive classrooms that recognise all members, whatever their identity (Baskerville, 2009). The methods of research contribute to Baskerville's endeavours by enabling individual voices to be a part of the discourse around Moana students in design education.

Chapter Overviews.

Chapter One: Motivation.

Having voiced my personal motivations for this study I will clarify the brutal truth highlighted by national statistics that clearly outline the need to address the issue of engagement, retention and matriculation of Moana students in tertiary education. I will address what is perceived to be the overall predicament of Moana students and reference findings and statistics that illustrate Moana specific needs. Using my experience within design education, I will also speak to the opportunities to be had when Indigenous knowledge is embedded within teaching practices and curricular and assert that this would constitute a significant step to improving engagement and retention. I will argue that while this remains the exception, not the rule, the ability for Moana students to engage and therefore succeed remains impeded. To highlight one example of how

cultural inclusivity is currently addressed in design I will illustrate the more common approach in which Indigenous knowledge is used without understanding or acknowledgement. This example will exemplify current failures within global corporations and markets to use Indigenous aesthetics simply for profit. Building on Harvard Professor, Theodore Levitt's summation that, "Everywhere everything gets more and more like everything else as the world's preference structure is relentlessly homogenised," (Levitt. 2006 p.93) this chapter will conclude by highlighting the opportunities Indigenous culture, specifically Moana, can offer a realignment of this preference.

Chapter Two: Literature Review.

In Chapter Two I offer a literary landscape that holds influence in this discourse. I will introduce works that have highlighted the enormity of the issue and further influential literature that has shaped the framework and at times acted as the counterpoint for my discussions. I will, first and foremost, acknowledge the work of those who continue to bring this issue to the forefront and reflect on what their findings offer this study. Having already established in Chapter One the statistical reality for Moana students in tertiary education I will address the more immediate focus of this investigation, the pathway of the Moana student in design

education. At this point, I will introduce Māhina's (2010) work "*tā-vā*," The Theory of Reality, and a study of time and space. At this point I will summarize the relevance that *tā-vā* along with *teu la-vā* holds for this research. Building from this, and again to illustrate the relevance and significance, I will discuss the work of those that have subsequently supported and developed the use of *tā-vā*.

The second part to this chapter will discuss the tenets of the Eurocentric model of education and creative practice and its influence on current pedagogical structures. I defer to Rayner Wick's (2000) seminal work, "Teaching at the Bauhaus." Wick clarifies the trajectory of the Eurocentric model from its beginnings to its translations in America in the mid twentieth century and ratifies its use in current pedagogical models. Using Wick's account and supported by other notable design writers and theorists, I will compare and contrast both the Moana and Eurocentric models to define commonalities that I will argue offer a pathway forward. Most importantly, to the structure of this thesis, is that these works come together to inform the nexus of my work, the photographic portraits and the narrative behind them that speaks to and of the Moana experience.

Chapter Three: *Vā, teu le vā, vā tapuia* and *tā-vā*.

Chapter Three plays a pivotal part in the thesis as it addresses both the Moana ideologies and the Eurocentric development of educational ideologies. Importantly, this chapter addresses where these two trajectories meet. It is in this connection that I suggest the key to a more successful path forward for Moana students in design education is held. This chapter will explain Māhina's *tā-vā*, the Moana ideology *teu le vā* and outline the use of them in this work. Paralleling this, I will offer an historic overview of the Eurocentric pedagogical model instigated by Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852). This was a model adopted by the nineteenth century reformists in Britain that was further developed in Europe prior to WW1 and incited the founding of the German Design Academy, the Bauhaus (1919-1933), with accolades that include the "most famous experiment in art education of the modern era," (Francisconi, 1971, p.843). Interestingly, as my research developed, another correlation between Froebel, Indigenous practices and learning by doing emerged. Eurocentric educational methods predominantly use grammar-based academic approaches, but the introduction of the Cuisenaire rods by Froebel and his contemporaries in the late nineteenth century was and still is in direct contrast to these established and favored methods. In this chapter I will parallel the Cuisenaire rods to the *Rakau* sticks

traditionally used by Māori to address two and three-dimensional learning by doing. I will also discuss the similarities between the Silent Approach developed by the French mathematician and educator, Caleb Gattegno (1911 -1988) and Indigenous methods of teaching and learning where the silence of the teacher gives the students room to explore, and the teacher room to observe. Most notably this chapter will identify the connections and correlations that offer opportunities of inclusive approaches for Moana students that I suggest are currently lacking.

Chapters Four and five: Research methods – Visual and Oral.

A picture tells a thousand words, but so can I and my Samoan brothers and sisters. These chapters privilege the Moana viewpoint. Firstly, I will establish the historic legacies that have impacted and continue to influence attitudes towards education for the Moana people. In order to gain an understanding of the current paradigms these chapters will, guided by *tā-vā* look backwards to the historic links between colonial and Moana appreciation for the acquisition of knowledge. Having established this grounding I will turn to my love of photography as a means to tell a story and focus my lens directly on my own culture, Samoa. I will visually research and document

ceremonial activities and illustrate through these ethnographic photographic studies how Moana peoples approach the transfer of knowledge and discuss their privileging of legacy and reciprocity. By analysing and reflecting on Samoan ceremonies I will illuminate the relationships, both tangible and intangible and explore the visual spaces, the in-betweenness, that Māhina, Froebel, Gattegno, Itten and Moholy-Nagy assert holds the opportunity for the most holistic approach to the transfer of knowledge.

Secondly, and again addressing cries for the adoption of more inclusive methods in education (Baskerville, 2009) this chapter will, through the research methodology of *talanoa* give a voice to the thoughts and opinions of my fellow Moana students. Having defined *talanoa*, the relevance and opportunity it offers this study, I will on behalf of my fellow Moana students, respectfully recount their opinions and concerns. It is these stories that influence the narrative of my final portraits and I thank them for their generosity and candour.

Chapter Six: Reflections.

Chapter Six acts as a reflective moment that both allows the visual articulation of the narratives behind each of the five photographic works and allows me to express their meaning and purpose.

Chapter Six acts as a reflective moment that undertakes the usual articulation of the narratives embedded in the four of the five photographic works. This chapter also allows me the opportunity to express the purpose of the works:

- *Fafau* – Bound by Culture
- *Siva Mālie* – Moving with Mana
- *Tava'e'ula* – Nesting place of Indigenous Knowledge
- *Measina* – The Treasures within Language

Chapter Seven: Pathways.

Chapter Seven will discuss a resolution, or a pathway forward to inclusivity. Using the ideals of *tā-vā*, I will, during the process of this investigation, offer Māhinas (2010) understanding of past present and future as a guide;

"...herein, people are thought to walk forward into the past and walk backward into the future, both taking place in the present, where the past and future are constantly mediated in the ever-transforming present" (p.170).

Chapter Eight: *Taualuga*.

At the conclusion of any Samoan event there is always a *taualuga*, a dance that is said to be the pinnacle of Samoan visual culture. In this chapter I have tried to capture this through imagery, this is done as a thank you to the knowledge of my ancestors and those that have come before me and those that have helped in the production of the knowledge that has added weight and meaning to this research.

{ "It is this very "difference" that has allowed me to succeed in New Zealand and has allowed me to maintain my identity as a Samoan born in New Zealand. And as such I am able to contribute immensely to the wider New Zealand society in being able to use my dual cultural "world views" and understandings with which to optimize my relationships at all levels to obtain positive outcomes for Pacific peoples in New Zealand. I put this down to my understanding of the tenet/principle/concept/cultural references (for it is all these and more) of vā, and teu le vā, as it has materialized for me (Anae. 2010)". }

MOTIVATION

1.0. Introduction

This chapter will first and foremost voice my own motivations and struggles that have culminated in this study. Having done so, I will set aside my subjectivity and cast a more objective eye over the landscape of Moana students in tertiary education. I aim to highlight the benefits of cultural inclusivity as a reciprocal relationship and not one of dependence. Having identified a number of initiatives that focus on the engagement and retention of both Māori and Moana students, this chapter will then expose recent statistics that show more still needs to be done. Later in this thesis, I will expand this argument using the exemplars of the Tongan ideology of *tā-vā* (Māhina, 2010), (time and space) and the Samoan belief in *teu-le-vā* (nurturing of space) and *vā tapuia* (sacred connections) and claim that an understanding and use of Moana ideologies does not only act as a tool of inclusivity but that these ideals and understandings can benefit design as a whole. At this very early stage in the documentation of my research I will place my hand on my heart and claim that the use of Moana Indigenous knowledge, encourages a reciprocal relationship and removes the sense of bewilderment so many Moana students experience in tertiary education. I believe this would place Moana students on a level playing field and not on their own separate

playing field. I do not at any time presume to know the answers, but as my service to my community, I will paint the landscape; the background, the foreground and the place from which I stand and offer this perspective.

In both 2014 and 2015, the School of Design identified 13% of those enrolled as Māori and Moana students. In relation to those included in this demographic, research illustrates, rather disparagingly, that these students are most likely to fail or not complete their studies. Victor Levine, (2003) argues this unsatisfactory outcome is due to the current mode of education failing to relate to the diversity of cultures evident in the cohort. In parallel with my assertion that there is a need to purposefully embed Indigenous knowledge into the curriculum not just allow for its use if desired by the students. Dr Cherie Chu (2009), also argues that Moana students experience particular difficulties when attempting to self-navigate their Indigenous backgrounds into current educational models. One can appreciate that not all faculty members may feel equipped to undertake this shift in content. This research will suggest that there are a number of Indigenous ideologies and strategies that both parallel and enhance current more Eurocentric models and can act as the bridging between the two models.

The tenets of Ako Aotearoa, as a teaching and learning platform encouraged at VUW speaks to a more holistic approach to education where both teachers and learners share the educational space. An important acknowledgement to make at this preliminary stage is that this research does not anticipate or argue for an either/or, or a “them and us” scenario, but rather a recognition that knowledge comes from many cultures and contexts and can successfully be delivered in a variety of ways. This research aims to enable a bridging of cultural boundaries within design education that will enable, as part of this outcome, improved engagement, retention and academic success of Moana students and of all students as cultural beings within design education. Paralleling this and adding weight to the relevance of cultural inclusiveness in design education is that New Zealand is not a bicultural nation but a multicultural one. This research proposes that by offering a multicultural learning environment, not only will Māori and Moana students’ engagement with design education be enabled, encouraged and enhanced but all students will have the opportunity to engage with and learn from the diversity offered. Guided by Māhina’s ideals, this study aims to establish strategies that will enable more symbiotic relationships where design and culture can work for the betterment of not just the

individual but the collective.

Throughout my life, there have been many instances where I have experienced firsthand the emphasis Moana families place on the importance of education, which Anae, Anderson, Benseman and Coxon (2002) also reveal in their “Moana Peoples in Tertiary Education”. If this was not through family and friends then it was always reiterated to us via the pulpit most Sunday mornings.

Consequently, the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA) in collaboration with Statistics New Zealand (SNZ) (2010) conducted a report; “Education and Pacific Peoples in New Zealand,” which highlights some of the key factors that point to the struggles confronting Moana students today. It also looks at the benefits of gaining a tertiary education and what it can offer Moana families through financial increase, but how it also enables them to contribute more to society through engaging in and achieving higher education (2010). This importance is echoed in their statistics in *Fig 1.0* that show the decrease of Pasifika peoples without any qualifications from 1986 to 2006. In comparison to the total population Pasifika fare quite well. However, they also report on statistics that hinder the overall outlook on Moana within a general scope of education in NZ, “At both diploma and degree-level, 18-19 year old Moana students are less likely to complete a qualification than

students from other ethnic groups" (SNZ et al. 2010). These sentiments are echoed by, Levine (2013), as Moana students are receiving an education that does not "relate to their culture and way of life" (p. 17). Pasikale (2002), on the other hand puts it down to the tensions between Western education system dominant in NZ and Moana peoples' worldview. But of all the Moana students who come out of college, only "22.8%" (SNZ et al, 2010, p. 56) of them have the necessary requirements to enter into university. In saying that, there are many other alternatives to university that offer equal opportunities, it is the responsibility of the colleges/high schools they attend to recognize the students' strengths and weaknesses and advise them accordingly in their second to last year of secondary school so that they are able to work towards it in their final year. Or, they need to be informed accordingly in their junior years at college about the direction and subjects they need to do in order to get into the tertiary courses they are aspiring towards.

1.1. Navigating My Way:

As a design student of Moana heritage, my journey through VUW SoD has been nothing short of a miracle. Statistics tells us that as a Moana student I was more likely to fail than any of the non-Moana

students in my cohort. As many have experienced, evidenced by the statistics offered, I too faced my fair share of challenges. These challenges, are not only from within the University but from within my community. Albeit the great enthusiasm for my education; family commitments, responsibilities and expectations can also complicate, if not directly hinder the education process.

David Scott (2008), asserts that the first year of the student experience is pivotal in the future outcomes of his or her student life. My own experience of this confers with his assertions. Tertiary study can be a daunting new beginning for many students. In my first week of my undergraduate study for my Bachelor of Arts degree (BA) in 2006, I remember trying to find a familiar face that I could connect to. With the help of Te-Ropu Āwhina, a mentoring program that assists in student success at the School of Engineering as well as the School of Architecture and Design at Victoria University, I was able to bond with other Moana students. We were a very small minority as not many Indigenous students were studying design when I started in 2006. There were, in total, five of us. From my recollections and friendships with these students, I can confirm that of these five Moana students only two have graduated and this made the remaining students, of which I was one, feel quite disheartened.

Fig 1.0 | Statistics New Zealand

Rather unexpectedly, of the Moana students that were in my initial cohort four of the five students were Samoan. We also shared similar upbringings that included family, church and our culture as integral parts of our lives. We also shared the classic migration story of our parents moving to New Zealand in search of a better future for both our immediate and extended families. Many migrant parents also support those in the family who have remained in the islands from afar. This financial stress or responsibility in itself places an expectation on a number of Moana students attending educational institutes in New Zealand. This pressure can shift the student's emphasis away from learning to the sole goal of achieving. The implication, quite wrongly is that if you pass you have learnt. This, I will suggest, is not the case. Supporting this assertion Baskerville (2009) argues that a better understanding and engagement with Indigenous communities would facilitate more appropriate teaching and learning relationships that address culturally related expectations and hindrances. Baskerville asserts that fundamental to a successful teaching and learning environment is that "students should be allowed to bring who they are to the classroom" (p.462).

Reflecting on Baskerville's comments I have no recollection of during the earlier period of my studies, when I was

struggling to engage or succeed, feeling that my cultural heritage had a place in design. Even within courses that addressed historical content there was no reference to Māori or Moana, let alone the more recent discourse around Moana. This taught history, of which I referred to in my introduction, seemingly ignored cultural heritage as part of the debate around the removal of ornament that were so venomously undertaken by modernist architects (O'Sullivan, 2016). Therefore, references to culture, religion and history were scorned upon as criminal and not worthy of a place in a modern civilized society. I have come to understand although not accept, the discipline's explanation, not apology, of this omission. This exclusion has begun to change, but, it continues to be apparent that because design as a discipline was not established until the early to mid-twentieth century the discipline's researchers rather shortsightedly, still considered Indigenous design as having little to offer (O'Sullivan, 2016). Moving forward, Baskerville and Lerner are amongst a number of current design educators and theorists advocating for change. Lerner suggests that to ensure the aesthetic language of the future does not become constricted or impeded there is a need for a deeper and more meaningful understanding of culture, in particular Indigenous culture. Throughout this

2012					
CCDN	231	Experimental Design Ideas	B-	20	
PASI	201	Comparative Hist in Polynesia	B+	20	
SARC	212	Furniture Design	B+	15	
2013					
CCDN	233	Design Ethnography	B	20	
CCDN	271	Design as Inquiry	B+	20	
CCDN	331	Live Theory	A-	20	
CCDN	332	Design +	A+	20	
DSDN	144	Photographics	E	0	
PASI	301	Framing the Pacific	B+	20	
SARC	312	Furniture Design	U	0	
2014					
CCDN	244	Expanded Photographics	A-	20	
CCDN	371	Cultures of Design.	B+	20	
CCDN	444	Computer Generated Culture	A-	30	
DSDN	411	Design Led Futures	A-	30	
DSDN	481	Research Methods	A-	30	
DSDN	485	Directed Individual Study	A	30	
2015					
CCDN	591	Thesis	IP	120	

Fig 1.1 | University Grades

thesis I will argue that to address the isolation or separation Moana students experience throughout their experiences of aesthetic education, their culture needs to be acknowledged and understood as integral within the curriculum structure and material developed within tertiary programs.

Within the Māori Education initiative “*Ka Hikitia*; Managing for Success 2008 – 2012,” Government Minister, Chris Carter spoke of the key messages of *Ka Hikitia* being that Māori learners have potential, they are culturally advantaged and inherently capable. Importantly Carter also acknowledged the reciprocity required within the teacher and learner relationship when he noted the need for teachers to learn from their students, their *whanau* (family) and their communities. This, I would posit, is essential to the success of a culturally inclusive environment. Baskerville also supports this assertion and suggests that a successful approach to inclusive practice requires a relationship between the student and the teacher as individuals. Dr. Linda Leach (2011) of Massey University directly addresses Māori and Moana peoples as under-represented in New Zealand’s tertiary institutions. Leach discusses that unlike the inclusive approach taken by some early twentieth century theorists many countries including, New Zealand expected Indigenous peoples to

“assimilate into the dominant culture” (Leach, 2011, p.248). On a positive note, I would posit that there has been significant movement away from the theories of cultural and ethnic assimilation in recent years. Supporting Baskerville’s ideals, Leach goes on to argue that to simply situate diversity within a group is not a sufficient enough change, that personal and individual interaction is required to enhance the positive benefits of this inclusiveness.

1.2. A place for individuality in Design Education

Initiated by my own experience as a Moana student and ratified by the work of such researchers as Levine, Young and Chu, this chapter asserts that Moana students experience particular difficulties when attempting to navigate their Indigenous backgrounds around or more arduously, into current educational models. With the aim of identifying strategies that will enable a successful bridging between current paradigms in design education and Indigenous methods for the sharing of knowledge, this research will begin by investigating the specific learning challenges Moana students face within the current, predominantly euro-centric mode of design education prevalent.

Fig 1.2 | Gender Roles

Fig 1.3 | Gender Roles

It may or may not be known beyond Moana communities, but many Moana school leavers enroll at university to fulfill their parents' wishes but not their own. During my own undergraduate studies between 2006 and 2009 I faced a number of challenges. This led to my taking a gap year in which I reflected on not only the challenges and the demands of tertiary education but also the opportunity that had been afforded me by my community. There would also be opportunities to be realized once I completed my studies. Reflecting on this, I returned with greater determination. The space, the silence, away from university allowed for the consideration of priorities, responsibilities, my passions, possibilities and dreams. I can assert from this emic, inside perspective to a scenario that I see and hear frequently within the Moana communities, that degree structures could be more aligned to Moana students if there were more practicum or industry based experiences as part of the curriculum assessment. I argue that this approach would enable Moana students, to experience authenticity in learning experiences within their design education. As a by-product of this, students would, upon their return to university, have a higher expectation of themselves and their education. This approach could address the reciprocal element of inclusive education by enabling the roles to be inverted. In this particular instance

the student can confirm or deny the relevance of the pedagogy to industry standards and the teacher can learn and adjust sessions to accommodate this (Baskerville, 2009). I also found a number of similarities and opportunities in the "Silent Approach" developed by the French mathematician and educator, Caleb Gattegno (1911-1988) and indigenous methods of teaching and learning where the silence of the teacher gives the students room to explore and the teacher room to observe.

Leach (2011), Baskerville (2009) and O'Sullivan (2016) discuss in unity the need to address cultural inclusivity not as a, "them or us" scenario but as an understanding that weaving, tying, tethering ourselves to notions, ideals, communities, cultures, nature and the universe is not a singularly Western or modern approach. In particular, learning through doing has roots and applicability within and from Indigenous cultures, which should be acknowledged specifically within design education. O'Sullivan (2016), specifically posits a relevance for Indigenous visual spatial strategies with design education and it is this assertion that I will further develop in Chapter Six of this research.

Utilising the emic approach, which is fundamental to my thesis it was my experience that during the earlier years of my design education the relationship

Fig 1.4 | Gender Roles

Fig 1.5 | Gender Roles

between my teachers and I was not one of reciprocity but one of assimilation. Leach discusses two positions an educator may take within a diverse group; the first is the individual position, whereby the teacher addresses individual rights as primary or secondly, the universal approach, where the teacher, privileges their own position (Leach, 2011). Using Leach's clarification, my experience was of a relationship that leaned towards the former of these methodologies. This approach contradicts both Leach's and Baskerville's arguments that educators need to recognize, embrace and understand the differences in their students and then find ways to manage them effectively (Baskerville, 2009). The shortfalls of my initial experience have, thankfully been addressed within first year pedagogy and I have come full circle to experience this as a tutor in the studio scenario. But in relation to my own experience this shift was not undertaken in all courses. My experience of design pedagogy was that my cultural perspective was never invited or encouraged. It would not have been shunned, but it was expected in the inclusive manner that both Leach and Baskerville refer to. There was an expectation that whatever was done in the class would align itself to the universal aesthetic or approach. Early in my studies I was never one to receive A's. This is evident in *Fig 1.1*.

After graduating with my Bachelor of Arts in 2010 I worked in jobs that did not particularly enthuse me. With a sense that I had more to offer both my community and myself I decided to return to university in 2012. A lot had changed in the three years; it became a lot more difficult to obtain grades that I was satisfied with. In some instances I merely scraped by. With my hand on my heart I can say this was not from a lack of trying. To get an idea of the chain of thought that I went through when asked to design a space or a product that created or evoked an emotive response from people, I designed a concept bra. This piece of underwear would light up when the wearer saw someone who they were physically attracted to, thus creating an awkward moment for the wearer. In that assignment I received a B. It was not until after the presentation for that paper that my lecturer noticed my struggles and suggested that I incorporate some of my own culture into my design thinking, which ironically felt foreign to me. There was little precedent for this and I was not aware of any course work that promoted or openly encouraged the introduction or use of Indigenous knowledge or thinking.

This was a transformative moment in my design education. In that moment the process of what I can only describe as a decolonization of my mind and a re-establishment of my connections with

Fig 1.6 | Gender Roles

Fig 1.7 | Gender Roles

my cultural roots began. The reconnect came easily enough but aligning my cultural thinking to the design briefs and assessment criteria was not as straight forward as one might assume. *Fig 1.1* illustrates the change in grades from before this epiphany and beyond. With the introduction of Indigenous knowledge to my work my educational experience changed. My work obtained more positive feedback and my grades improved. Most importantly, I was finally able to find a platform from which I was able to draw inspirations from. I would argue this experience, although a very personal one, again exemplars the assertions of Leach and Baskerville that diversity, in my instance, Indigenous knowledge must be an integral part of the learning environment. It should be evident and experienced in the space we call education.

At this point it may become more apparent how *tā-vā* and *teu-la-vā* are relevant to the enhancement of education. Chapter Three will explain this more definitively, but put succinctly, the space between two things forms a reciprocal relationship. This relationship is of a circular nature and needs to be cared for and nurtured. The change in the teacher/learner relationship from one of dominance and subservient to a shared relationship in which both individuals were respected for who they are as cultural beings as well as

human beings and what they bring to the scenario, enabled me to express myself in my own way rather than attempting to express something that is foreign and possibly irrelevant to me. My learning became authentic and relevant which are two of the criteria outlined as fundamental to positive learning experiences (Kreber, 2012).

1.3. *The Proof is in the Pudding*

As an exemplar of the extent to which my design work has benefitted from the use of cultural inclusivity in design education, I will illustrate assignments that were done post my epiphany. The success of this approach is formally recognized in the improvement of my grades in *Fig 1.1*, but the emotional uplift can only be appreciated by the fact that I am currently completing postgraduate design study, fully immersing myself in my culture and finding more of my voice than I had thought possible.

The first assignment that I will reflect on was a 200 level course on ethnographic research. I was to research and articulate my findings on gender inequality, so naturally, I looked to my own culture for inspiration, information and aspiration. Again, taking the emic approach, I looked at my own immediate family, particularly my mother,

Fig 1.8 | Gender Roles

Fig 1.9 | Gender Roles

as a case study in *Fig 1.2* to *Fig 2.0*. This was through an observation I had made, whereby every Sunday morning at 6:00am my mother wakes up to make *toana'i*, Sunday lunch. At 8.30am she and my father leave to teach for Sunday school until the formal Church service starts at 11:00am. This is followed by choir practice at 3:00pm and Youth Group at 6:00 pm. This has been their Sunday routine for as long as I can remember. During this time my mother would also find the time to iron my father's clothes and do the washing. All the while my father would sit on his computer playing solitaire. This assignment respectfully questioned my mother's motivations and actions and asked how they related to her cultural upbringing. She replied it was her *tautua*, her service, to her family. The opinions of others around my mother's choices are not relevant to this study but the opportunity to discuss cultural differences within this course was, in my opinion, beneficial to all. The approach taken in this class parallels the endeavors Baskerville (2009) noted when she stated that even "educators must embrace new ways of challenging themselves to think differently about the world they live in and how the world affects the educational experiences of the students" (p.461).

In *Fig 2.1* to *Fig 2.6* the assignment asked us to view the world using different

perceptions and perspectives. This was challenging. My approach was to look at people that I saw everyday but did not acknowledge, the homeless. As I walked around the central business district I questioned my apathy towards this group. As soon as I began to photograph them a relationship was formed. My cultural understanding of relationships, *teu le vā*, enabled me to see these members of our society with respect. The Samoan principle of reciprocity empowered me to portray them as individuals of substance, intrigue and value. My camera angles were able to parallel my cultural perspectives and produce a project that I am still very proud of.

Fig 2.7 to *Fig 2.8* depicts the third and final of my undergraduate projects that I will use to exemplar the use of Indigenous knowledge in design education. This project also enabled my fellow class members and educators to gain an appreciation of appropriate and inappropriate uses of Indigenous creative practices and ideologies. By gaining this knowledge these students can also begin to appreciate the difference in diversity and move closer to their own graduate attribute of global citizenship. In this assignment I addressed the lack of understanding around Indigenous knowledge and the misappropriation of Indigenous creative practice. At the forefront of this

Fig 2.0 | Gender Roles

Fig 2.1 | Homeless Project

Fig 2.2 | Homeles Project

investigation was the global conglomerate Nike. Their misdemeanor was the incorrect and insensitive use of specifically male Samoan tattoos on a new line of woman's sports leggings. A member of the New Zealand government of Samoan heritage wrote to Nike about what he saw as a disrespectful approach to cultural heritage. Nike responded by discontinuing the line of leggings. This assignment was critical of the lack of communication before, during and after the production and subsequent discontinuation of the sportswear. The depictions I offered addressed how language was a key aspect in the maintenance of culture and without it, Indigenous cultures could lose their voice. Without this voice the leggings would still be on the market and Nike would not have learned that the appropriation of cultural symbols and creative practices needs an empathetic and knowledgeable approach.

By taking a culturally inclusive approach to my assignments I was able to view the brief through a unique Indigenous lens. This approach offers the opportunity of making other students and teachers culturally aware and introduces them to the importance of cultural empathy. For me, during this time, my culture was not only used as inspiration but also a means of self-expression. My knowledge of photography helped me to portray the

issues that surround my Indigenous community to a broader audience. This, I would argue is a good example of the reciprocal and respectful relationship that educational theorists espouse, but importantly it is embedded in Samoan culture. Statistics show that when this approach is not part of the pedagogical structure in education Māori and Moana struggle to engage and therefore succeed.

With my understanding of *fa'asamoa*, I was also able to engage confidently within class discussions and I believe the Indigenous knowledge I used in my assignments played a pivotal role in the success I experienced during the latter part of my undergraduate design studies. This is what has given me the courage and confidence to attempt a Masters in Design Innovation. With the transition into my first year of masters I used the same approach but with greater results, which is reflected in *Fig 1.1*. VUW also celebrate Pasifika success by holding a Pasifika graduation where they honour the hard work of the Pasifika students. During this celebratory event in 2015 I was awarded the Pasifika Award for Academic Excellence for the Schools of Architecture and Design. In 2013 I was also awarded the Culture and Context Design Gibson Group award for Excellence and Innovation.

Fig 2.3 | Homeless Project

Fig 2.4 | Homeless Project

Fig 2.5 | Homeless Project

Fig 2.6 | Homeless Project

Nike apologises over Samoan tattoo-inspired tights

Global sportswear giant Nike has stopped production of a line of women's running tights depicting indigenous tattoos after the apparel sparked outrage among the Pacific community. The design on Nike's Pro Tattoo Tech tights, which are part of the women's range of sportswear, was labelled exploitative of a traditional Samoan tattoo reserved only for men. Labour MP Su'a William Sio said Nike had not thought about the cultural significance of the tattoo, known traditionally as a Pe'a. "Before you launch into something like this, there's generally a consultation with those whose pattern who have ownership of this pattern." "I don't think Nike has taken the time to do that." Nike said the leggings were not available in New Zealand and were never intended for our market. "The Nike tattoo tech collection was inspired by tattoo graphics," the company said in a statement.

"We apologize to anyone who views this design as insensitive to any specific culture. No offense was intended." Nike Marketing; As reported on TVNZ One News 14/08/2013

Fig 2.7 | Cultural misappropriation

"Language and Identity"

Author (s): Salainaola Lisa-Marce Wilson

Source: Masters thesis: Le Tofi Ne'i Vale Tuulima

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Anae (1998) and Macpherson (2001) propose there is a difference in the identities constructed by Samoan youth born outside of their homelands.

In their view, no longer do the majority of those born in New Zealand regard themselves as „Samoan“. This is because the Samoan identity in their view refers to the migrant identities their parents brought with them from Samoa – the Samoan identity which „linked them to nuclear families, extended families, villages, districts and religious faith which defined and organised the social, economic and political realities of daily existence“ (Macpherson, 2001, p.70).

On this point, Tutia (1998) writes that young Samoans in New Zealand not only struggle to maintain the Samoan language, some are not even afforded the luxury of having Samoan as their first language. She sees this struggle to reflect an intergenerational conflict wherein young Samoans find themselves „caught between cultures“. In Tutia's view there is a struggle between the Samoan culture, which prescribes an understanding and speaking of the mother tongue, and the New Zealand dominant culture which requires that English be spoken. Anae further argues that a „sub-culture“ of Samoans is developing in New Zealand which she terms „tautala NZ-born“. In her view, New Zealand-born participants who are not fluent in the Samoan language still regard the Samoan language as the most important determinant of being Samoan. Yet, even without the language, they still „feel Samoan“ (Anae, 1998). This issue of what makes a „Samoan“ is of importance to this research on the maintenance of the

Samoan language. Spolsky's warning that a community that acquires English risks losing their culture, identity and traditional values, is a salient reminder given the central place of the Samoan language to the Samoan culture (Spolsky, 1988). For example, Tamasese has described the language as the lifeblood of the Samoan culture (2005b; 2008b) and Hunkin-Tuilefuga (2001) writes that;

“The relationship between language and culture is like oxygen to human survival – without one, the other will not survive”

(p. 197). The Samoan language has also been likened to the „afa (sennit) which binds one's identity to the Samoan culture and the vehicle by which relationships with one another, God and nature are established and maintained (Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, 1996). Be that as it may, Starks (2005) states that a language shift from Samoan to English in New Zealand is likely to occur given the strong feelings of the younger participants that English is needed if they are to succeed socially and academically in the New Zealand context (p.537).

Fig 2.8 | Cultural misappropriation

These achievements were only possible through delving into my understanding of culture and implementing that knowledge into my education. Like Tamasese, (2009) he too believes that culture is gifted from God. I believe that my ability to speak my mother tongue contributes immensely to my ability to understand my culture, and I posit these talents as gifts from God.

This chapter has acknowledged my motivations, frustrations difficulties and successes. It has discussed that when culture is given a space within design curriculums, a relationship of respect and reciprocal understanding can be navigated, or in appreciation of *teu le vā*, nurtured space. To paraphrase Baskerville (2009); effective learning is developed through understanding and accepting your students as cultural beings. (p.462)

{ "The Samoan word for vā, includes the term "tapu," within. The term literally refers to the sacred (tapu-ia) relationship (vā) between man and all things animate and inanimate. It implies that in our relationships with all things, living and dead, there exists a sacred essence, a life force beyond human reckoning" (As cited in Anae, 2010, p.222). }

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

In Chapter Two I offer a literary landscape that holds influence in this discourse. I will introduce works that have highlighted the enormity of the issue along with influential literature that has shaped the framework and at times acted as the counterpoint for my discussions. First and foremost I acknowledge the work of those who continue to bring this issue to the forefront. As with Chapter One, this chapter will begin with the less than favorable truths. This chapter identifies sources of data from SNZ and the MPIA (Anae et al, 2002). The focus of data offered by these groups does not delineate or separate aesthetic education per say, but I suggest the overall view highlights issues that pertain to tertiary design education. As important as the facts and figures are to this research, I introduce Māhina's (2010) work *tā-vā*, The Theory of Reality. Building from this, and again to illustrate relevance and significance, I will discuss the work of Dr. Tēvita O. Ka'ili, and others who have subsequently supported and developed the use of *tā-vā*.

The second part to this chapter will discuss the tenets of the Eurocentric model of aesthetic education and its influence on current pedagogical structures for design education. I review the teachings of Friedrich Froebel, (1782-1852) and compare his efforts

to Indigenous teaching and learning methods. Of significant influence to this research is Rainer Wick's (2000) seminal work, "Teaching at the Bauhaus." Wick clarifies the trajectory of the Eurocentric model from the Industrial Revolution in the late 1800's through the German Design Academy Bauhaus, (1919-1933) that was bookmarked between WWI and WWII onto its translations in America in the mid twentieth century. Wick explains the use of this model over this extended period and ratifies its use in current pedagogical models. Using Wick's account, and supported by other notable design writers and theorists I will compare and contrast both the Moana and Eurocentric models to define commonalities that I will argue, offer a pathway forward. Importantly, to the structure of this thesis is that these works come together to inform the nexus of my work, the photographic portraits and the narrative behind them that speaks to and of the Moana experience.

With my motivations clearly noted in Chapter One, the literature review seeks to place a framework around both what has led to the current concerns and what options there may be to effect change. As also stated in my introduction, I am proposing that cultural inclusivity should play a significant role in informing the future of design education I put forward that the ideology of *tā-vā*, holds one of the keys to the success of this endeavor.

For this reason I will review the work of Māhina as a priority in Chapter Three. To strengthen the rationale for the use and relevance of Māhina's, Theory of Reality, *tā-vā* to design education and design thinking in general, I will discuss his work "*Tā-Vā*, and Moana: Temporality, Spatiality, and Indigeneity." Other works that promote Moana ideologies and practices as relevant to informing or supporting the use *tā-vā* or other Moana ideologies will also be introduced in this chapter.

2.1. Moana Failure in Education:

As a demographic, recent data from Statistics New Zealand show that Pacific and Māori students have a high failure rate within tertiary education (2008). Furthermore, Moana students, more than any other ethnic group are not likely to complete their tertiary education (Statistics, 2008). Endorsing my own very personal experience in tertiary education, Ministry of Education in New Zealand representative David Scott (2008), highlighted the first year of undergraduate study as a critical moment in the journey of Moana students into tertiary education. In 2003, the MPIA highlighted; isolation, an absence of what they described as a "critical mass" of Moana students, a lack of diversity and an absence of supportive student networks as the main barriers to the

integration of Moana students into academic studies. I can confer a number of these as being the case in 2003 but there have been significant shifts in this since that time. Both the education initiative of "Ako Aotearoa" that addresses inclusivity, reciprocity and respect within the teaching and learning environments and is now a decade old. The mentoring initiative of "Te Rōpū Āwhina" established in 1999 have addressed many of these issues at the School of Design, Victoria University of Wellington.

Evidencing an important and positive outcome for these initiatives is the current emphasis on a more inclusive understanding of multiplicity and in response to this a vastly broader appreciation of diversity has also evolved. According to Dr. Linda Leach, of Massey University, diversity is now more inclusively defined as, "characteristics of personality, work style, religion, race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, having a disability, socioeconomic level, educational attainment, and general work experience" (as cited in Leach, 2011, p.248). Although this is a positive step forward I would question the impact of simply being an inclusive institute. Delia Baskerville, an education lecturer at VUW takes this discussion further arguing that there needs to be a more complete appreciation of reciprocal teaching and learning in the classroom to enable diversity, particularly cultural diversity to

be able to fully manifest itself.

The first *fono* (meeting) held to discuss the issues of engagement and achievement in education for the Moana community was held in 1994 (Tongati'o, 2010). It is unfortunate that the data collected for this meeting was not considered sufficient or reliable enough to target any specific problems that Moana faced. The data generated over the struggle around Moana students in education has a broad and generalized viewpoint and only really shows the need to address Moana in education. Tongati'o (2010) discusses the New Zealand educational system as being one of the best in the world in relation to student results. Although, she notes that in comparison to international standards, Moana and Māori students were once again placed at the lower levels of achievement.

Lecturer at Lincoln University, Neil Fleming (1995) pinpoints key markers around the delivery of education within the university environment. Some of what Fleming discusses does not directly relate to aesthetic education methods but his work does however help to paint a picture of what Moana students face in education. Fleming argues that the principal stumbling blocks for Moana students in tertiary education include; the reliance on textbooks, individual note taking by students and the heavy

preference for the lecture style of teaching (1995). Of interest is a comprehensive study of Moana students who failed to gain entry into the second year of their courses by Hau'alofa'ia, Katonga and Titia (2006). This study identified four of the main problems that these students faced. These included; communicating in English, an inability to feel they could approach lecturers for help, speaking out in class or in a group and the time commitments and responsibilities these students had within their families and cultural communities.

By comparing the key features of the delivery modes of education in New Zealand universities and key problems faced by Moana students, it becomes apparent how these factors combine to create a more compounding and challenging learning environment for the Moana students to attempt to realize their educational goals. Therefore if a student is having difficulty with English, they are immediately at a disadvantage as the delivery and the mode of instruction in NZ is in English. The lecture structure puts the lecturer in an influential position in the learning experience, with Moana students struggling to approach lecturers and speak out about issues they may have, as this is not an appropriate social interaction for Moana students. Paulo Freire (1970) describes this linear approach to the delivery of knowledge as

“banking education,” where the transaction of knowledge only happens from teacher to student and not one that is reciprocal or circular as Māhina (2010) describes what the production of knowledge should be about through the understanding of *tā-vā*.

Papua New Guinean (PNG) educator, Michael Mel (2002), argues that for PNG students the very individual perspective to learning featured in university education is influenced heavily by colonialist approaches (2002). This approach is problematic for PNG students for whom Indigenous customs, knowledge and learning are heavily reliant on collective identity of one’s community (Mel, 2001). Moana communities share this anomaly from western modes of educational delivery and structure. Moana students are in many instances involved with collective groups such as family, church and youth groups (Hau’alofa’ia et al, 2006). Beyond the specifics identified by university academics, the overarching factor that contributed to their failure, as identified, by unsuccessful Moana students themselves, is that they simply do not understand the university system. On the other hand, Levine (2013), contends that Pasifika students can learn. Levine argues, “it is neither an inherent deficiency in Pacific Island children nor an alien curriculum that is the problem” (p.18). Levine, criticizes Pasifika countries

for trying to remedy education failures in the Pasifika communities by pouring more money into education when they actually need more educators who are more engaged with the teaching and learning of students.

Statistics New Zealand (SNZ) have also noted through their research that the Pasifika community will make 10% of New Zealand’s total population within the next ten years (Statistics NZ, 2010).

The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA) also report in 2011 that in comparison to the total population, the Moana community had the largest population within the ages of 18-24 (p.50). These statistics reinforce the need for more pedagogical structures to address the needs of Moana within education that cater to this specific but growing population. SNZ also reports on the retention of Moana students after entering into tertiary education, as well as their success towards graduation. Chapters Three will reflect on these statistics and discuss how using *tā-vā*, “the availability of learning support services; teaching practices and relationships; and the place of Pasifika knowledge and experience within courses” (SNZ et al, 2011, p.57) can be realized.

In Meleani Anae’s (2001), “The New Vikings of the Sunrise,” she discusses the

integral role of the *aiga* (family) within *fa'asamoa* and how its aim is to nurture their children, as well as the provisions that are afforded to family members such as *alofa* (love). The value of reciprocity is paramount as they nurture the relationships within that space. The role of the *aiga*, as I will discuss in Chapter Four, is one of the key factors that contributes to the success or failure of a student in their first year of tertiary education. But if we are to look deeper into the meaning of what love means for a Samoan family, I would be so bold as to say it is the same for many Moana families, that your *tautua* (service) above all else is to serve your family whole heartedly. Sia Figel (1996) eloquently articulates this;

"Alofa. The virtue that makes you forget about you and you think of others first. Whether it's your mother-father-sister-brother-grand-mother. All members of your aiga. Of the sacred 'we'. The aiga. The nu'u (village). The itumalo (district). The whole of Samoa" (p. 12).

Jemaima Tiatia (2007) further discusses familial values, in her work; "NZ-Born Samoan Young People's Response to Suicidal Behaviors." Tiatia reports that the high suicidal rates recorded in Samoan families are partly due to the weight of family responsibilities and expectations. Tiatia's views ratify that familial ties are

important but throw a dispersion on the role they can play in the lives of some Pasifika youth. Anae et al (2002) posits the concept of family as being one of support and nurture where Tiatia discusses the high suicidal rates of Pasifika youths due to the stress it can impose. Anae et al (2002) argue that educational failures are due to "home or community factors such as competing demands from family, church, or work" (p.21).

Adding to this trajectory in the discussion Pasikale, (2002) writes, "In my view, part of the ineffectiveness in making real progress in reversing the 'failure' trend, is the inability to recognize, let alone reconcile, the tensions between state aspirations and individual aspirations." (p.115) Pasikale asserts in his 2002 article "Rethinking Pacific Education," that there are real tensions between the Western education system dominant in New Zealand and the Pasifika Islander's worldview and lifestyle. He goes on to argue that these "failure trends" do not align with the results of other majority groups in the education. After completing some preliminary fieldwork of my own in the form of unstructured interviews with undergraduate students at VUW's design school, I also discovered that Pasifika people within tertiary education tend to stay there longer than any other ethnic group, I myself as an example of this.

Reasons cited by the students include the familial environment they grow accustomed to and the difficulties in breaking away into the real world or getting into the workforce.

2.2. *Vā*

The term *vā* is something that is common throughout the nations of Moana. Ka'ili, (2005) notes that within each of the many Island nations that make up Moana, each employs their own understanding of *vā*. Generally speaking, *vā* denotes a sense of space or space relations. Within the last quarter century the relevance of *vā* within academia and research has been building momentum. *Vā* has been applied as a means of understanding one's research but also as a theory of time and space. Māhina (2010), a contemporary Tongan scholar and academic, developed *vā* into a more comprehensive theory *tā-vā*. Māhina writes, "This time-space theory is based on the Moana concepts and practices *tā* and *vā*, Tongan for "time" and "space." (p.169) Māhina's "Theory of Reality" interlinks the past, present and future, where to understand or to prepare for the future you must walk backwards into the future allowing the past to guide you forward as both past and present are mediated in the now (Māhina, 2010).

This theory has also been adapted by

other researchers; poet writer and artist Albert Wendt (2009), Moana architect, Albert Rafiti (2014), Pacific Studies lecturer Meleani Anae and U.S based Moana academic Tēvita O. Ka'ili (2005). Although diverse in their applications, all advocate the importance of an application of Māhina's theory. "Given both the generality and the formality informing the theory, it enters all fields of studies as in the case of anthropology and education". (Māhina, 2010, p.169)

Acting as the counterpoint to this study is the more Eurocentric model of design education currently practiced that addresses a more universal approach. Rayner Wick's (2000); "Teaching at the Bauhaus," acts as the backbone to informing this investigation of the founding tenets of this pedagogy. The more contemporary discourse ratifying the use of Bauhaus pedagogical structures and methods within current practice will be represented by the works of design theorist Alain Findeli with both the writings of Findeli (2001) and fellow design theorist Fern Lerner supporting the quest for a broader scope of inquiry to enrich the design vocabulary. I will discuss and argue that the writings of and about Bauhäusler Johannes Itten and László Moholy-Nagy who along with Māhina, understood the space in between as a space to be nurtured.

More contemporary discussions around

how one might achieve this paradigm shift are taken from the works of Delia Baskerville and Nan O'Sullivan both of Victoria University of Wellington.

2.3. Visual Ethnography

Much of the ethnographic research stems from anthropologic and sociologic research (Schwartz, 1989) done in the Pacific has been conducted by researchers outside of the Moana community, which, at times has caused much controversy. Margret Mead's (1901-1978) book; "Coming of Age in Samoa" has been widely criticized for its overt subjectivity. The criticism is that Mead should have offered a more objective real world analysis of the people and the culture. Siaune (2004) asserts that,

"evaluating the available literature highlights two important factors, firstly, the literature, especially the early accounts must not only be viewed as the 'source' but also that it must be considered in light of the authors' own agenda, worldview and the period time that they are writing in" (p.6).

Therefore although my experience is very personal, subjective, and my endeavours heartfelt I recognize the need to stand back, view the larger contexts and shift my camera lens to tell another's story.

This flexibility will allow me to approach the people, the environment and the uses for reciprocity and story-telling within Moana practices with a unique transparency. This approach will allow me more accurately establish; how, why and in what form Moana practices can engage with design education.

Photography is well established as a means to engage with and deliver story-telling, but it can do so much more. Dona Schwartz (1989) echoes much of what I believe when she writes that photography as a research tool of visual documentation should be,

"viewed as works of art, photographs are thought to embody the personal concerns of the photographer-artist... Viewed as records, photographs are thought to reproduce the reality in front of the camera's lens, yielding an unmediated and unbiased visual report" (p.120).

This approach is what I hope to bring to my work and negate the controversy surrounding anthropological views of researchers created by Mead. Adding to this discussion acclaimed visual ethnographer Sarah Pink (2013) writes, "it remains necessary to stress that a fundamental assumption of visual ethnography is that it is concerned with the production of knowledge and ways of knowing rather

than with the collection of data" (p.35).
I would assert that Like Māhina, Pink
looks for intangibles to establish realities.

Other relevant works and evidence will be
referred to and positioned throughout the
body of this work but these works form
the mainstay of my investigation and
platform from which I move forward.

{ “Vā is the space between, the inbetweenness, not empty space, not space that separates but space that relates, that vā hold separates entities and things together in the unity-in-all, the space that is context, giving meaning to things” (Wendt. 1999, p.402). }

VĀ, TEU LE VĀ, VĀ TAPUIA AND TĀ-VĀ

3.0. Introduction

This chapter endeavors to articulate my own personal interpretations of *vā*, *tā-vā* and *teu le vā* and considers its use within my own life as a Samoan born immigrant living in New Zealand. Aided by a number of renowned Samoan academics I will also attempt to portray as best I can, the Samoan perspective of these Moana concepts. This chapter explains the theory embedded in these concepts and considers how other academics have applied these ideologies into their work. A specific focus will be applied to the adaption of *vā*, *tā-vā* and *teu le vā* into academic frameworks that can assist Moana students to better navigate their pathways through tertiary education. With my ultimate aim of finding ways for indigenous ideology to be embedded into design education, I will conclude this chapter with four very recent examples of how these concepts are currently being explored in design education. I will elucidate four pedagogical structures that have incorporated *Vā*, *teu le vā*, *vā tapuia* and *tā-vā* visually and ideologically into both design investigations and practice within the Bachelor of Design Innovation at Victoria University and highlight the relevance and opportunities *vā*, *tā-vā* and *teu le vā* offer design education. The inclusion of Moana ideals at both first and second year levels into the incumbent structure has gone on to ignite

a number of initiatives, none so significant as the establishment of the post graduate design research innovation lab (DRIL) Design and Culture that specifically encourages the use of indigenous ideologies, research methods and processes in student explorations. These strategies are no longer being discussed and used by a minority but now recognized, valued and embedded in the design process for the significant contributions they make.

Casting an eye over my own experience, as described in Chapter One, my own epiphany occurred when I was encouraged, although at first it felt like I was permitted, to use aspects of my culture in my design process. There was no doubt that this inclusion certainly allowed me to express myself, explore more confidently and design more intuitively. I addressed Moana issues and visually documented my narratives. Reflecting on the work done, I realized there was more than just my perspective embedded in my work. The work seemed to always reflect, involve and respond to something larger. The notions of collectives and communities seemed to embed themselves in my work. It was at this point I began to look for the reason why this would occur so instinctively. As I began to address these questions and understand how these particular ideologies strengthened my design thinking, process and practice I also

Fig 2.9 | Dr. Hūfanga Okusitino Māhina

began to experience the visual and ideological correlations between indigenous ideologies and those of a number of early twentieth century European design educators from the German design academy, The Bauhaus (1919 – 1933) that O’Sullivan refers to in her writing. “Less than half a century later French reformist and inspiration to both Itten, and his Bauhaus colleagues, Eugene Grasset (1845-1917) also looked to Indigenous culture and asserted similar beliefs in reductive graphic codes and chronological connections” (O’Sullivan, 2016, p.138).

Of particular importance to this chapter and this research is Māhina’s (2010) Moana ideology of *tā-vā*, The Theory of Reality; time and space, the more culturally specific Samoan belief *teu le vā*; the nurturing of space relations and *vā tapuia*; sacred connections. Hinging these concepts is Wendt’s clarification of *vā* as a space when connection, interaction and relationships occur.

“The space between, the in-between-ness, not empty space, not space that separates but space that relates, that vā holds separate entities and things together in the unity-in-all, the space that is context, giving meaning to things” (Wendt, 1999, p.402).

Importantly, this understanding of space is also expressed within a number of the

Bauhaus tenets which were sidelined when that particular aesthetic education was translated into the more western aesthetic structures in the United States during the mid- twentieth century. “It is important to recognise that these ideals were embedded in Bauhaus pedagogy but not the aesthetic model that emerged to be known, and dominate the aesthetic landscape, as the Bauhaus Style. Itten’s tenets, like *tā-vā* and *teu le vā* had offered students the ability to see, synthesize emotion and senses, and expressively articulate the essence of form and space” (O’Sullivan, 2016, p.5). Within both *tā-vā* and *teu le vā*, history and the connections to it through an understanding of legacy are considered pivotal in order to inform the way forward. Māhina describes this as, “all things, in nature, mind and society... stand in eternal relations of exchange” (Māhina, 2010, p.169). This ideology acts as fundamental construct to my argument that beyond any cultural differences that exist within design education, there are connections that can be built upon to enable more equitable scenarios for Moana students within current design educational models.

3.1. *Vā In life*

To begin the explanations I will start with *vā*. As noted, Albert Wendt’s clarification

offers a common thread through the Moana understanding of *vā*. Building on Wendt's explanation, Ka'ili (2005) uses both the Tongan and Samoan understandings of *vā* in his research to explain *tauhi vā*, the trans-national connections that traverse oceans and land and establish relationships of kinship abroad. Ka'ili explains the connections made when abroad through reciprocal exchange and describes that the strength of connection to the motherland influences how reciprocal exchange occurs or lack thereof. (Ka'ili, 2005) Ka'ili expands this explanation when he asserts *tauhi vā*, "weaves together connections of *kainga* (kinships ties) as well as *fonua* (land) and its people" (p.13). Albert Wendt's (1999) account of *vā* offers further insight into the nurturing of relational and familial ties in Samoan society when he explains "*teu le vā* is to cherish/nurse/care for the *vā*" (Wendt, 1999, p.402). This connection is extended to all things animate and inanimate. (Wendt, 1999) It is important to recognise that *vā* is not specific to these two islands, as, "cognates are found in many Moanan languages" (Ka'ili, 2005, p.89).

Social anthropologist David Gegeo (2001) explains the notions of belonging in his essay "Cultural Rupture and Indigeneity: The Challenge of (Re) visioning Place in the Pacific". He does this through his own culture of Kwara'ae and Lau descent from

the Solomon Islands. Gegeo argues for the recognition of indigenous cultures in a contemporary setting. A large part of this acknowledgement relies on the connections felt between the past and the present. Beyond the familial relationship which Gegeo discusses as a significant contribution to living indigenous cultures he recognizes the complexities of migration and that people in many instances identify as bi-cultural or multi-cultural. Gegeo argues that there should be a balance between maintaining connections to your indigenous roots and blending with other cultures around you. As part of this discussion, I would suggest *vā* can be seen as adding a dimension, depth and a tensile quality to the understanding of space in between the cultures. This ideology acts as fundamental construct to my argument that beyond any cultural differences that exist within design education, there are connections that can be built upon to enable more equitable scenarios for Moana students within current design educational models. Eurocentric educational methods predominantly use grammar-based academic approaches, but the introduction of the Cuisenaire rods by Froebel and his contemporaries in the late nineteenth century was and still is in direct contrast to the traditional methods of rote learning. These rods specifically address, along with Froebel's Gifts, physical learning. Cuisenaire rods, as they

are referred to, in correlation to Froebel and Itten, use simple grammars of shape and primary colours to ensure the essence of the endeavour is understood. Of particular importance to the successful transfer and retention of indigenous knowledge similar teaching and learning methods can be seen in the Māori *Rakau* sticks. These were traditionally used by Maori to address two and three dimensional learning by doing and have, in more recent times been used widely in the teaching of indigenous language which I have established in this research as fundamental to the transfer of indigeneity

3.2. *Vā In design education*

Much of what Wendt, Ka'ili and Gegeo discuss sits comfortably alongside numerous Bauhaus tenets developed in the early part of the twentieth century. A number of these were misrepresented in the pedagogy that was developed in the mid –twentieth century in the United States. Bauhausler Johannes Itten (1990) explained space as;

"Walls with windows and doors form the house, but the emptiness in them establishes the essence of the house. Fundamentally, the material conceals utility; the immaterial establishes essence. The essence of a material is its

effect on space, the immaterial Space is the material of the immaterial" (as cited in Wick, 2000, p.119).

Moholy – Nagy followed Itten's theory up with an appreciation of the tensile characteristics that can exist between entities in space. Moholy-Nagy (1969) asserted; "Today spatial design is an interweaving of shapes; shapes which are ordered into certain well defined, if invisible, space relations; shapes which represent the fluctuating play of tension and force" (as cited in Bayer, H. (Ed.). 1959, p122).

Within contemporary design education, particularly the western (Eurocentric) model, space is not considered as Itten or Moholy- Nagy might have proposed. It is viewed as a separator (Māhina, 2010). This approach is, in my opinion, counterproductive to many approaches or concerns that design struggles to embed within its practice. Understanding space exists between entities and can become the reason for these entities to exist as a relationship allows students to examine the concepts of by example, action and reaction, give and take, symmetrical and asymmetrical balances within the space or relationships. Within design some of the most direct linkages that could be made that enable the appreciation of space between are expressed through gestalt theory's supposition that the whole is only a sum of its parts. Gestalt,

Fig 3.0. | First Year Work

Fig 3.1. | First Year Work

Fig 3.2. | First Year Work

Fig 3.3. | First Year Work

developed by German psychologists in the 1920s, refers to theories of visual perception that attempt to describe how the relationships between individual components and unified wholes. There is an interconnectedness that links and rationalises the components into a larger more meaningful whole. Supporting gestalt as a theory of interconnectivity, art theorist and perceptual psychologist Rudulf Arnheim (1954) stated; "Any visual quality must be determined by its environment in space and time." (p.9)

3.3. *Tā-vā Connections In Life (Fig...Māhina)*

The spaces within the familial ties discussed are considered as symbiotic, with all related entities giving and taking in a reciprocal way. As Māhina explains, "all things, in nature, mind and society stand in eternal relations of exchange" (Māhina, 2010, p.169). This succinct explanation offered by Māhina allows an appreciation of the range and complexity the ideal offers. Within his Theory of Reality, *tā-vā*, Māhina's criticizes many western ideals as being linear and singular. Māhina describes *tā-vā* as, "In Moana, time and space are culturally ordered and historically altered in plural, cultural, collectivistic, holistic and circular modes" (p.170). I would posit this description suggests a fluid, ongoing and reflective process to moving forward.

3.4. *Vā Connections with Design Education*

To contrast this, Māhina (2010) discusses the very scientific understandings of evolutionary developments in a western context as overtly "singular, techno-teleological, individualistic, atomistic and linear" (p.170). Māhina's preference is obvious and what he suggests holds a great deal of relevance to design thinking and practice. What becomes interesting at this juncture is what O'Sullivan posits as one of the most relevant applications of indigenous ideology into contemporary design education. Bauhaus pedagogical structures were rooted in Friedrich Froebel's educational reforms. Froebel too was concerned with showing the interrelationships between living and inanimate things" (Provenzo JR, 2009, p.87). These ideals parallel Māhina's that all things in nature are connected.

"It was upon holistic, sensory, spatial and social ideals that Froebel built his pedagogy and introduced, perhaps more correctly, re-introduced, to the new world, the values of nurturing and respecting the individual and acknowledging their progressive contributions within a larger collective, be that family, community or the environment" (O'Sullivan, 2016).

Moholy-Nagy (1969) discussed developments to these ideals as "heading

toward a kinetic, time-spatial existence, toward an awareness of the forces plus their relationships which defines all life.” (Moholy-Nagy, 1969, p.268)

3.5. *Teu le Vā & Vā Tapuia In life*

Having gained an appreciation of *vā*, space, *tā-vā*, time and space, the treatment of this space is the next logical consideration. As a migrant of Samoa now residing in New Zealand Aotearoa, I have always felt a connection with my cultural roots, which was nurtured within our home through the speaking of our mother tongue and the Samoan church we attended since moving to NZ in 1988. As children we were always taught many things that have resonated with us throughout our lives. These lessons represent and express measina, cultural treasures, within our everyday lives. The ‘Island way’ of life was taught; particularly when we stepped out of line. As I have discussed Samoan society considers *vā* to be sacred. Family bonds set up much of societal structures. The nurturing of sacred connections is known in Samoan culture as *vā tapuia* and expands on the ideals of *vā* that more broadly addresses spatial relations between all things animate and inanimate (Wendt, 1999). The relationship between siblings also holds significance with the bond between a *tuagane* (brother) and a *tuafafine*

(sister) said to be a sacred covenant that is not spoken but nurtured through deep respect, love and compassion. This relationship is further explained by Muaiaava (2015);

Feagaiga (Sacred covenant) dictates the vā tapuia (sacred space) relationship between a tuagane and his tuafafine. The status of the tuafafine is also defined as a feagaiga. The tuafafine–tuagane relationship is reciprocal and at times one of unequal proportion. The tuagane protects and serves his tuafafine even with his life and underpinning this service is a fear of her divine ability to curse and punish. Conversely, the tuafafine’s behaviour is restricted by the need to maintain good moral behaviour since any immorality would inflict shame on her family, especially her tuagane (p.74).

Anae (2010), further asserts that *vā tapuia* is a “sacred essence, a life force beyond human reckoning” (p. 244). My parents always taught us that boys should treat their sisters with great respect and whether you were younger than your sister you still had the added responsibility of looking after them. This relationship held relevance as we matured and established relationships with life-partners of our own. *Vā tapuia* reflects how, as men we should treat partners with the same respect that we showed our sisters. Even

Fig 3.4. | Second Year Work

into our young adult life as siblings, we were constantly reminded by our parents about this space and how sacred it was. Anae (2010) explains this space further, “more often than not, it is complex, multi-layered and fraught with difficulties. But if all parties have the will, the spirit and the heart for what is at stake then positive outcomes will be achieved” (p.13). Thus, the “*tuafafine* as sacred party is exalted above the secular status of her *tuagane*...The *tuagane* is always conscious of this space and that good service to his *feagaiga* is of paramount importance” (Muaiaava, 2015, p.74).

One of the most significant appreciations of space that is made in social situations is an appreciation of personal space. Walking and talking in front of people is considered an intrusion and if done, Moana peoples will verbalize their acknowledgment of passing into that space. In Samoa we bow our heads and say ‘*tulou*’ (excuse me). This is a universal respect shown to everyone. Growing the concept of space, ‘*teu le vā*’, is both a Tongan and a Samoan belief. *Teu le vā* specifically addresses the nurturing of the space between you and others. *Teu le vā* acknowledges the sacredness of space as a mechanism of connection not separation. (Wendt, 1999). *Teu le vā* teaches an awareness that what connects these space is a mutual

respect and understanding of the “in-betweenness” held in relationships. These relationships are at times complex and difficult but the eternal connection and commitment to nurture them ensures movement forward and creates legacies. Anae (1998) explains, “*Teu le vā* requires that one regards these (inter) actions as sacred in order to value, nurture and, if necessary, tidy up the *vā*” (p.224).

3.6. *Vā In practice within design education*

To illustrate the uses of *vā*, *ta vā* and *teu le vā*, I will discuss two courses within the School of Design that specifically embed indigenous knowledge into the framework of the courses. All students consider the relationship of indigenous culture to design. In the first instance first year students are asked to consider and identify their individual and collective understandings of culture. This project includes design history and theory and introduces *tā-vā* to help students identify and visually express both tangible and intangible connections to the past, present and the future.

Within the course brief students are asked to, “adapt the structures inherent in family genealogies, through iteration, using symbols, visual narratives and specific design strategies taken from

Fig 3.5. | Second Year Work

indigenous practices.” The students parallel the artistic marking of time (*tā*) in space (*vā*) in which geometrical designs are created using repetition and symmetry to give rise to *vā lelei* (good connections). (Fig 3.0. to Fig 3.3.)

Building on the student’s visual interpretations of familial connections to cultural heritage and legacy the students are then asked in their second year to address these tenets in their theoretical approaches to design. Notions of space as containing what could be described as invisible, possibly intangible relationships are introduced through Māhina’s ideology of *tā-vā*. As a specific feature, and as an expansion on their understanding of the relevance *tā-vā* has in contemporary society, the second year students were also introduced to the ideology of *teu la vā* the recognition of sacred connections. The relationships were explained as existing between people, ideals or nature but importantly they are emotional, binding and eternal. The students used these ideals to discuss how respect, reciprocity, mutuality, symmetry and balanced socio-spatial relationships could be engendered into their design investigations. (Fig 3.4. to Fig 3.5.)

and relate to design issues around sustainability, mass-consumption, customization, inter-personal digital relationships.

Students discussed *tā-vā* and *teu le vā* as offering them ways to investigate

{ "I will not pretend that I know her in all her manifestations. No one - not even our gods ever did; no one does (UNESCO experts and consultants included); no one ever will because whenever we think we have captured her she has already assumed new guises – the love affair is endless, even her vital statistics, as it were, will change endlessly. In the final instances, our countries, cultures, nations, planets are what we imagine them to be. One human being's reality is another fiction. Perhaps we ourselves exist only in one another's dream" (Wendt, 1982, p.103). }

VISUAL RESEARCH AND DISCOVERIES

4.0. Introduction.

To enable a more focused view of the opportunities outlined in tertiary education for the retention of Māori and Moana students. I have identified design education as an area where these cultures, specifically Moana culture can directly enhance the curriculum, student engagement and their successful outcomes. The need to address the success of Māori and Moana students in tertiary education has already been clearly and definitively outlined and ratified in strategic plans at both university board and government levels. At the outset of this thesis I referenced a number of facts and figures from SNZ, Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs and VUW faculty members. My use of statistics at the outset of my thesis was to lay the gauntlet down, draw a line in the sand and to highlight the current and very real need to examine, and where I can, offer some light on a path forward. The numbers and data clearly illuminate the problems of low engagement, retention and graduation and highlight the very real struggles for Moana students in tertiary education. Therefore, having clarified the gravity of the situation for Māori and Moana students I do not feel there is a need to repeat or revisit the statistics in this chapter.

To offer a context to the research methods adopted and the groups

selected to research in this thesis, this chapter begins by briefly examining *fa'asamoa* and explains the contexts under which, and the space within the transfer of knowledge occurs in a Moana setting. With an appreciation of this, Chapter Four will examine two ceremonial events. The explanation of *fa'asamoa* is included to support the choice of research methods conducted, their relevance to the investigations and the findings they offer. With an understanding of a larger context I hope to enhance the appreciation of the relevance and findings these research methods have brought to my study.

To assist my research I have used a number of groups and individuals both within tertiary education and also from other cultural groups that offer more traditional and culturally specific approaches to the transfer of knowledge. The methods selected at the outset of my investigations not only reflect my wish to include indigenous research methods but also their relevance and appropriateness to the cohorts, individuals and communities I have engaged with. These methods align and synchronize with Moana traditions of both visual storytelling and the face-to-face gathering of oral histories as opposed to the written word. Beyond traditional methods appropriate to academic research, the value offered in peer reviewed journal articles and other

accredited writing I have selected the less familiar methods of visual ethnography and talanoa to obtain fact, knowledge and understanding. I have not used them as a matter of principle; indigenous methods for a study on indigeneity. These research methods are, in my opinion, the most relevant and fit for purpose and will be further explained throughout this chapter as they become applicable.

Although the participants in my research may appear predictable, some of the research methods may not be as commonplace within a traditional research trajectory. Beyond the participants and research methods used in this study the ideology of *tā-vā* also impacts on this component of my investigations. *Tā-vā* acknowledges a reciprocal approach that also offers respect. In all instances in which I have asked for information, comment or just to take a photo I have acknowledge the need to reciprocate. This engenders a trust and equality in the sharing. These principles are also acknowledged in Ako Aotearoa (2010). The appreciation of the contribution others are making also extends to the acknowledgement of place, space and behaviour. Within Moana cultures it is important to always take account of; who you are talking to, their status in the community, where you are talking to them and how you are expected to act. These all combine to express your respect.

Importantly, research is affected by this understanding.

Particular to my research methodology and differing from the traditional position of a researcher as impartial and approaching the subject matter from the outside looking in, I stand within the subject, impassioned, curious and hopeful. Chapter Four addresses my use of visual ethnography as a research tool and engages with a number of cultural groups, which I will refer to as the case studies. Two case studies will be visually examined through photography, ceremonies that involve matai. These chiefs are renowned for their experience and knowledge and the transfer of this to others through traditional practices. Each case focuses on one matai and his method or methods used in the transfer of knowledge. The matai experience and insight is considered profound and I am grateful for the willingness with which they allowed me to witness and discuss their practices. These archetypes specifically exemplar modes of teaching and learning used within Samoan, and many other Moana cultures. These culturally specific examples act as a counterpoint to the incumbent modes of research practiced by many institutes offering design education.

4.1. *Fa'asamoa*.

Fa'asamoa is a term that covers some basic aspects of its more modern understanding. Delving into its many facets is a whole research topic on its own, but it is important for this chapter to provide a brief overview in order to convey its many complexities but also its beauty. *Fa'asamoa*, is a way of life for the Samoan people, it is how they walk, talk and eat every day. In formal occasions too, *fa'asamoa* is present and cultural processes are completed with the utmost respect. According to Tiatia (1998), respect within *fa'asamoa* means worthy consideration. It means an appropriate behaviour/attitude/action that must be performed by someone in order to take good care, recognise and consider other people or things in our environments. The relationship between people is highly respected in the Samoan culture, which is what we refer to in this research as *vā*. These are called the *vā tapuia* (sacred connections) or *sā*, sacred rules and the *tapu* within relational arrangements. Within *fa'asamoa* there is also a hierarchy amongst the titled men and men of the cloth. *Sā* and *tapu* are the main characteristics of respect that are more commonly, practices within *vā*. *Tapu* in its fundamental sense means, that which is forbidden to the ordinary (Tamasese, Peteru & Waldegrave, 1998). Depending on your title, respect will almost always

be given to those of higher ranking. For the purposes of my own research it is important to note that while these are important aspects of *fa'asamoa*, ultimately it cannot be defined to any one rigid thing, it is important to note its fluidity yet also its complexity. This means that it is able to shift its meaning in different contexts (Siauane, 2004). To fully understand *fa'asamoa* and its complexities, one must be fully immersed in the culture on a daily basis. Therefore this research offers some insight into *fa'asamoa* and what I thought was prevalent in the exchanges of knowledge during my research.

As someone who considers himself to be a creative practitioner, I am always curious about traditional art and crafts undertaken by both traditional and contemporary Moana peoples. My interests and curiosity lead me to the University of Auckland, where renowned Samoan *tufuga ta-tatau* (master tattooist) Paulo Suluape, was the artist in residence. It was a public display of the traditional art of Samoan tattooing held at the university *fale*. Tradition dictates you are not allowed to watch unless you wore an *ie lavalava* (sarong) and sit in silence with your legs folded. As a result of sitting for some time watching attentively, my legs got numb. I decided to alter my sitting position. Immediately, Suluape stopped what he was doing and stared at me and insisted I

Fig 3.6. | 1st Year Cohort

refold my legs. With a renewed appreciation of fa'asamoa I proceeded to undertake my research.

4.2. Visual Research Methods and Discoveries.

To expand the understanding of Moana peoples in education or how Moana peoples teach and learn, I have engaged my primary passion, photography, and undertaken the depiction, analysis and reflection of my case studies. As discussed, the cultural diversity currently present in the first year is illustrated in the portraits I have taken in *Fig 3.6.* to *Fig 3.7.* The bulk of the visual ethnography is undertaken within the ceremonies that I was privileged enough to be a part of. The ceremonies are Samoan but do hold many similar customs and traditions to other Moana Islands. As discussed in Chapter One, although this research stems from an emic approach or perspective I would argue that this research method allows me the opportunity to step back and respect the *vā*, the space, the context and the personalities between myself and the ceremony. Siuane (2004) writes,

"Evaluating the available literature highlights two important factors, firstly, the literature, especially the early accounts must not only be viewed as the

source but also that it must be considered in light of the authors' own agenda, worldview and the period time that they are writing in. Secondly, the literature on Samoa and on the Samoan people illustrates how the sources have become part of the evolutionary process of fa'asamoa" (Siuaine, 2004, pg.6).

Ethnography is said to be born out of sociology and anthropology (Schwartz, 1989). The inter-disciplinary offered by visual ethnography spans like *vā* (Māhina, 2010) into other fields of research (Pink (2013). Pink notes that "consumer research, health studies, education studies, media studies, organisation studies, design research, buildings research and school of art" all engage in this methodology (p.2). The relevance or perhaps more importantly the opportunity visual ethnography offers this research was the ability to distance myself from the ceremonies, protocols and underlying politics of the events. Pink (2013) further explains the benefits of visual ethnography "as an approach to experiencing, interpreting and representing experience, culture, society and material and sensory environments that informs and is informed by sets of different disciplinary agendas and theoretical principals" (Pink, 2013, p.34). Without this ability the nuances, interpretations, background and contextual activities would be lost as the temptation would be to focus on the

Fig 3.7. | 1st Year Cohort

central group of participants; the bride, the chief, the pastor for example and not see the bigger picture or impact. This method allowed me to retreat and remain mobile within the ceremonial space without disrupting hierarchy or ritual. In many instances visual ethnography via film has made a number of intangible connections visible and, as a result, tangible.

Visual recording is a traditional process for handing down knowledge. Rarely was it written. Younger members of the group adopt a watch, listen and learn approach to cultural and everyday activities. Little of this process is formalized with very few hierarchical or societal selections taking place as to who should learn the rituals and eventually take on the ceremonial role. This practice encourages an egalitarian approach to education. It is generally understood within Samoan communities that these transfers of knowledge are available to all the younger members. Individuals can choose to interact, participate. Importantly, as part of this learning process of listening and replicating the work and processes of others a reciprocal respect is embedded in the relationship. Importantly to the focus of this research, this process of self-selection in learning rewards initiative, interest and engagement.

In the initial part of my research, with the individuals consent officially sought, I photographed the cohort and gathered data to enable me to evidence the diversity within the First Year within VUW School of Design (*Fig 3.6. to Fig 3.7.*). This information visually told the story of cultural diversity in an honest and unbiased way. At this stage, I also asked students to fill out a questionnaire that asked them to nominate their cultural affiliation or affiliations as they saw fit. Pairing their photos with their completed questionnaires, I then grouped the student information into geographical collectives that represented the associations the students had made to their cultures. This was the second moment of a recognition of the extent of the diversity that existed in the cohort. *Fig 3.8.* School data enabled me to assess that 230 students enrolled in the 2015 First Year with that number settling at 215 once classes started. Of this group 11 students were away on the days the photographs were taken of the cohort and a further 18 students did not wish to partake in the research. As noted earlier in my thesis this collation and illustration of the diversity in the First Year Design 2015 (FYD) is not done to officially establish a demographic. It is done to quickly and succinctly visually ratify the cultural diversity already established by both government and university boards as a factor that needs to be addressed within education as a whole.

Although I ask the reader to take these findings as just a visual assurance that the diversity is real I have reflected more deeply on what this research offered. The information gathered from the FYD cohort portrayed a robust multicultural student community within the VUW School of Design. Interestingly, the majority of students with indigenous backgrounds were of mixed race and when asked to identify the culture that had the most influence in their everyday lives, many noted that their European heritage had been the most influential. This was most notable in the Euro-Asian students with the full contingent of these students nominating their European ancestry as the most dominate cultural influence in their lives. With an appreciation of cultural assimilation of the dominant culture this data is not surprising (*Fig 3.8*). Of the students who nominated they who were of both Maori and European heritage less than a quarter of them noted Maori as being most influential culture in their lives. In complete contrast to this only a quarter of the Moana students of mixed cultural heritage noted European culture as the most influential. This data shows there is no set formula for knowing what culture a student may lean towards or on for their teaching and learning preferences. The students themselves may be conflicted over this and may shift from one to another. This research does show a dependence or predominant

default position to Western culture but perhaps a shortfall was that this research did not ask and therefore does not tell if the student would prefer options in education that allowed for their culture to influence both teaching and learning methods.

From my own childhood schooling in New Zealand the colonial history and heritage was privileged. We learnt about the coming of Captain Cook and his many conquests colonizing various Island groups and the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. We learnt about European wars not Māori or Moana wars. We learnt of European migration, not Moana.

This research has further elucidated and confirms the need for a shift in the current ways of teaching and learning at a tertiary level to more fully embrace the cultural diversity within the school. Education, I will argue should be more inclusive of the cultures that make up the student body.

In contrast to the student portraits the next sets of images presented offer specificity and require a more in depth appreciation of the story being told. These images highlight the use of traditional Samoan approaches to the teaching and learning of Indigenous knowledge. Although taken in a modern Samoan setting the traditions are embedded. This chapter observes

ETHNIC DIVERSITY OF
STUDENTS AT THE
SCHOOL OF DESIGN
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF
WELLINGTON
n= 177

Fig 3.8. | 1st Year Cohort Data

and reflects on two ceremonies. The first, *fa'akigi*, is a wedding and the second is a funeral, *maliu*. *Fa'asamoa* remains pivotal within these ceremonies that depict both the practices of reciprocity and *alofa*, love. Siauane (2004) posits these as being two of the three fundamental properties of *fa'asamoa*. These ceremonies fundamentally rely on reciprocal exchange. As I have asserted in the introduction of this chapter, gaining experience and knowledge is through individual curiosity and by asking questions and this is also how I have gained my understanding of these ceremonies. My parents and those close to me were my teachers. Being of Samoan decent and having a keen sense of the cultural space I was in I was able to either know or recognize where to stand and where not to stand. There are spaces during every ceremony that are *tapu*, sacred, and this space must be observed, even by visitors. These restrictions did not hinder, in fact they enhanced my perspective, making it uniquely Samoan and heightening the insight into some of the processes of reciprocal cultural exchange.

4.3. Visual Research Case studies – The transfer of knowledge via ceremony: The background.

In the Samoan structure of society and customs, there are official custodians of

knowledge who are called the *tulafale*, talking chief or *Ali'i*, paramount chief. Tamasese talks of the process of knowledge transfer by these custodians as a sacred process...

"The knowledge of tulafale is sacred as is the transfer of this knowledge to the nanai. Generally speaking tulafale were all schooled in genealogical history and in the meanings of mythology, rituals, chants, songs, dances and so on. Senior tulafale are known as tuua. When tuua transfer their knowledge to a nanai the knowledge is considered to have depth" (Tamasese, 2005, p.63).

Siauane (2004), notes that the road to being a *matai* is deeply rooted in a pathway through service, "*O le ala ile pule o le tautua*." Although this research has disused an egalitarian approach to the transfer of knowledge, historically there were instances of a more selective approach. The recipients of such an opportunity are referred to as: *o e nanai* - those who are specially selected for the transfer of knowledge. Tamasese also notes it is important to recognize that the selection of the *o e nanai* is not based on lineage and one does not need to be chosen just willing. As a spectator, whilst I was not officially a recipient, but as a willing and respectful guest of this cultural processes I was able to gain privileged insights into the transfer of indigenous knowledge that occurred

during this ceremony. My own cultural knowledge in *fa'asamoa* also aided in my ability to respect and understand the *vā* during this ceremony. Heightening the ceremonial context was the use of the formal version of the Samoan language by the *matai* that is reserved for significant occasions only.

4.4a. *Fa'akigi, a Wedding.*

As children, during Sunday school we learnt that Christianity was introduced to Samoa in 1830 and from my memory of these teachings the missionaries had banned a lot of cultural traditions since then, as it did not coincide with their Christian beliefs. Consequently, colonialism and religion has had great impact on the indigenous practices and these can be seen in how they are currently interpreted today (Siaune, 2004). The *fa'akigi*, is one such ceremony. As my mother explained to me the giving of a bride to the groom's family which is shown in *Fig 4.6. Fa'akigi* is not as widely practised in modern times so this particular event was a unique opportunity to experience the traditional roots of the ritual. Other elders conferred with my mother telling me this was indeed a rare occasion especially in New Zealand where much of these ceremonial practices have been lost. The loss was not incurred through the lack of cultural engagement but more that the financial prosperity

and ability for families to acquire the fine mats (*Fig 4.0.*) and *tapa* required was not as prevalent in the Moana communities in New Zealand. Levine (2003) echoes these comments noting the uncertainty of the *matai* system in the future because of the costs involved, which he also points out are not only monetary but also due to time constraints.

This ethnographic study highlights two specific ways in which the knowledge was being transferred. For this chapter I prioritize the visual connections, but there is much to be learnt from the conversation as well. In this chapter I will discuss the details of the ceremony as I try and guide the reader through the images in order to appreciate how indigenous knowledge negotiating the shared space of teaching and learning.

4.4b. *The Ceremony.*

The *fa'akigi* ceremony took place in Auckland, New Zealand. Auckland claims the largest population of Moana peoples in the world (SNZ, 2006). In spite of that statistic, I do believe the fact that the wedding was not in the homeland means that the scale was compromised. The entire village would have been involved, whereas in Auckland, it was principally limited to the two families. Because this is a ritual, there are spaces and relationships that are recognized over

Fig 3.9. | Fa'akigi Ceremony

Fig 4.0. | Fa'akigi Ceremony

and above others. None are ignored but some take precedence. After acknowledging the current Head of State, Tupua Tamasese, the most eminent space is that between the *faifeau*, ministers and pastors, and the Christian God. Muaiaava (2015) suggests, these spaces that *faifeau* occupy have adopted the notion of *feagaiga* that is liken to the covenant between brother and sister. Therefore, religion plays a significant role in Samoan cultural gatherings and great respect and honour is shown to *faifeau* (Ioka, 1998). Interestingly, during *talanoa*, with one of the *matai* I conducted my *talanoa* with, Salevao commented that he was of the belief that *faifeau* have no rights over cultural proceedings, although he had experienced a more lax approach to this in New Zealand then to that of the homeland. Fig 3.9 to Fig 6.2, a selection of images, offer a pictorial overview of the *fa'akig*i ceremony.

The four main groups of people within the ceremony showcase the hierarchy. Priority one is with the *faifeau* and their wives who are portrayed in Fig 3.9 picture left. Secondly, the bride and her extended family in Fig 4.4. Following the bride comes the groom and his extended family in the center of Fig 3.9. Lastly, but still shown great respect are the wedding guests and the churches own congregation in Fig 3.9 to the right of the frame. Adding to the dynamics of the vocal or active roles in the ceremony, is

the fact that, because the groom is Tongan, his family's role is diminished further.

The ceremony procession involves a speaker or *tulafale* from each family to talk on their behalf. The *tulafale* would in most instance hold a *to'oto'o* (staff) and a *fue*, fly whisk over their shoulder. Fig 4.2 and Fig 4.3 The *faifeau* and their wives do not usually speak, but they have the authority to overrule the *matai* if they see something as out of order. Assisting the *matai* is a *taule'ale'a* an untitled male (Fig 5.7.) who is in the process of becoming a *matai* himself. This would be the most prominent teaching and learning relationship held in this ceremony and it can be likened to a master and apprentice scenario which is the structure often used in the teaching of creative practice. Also this practice aligns to the pedagogical structure of the Bauhaus Design Academy where each studio has a master, journeyman (assistant) and students.

4.4c. VĀ The space for respect

The seating arrangements portrayed the first indication of hierarchy as those at the front are considered central to the ceremony and those further back in Fig 3.9 from the centralized area of giving are less influential.

Fig 4.1. | Fa'akigi Ceremony

Fig 4.2. | Fa'akigi Ceremony
Fig 4.3. | Fa'akigi Ceremony

Fig 4.4. | Fa'akigi Ceremony

Fig 4.5. | Fa'akigi Ceremony

The space in the center of the ceremony is where the giving and reciprocal exchange take place. Another indicator of hierarchy was the manner in which personal greetings are extended. When guests walked through the central space of the ceremony, they would slightly bow and nod their heads, as a sign of respect. This is, as I have discussed earlier common in Samoan culture. *Fig 3.9*, illustrates the hierarchical seating arrangements. To the front of the congregation in *Fig 3.9* we see predominantly men, usually of *Ali'i* status with the remainder of the congregation and those untitled sitting to the rear of the group. My *talanoa* session with the *matai*, was most informative. It was in one of these that I discovered that these ranks are dependent on the longevity of the title one holds, their knowledge of *fa'asamoa* and their understanding of genealogy. The organization of the space between individuals is important in the Samoan context. It would not be feasible to have a minister seated behind a group of youths, or a *matai* to be seated next to an untitled individual. The knowledge of where one person sits in comparison to another is key to successfully participating in the *fa'akigi* process.

4.4d. The Space –for Language.

In any Samoan ceremony, the formal language is the only language that is spoken, one cannot speak casually as they would in everyday conversation as it demeans the sacredness of the space. Not only are the actions of those participating being articulated but also what they are saying is critical. Hence, language, I would argue is by far the most fundamental element of *fa'asamoa*. With a declining number of Samoan who speak their mother tongue as a first language (SNZ, 1998, 2007), the threats to the culture become more prominent. Tamasese has described the language as “the lifeblood of the Samoan culture” (2005b; 2008b). Hunkin-Tuileufuga (2001) ratifies this in writing, “the relationship between language and culture is like oxygen to human survival. Without one, the other will not survive” (as cited in Wilson, 2010, p.44). So whilst the sharing of knowledge is the focus of this research, I acknowledge the integral and fundamental role my understanding and speaking of the Samoan language has played in the gathering and articulation of this research.

Fig 4.6. | Fa'akigī Ceremony

Fig 4.7. | Fa'akigi Ceremony

Fig 4.8. | Fa'akigi Ceremony

Fig 4.9. | Fa'akigi Ceremony
Fig 5.0. | Fa'akigi Ceremony

4.4e. The space – for gender.

At this point, it is important to note that while the images show men speaking and situated in places of dominance, women also play an integral role within ceremonies. Furthermore, in a number of villages women hold *matai* titles but this is not universal, as in some instances *sā* – sacred village rules do not allow this. During the ceremony, we glean a sense of the role women play specifically in *Fig 4.1* and *Fig 5.9*. Among the women were also *fafafine*, transgendered, who are widely accepted within Samoan society. From my own observations, *fafafine* are less discriminated against or segregated in Samoan culture than transgendered people are in some factions of western society. These scenarios can be quite intimidating for young Samoan women who are not accustomed to cultural traditions. There are certain ways in which one must conduct themselves that are in accordance with the principals ingrained within *fa'asamoa*, if not through their actions then through their words and the attire worn. For men, they would usually wear an *ie faitaga*, formal sarong with an *alo'a*, island shirt and the women would be dressed in a *puletasi*, two piece dress. *Fig 5.4*.

4.4f. The space – for the generations

During the ceremony, there are also children present as seen in *Fig 4.5*. This group hold equal relevance to the more auspicious or obvious contributors to this ceremony, as they are the ones that are seeking to learn from those who hold the knowledge. Whilst the children's ability to comprehend what is going on maybe somewhat limited they are all offered the opportunity to learn about their culture through their attendance. To again parallel the journeymen of the Bauhaus and creative practices historically. Tamasese, (2004) Samoa's, current Head of State argues that the transfer of indigenous knowledge has to start within the home or the *aiga*, and that ultimately it is dependent on an individual's willingness to learn. Those who were attentive to the processes of *fa'akigi* would have to some extent of their understanding received the same knowledge. This knowledge is learnt from observing the processes being done by those with the knowledge – *matai*. And so when the time comes for the younger generations to be at the forefront of *fa'asamoa* they know how and when to apply this knowledge. As evident in the role the females played in the *fa'akigi* ceremony in *Fig 4.7*, *Fig 5.3* and *Fig 5.4*.

Fig 5.1. | Fa'akigi Ceremony

Fig 5.2. | Fa'akigi Ceremony

Fig 5.3. | Fa'akigi Ceremony
Fig 5.4. | Fa'akigi Ceremony

Fig 5.5. | Fa'akigi Ceremony
Fig 5.6. | Fa'akigi Ceremony

Fig 5.7. | Fa'akigi Ceremony

Fig 5.8 | Fa'akigi Ceremony

Fig 5.9. | Fa'akigi Ceremony

Fig 6.0. | Fa'akigi Ceremony

Fig 6.1. | Fa'akigi Ceremony
Fig 6.2. | Fa'akigi Ceremony

4.5a. Reciprocal exchanges through *teu le vā*

"Economists do not take account of the social centrality of the ancient practice of reciprocity, the core of all Oceanic cultures. They overlook the fact that for everything homelands relatives receive they reciprocate with goods they themselves produce, and they maintain ancestral tools and lands for everyone, homes with warmed hearths for travelers to return to at the end of the day, or to re-strengthen their bonds, their souls and their identities before they move on again. This is not dependence but interdependence, which is purportedly the essence of the global system. To say that it is something else and less is not only erroneous, it denies people their dignity" (Hau'ofa, 1994, p. 12).

4.5b. *Maliu – A Funeral.*

As I continue to elucidate the meaning and relevance for *vā* in this research, an appreciation of the depth and breadth of *alofa*, love or reciprocal exchange held as a part of these connections and kinship ties is important. The notion of *alofa* spans throughout many cultures within Moana (Ka'ili, 2005). With the act of *alofa* not taken lightly in Moana communities, especially when there is a lot of time and money involved. The concept of *vā* is intangible, but when put into practice

through *fa'asamoa* within the use of reciprocal cultural exchange it becomes tangible. Moana academics Māhina and Ka'ili refer to *vā* and use it extensively as a research tool. Ka'ili's (2005) essay, "Nurturing Tongan Socio-spatial Ties" is used in this research to specifically to highlight points within this study of a Samoan funeral. Though Ka'ili speaks as a Tongan, his interpretation and use of *vā*, *tauhi vā*, holds a great resemblance to that of the Samoan concept of *vā* or *teu le vā*. *Vā* is not exclusive to these island regions and is found in the greater scope of Moana, "but conceptualized differently in various societies" (Ka'ili, 2005, p.87). Similarly, Hau'ofa's 1994 essay "Our Sea of Islands," points to the ancient practice of reciprocity as the core to all cultures within the space referred to as Moana. This connection is one that continues to be central in Māhina's work and understanding of transnational spaces (p. 88).

During this research, my cousin passed away from cancer. Although she was a cousin, because of her age in comparison to mine, I called her Aunty. She was close to my mother, as they had grown up together in Samoa. These familial ties bound them from childhood and they quickly reconnected once both were in New Zealand. I was with my mother the day Aunty was called back to her maker.

Fig 6.3. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 6.4. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 6.5. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 6.6. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 6.7. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 6.8. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 6.9. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 7.0. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 7.1. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 7.2. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 7.3. | Reciprocal Exchange

A pictorial view of the funeral in order of proceedings Fig 6.3 to Fig 9.3.

4.5c. The ceremony.

The three days leading up to my Aunt's final day, there were flurries of people coming in and out of where her body was being held (Fig 6.3). People would offer gifts of fine mats, *tapa* cloth or money (Fig 6.5 to Fig 7.3). The act of giving during a funeral is called *si'i* and these generous offerings and the people who gave them were welcomed by *matai* of my Aunt's extended family. (Fig 6.6). As in the *fa'akigi* ceremony, here too there is an elected speaker that represents the relevant groups (Fig 6.5, Fig 7.7 and Fig 7.2). After some discussion over who should represent the two sides of my Aunt's family one was elected the other was self-elected. Oddly enough, the elected speaker respectfully handed the reigns over to the self-elected *matai*. I believe this occurred because the elected speaker can always be challenged. This is because as an elected speaker you too benefit from the generous gifts through the people giving their *si'i*. These offerings of fine mats and money are to show the respect and act as an expression of *alofa* and an application of *teu le vā*, caring for the space.

4.5d. *Vā - Teu le vā, tauhi vā, vā tapuia - Caring for the space.*

Samoan funerals usually extend over a number of days and Aunt's was no exception, lasting eight days. The extended duration is often due to the immediate family awaiting the arrival of extended families. Ka'ili (2005) speaks to this in his appreciation of "*tauhi vā* – taking care of socio-spatial relations with kin and kin alike" (p.89). In respect of this relationship Moana peoples will travel many miles for a family funeral, as these actions are what maintain *vā*. These ties also extend to close friends of the family. Attendance reaffirms these ties. In as much as the oceans *vā* may separate, it is *vā tapuia*, sacred spaces that binds familial connections. Ka'ili (2005) discusses *vā* as the vast Moana Ocean, an entity that does not separate but one that connects. "Our sea of islands" (Hau'ofa, 1994), are seen as connections that can span many miles, tied through *Tagata o le Moana*, people of the sea. These connections hold and express *alofa*. The act of *alofa* is not taken lightly in Moana communities, especially when there is a lot of money involved.

4.5e. *Caring for the space through Si'i - Giving.*

As noted these ceremonies, especially when held in the Islands, can become

Fig 7.4. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 7.5. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 7.6. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 7.7. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 7.8. | Reciprocal Exchange

significant events with hundreds of guests attending.

Because of the distances travelled, in many cases from overseas, this can be expensive. On top of travel costs the *si'i* can be significant as well. At this funeral the biggest *si'i* came from my Aunt's husband's family. They wished to show the love they had for Aunt not only as a wife, but as the person gave so much *alofa* to her husband's family. Not only did they provide mass amounts of material offerings but large sums of money were also gifted (Fig 7.1. to Fig 8.0.).

Siaua (2004) explains these roles or obligations, as one's *tautua* (service). "It is a living expression of one's service to one's *aiga*, *matai*, village and church. It is the physical giving that is not only a strong part of Samoan culture but also a living expression of one's love and generosity" (p.71). Branches of my Aunt's extended families also contributed. This does not always have a positive effect on the individuals or the families. *Fa'alavelave* describes anything that involves reciprocal exchange and encompasses all occasions such as funerals, weddings or birthdays.

Fa'alavelave in a modern context implies more negative than mutually beneficial connotations and implies intensive chores and monetary offerings. These negative connotations have contributed to many people extricating themselves from *fa'asamoa*.

Fa'alavelave brings with it confusion and this, I would assert, negates the ideals embedded in the concept of *alofa*.

4.5f. Caring for the space through *Si'i – Receiving.*

It is commonplace to see Samoan women busy in the kitchen as seen in Fig 7.4, although this is not considered a primary role for them as part of *fa'asamoa*. But in this case males were nowhere to be seen while the women busied themselves with the *feau's*, chores. The women were cooking the food that would be used to reciprocate to the family and friends that had come and offered *si'i*. In the evenings, the *fai'feau*, ministers would come and pray with the family. In return the family reciprocate by way of food (Fig 6.7). Significant amounts of time and money go into the preparation of the food (Fig 4.7). On the last night of the *maliu*, the extended families get together. Collectively they put all the gifted mats from the *si'i* together in order of size and beauty.

4.5g. Caring for the space through *Si'i – Giving Back.*

Once the burial is over and the food consumed, the family reciprocates back to those offered or showed their *alofa* through *si'i*. This also occurs during *fa'akigi*, wedding ceremonies. This

Fig 7.9. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 8.0. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 8.1. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 8.2. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 8.3. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 8.4. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 8.5. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 8.6. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 8.7. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 8.8 | Reciprocal Exchange

reciprocal exchange happens between my Aunty's extended family, the church group and the minister's table. The family begins by reciprocating to the church my aunty attended (Fig 8.5 to Fig 9.3). The best fine mats will go to the minister's family all these are prepared the night before, which can go till early hours of the morning (Fig 8.1 to 8.4). And then the ranking of matai will determine the look and the size of the fine mat given. One top of these offerings, money is also given and once again rank, determines remuneration. The minister will always receive the most offerings because he outranks any matai in any ceremonial proceeding. As with the *fa'akigi* ceremony, the ministers are not very vocal, but they do play a major part in concluding the proceedings. Siauane offers us some insight as to why the *faifeau* is held to such high esteem.

"The faifeau became synonymous with and interpreted as the sui o le Atua – God's representative, and was to be treated and revered in the manner of a matai. It is believed that the faifeau now possessed the similar spirit powers once belonged to the shaman of the primitive gods. Freeman highlights, that the Samoan traditions and rituals practiced towards their ancient gods such as presenting food and property to the ancient gods was now transferred to the god Jehovah, and the impact of new material goods

soon evolved material culture"
(Siauane, 2004, p.103).

So following on from this belief and new found custom, the church is gifted with the bulk of the offerings from the *si'i* made. From there, the church will divide their offerings among the matai of the church evenly. The giving back does not stop there. To show gratitude for the *si'i* they received, my Aunty's family gave the bulk of the gifts to the church with the remainder going to others who had offered *si'i*.

4.5h. Caring for the space through *Fa'aaloalo* - Respect.

In this case, my Aunty's husband's family had so much respect for her *tautua* to them that they respectfully declined the *alofa*. The *si'i* would now be given to others who had been generous with their time and efforts towards the funeral. As a child I remember my father would go and preach at other churches. He would be thanked with food, more than we could store at home and sometimes as well as money. On many occasions, my father would get me to divide up all the food he received from his offerings and give it to our neighbors. If there was enough to go around we would go deliver some to members of the church. In doing this, my father never expected anything in return.

Fig 8.9. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 9.0. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 9.1. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 9.2. | Reciprocal Exchange

Fig 9.3. | Reciprocal Exchange

It taught me that it was always “better to give than it was to receive” without the expectation of reciprocation. These cultural processes have taught me the value of family within *fa’asamoa*, and the *alofa* within relationships that family and friends hold dear to them. It can be conflicting at times with personal values but I am still learning and growing as a Samoan.

I witnessed different sects of the extended family coming together, of putting their head, heart and hands towards helping my Aunt’s immediate family. It was both humbling and culturally enlightening. Spiritually and socially, this was a rewarding and cathartic experience but there is no doubt it was financially straining. In the eyes of my Aunt’s family the cost were immaterial. It was the same for the *fa’akigi* ceremony and any formal event that takes place in *fa’asamoa*. Anae (2001), purports these factors are what encompasses *alofa*. Reciprocal exchange is an act of *alofa*. *Alofa* is the nurturing of space between all things animate and inanimate as defined by Anae (2010).

{ “Va’ai ou mata ma fa’alogo ou taliga” - Look carefully
and use your ears attentively. (Salevao – Fig 9.6) }

ORAL RESEARCH METHODS AND DISCOVERIES

5.0. *Talanoa*

This chapter will cover the oral method of research used throughout my investigations. In Chapter Four I discussed and illustrated the unspoken information, emotion and exchanges between people. Chapter Five will undertake the oral transactions and exchanges. It is important to recognise that these exchanges, although perhaps more tangible, they still recognise and acknowledge the intangibles within the space, and the relationship between the parties involved. This chapter begins with an explanation of *talanoa*, how it is used and the benefits it offers my research. Following on from the establishment of *talanoa's* value in this work this chapter will discuss the execution of and the discussions had within the *talanoa* sessions. The chapter will conclude with a reflection of my findings from the use of this important and fluid indigenous research method.

According to Otsuka (2006) "*talanoa* research is the most culturally appropriate research design in the Pacific" (p. 2). Traditional modes of oral, or written research involve interviews, questionnaires and transcripts and for reasons of impartiality establish a distance between the participants and researchers. *Talanoa* turns that method on its ear. *Talanoa* offers a personable, emic approach, where the engagement is

considered to offer authenticity because it is undertaken in a shared space of cultural exchange that both assumes and offers respect. *Talanoa* asks participants to share freely and encourages this through the telling of the participants' own stories. *Talanoa* enables participants to be more relaxed within the research environment. Importantly, and establishing it as a wholly different approach from traditional neutral and independent approaches, *talanoa* is heavily reliant on the connections that exist or can be established between the researcher and the participant.

The *talanoa* research method was used in this thesis in a number of ways. The first was to collect oral data from those well versed in the art of *fa'amatai*, the chiefly system, and then undertaken with my peers, students within the SoD. The use of the *talanoa* methodology in my discussions with both the *matai* and the students was to enable an understanding of the processes used well or otherwise, in the transfer of indigenous knowledge between the *matai* the incumbents and the successors and the students within their learning environments. Using *talanoa*, I conducted discussions with Moana SoD students in which they shared their experiences within this specific education track. Through these *talanoa* sessions I hoped to shed light on some of the difficulties that students

Fig 9.4. | Talanoa Participant Tupuivao Lave Mauga

faced, and add further perspective to my own student experiences discussed in Chapter One. I spoke to the *matai* and the design students in relaxed and, for some, familiar environments. According to Vaioleti (2006), “In a good *talanoa* encounter, noa creates the space and conditions. *Tala* holistically intermingles a researchers’ and a participants’ emotions, knowing and experiences.” (p.24). The *talanoa* experience in this research has consolidated Vaioleti’s claims for me.

5.1. *Matai – an exchange between the master and apprentice.*

As discussed, the formation or establishment of connections between *talanoa* participants is an important aspect of the exchange. The three *matai* I spoke with were not strangers to me. I had a prior connections with them through the Samoan church community. Based on our shared culture and ability to communicate in Samoan, our connection was strong. As a sign of my respect and as part of the reciprocal exchange we undertook I photographed these important men and gifted them their portraits upon the completion of this research. This exchange acknowledged the *vā* we shared and demonstrated *teu le vā*, the nurturing of that space. My exchange expressed my gratitude for their time and their knowledge.

Tupuivao Lave Maugā (Fig 9.4.) comes from the village of Lalomalava in Savai’i. Maugā, spoke of his belief in *tautua*, one’s service, and acknowledged that the sharing of traditional knowledge was an important part of that for him, as a *matai*. From this knowledge a better understanding and undertaking of *fa’asamoa* is gained. With no formal education on *fa’asamoa* established, watching, listening and perceiving information from your elders, parents and teachers is paramount. Maugā spoke of his conviction that everything, especially knowledge, is passed down through word of mouth. He spoke somberly of his own *fa’asamoa* experiences. His sons are of both Samoan and Māori descent, and were brought up in New Zealand in what Maugā describes as a Western lifestyle. Their mother, no longer Maugā’s wife, saw no value in *fa’asamoa*. This established a disconnection between the boys and their Samoan culture. In more recent times two of his three of his sons have attempted to reconnect with the Samoan family and culture. They do not speak the language so, to assist in their reconnection, Maugā has, rather innovatively engaged an online service to help them first understand their genealogy. Wilson, (2010) acknowledges the church as being one of the domains of supporting the maintenance of indigenous languages outside of their home countries. Confirming this

Fig 9.5. | Talanoa Participant Mulipola Sinoti

assertion, the Samoan church in New Zealand has adopted a new and inventive interpretation of the village like space where Samoans congregate. This space aims to enable the experience of and learning of *fa'asamoa* outside of Samoa.

The village of Manono is home to Mulipola Tunoa Sinoti (Fig 9.5). It is a small island between the two main islands of Samoa. Mulipola, is a very proud Samoan and was unquestionably one of the most passionate men I have met. His devotion to his culture and his dedication to the passing on of his knowledge of *fa'asamoa* to the young generation of his church is overtly apparent. Mulipola spoke of his father and how he would watch and listen fervently to him during ceremonies within their village to gain a knowledge and understanding of, not only the ritual, but of the man. He called this transfer of knowledge, "mouth to mouth." Mulipola, believes, like Maugā, in the connections between indigenous language and the ability to gain and retain *fa'asamoa*. Mulipola describes the Samoan gagana, language "as a colourful language." His love of *fa'asamoa* is also apparent in his many and resplendent traditional Samoan pe'a, men's traditional full body tattoos. My *talanoa* with Mulipola led us to the roles of family members within the village. This included the role of the *taule'ale'a* and *Ali'i*. The clarifications he offered have contributed greatly to my appreciation of these positions within the

larger collective and helped me see more clearly certain aspects of the ethnographic research. He specifically clarified the hierarchies and nuances of service between the *taule'ale'a* and the *Ali'i*, and the *Ali'i* to the village. Mulipola also refers to the familial respect that was discussed in Chapter One as a significant aspect of the Samoan culture. He too acknowledges the value of respectful and protective behaviours towards gender. Central to our discussion was the interdependences between religion and *fa'asamoa* in which Mulipola asserts, for Samoan people, one can't survive without the other. Key to our discussions was Mulipola's conclusion that *aganu'u*, culture and conduct according to the customs of one's own country are achieved through knowing the relationship that exists between them.

My last and the longest *talanoa* session I undertook was with Salevao Manase (Fig 9.6). This *talanoa* was specifically informative around culture. Much of what the three *matai* said was in alignment with each other. Where this *talanoa* differed, and this might be a poor reflection on me, was that Manase, having lived in New Zealand for almost fifty years spoke English more fluently than my other *matai* participants. Manase was able to go back and forth between Samoan and English and translate anything I did not understand

Fig 9.6. | Talanoa Participant Salevao Manase

into English. Because of his fluency in both languages we were able to engage in a robust discussion where he also challenged my views and understandings on *fa'asamoa*. This particular discussion, although quite confronting, when undertaken in the *talanoa* space was able to take place with respect and reciprocal appreciation for differing perspectives.

There were many parallels between the matais viewpoints. Relationships and connections played a central role in the discussions whether they were between individuals, titled people, those of religion or larger cultural groups. Not surprisingly, at this stage of my research, *vā* contributed significantly to the discussions with all three of the matai. They all noted its importance and significance in *fa'asamoa*. Salevao sums up how all three participants were taught *fa'asamoa* from a young age. The saying is also repeated to *taule'ale'a* and *taupou*, village maidens from a young age and although I have noted it at the beginning of Chapter Five, I unapologetically repeat it here.

"Va'ai ou mata ma fa'alogo ou taliga," look carefully and use your ears attentively. (Fig 9.6.)

The *talanoa* sessions solidified that language, one's mother tongue, is the all-encompassing factor that helps to

share *fa'asamoa*, learn *fa'asamoa* and understanding *fa'asamoa*. Language aids in the transfer and sharing of indigenous knowledge, and helps to maintain and sustain culture. (Wilson, 2010). Religion also plays a role as it is the most prominent domain which culture and language are currently maintained within New Zealand. The challenge to maintain language, culture and as part of that *fa'asamoa* is a mammoth one made acutely aware to me by the fact that these men, all passionate, articulate and active in *fa'asamoa* struggle to engage their children in *fa'asamoa*. Much of their concern for their culture has been driven by the dwindling engagement of youth with culture and I hope my research can go some way to enabling youth to see renewed relevance for their cultural roots with education, specifically design education.

5.2. The next generation

Following this trajectory I conducted *talanoa* sessions with a number of Moana students. The sessions were set up in a way that I hoped the students would find comfortable and amenable to honest discussion. An important consideration when undertaking this research was to ensure the line of questioning remained fluid and able to be guided by the participants and not controlled or defined by my expectations as the researcher.

This is critical for my research to be seen by my participants as respectful and empathetic. Although my agenda for this research has roots in a personal experience, my aim is to ensure it is authentic and that it can benefit the wider Pasifika community in NZ. To ensure the students appreciated the reciprocity available in such a space, I spoke first. By voicing my own experiences at the outset I hoped to allay their fears of embarrassment, isolation or ridicule. The *talanoa* session took place towards the end of the academic year. This was done to give them time to assimilate in, or not, and gain an appreciation for the learning environment and how they were engaging with it and the others that shared it with them within the SoD.

The students were a dynamic mix. The one adult student in the mix added experiences that were vastly different to the younger students. A number of these students were, as I was, members of Te Ropu Āwhina, the Māori and Moana mentoring group I spoke of earlier in my research. Knowing this, and having met some of the students as a part of Āwhina, allowed me an initial means of connection. As stated in Chapter Three, this offered an immediate connection towards further and deeper understandings with that student. Although these relationships were established with individuals for the sake

of this research I will not refer to them individually but more as a collective of Moana students with stories to tell. My own appreciation of *fa'asamoa* and Moana culture in general, encouraged me to begin the *talanoa* with a prayer. We would end with food, but let's not get distracted. Therefore, we first gave thanks and paid respect for the opportunity to come together as Moana people. As a sign of my gratitude and acknowledging the role I would play in nurturing this connections with my participants I bought the food we would share at the conclusions of our *talanoa*.

The responses were varied, with the adult student commenting that she felt she had a lot more to prove being an adult student. She and a current third year student described their first year experiences as a nervous time and as being intimidated by the new surroundings. The first year students, who it is important to note have been a part of numerous initiatives introduced to the first year of the Design School around more inclusive pedagogy, commented that they were not struggling and had no sense of displacement in terms of cultural backgrounds. This may not be as simple a conclusion as one might suppose with the adult student also noting that keeping up with technology had remained a challenge for her. The ease of which the first years are finding their early tertiary experiences could be

attributed to the use of technology in the courses and the universality it contains in its interfaces. One could interpret the adult student's issues as generational as she is not classified as a digital native. A digital native, is a part of a generation of technologically knowledgeable people and although an unfortunate term to use in this study, does aptly describe the ease with which that generation adapt to and engage with technology. Another conclusion could be that as with Maugā's sons, the younger Moana students have become more in tune with their Western surroundings. The students noted that they needed to work harder than they had at school and were requiring more external encouragement than they had expected to engage with. The first year programme at VUW SoD addresses these issues specifically in the programme's structure and has a strong allegiance to Āwhina. The support provided is specific to the first year but is implemented with a specific agenda included that acknowledges the need to continue to improve engagement and retention of Māori and Moana.

The third year student found that if she kept her head down and ensured consistent effort and engagement, she progressed well but went unnoticed. Within her obscurity, her cultural recognition suffered. Overall, this group collectively represented a vertical slice though the School's cohorts, but all discussed issues

of engagement with the wider school in each of their year levels. They seemed to not be engaged with the wider cohort from their respective years. This was an interesting collective issue but not one that the talanoa sessions managed to get to the bottom of. But as a session it was productive to identify a new dynamic that could be addressed.

5.3. A move forward to sharing space

Given the information the *talanoa* session provided it became apparent that this particular group would benefit from on-going *talanoa* sessions to build the information and enable more complex stitching of networks and isolating of issues. Although individual stories were told and similarities established, there were more differences than likenesses. Some struggles were the same but strategies for resolution were different and often self-imposed or established. What was still striking was that beyond the newly introduced strategies that are isolated to certain courses, there is still a reluctance for students to bring themselves, their cultural, gender, quirky or homogenous selves to the class room (Baskerville, 2009). For all students, their cultural engagement is limited. But for the Maori and Moana the use of the mother tongue, recognition of protocols and ideologies would go a long way to enabling a less

Anglo, Euro, "Anything but Pasifika" perspective on design.

There is a lot to take from the practice of *talanoa* as a research tool that enables direct and honest discussion in a safe and supportive space. From these discussions I would propose that talanoa sessions be an integral part of studio sessions, in which all design students can become comfortable in the sharing space. The studio is a confronting space in which ideas are asked to be shared, exchanged and explored. This is a difficult exercise at any stage in a design process. I would advocate the use of this indigenous method as an example of the behaviour expected within a shared space, be it a physical one or the emotional space of sharing ideas. Students could begin to expand their engagement with other students. I would argue this approach would ensure that design education profited from the reciprocal relationships developed as it continues to claim and advance its collaborative and interdisciplinary skills. In addition, by focusing on Moana students, the intention is not to demean or diminish any other minority or marginalised groups hopefully, a by-product of this work could be more culturally empathic, diverse and inclusive approaches to any and all spaces in design, tangible or intangible.

In response to this experience and to

frame the comparisons between cultural practices and current pedagogical models I have undertaken the role of a tutor within the Design School. This has enabled me to work alongside both faculty and students, at the coalface so to speak. This has enabled me to witness how the pedagogy is developed, what administration and delivery approaches are undertaken, and why reciprocity and respect are fundamental to the teaching and learning relationship. The time spent in the tutoring role informs the reflective content of the next chapter.

{ "...we are all in search of that heaven, that Hawaiki, where our hearts will find meaning; most of us never find it, or, at the moment of finding it, fail to recognise it. At this stage in my life I have found it in Oceania: it is a return to where I was born, or, put another way, it is a search for where I was born" (Wendt, 1982, p.203). }

REFLECTIONS ON DESIGN OUTPUTS

Indigenous creative practice – reciprocal exchanges.

6.0. Introduction.

"In 1993 I offered a view of ourselves that was more optimistic than the currently prevailing notions of our present and future as peoples of Oceania. That view is tied to my firm belief that all social realities are human creations – and that if we fail to construct our own realities – others will do it for us" (Hau'ofa, 2000, p.453).

The creative output that is supported by this thesis comprises of five works. Reflective of *tā-vā* and are inter-connected. Importantly they portray four individuals and four different aspects of the journey. The final and fifth piece is a *taualoga*, a thank you which will be presented in Chapter Eight, as with any Samoan event, everything ends with a *taualuga*. Traditional portraiture tells the story or extends the knowledge by placing keys and signifiers within the work to compliment, contrast or act as counterpoints to the person featured in the work. My works are no different. Each cloth, headpiece, flywhisk, feather, body position, fine mat, *tapu* or necklace offers opportunity for insight and interpretation to and of these visual expressions of this journey.

This chapter presents the relevance of creative output to indigenous research and specifically addresses the works that this thesis supports. Additionally, this chapter explains both the collective and individual narratives held in the images I have created. As part of this discussion, I will explain the place creative practice holds within Samoan culture and reveal the creative objectives behind the photographs. These images act as a visual expression of both my own and my contemporary's very personal journeys through design education. The outcomes are intended as a visual response to the issues and aims that are highlighted within this research. Informed by my cultural roots as a Samoan migrant and Māhina's *tā-vā* theory, these images depict and characterize connections through both time and space. The experiences depicted are also influenced by *tā-vā* and consider retrospective, current and future timeframes. The images reflect what I have learnt throughout this research and how, by connecting these moments in time I can contribute towards positive change for Moana students in the common space we share, design education. To offer more than an explanation of the works and in response to the use of ethnographic approaches taken, this chapter also uses the images and narratives embedded in them to reflect on the work and experiences they were inspired by.

Fig 9.7. | *Fafau* - Bound by Culture

Addressing the works in this way, I aim to offer specific insight into the personal and collective narratives that I have embedded in the construction, context and content of these photographic works.

Indigenous creative practices are not mentioned specifically within this research, but it refers to doing or participating in ceremonies, song and dance in a traditional cultural environment. Creative practice holds both an artistic and practical role within Moana culture. Beyond the relevance and importance these acts or works hold as indigenous art and crafts or cultural expression, they can also be object or act of service, ritual, ceremony, utility or exchange. These works act as both Indigenous creative practice and as a portrayal of my *tautua* to my heritage and to my Moana communities.

The images I have created and curated represent pivotal moments in my journey that were also experienced to some degree or other by my contemporaries. The works take into account the discussions of those who have also contributed to the general discourse and highlight some of the criticisms of the current experiences. The intent of my work is not to negate or undermine the efforts made by many to address and amend the scenario, but to confirm the need for a shift in paradigm. My focus throughout has been aesthetic education,

particularly design education. As I have argued, storytellers and visual communicators with a traditionally holistic approach to the connections made between humans and humans and humans and things Moana peoples have much to offer the world of design.

6.1. Image One: Fafau – Bound by Culture.

Fig 9.7, Fafau, address the overriding research motivation and asks; what binds me to my culture, and why does my culture bind me. Restricted by *senit*, Tupe, a young woman of status, wears the ceremonial *tuiga*, headdress, and sits quietly with her hands clasped, as she bares her *malu* (Traditional Samoan tattoo for women) to the world. She is respectful, submissive and has no opportunity to speak – although she has plenty she could say through her cultural markings and adornment. Of course, there is no one answer to this inquiry but for me, culture is engrained in my being. It ties me to my past, it is embedded in my daily life. I have belief and a love for it that I endeavour to take forward with me and express outwardly to those around me. My expressions of it will be my legacy. My understanding, respect and reciprocal exchanges through *vā*, *tā-vā* and *teu le vā* enable this. *Fafau*, silently sets the stage, places a mark in the sand and sits proudly, almost majestically and waits for her moment to

Fig 9.8. | Siva Mālie - Moving with Mana

be able to express herself. *Fafau*, explores how binding ones mouth with senit, represents the loss of language thus binds us also to this Western idealism. Which then allows Tupe the opportunity to revisit what is her important to her.

6.2. Image Two: Siva Mālie – Moving with Mana.

Fig 9.8 Siva Mālie captures Matamoana mid motion as he moves through space expressing his indigenous practice. To acknowledge and define this space as sacred he displays a Tongan dance specific to men, *mako*. The flicking of the head (*Teki*) is accentuated through the feathers and characterizes his movement through space. His mouth is covered by a white cloth that symbolizes the white collar of colonial influences that continue to restrict his expression. Matamoana, is strong, defiant but respectful and he negotiates his path with the grace and creative expression bestowed on him by his ancestors. He holds this cultural space securely as he finds himself centered within this space that at times seems crowded with the ideas of assimilation, hegemony and homogeny. The mana, the respect and prestige, Matamoana displays allows him the strength to continue his indigenous practice, arts and way of life. His upright forward leaning stance expresses his offering of this sacred indigenous knowledge to the world as a

gift that should be shared and cherished.

The act of dancing to the beat of a *pāke* (traditional island drum/drums), one learns the harmonious movements that replicate nature and the swift calming breeze of the night, the movement of the ocean as it sways you side to side. Dance can also be about celebration, loss or even about self-expression. Within the process of learning how to dance, you also learn discipline and order, and the nurturing of space, and how your body moves within that space in relation to those around you. Tamasese (2005), believes that being in the act of Indigenous practices of dance is also about recording Indigenous histories. Through traditional dance one is able to apply and maintain these indigenous knowledges of indigenous practices. Which for someone who advocates for cultural inclusivity is very important to the integrity of this research. Tamasese (2005) also notes the significance of dance in the “transferring of knowledge and history between generations” (P.62).

6.3. Image three: Tava’e’ula – Nesting place of Indigenous Knowledge

Fig 9.9 Like the red-tailed tava’e’ula, who under the threat of introduced predators, has shifted her familial nesting place from amongst Tutuila to between rocks and roots. Ofa, continues to display beauty,

Fig 9.9. | *Tava'e'ula* - Nesting place of Indigenous Knowledge

poise and dignity and has adapted to her new space by maintaining her Indigenous knowledge. Her ability to negotiate and adapt does not mean that her unique Indigenous beauty must be lost. Family is important in Moana cultures. It is embedded in fa'asamoa and the care for one's children and aged is paramount. It is a significant part of one's *tautua*, service. The reciprocity expressed in *vā*, *tā-vā*, *teu le vā* are, as Māhina posits, circular, generational and forever connected (Māhina, 2010).

Indigenous knowledge is the embodiment of the principals embedded within *tā-vā*, *teu le vā*, *tauhi vā* and *vā tapuia*. All the knowledge that we hold sacred, as Moana peoples are what is known to Samoans as; *measina* or *taonga* to the Māori people. The passing of Indigenous knowledge onto our *mokopuna* (children), is how culture can be nurtured and maintained. This knowledge holds value in the humblest of ways as it teaches the value of respect. This passing of knowledge is rooted in the title of this research based off a biblical verse found in Proverbs and now adopted into Pacific ideologies.

Through Indigenous knowledge we are able to attain *mana* (power/prestige/knowledge). It is the power that enables Moana to continue on with their Indigenous practices, their arts and their way of life. Ofa's (Fig 9.9) stance is my portrayal

of reciprocal exchange of Indigenous knowledge to the world, not knowledge to be boastful but knowledge that should be shared, nurtured and cherished. The binding of the mouth is in relation to my personal experiences about Indigenous knowledge as not being something that I considered to ever be something that I could incorporate into my assignments. The colour of the material that is used to bind Ofa's mouth, pays homage to my ancestors that bled for this knowledge to survive, and for our forefathers who passed these treasures onto the next generations. Ofa, brings her beauty, her pride, her legacy and her Indigenous knowledge with her as she re-establishes the nesting site.

6.4. Image Four: Measina – The Treasures within Language

Fig 10.0 Represents the importance of language plays a pivotal role in the maintenance of any culture.

"Tamasese has described the language as the lifeblood of the Samoan culture and Hunkin-Tuiletufuga writes, "the relationship between language and culture is like oxygen to human survival – without one, the other will not survive" (as cited in Wilson, 2010, p.44). What seemed to me at times to be a limited knowledge of my language, I was able to identify and understand meanings, methods, nuances and ambiguities. By

Fig 10.0. | *Measina* - The Treasures within Language

engaging with the language, I was afforded an insight that might otherwise have passed me by. My commitment to and my understanding of the language has been expanded through the generosity of those I have spoken to throughout this process and their appreciation of fa'asamoa. As part of *tā-vā*, I will continue to expand this knowledge. The fourth image, in this series deliberates on the use of indigenous language. As with the other images, Tavai's mouth is bound. Unlike Tupe, whose culture binds her voice with the senit rope forcing her to sit quietly, Tavai is upright. Representing a talking chief, *tulafale* he stands with his ceremonial *fue* (fly whisk), placed on his shoulder. This indicates he is ready to formally address the group with a *lauga*, speech. Language plays an integral role in the maintenance of culture and Tavai stands, proud, strong and respectfully ready to have his, and the voices of his people heard.

6.5. Conclusion

Beyond my own reflective observations, connections the discoveries made, the viewer also holds significance. Importantly, even though I speak of these works as a personal interpretation, I hope to also encourage all those viewing the images to contemplate and reflect on their own experiences with cultural

diversity in a larger context. Whatever the viewers experience, opinion or query, these images aim to encourage reflection, reaction and discussion; acting as a point of reference to grow from. Beyond reaching those that may have traversed a similar path to the one examined in this investigation the hope is that others may find inspiration and motivation through the narratives provided within the imagery in the portrayal of Moana cultures. By shedding some light onto these journeys through design education and highlighting the relevance of indigenous knowledge within design education and design practice a connection may be illuminated that allows others to feel confident enough to embark on their own distinct and diverse paths.

{ "...education needs to be at best, both critical and technical, with the critical taking primacy over the technical. A consistent shift of Western from imposition to mediation of tensions at the intersection of Western-Moana cultures has been long overdue...the logical order of precedence in the scheme of things that knowledge production always precedes knowledge application" (Māhina, 2010, p.172). }

TURN AND LOOK BACK

The need, the desire and the ratification of a more inclusive approach to how we think and what we do becomes increasingly more evident with every passing day. Migration, refugees, diverse communities, mingled, merged, married or at odds with each other are a reality of our everyday. This research has not addressed this global issue. Rather it focuses on the pinhead that is my own personal experience as a migrant in a culture that began in our first meeting in the early eighteenth century when Louis-Antoine de Bougainville named my Samoa, the Navigator Islands in 1786 (Forbes, 1876). I am not so generous to think this name was an acknowledgement of the skills the Moana peoples demonstrated at sea. Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, Moana history was an interwoven one. These hostilities were no exception to any rule of war between different nations. Conflict, as Māhina refers to such events, can both separate and bind. Māhina, (2010) argues that, “all things, in nature, mind and society, stand in eternal relations of exchange, giving rise to conflict and order” (p.169). He goes on to explain that these relationships are in a continuous state of conflict and order, “the West and the Moana, for example, have entered into ongoing relations of exchange since their initial point of contact” (p.140). Of concern to both Māhina, and this research is the imbalance still experienced within the relationship

between the West and Moana peoples and specifically addresses governance and education as relationships that demonstrate an unhealthy asymmetry.

It is this asymmetry that I have addressed in my research and creative outputs. In Chapter One the extent of this imbalance was identified and I staked my claim within that conflict and noted my surprise at my ability to navigate a path through what were very foreign waters. As a reflection on that experience, perhaps that is what we Moana peoples do so well – navigate space. But as Chu (2009) argued Pasifika students found the navigation of their indigenous backgrounds into current educational spaces difficult. This chapter established with the help of Scott, Baskerville and O’Sullivan the first year as a definitive point in tertiary education for Moana students and the need for transparent and reciprocal relationships within teaching and learning environments. But of most significance was the recognition that “students should be allowed to bring who they are to the classroom” (Baskerville, 2009, p.462). At this point the specificity of the focus was established and paralleled to the Euro- centric model that is for the most part prevalent on design education. Importantly I discuss my own experiences that enabled the emic perspective that inspired me to be laid out for all to see. This chapter expressed my motivations,

frustrations, difficulties and successes. I argued, convincingly I hope, that when culture should be given the space within design education to negotiate a space of respect through understanding and accepting all students as cultural beings.

Chapter Two offered a review of the literature I asserted held significance and influence to my research. Although statistics play an ongoing part in the discourse around the successes, and sadly more relevantly to this research the failures, of Māori and Moana students in education, these are not my focus. They were as noted a backdrop, a proclamation that yes, something needs to happen. The principle work discussed in Chapter Two is Māhina's. It was important to establish at the outset an appreciation of *tā-vā*, The Theory of Reality and the role it played in my own experiences and what it offers that path forward. Pasifika, Moana writers and academics Anae, Hau'alofa'ia, Ka'ili and Pasikale supported Māhina in this chapter by adding depth and breadth to the use and understanding of *vā*, *tā-vā* and *teu le vā* in different contexts. Wick's work offered an understanding of the establishment of the Euro-centric model with O'Sullivan enabling connections to be made between the two within modifications to the current model. Levine, Baskerville and others enable an overall endorsement for change and along with O'Sullivan discuss ways this can be achieved.

Chapter Three offers the connections and correlations between the past, the present and the future of design education. Chapter Three outlines *vā*, *tā-vā* and *teu le vā* and explains how each belief interprets and inhabits space. These concepts are paralleled to Bauhaus reformist pedagogies and understandings of space that can be used alongside indigenous ideologies. In particular this chapter identifies certain European educational reformists and Bauhäusler as having a similar appreciation of space within aesthetic education. It is these similarities that are adopted and used to structure course work at Victoria University that takes into account a more holistic approach and circular nature to design education, research and practice.

Chapters Four and Five are the chapters with which I am most proud. These chapters represent Moana experiences, Moana voices, gathered in Moana ways. Most importantly, *fa'asamoa*, the Samoan way guides every step of these processes and discussions. Particular to my research is my methodology. This research takes a different approach from the traditional in which the researcher is impartial. I stand proudly within the space that I research but use the specific methods of visual ethnography and *talanoa*, oral histories, to respectfully gather and honour the perspectives and knowledge of my fellow students and

a number of significant dignitaries. I approach the discussion of the transfer of knowledge with respect and reciprocity that Chapter Three established as essential. *Vā*, *tā-vā* and *teu le vā* have remained critical at all times during the research, writing and reflection of these chapters. This research process has enabled me to engage with much of what I love and cherish in my life; my family, Church, language and culture. But as the icing on the cake, the *taualuga*, I have been able to use my love of and skill with photography from the beginning to the end of this research thesis in what I believe has been a meaningful and relevant way to tell my story and that of my fellow Moana students.

Chapter Six, explains my creative output, as noted at the outset of this research; "*O le ala I le pule o le tautua*," the path to leadership is through service. These images encapsulate a part of that service. *Fafau*, *Siva Mālie*, *Tava'e'ula* and *Measina*. This chapter is the explanation of the realization of my work. It visually asserts as, Hau'ofa has stated, "if we fail to construct our own realities – others will do it for us."

{ "Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding, Oceania is hospitable and generous, Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still, Oceania is us. We are the sea, we are the ocean, we must wake up to this ancient truth and together use it to overturn all hegemonic views that aim ultimately to confine us again, physically and psychologically, in the tiny spaces which we have resisted accepting as our sole appointed place, and from which we have recently liberated ourselves. We must not allow anyone to belittle us again, and take away our freedom" (Hau'ofa, 1994, p.16). }

TAUALUGA.

Image Five: Tualuga – Fa’afetai, fa’afetai fa’afetai tele lava

In any Samoan event between two groups or villages, there is always a tualuga, a thank you. Therefore, to say thanks I must acknowledge that this research has formed many new connections through the production of knowledge. Tā-vā has enabled my voice through inspiration, motivation, instruction and knowledge. Tā-vā has taught me to continue to look backwards and forwards but to always be aware that I have a role to play in the here and now, to assure my culture lives and breathes on, that is my service. But, through the title of this research, a’oa’o le tama e tusa ma ona ala, a o’o ina matua e le toe te’a ese ai, which translates to English as; “Train a child in the way he/she should go, even when they’re older he/she will not depart from it.” I posit this biblical assertion as a title, for my parents having brought me up in a spiritually and culturally enriching environment, which has guided and inspired my thinking.

This tualuga signifies the ending of this research in which people who shared interest in the production and development of indigenous knowledge were connected. Tupe, as seen in Fafau, image one, bound by her culture, sitting quietly. She is now, upstanding and dancing. Tupe moves and expresses herself freely and confidently beyond the frames previous-

ly set around her. She moves through vā, a religious space represented in the triptych arched space, navigating a path and nurturing the vā tapuia and in doing so, acknowledges her tautua. The arches, therefore represent the sacredness of the space she moves through and expresses her culture freely. She finds room for indigenous practice, knowledge and languages within it, tā-vā. I pay homage to my ancestors of Hawaiki and acknowledge that like the tualuga, that sits above the fale, without it I am exposed, vulnerable and unlikely to weather the storm.

I le tu ma le aganu’u fa’asamoa pe a fai ni poulaga, po o ni faafiafiaga fa’asamoa, faai’u lava mea uma I le tualuga. Afai o se fesaga’iga a ni nu’u se lua, ona ave lea o le fa’aaloalo I malo e fai mai ai ni a latou faafiafiaga. A mae’a, ona fai lea o le latou faatafiti ae faai’u I le tualuga. Afai o lo o malaga mai ai se taupou o le nu’u, o ia lea e sa’asa’a e tualuga le fa’afiafiaga a le malaga ae aiuli I ai ni sogaimiti se to’alua. O le taupou po o le ‘augafa’apae, o se alo tamaitai o se Alii taua o le nu’u. A I ai nisi e fia sisiva I le tualuga, e le mafia ona latalata I le taupou ae sisiva mamao mai tua ma autafa.

E mafua mai lenei upu tualuga I le fuasiaina o se fale Samoa. E fausia uma lava vaega o le tino o le fale ia mae’a, ona ato loa lea ae mulia’i lava I le tualuga ma malu loa le fale.

Fig 9.7. | *Tavaluga* - Thank you

Ua 'a'au, 'a'au taunu'u i le nu'u o le 'Ape.

LIST OF FIGURES

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VUW School of Design 101 Student work. Retrieved from course Co-ordinator. Fig 3.0.
| First Year Work

Fig 3.0. | First Year Work

Fig 3.1. | First Year Work

Fig 3.2. | First Year Work

Fig 3.3. | First Year Work

Fig 3.4. | Second Year Work - Photo taken by author writing by student

Fig 3.5. | Second Year Work - Photo taken by author writing by student

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FIN.