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**An Analytical Perspective on Moana Research
And the Case of Tongan Faiva**

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
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Abstract

An Analytical Perspective on Moana Research and the Case of Tongan Faiva

This thesis adopts an analytical approach to Moana research from a “Pacific Studies” perspective, focusing as it does on Moana languages and Moana indigenous knowledge. From this perspective it analyses and discusses the imposition of Western paradigms in Moana research and in Moana language, both historically and currently. It argues that Western ideas, concepts and practice are often assumed to be appropriate rather than what they are, that is, a Western imposition, and that this form of imposition is not just to be found in research methodologies, but in the systematic application of Western paradigms to all aspects of understanding Moana cultures, including current understandings of the *fuo* (“form”), *uho* (“content”) and *‘aonga* (“function”) of Moana languages. As both a theoretical and practical example of appropriate Moana research, that is, where both theory and methodology arise from within, in an “inside-out” approach, this thesis develops Māhina’s General Tā-Vā Theory of Reality, with the addition of the Hypothesis of Laumālie, as well as indigenous Moana methodology such as the Metaphor of Kakala, the Metaphor of No‘o‘anga and Moana research processes such as *talanoa*, in the study of Tongan *Faiva*. To do this it also analyses the impact of imposing a Western paradigm on Moana languages and discusses the Moana concepts that are still contained within vocabularies associated with Tongan *Faiva*. It takes a more analytical approach than do previous studies on Tongan *Faiva* and conceptualizes the *fuo* (“form”), *uho* (“content”) and *‘aonga* (“function”) of *Faiva* within a broader and more holistic Tongan social matrix. This thesis proposes the need for a systematic de-programming and de-colonizing of Moana research and the development of a new and comprehensive Moana paradigm as an essential task. It argues that this should be done through a process of adopting both culturally appropriate methodological approaches in researching and culturally appropriate theoretical models in approaching and interpreting knowledge as found in indigenous Moana cultures.

Fakatapui: Dedication

I dedicate this work to my friend and *Hūfanga* ‘Okusitino Māhina, who has been my *māhina*, shining a path and showing me the way to Hina. I also dedicate this work to my son Kahurangi for being himself and to all his Moana *tīpuna* who through their own ingenuity and endurance, flourished across the vastness of the Moana Nui to become the pride of Tangaloa.

*Whāia te iti kahurangi
Ki te tuohu koe, me he maunga teitei*

Follow the smallest treasures of your heart, if you bow,
Let it be only to the greatest mountain.

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Notes on Terminology

The term Moana

Throughout this thesis I have adopted the term Moana in preference to the Western term Pacific. Long before Westerners renamed it the Pacific, the people who explored and settled this great ocean referred to it as the Moana, or sometimes Moana Nui meaning “great Moana”. The term Moana was also used by Moana scholars such as ‘Okusitino Māhina, Futa Helu and Tēvita O. Ka’ili who argues:

I use the name Moana instead of Polynesia/Polynesian because moana means ocean in many of the islands. I also use the name Moana to highlight the oceanic culture of people from the islands. I was inspired by ‘Okusitino Māhina’s writings on the term moana (1999a:278, 1999b:53), and by Futa Helu’s claim that the name Samoana means “sea people” (1999:113; Finney 1973). The term “moana” is embedded in the worldview of “in-between space.” It is possible that the word “moa-na” originated from the word “moa”-lit. means “middle space/in-between space.” Thus, moana is the "space between" islands. In Tonga, “moana” and “vaha” (space between islands) are sometimes used interchangeably. (Ka’ili 2008:11)

The term Western

Throughout this thesis I have adopted the term Western, also known as the West, as a term referring to different peoples and cultures primarily of European descent and having cultures and societies heavily influenced by and connected to Europe.

The use of capitalization

I have used capitalization for some terms throughout, to indicate and refer to the generality of a concept. In the case of *Faiva* for instance, I have used a capital *F* to differentiate its generality from more specific contexts such as in *faiva haka*, *faiva ta’anga*, *faiva hiva* and so on.

The use of quotation marks

I have utilized quotation marks in many instances throughout this thesis and particularly when suggesting English terms or meanings for Tongan or other Moana “words”. Due to the many difficulties in translation and in finding any equivalence for many Moana concepts and terms, in each case the use of quotation marks serves to

underscore one of the main themes of this thesis, that is; that “equivalencing” with English terms and concepts may be misleading. Where I have used English terms as suggested meanings in this way, in each case it has only been to give an indication and such terms are not to be taken too literally. At their very best, terms in quotation marks serve only as an approximation.

The use of italics

I have used italics for all non-English words throughout, except in quotations (such as the *faiva ta'anga* at the beginning of each chapter) and for author's names or proper names such as Pulotu, Moana, Tangaloa, Tongan, Māori and so on.

The Use of Tongan “Words”

It should be noted that many Tongan “words” are inferential in nature and may develop variations in meaning across varying *tā-vā* intersections (See the discussion in chapter 3 on the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality and the Hypothesis of Laumālie), which means they should not be defined beforehand with a specific English meaning without exercising some caution. (See discussions in chapter 5 on Moana language, especially on the inappropriate assignation of English “equivalents”).

Throughout this thesis I have therefore chosen to retain many Tongan or other Moana “words” but have included an English “meaning” in brackets. As indicated in the previous section however, I have utilized quotation marks to emphasize that the assigned English “meaning” in each case should not be taken too literally. One of the main underlying themes of this thesis is about the misconceptions that can arise from the use of English “equivalents” and I felt that any understanding was therefore best left in the context of the relevant discussion, rather than in the isolation of a specific glossary. It is for this reason that I have not included a separate glossary of Tongan “words.”

Chapter 1:

‘Osiki ‘a Velenga

Giving one’s all to Velenga

When someone is expected to give their utmost to a task (Māhina 2004a:102)

Talateu: Introduction

Maui Kisikisi

I am Sione of the Sea
You know me
I speak the truth
All the time
Without reason or rhyme
Heliaki, by the way
Is of ancestors
So they say
But me, I am the best
I put *heliaki* to the test
You look me in the eye
I say to you
I am from Ha’apai

Tonga Tapu, is not for me
For I am contrary
Contrary to the rest
That is when I’m at my best
I have to confess, I do protest

My father told me
Sione be free, you are nearly 33
Look after us, your family
I say to my father, Why me?
I’m not the only member of this family

Sione you are the best
Your heart can stand the test
You are from Ha’apai
And the apple of my eye

What test is this for me?
To go without my family
I tell this story
It is true

I left my home for what was new

I wanted to be on my own
And reap the rewards I had sown
Yet in the crowd I call out loud
Saane, I'm home

Why me? Why did it have to be?
I blame my ancestry
But why I blame my ancestry?
When I am everything a man strives to be
I did my best

Mother and father lay to rest
And so I say to you Heleni
I am the guy from Ha'apai

(A *faiva ta'anga* for Sione Saafi and Saane Taumoeofolau-Saafi
by Helen Ferris-Leary, 2010)

Initially as I started my research on Tongan *Faiva*, I quite innocently and excitedly dwelt on the performing arts because of my love of dance and a desire to research and develop knowledge in this area. As soon as I critically engaged in my subject matter however, I discovered that much of the Moana research that had been carried out was entirely dominated by imposed Western ideas, concepts and practices.

Whilst inappropriate theoretical and methodological approaches are to be expected to a greater or lesser degree when outsiders do research in other cultures, what was somewhat surprising to me, was an almost complete failure to recognise the true extent of the problem. In the West, good scientific research has always presented itself as developing knowledge through the discovery and establishment of factual information. To this end, it has long been recognised that there is a need to develop good theory and appropriate and well thought out methodologies. In the existing literature on Moana research however, this was hardly ever the case.

Even though Moana scholars have raised issues of indigeneity and/or appropriateness in discussions of Moana research,¹ the question of validity of both theoretical and

¹ See for instance: Anae 1998, 2001, 2002; Baba 2004; Coxon 2003; Halapua 2000, 2003, 2007, 2008; Hau'ofa 1982, 1993, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2008; Helu 1983, 1985, 1993, 1994b, 1997, 1998, 1999; Ka'ili 2005, 2008; Māhina 2004f, 2004h, 2004i, 2007d, 2008b, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2010e, 2010f; Manu'atu 2000, 2000b, 2003; Nabobo-Baba 2004; Potauaine 2005, 2010; Puloka 1999, 2001; Smith

methodological approaches in Moana research has remained somewhat unresolved in a movement that has been somewhat fragmented. In many ways this situation itself mirrors other outcomes of colonial and imperial agendas in the Moana, and represents its own sense of displacement, dislocation and disenfranchisement.

When I started my research for this thesis, I had the idea that I would investigate the language surrounding *Faiva*, and most notably Tongan words and vocabulary associated with *Faiva*, and that this would be an appropriate way of exploring it as a concept in the context of its associated conceptual framework. To do this I intended to develop an appropriate Moana theoretical and methodological approach.

Initially what I thought was only a process of choosing the relevant vocabulary and then applying appropriate theory and methodology turned into something far greater. Not only was I confronted by literature that portrayed a completely Western version of the Moana, but even Tongan language itself, rather than being an entirely separate language from Māori, Samoan, Hawaiian, etc. as presented in the usual Western dictionary format, was seemingly only part of a much greater Moana language. In fact, the many similarities between Tongan, Hawaiian, Samoan, Māori and so on, dismissed by early Westerners as being a remnant of some ancient Proto-Polynesian language form, were both substantial and compelling, even in their present day forms. Not only was the early Western approach to Moana language misleading, but the divisions themselves seemed arbitrary, based more on Western ignorance of both extensive voyaging in the Moana and of the presence of an underlying and unifying Moana ontology and epistemology.² This Western view not only misrepresented many aspects of the Moana at the time, but Moana language itself has been progressively and continuously reframed to match an imposed Western paradigm of language and language structures until it has become accepted as such, not only in

2004, 2005, 2005b, 2007, 2008; Sanga 2004; Taufe'ulungaki 2003; Taumoe'olau 2004; Thaman 2004; Williams 2009; and others.

² Many of the current names for Moana peoples, are themselves divisions assigned by early Westerners. The name Māori was not a general name for the people living in Aotearoa until Westerners began defining them as such. In this regard Ka'ili states: Some islands use the term Mā'ohi for the native people of Polynesia. Mā'ohi is commonly used in Tahiti and Rapa Nui. Rapanuians use the name Mā'ohi or Maohi for all the native people of Polynesia (Te Ara Huero Ra'ā Tuki, personal communication, August 7, 2006). (Ka'ili 2008:101).

dictionaries, but in academia and the Moana generally. In reality, not only do Western paradigmatic concepts such as verb, noun, adjective, adverb, suffix, prefix, and so on, seem inappropriate in many cases,³ but even the Western idea of what constitutes a “word” may be entirely misleading when it comes to the conceptual frameworks that may underlie Moana language.

Accepting these sorts of Western versions of the world without question, is not only problematic in research, but also imposes a framework where a Western paradigm is presented as factual and universal, instead of what it is, that is; ontological and epistemological. In this light, even the continual and unqualified packaging of Tongan, Māori, Samoan, Hawaiian, etc. as if they are distinct languages, in Western style dictionaries with Western language formats, is hardly more than a continuation and extension of the same imperialist agenda of Western imposition that has been present since Westerners first entered the Moana.⁴

In my own case, this has meant that my desire to research Tongan *Faiva* has drawn me from the very beginning, into both a debate and an investigation of something much wider and more extensive than I could ever have imagined. In short, it has been simply impossible to do research on *Faiva*, without at the same time dealing with the extensive and systematic imposition of Western ideas, concepts and practices, not only in the area of existing research on *Faiva*, but more generally in Moana language itself. In other words, I have had to investigate and discuss the much wider and deeper issue of Western imposition, even to be able to set *Faiva* in an appropriate framework for either its investigation, or any resulting discussion.

This thesis then, whilst still containing my study of *Faiva*, is also the outcome of a concurrent critique of both the imposition of Western ideas, concepts and practices in my field and the need to develop an appropriate Moana based conceptual framework for researching Moana culture in general, in other words, a need to look at Moana research in a Moana context and on purely Moana terms. This thesis is therefore not just a study of Tongan *Faiva*, but one that is primarily thematic around my concern

³ See: Tregear 1891:xiii

⁴ Cf. Memmi 1991; Smith 2005; Trask 2000.

for a more appropriate Moana based research framework, and evolving and developing Moana knowledge that is not founded in, nor framed in purely Western terms. In other words, the development of an appropriate Moana paradigm. This thesis therefore adopts an analytical approach from a “Pacific Studies” perspective, focusing on Moana languages and Moana indigenous knowledge and less on literature that does not stress Moana language and indigenous knowledge.⁵ From this perspective it analyses and discusses the imposition of a Western paradigm in Moana research and in Moana language, both historically and currently.

To this end, whilst I have developed both Moana theory and methodology, I have also applied this development in my research, by using Tongan *Faiva* as an actual example of research using this type of Moana based research framework and discussed my findings accordingly. In this context I have included important insights, thoughts and discussions that have not only facilitated my own understandings and theoretical perspectives, but have helped to demonstrate that adopting a Moana paradigm rather than the more usual Western one, can lead to unique and substantial results. In these regards, my research on Tongan *Faiva* as an example of such an approach, demonstrates both the possibility, as well as the potential for discovering new and exciting dimensions of a subject, if Moana research is set in an appropriate theoretical and methodological framework, and in its own Moana paradigm.

In this Moana context for instance, *Faiva* is revealed to be an extraordinary and complex conceptual phenomenon woven into so many aspects of Tongan culture that a fuller understanding may only be seen by examining a large number of other Tongan ideas, concepts and practices, both ontologically and epistemologically. Unfortunately the widespread invasion of Western ideas, concepts and practice in almost every aspect of modern Tongan culture has meant that unraveling a complete understanding of *Faiva*, is not separate from gaining a more complete understanding of the Western reframing, reinterpretation and redefinition of Tongan and Moana culture more generally. An appropriate ontological and epistemological approach not only requires a review of the usual Western approaches so extensively employed in the past, but a concurrent awareness of the imposition of Western ideas, concepts and

⁵ See Taumoeofolau, 2010b.

practices that remain as an unquestioned foundation in almost all aspects of the present.

To develop and carry out my research then, I built on current Moana theorists and Moana methodological approaches. I have been inspired by the work of ‘Okusitino Māhina, Tēvita Ka’ili, Konai Helu Thaman, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Sitiveni Halapua, Epli Hau’ofa, ‘I. Futa Helu, Melani Anae, Tupeni Baba, Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, Kabini F. Sanga, Linitā Manu’atu, Nuhisifa Williams, Ana Maui Taufe’ulungaki, Eve Coxon, Melenaita Taumoe folau, Sēmisi Fetokai Potauaine, Tēvita Tonga Mohenoa Puloka and others, and all have to a greater or lesser extent, been both an inspiration and instrumental in my process. This Moana based theoretical and methodological framework has privileged me with a unique Moana understanding of *Faiva* and access to its deeper meanings, both in its *fuo* (“form”), *uho* (“content”) and *aonga* (“function”) and the deeper beauty and sophistication of all such concepts in Tongan culture.

Theoretically, (chapter 3) I have utilized the Tongan theoretical Tā-Vā Theory of Reality of ‘Okusitino Māhina, which I have extended and developed to include the Hypothesis of Laumālie (“spirit”). This has allowed me to analyze and discuss not only the spatio-temporal and socio-spatial relationships inherent in the *fuo* (“form”), *uho* (“content”), *aonga* (“function”) of *Faiva*, but also through associated Tongan concepts such as *tauhi vā* (“social relations”), *heliaki* (“saying one thing but meaning another”), *mālie* (“harmonious beauty”), and *potupotutatau* (“symmetry”), and the hypothetical concept of *laumālie* in Moana languages.

Methodologically, (chapter 4) I have employed conceptually valuable insights into Moana methodologies such as offered by Konai Helu Thaman’s Tongan Metaphor of Kakala (“Tongan sweet smelling flowers”), and further developed my own methodology through the Tongan Metaphor of No‘o‘anga (“shark noosing”), and the Moana methodological process known as *talanoa* (“discussion leading to consensus”).

In this way my approach has revealed *Faiva* in an original and substantial way, exhibiting not only its fluid and somewhat context dependant meaning, but also as an

ever important and central conceptual role in many and varying aspects of Tongan culture. When *Faiva* is conceptualized in its role of “social construction, cohesion, order, symmetry, harmony and aesthetics, and beauty” for instance, it takes on the mantle of being the Tongan “art” of “socio-spatial relations”, where the symmetry of performance (through *tā* and *vā*) makes *vālelei* (“beautiful social relations”) which in turn produces *māfana* (the Tongan “feeling of inner warmth”), *tau-e-langi* (the highest form of *māfana*), *hākailangitau* (“elation or joy”) and *lāngilangi* (“honor”) for performers of *Faiva*, where *māfana*, *tau-e-langi*, *hākailangitau* and *lāngilangi* are also related to *laumālie* (“spiritual aspect”). In fact, my research indicated that *Faiva* takes on many important roles in Tongan culture far beyond its more simplistic Western interpretations as “skill”, “entertainment” and so on. My research revealed *Faiva* as not only part of a natural Moana methodology in knowledge development, but simultaneously functions to preserve that knowledge, as well as being a process of education and a personal and social model for *‘ulungāanga faka-Tonga*, the Tongan way of being. In all these regards *Faiva* acts as an important and central agent in facilitating social construction, cohesion, order, symmetry, harmony, aesthetics and beauty, and may also be equivalent to a traditional Tongan “religion” in its role of promoting not only a deeper relationship with “gods” such as Tangaloa, but an ongoing living relationship with ancestors, and providing an important socio-spiritual model (of Pulotu). (See chapter 7)

Not the least of my insights into the multidimensional and circular nature of *Faiva* has been in the process of my research itself. Not only was my understanding of *Faiva* facilitated by an appropriate theoretical and methodological approach, but in turn, this understanding contributed to my process of developing and refining the very theory and methods used to investigate it. This demonstrates the circular nature of Moana “science” or knowledge development, and because my research itself was done in this way, it could also be referred to as the practice of “*Faiva*”. My research therefore demonstrates the interwoven and extraordinary depth of an indigenous non-Western concept such as *Faiva*, both conceptually and practically.

By adopting a purely Moana orientation, I have not only been able to conceptualize *Faiva* as something far deeper and more pervasive than has previous Western based research, but I have also been able to gain insight into the *fuo* (“form”), *uho*

(“content”) and ‘*aonga* (“function”) of Moana language itself. Re-evaluating Moana language on its own non-Western terms for instance, at least within the context of my own theoretical approach to both its structure and content, shows immense promise for future research into both its structure and of analyzing its epistemological and ontological content.

My thesis represents not just a new and original insight into Tongan concept such as *Faiva*, but a concerted attempt at identifying and discussing the widespread imposition of Western ideas, concepts and practices that has been an ongoing obstacle to this endeavor. This itself has been an extraordinary task, not only because this imposition is so extensive, but because of its pervasive and profoundly subtle forms.

In Epeli Hau’ofa’s “Sea of Islands” (Hau’ofa 1994) for instance, there was an attempt by Hau’ofa to identify and address the subtle pervasiveness of the Western imposition of “small-ness” on Moana identity. According to Hau’ofa, the West has always presented the Moana as small, a somewhat romantic idea of small islands in a far sea, a small piece of paradise for Westerners to visit. Because our landmasses were small, we were therefore also seen as “small”, “insignificant” perhaps almost “nothing”. In his “Sea of Islands” Hau’ofa (1994) offered his thoughts: What about our sea?...our sea of islands?...we are big...the biggest ocean in the world. By thinking of “our sea of islands” we immediately become “big”...we are no longer “small.” In other words he demanded that we radically shift from Western thinking about the Moana as just small Islands in a far sea, to a Moana based thinking of “our sea of islands.” In fact Moana people have always been a maritime people, not a land-based people. In reality our territory was not small isolated islands in the Moana Nui, but was the whole of the greater Moana Nui itself. Moana peoples from this perspective possessed one of the largest territories in the world.

‘Okusitino Māhina was himself trying to address the subtlety of Western imposition in his brilliant thesis “Tala-ē-Fonua” (Māhina, 1992), where he treats Tongan oral history as being as valid as Western written history and redefines Western ideas of history from a Tongan perspective.

My own thesis adds to and expands on these and other attempts by Moana scholars at decolonization, and makes an original and substantial contribution to consolidating a unique theoretical academic program for the widespread de-programming of the Moana. Like Hau'ofa and Māhina, many of my colleagues have initiated the same thing but we remain sporadic and not unified in any organized way.

In all these regards then, this thesis is a concerted attempt to unify all these discrete elements, to help establish a unified movement, where I critically engage in a sustained theoretical criticism of Western imposition, that is: of using Western ideas, concepts, and practices, to describe Tongan culture, instead of examining Tongan culture by means of Tongan (Moana) ideas, concepts and practices. In this instance, this thesis contributes to the important task of theoretically and practically bringing these fragmented elements together as a unified, sustained theoretical critique of many of the problems generated by the imposition of Western concepts and practices as a means of critiquing Moana culture. In other words it is an original and substantial attempt to interweave discrete attempts by other Moana scholars into a unified movement where there is a distinction between the Indigenous and the West, and where we deal with the Indigenous by means of our own concepts and practices on our own terms and how we see the world, rather than seeing ourselves as seen by the West. With the current and extensive use of terminology such as the “modern world” or “modern science” when these are often nothing more than “Western world” and “Western science” respectively, it is clear that we have a long way to go in this regard and that there is still much to be explored by future Moana researchers.

Issues and obstacles encountered in the production of this thesis

Whilst the flexibility of my research approach had definite advantages because it was developed from the same culture it was intended to study, and was therefore fully in line with Moana methodological and theoretical approaches, it was fraught with issues, not the least of which was the use of the English language to communicate Moana concepts. In fact, I often felt that there was no adequate way of expressing these in English. Ironically perhaps, it is these very issues that contributed to some of my greatest insights into the Moana world and how it has been so widely misrepresented, misinterpreted and reinterpreted by the West.

As a part-solution to this complex dilemma, I adopted the approach of not trying to seek “equivalents” in English but rather to use English descriptively where I could. Where I needed to approximate by referencing a similar Western idea or concept for the sake of brevity of explanation, I clearly marked this by putting the “equivalent” in quotation marks to indicate it as such. It should be noted in these cases, the relationship is not usually one of actual equivalence but rather of approximation, or even a metaphorical one.

In order to deal with the consistent and widespread imposition of Western ideas, concepts and practices, I have also been required to be somewhat repetitive throughout my thesis. It should be noted that, whilst this may be repetition in one sense, it is not just repetition per se, but the result of applying a theoretical unity throughout my thesis and that is: The displacement of Moana ideas, concepts and practices by Western ideas, concepts and practices. In other words my need for repetition has arisen directly from the same theoretical scrutiny as applied to a host of overlapping yet different instances, different circumstances, and different substances, across my whole field of endeavor. If anything, such “repetition” is not through any lack of conciseness on my part, but a reflection of how rigorous and consistent the imposition of Western ideas, concepts and practices has actually been, both in research, in academia, and in the Moana more generally.

Carrying out my research and writing this thesis has been a journey that has not only been challenging to myself as a colonized and Westernized Moana person, but also to the incumbent Western version of my field. What Thomas Kuhn expressed in his 1962 book “The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,” and by what others have experienced, it is clear that innovative theoretical and methodological approaches often involve paradigm shifts that may contradict, challenge, and generally raise conflicts with incumbents in the field.⁶

⁶ Cf. Kuhn 1962, 1963, 1970, 1977; West 1997; Hau’ofa 1993a, 1993b, 1994, 2005, 2008; Māhina 1999a, 2001, 2004b, 2004f, 2004h, 2004i, 2007d, 2008b, 2009b, 2009d, 2010e, 2010f.

This has meant in my own case, that there is not only a potential for paradigmatic conflict with incumbents in my field, but also with an “incumbency of Western ideas, concepts and practice” more generally. In other words, in the academic field, Western academic ideas, concepts and practice, are usually the only criteria by which academic expression is experienced or accepted.⁷

For example, whereas Western research is usually a linear process of literature review, theoretical application through some form of methodology, and ending in relatively specific results amounting to knowledge, Moana “research” is different. Moana research is not only far less specific, but includes such processes as *talanoa* (discussion leading to consensus). This leads to not only an ongoing circular process of *talanoa*-knowledge-*talanoa*-knowledge-*talanoa* and so on, but also to an holistic and flexible result which, by its nature, is far less specific. In other words the outcome of Moana research is a socially mediated outcome expressed in Moana social terms, rather than a more individualistic Western goal oriented process leading to a more specific materialistic result. This results in a fundamental conflict between a Moana research paradigm and a Western one. Critiques of Moana research from within a Western research paradigm for instance, may result in judgments of it being both unscientific and speculative. Whilst a *talanoa* type of “speculation” may be seen as a valid process in terms of initial investigation in Western research for instance, in contrast to Moana research, it is not usually considered as a valid outcome of research per se. From a Moana research perspective on the other hand, Western research is too linear, rigid and specific to be appropriate for investigating many Moana cultural phenomena.

Because of these sorts of conflict then, any new and important insights that are gained through the Moana process, whether they be philosophical or actual, whether they be based on inference or something more substantial, may immediately fall victim to criticisms based entirely on criteria from within a Western paradigm. Typically, Moana ideas, concepts, insights, proposals and so on, may be criticized in a way that

⁷ Research ‘through imperial eyes’ describes an approach which assumes that Western ideas about the most fundamental things are the only ideas possible to hold, certainly the only rational ideas, and the only ideas which can make sense of the world, of reality, of social life and of human beings. (Smith 2005:56)

cannot be addressed or remedied, because almost all existing research and knowledge is framed in a Western paradigm, which is different.

This situation is typical of the type of “vicious-cycle” I have had to consider in the process of writing this thesis. Hau’ofa even goes so far as to say:

If something is introduced into a situation and does not cause negative reactions, we can say that that something is not really creative or innovative. It merely adds more of the same, or helps to maintain the status quo. (Hau’ofa 2005a:18)

As is the case in the “modern” world generally, there is an almost universal application of a Western paradigm throughout academia and a common presumption that Western ideas, concepts and practices can be applied universally as if they somehow factual. This type of attitude, not only means that many Western ideas, concepts and practice remain unexamined, but pre-determines anything that opposes or contradicts a Western viewpoint as not only incorrect, but as some form of “heresy” (to the existing Western dogma). This in turn often leads to non-Western approaches being ridiculed and/or dismissed outright by incumbent academics, without the courtesy of further thought, or any consideration for the different perspectives involved.⁸

This is a major obstacle in any field where non-Western ideas, concepts and practices are being investigated or discussed, let alone where these may imply criticism of, or directly contradict existing Western ideas, concepts and practices. In fact, in dealing with entirely new paradigms of research that generate non-Western results and where there has hitherto been only fields of knowledge based on a plethora of Western imposition and interpretation, it often becomes impossible to deal effectively with many Western based criticism or judgments.⁹

⁸ Cf. Baba et al. 2004; Memmi 1991; Said 2003, 2004; Smith 2005; Trask 2000.

⁹ Cf. Hau’ofa 1993a, 1993b, 1994, 2005, 2008; Kuhn 1962, 1963, 1970, 1977; West 1997.

In the case of my own research, which has been carried out entirely from within a Moana paradigm for instance, has meant that my Moana outcomes¹⁰ have been open to being viewed in Western terms as “speculation” or “unscientific” not only because they may lack the specificity of Western results, but because results from Moana research typically appears as a series of insights, proposals and inferences. In other words, results that are in the form of a “discussion-for-further-discussion” consistent with *talanoa*-knowledge-*talanoa* circular logic found in a Moana “scientific” process, are liable to be dismissed as some form of “conjecture” by those intent on imposing a Western paradigm as the only “legitimate” outcome.

Of course this is entirely incorrect, and does not indicate that alternative outcomes are necessarily inferior to Western outcomes, but only that they are different. In the case of Moana research for instance, the type of outcome is appropriate to a socialized circular-evolving type of logic, and a knowledge built on scholarship involving intersection and social mediation of issues, rather than the individualistic and linear Western version leading to materialistic or specific results. Interestingly the sort of social orientated outcomes that are inherently generated by Moana research are also intentionally open to ongoing social critique and reformation. Consequently, unlike the many famous figures that fill the history and the development of Western knowledge, researchers of traditional Moana knowledge find the history and development of knowledge in the Moana have few if any authors, because it is largely “socially constructed.”

This sort of reality and the processes that underlie research and knowledge development in the Moana also reflect a theory and practice in the natural environment of the Moana Nui. In the case of Moana “navigational” knowledge for instance, the specificity of a Western navigational fix and specific compass direction to a destination was both unknown and unnecessary, because “navigation” in the Moana was a process of applying a generality of sailing direction and mediating a multiple layered intersection of changing information continuously until a destination was arrived at. In other words Moana “navigation” was a type of natural “*talanoa*”

¹⁰ Moana research processes such as *talanoa* for instance, tend to generate knowledge that is less specific in materialistic terms and designed as a starting point for further refinement through *talanoa* rather than as a conclusion per se.

and whilst this resulted in a specific destination, neither process nor result was definitive, because the changing nature of the Moana Nui meant that the process was different on every journey, even to the same destination.

The writing of this thesis has therefore been made more complex, not only because of the wide ranging imposition of a Western paradigm, but because this imposition has been so thorough that it has raised issues in virtually every aspect I have come across. This has been further complicated by the fact that I am also an indigenous Moana person who has been raised and educated entirely within a modern Western society. Whilst this has always posed a challenge in terms of varying degrees of conflict between Western ways and that of my own culture, it has also had an effect on my own sense of self and my place within the wider context of Western culture generally. Due to the complexity and the subtlety of many of these issues, and because of my own colonization, I have had to keep an open mind in order to develop to a point where I could even begin to see a picture that wasn't dominated and imposed upon by Western ideas, concepts and practices.

Very early in my life I was also diagnosed as having dyslexia. Even though this has been a major obstacle in both researching written material and in writing this thesis, as well as throughout my schooling and university career in general, the confusion and frustration that this "disability" has at times generated, has also served to highlight that whilst dyslexia is mostly understood as an inability to read and write "properly" in reality, it is only a difficulty in utilizing language within the usual (and expected) Western paradigm.

That Albert Einstein, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Micheal Faraday, Walt Disney, Pablo Picasso, Hans Christian Anderson, Lewis Carrol, Winston Churchill, Henry Ford, Thomas Jefferson, John F. Kennedy, George Washington, George Patton, Nelson Rockefeller, Steve Jobs, and many many others, all had to contend with the realities of being dyslexic, makes it clear that whilst dyslexia may be associated with poor academic performance in the Western world, it is not about being unintelligent as is so often assumed. In my own case, dyslexia has nothing to do with my ability to think, or my ability as a researcher, or my intelligence generally, but only that I could not meet certain Western expectations in

reading and writing. In fact like Leonardo da Vinci, I usually write backwards (from right to left, with letters and words in mirror image form) in my journals, my research notes, and generally, not because it is some sort of gimmick, or as some have said about Leonardo da Vinci, to disguise what is written, but because it is an easier and more natural form for me.

The very nature of this thesis has therefore tasked me with all sorts of personal challenges, as well as the usual unfounded ethnocentrically based Western paradigmatic criticisms. Despite these sorts of obstacles, I have tried to present my thesis in a genuine way and to remain both rational and logical in my approach and in my critical thinking, in the hope that any person who genuinely wants to know about the Moana can find in it some value. I firmly believe that knowledge development in the Moana is not about blindly building on Western misinterpretation and mistakes, nor about continuing to use inappropriate Western paradigms, either in research or in selectively pre-empting what is acceptable in academia more generally. As part of an indigenous Moana movement to research and understand ourselves on our own terms, it is important that we begin to reassess all and every aspect of an existing Western dogma, and if Moana knowledge is to progress at all, this needs to be in a way that can create a substantial shift and re-establish an appropriate Moana paradigm.

In all these regards I believe that my being dyslexic, whilst making for the usual difficulties of dyslexics in arenas dominated by Western languages such as academia, has been in other ways, a genuine “gift” outside the narrow confines imposed by a Western view of it. It is a gift that has given me both insight and understanding as a Moana person living in a Western world and a new and significant perspective on Moana research and the *tatau* (“symmetry”), *potupotutatau* (“harmony”) and *mālie* or *faka’ofa’ofa* (“beauty”) that in turn give rise to *vālelei* (“beautiful socio-spatial relationships”) through Moana ideas, concepts and practice.

In summary then, I have chosen to develop my own understandings through research as well as focus on many of the issues that have been raised by the aforementioned Moana scholars. With the current development and increasing appreciation of indigenous based research agendas, I believe it is both appropriate and timely, that a fuller Moana paradigm is developed for all Moana research.

In order to help facilitate this therefore, I not only give a background of historical Western imposition of ideas, concepts and practices in Moana research, but also discuss and analyse Moana theoretical and methodological approaches as well as their application in an actual Moana example. In this way, by choosing the example of Tongan *Faiva*, I have been able to compare and contrast my own findings with the existing literature on Tongan *Faiva*, and demonstrate the differing outcomes and insights into *Faiva* when a more appropriate Moana paradigm is adopted for its investigation.

I have also however, spent some time in considering how to present the material of this thesis as the normal mainstream and therefore expected academic forms are both explicitly and covertly dominated by Western ideas, concepts and practices, and these “linear” forms do not easily adapt themselves to the many interconnected currents and “circular” forms of thinking found in Moana ideas, concepts and practices.

The two diagrams on the following page contrast these two forms.

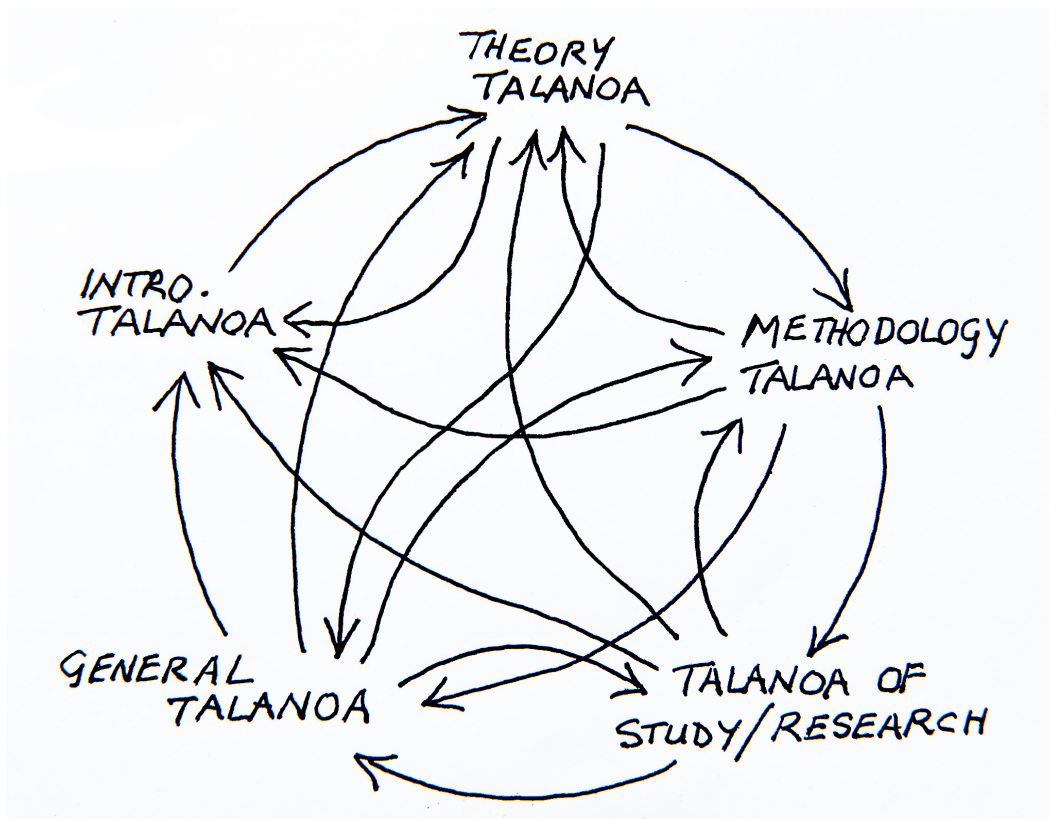
Diagram 1:

Western “linear” thesis form

Introduction and literature review ⇒ Methodology ⇒ Results ⇒ Analysis and conclusion

Diagram 2:

Moana “circular” thesis form: Showing Moana “currents and eddies” of *Talanoa*



I have therefore structured the writing of this thesis to mirror, as much as is possible (in a Western written format) the Moana circular patterns found in Moana ideas, concepts and practices. In general whilst I have to some extent accommodated a Western approach by separating issues into different chapters, there are substantial differences in how the material is organised. The literature review for instance, is interwoven in discussion form (*talanoa* form) throughout the thesis, rather than being

at the beginning as is the case for many Western theses. It also means that each chapter begins with a proverb and poetry, followed by an introduction woven into a discussion (*talanoa* form) rather than a simple introduction at the beginning of each chapter. Even my research findings are organised in a discussion form (*talanoa* form) rather than the linear “conclusive” form found in typical Western theses. In other words any “results” are not presented in this Western “summary and conclusion” style, but in statements that are designed to open to further *talanoa*. I believe that this style is more typical of Moana research, where there is never intended to be a final conclusion per se, but rather, a return to an ongoing *talanoa* (discussion). In the highly socialised cultures of the Moana and in an ever-changing Moana environment, this generates an appropriate knowledge base, because it is both open to continual social refinement as well as flexible environmentally sensitive development. Whilst development and change are also an expectation in Western scientific approaches, it is my opinion that they represent an approach that is both materialistic and more fixed and one that affords a more linear style and expectation, and where patterns of introduction-research-conclusion are the norm.

Bearing all this in mind, the following is how this thesis is generally laid out:

Following the general “*talanoa*” of this chapter, in chapter 2, I give an history of the imposition of Western ideas, concepts and practices in Moana research and make a case for a re-evaluation of any and all research that is based in these Western ideas, concepts and practices.

In chapter 3, I discuss and analyse the development of Moana theoretical approaches.

In chapter 4, I discuss and analyse the development of Moana methodological approaches.

In chapter 5, I discuss and analyse the importance of choosing appropriate language in Moana research.

In chapter 6, I discuss and analyse my research on *Faiva* in the context of an appropriate language choice.

In chapter 7, I exemplify and discuss the differing sorts of insights into *Faiva* that research based in a Moana paradigm yields.

Finally in chapter 8, I return to the general tenet of this thesis with a discussion and analysis of the importance of the issues raised by this thesis and of developing and establishing an appropriate Moana paradigm for Moana research.

Chapter 2:

Tu'ui ta'efakakava

Making the presentation of pigs at a funeral without kava.

A prescribed task tends to lose its cultural meaning when it is done in an inappropriate manner. (Māhina, 2004a:121)

Exploring the Need for a Re-evaluation of Western Ideas, Concepts and Practices in Moana Research

Tangaloa

The sun on high
Looked down from the sky
The celestial eye did see
And so by the north breeze
He whispered through the leaves
Of the great toa tree
Tangaloa tantalized by
Nature's beauty
Ilaheva hoihoifua Va'epopua

Tangaloa came down,
Without his crown,
A disguise to socialize
With Tonga's beauty Queen
He did toil in the soil
By planting the Royal seed
In the place of Mohenga
Tangaloa 'Eitumatupu'a
And Va'epopua
Born of Maama and Langi
A son of great beauty
'Aho'eitu

And so the strands of Royal Faiva
Intertwined with Heavenly desirer
But oh! What jealousy did, conspire
Brothers five, with no Maama ties
Aho'eitu broken and torn
By brothers treacherous scorn
Tangaloa did mourn, until the dawn
When 'Aho'eitu was then, reborn

(A *faiva ta'anga* for 'Okusitino Māhina, by Helen Ferris-Leary 2010)

Early meetings between Westerners and indigenous cultures were from the beginning, seen as a “civilized versus savage” scenario, with little or no possibility being allowed for genuine and equal sharing of world-views. Linda Smith describes the situation:

The significance of travelers’ tales and adventurers’ adventures is that they represented the Other to a general audience back in Europe which became fixed in the milieu of cultural ideas. Images of the ‘cannibal’ chief, the ‘red Indian, the ‘witch’ doctor, or the ‘tattooed and shrunken’ head, and stories which told of savagery and primitivism, generated further interest, and therefore further opportunities, to represent the Other again. Travelers’ stories were generally the experiences and observations of white men whose interactions with indigenous ‘societies’ or ‘peoples’ were constructed around their own cultural views of gender and sexuality. Observations made of indigenous women, for example, resonated with views about the role of women in European societies based on Western notions of culture, religion, race and class. (Smith 2005:8)

Indigenous peoples were generally seen as ignorant, superstitious heathens, and hardly more than animals living a primitive lifestyle. Indigenous world-views were unquestionably seen as inferior, and the majority of Westerners adopted a self-righteous and self-fulfilling superior attitude when it came to the Indigenous peoples they encountered. As an example of a typical attitude, in 1859 A.S.Thompson stated: The faculty of imagination is not strongly developed among them, although they permitted it to run wild in believing absurd superstitions (Thompson 1859:82).

In fact, most Westerners unquestioningly assumed there was a need to “improve” the “savages” who confronted them in their God-sanctioned enterprise of colonizing and civilizing the world, and set about “educating” them to live in a more “civilized” manner or simply exterminating them. Along with the usual Western invasion and exploitation then, there was often a concurrent history of “development” with both spiritual and educational programs forming an integral part of imperial and colonial infrastructures.

In reality, this “development” was often no more than a blatant program of Indigenous cultural annihilation, through re-naming, re-interpreting and conceptually re-structuring everything to fit with a Western cultural world-view. This not only made it more familiar for Westerners, but further facilitated and consolidated the

concurrent imperialistic and colonial agendas. Most commonly, the aforementioned spiritual and educational agendas were explicit in their Westernizing intent, requiring not just Western curriculums along with scripture study, but also the banning of anything “native” including and most notably, the speaking of Indigenous languages. In New Zealand, according to Bruce Biggs, the Native Schools Amendment Act of 1871 provided for the establishment of village schools and for the instruction in English only:

This marked the beginning of the policy of prohibiting the use of Māori in the schools, with the aim of replacing Māori by English as the language not only of the school but of all situations. Māori language became the ‘enemy’, and generations of school-children were chastised for speaking the language learned at the mother’s breast. Teachers were explicitly discouraged from learning to speak Māori themselves on the grounds that it would lessen their efficiency as teachers of English. The Education Department declared total war on the Māori language. (Biggs 1968:74)

Western colonization then, was never just about the simple exploitation of physical resources, but always included the governance of indigenous populations and “colonization of the indigenous mind” so to speak.¹ This served not only to “civilize the savage” but also to profoundly infiltrate the cultural infrastructures and deeper psychology of indigenous peoples, with the “Western way”. For instance Linda Smith states:

When confronted by the alternative conceptions of other societies, Western reality become reified as representing something ‘better’, reflecting ‘higher order’ of thinking, and being less prone to the dogma, witchcraft and immediacy of people and societies which were so ‘primitive’. Ideological appeals to such things as literacy, democracy and the development of complex social structures, make this way of thinking appear to be a universal truth and a necessary criterion of civilized society. (Smith 2005:48)

Without spending more time on the unfortunate historical aspects of this, it is enough to point out, whilst this agenda has changed somewhat in its modus operandi, it has

¹ For many indigenous peoples the major agency for imposing this positional superiority over knowledge, language and culture was colonial education. Colonial education came in two basic forms: missionary or religious schooling (which was often residential) followed later by public and secular schooling. Numerous accounts across nations now attest to the critical role played by schools in assimilation of colonized peoples, and in the systematic, frequently brutal, forms of denial of indigenous languages, knowledges and cultures. Not all groups of indigenous peoples, however, were permitted to attend school – some groups being already defined in some way as ‘ineducable’ or just plain troublesome and delinquent. Furthermore, in many examples the indigenous language was used as the medium of instruction and access to the colonizing language was denied specifically. This policy was designed to deny opportunities to participate as citizens. (Smith 2005:64)

not entirely gone away. In fact, this ideology, or the “Westernizing” of others, and its ethnocentric presentation as some form of “development” is still inherent and to be found in many modern development and aid programs in so called “third world” countries.

Whilst a difference in cultural values has been at the root of the conflict between Westerners and their Indigenous counterparts and whilst this is not entirely unexpected, it is unfortunate for modern research that Westerners always formalized their ethnocentricity in a way that saw indigenous peoples as having no science, no academic traditions, and no real knowledge or history.² The lack of Western style technology was also seen as a “lack of civilization” in indigenous peoples and further evidence that Westerners were not just more “civilized” but also “superior.”³ Even indigenous languages were classed as a less developed and a more primitive form of speech.⁴ Combined with imperial and colonial agendas,⁵ these sorts of attitudes led to an extensive history of unfortunate events for indigenous peoples, in most cases culminating in a rapid and traumatic end to an indigenous way of life.⁶

² According to Memmi, the fact that indigenous societies had their own systems of order was dismissed through what he referred to as a series of negations: They were not fully human, they were not civilized enough to have systems, they were not literate, their languages and modes of thought were inadequate. (Memmi 1991:83)

³ Westerners have usually classified non-Westerners who have obvious, elaborate technologies as more evolved or sophisticated than non-Westerners who do not have such technologies. Tangible art, writing systems, and mechanical gadgets, however alien in form, seem familiar in concept and are easier to value than are intangible social products. (Urciuoli 1995:206)

⁴ Cf. Tregear 1891, Williams 1844, 1871

⁵ Although much has been written about the development of trade and the role of traders and trading companies in imperialism, including the role of indigenous entrepreneurs in the process, the indigenous world is still coming to grips with the extent to which the ‘trade’ of human beings, artifacts, curios, art works, specimens and other cultural items has scattered our remains across the globe. The term ‘trade’ assumes at the very least a two-way transaction between those who sold and those who bought. It further assumes that human beings and other cultural items were commodities or goods and were actually available ‘for sale’. For indigenous peoples those assumptions are not held. From indigenous perspectives territories, peoples and their possessions were stolen, not traded. (Smith, 2005:89)

⁶ As Fanon and later writers such as Nandy have claimed, imperialism and colonialism brought complete disorder to colonized peoples, disconnection them from their histories, their landscapes, their languages, their social relations and their own ways of thinking, feeling and interacting with the world. (Smith 2005:28)

What is often not recognised is that these same attitudes, and particularly the idea that “Western way is the only way” is an idea that is still common today. In fact, the current global agendas including education and the expansion of markets for products, and a concurrent emphasis on science and technology and technological advancement are all framed and dominated by Western ideas, concepts and practice. In the face of the current Western domination of the global economic and political realities, many Indigenous peoples now find themselves and their cultural values under assault from all sides and from within. In many cases it is more and more difficult for many indigenous people to keep a realistic perspective on what is and isn't important, and particularly, on what is and isn't of value.

Whilst Western culture has always presented itself as more developed due to its seeming sophistication through technology and science, it is a serious mistake to assume this is, or ever equated with anything more than what it is, that is; a Western imposition.⁷ It is important to realize in this case, that science and technology, and the product driven materialism they so often serve, is only an outcome of a culture that chose that particular path. Whether this choice was made through historical necessity or otherwise, in reality it says only that it is different compared to other cultures. Whilst Westerners themselves certainly saw indigenous cultures without an array of sophisticated technology as being primitive, Western researchers also proceeded to study them as some form of relic, living in the modern world. Apart from the obvious racial overtones in such a scenario, it is important to realize, that Western based research has in many cases institutionalized these same assumptions and agendas. Whether this was itself part of some colonial or imperial agenda, or whether it was carried out with the idea that such research would shed light on their own distant past, Western researchers certainly contributed to the idea that technological superiority also meant cultural and even personal superiority.⁸

⁷ Cf. Edward Said's conceptualization of Orientalism and the historical and imperialistic re-definition of the “orient” and imposition and establishment of ideas of Western superiority through the late 1800's and early 1900's (Said 2003)

⁸ One of the supposed characteristics of primitive peoples was that we could not use our minds or intellects. We could not invent things, we could not create institutions or history, we could not imagine, we could not produce anything of value, we did not know how to use land and other resources from the natural world, we did not practice the ‘arts’ of civilization. By lacking such virtues we disqualified ourselves, not just from civilization but from humanity itself. In other words we were not ‘fully human’; some of us were not even considered partially human. (Smith 2005:25)

In contrast to this, if we are to adopt a more appropriate approach to research then, it is important to begin with the understanding that all cultures are modern cultures, equally evolved but with different perspectives and agendas. Many indigenous cultures for instance, adopted a world-view which was not so materialistic. Their evolution as a consequence was not in technology per se, but in other, perhaps more humanistic ways. Dimensions of indigenous cultures that are best described as “functional”, “philosophical” and “poetic” as well as “social”, “spiritual” and “ecological” are in many ways so incredibly rich and sophisticated as to rival the best of Western technology. That this had not been fully recognised, nor clearly stated in indigenous research, is because of a long history of Western dominance in this area, with researchers being so pre-emptively Western in their approaches and thinking, or so un-sophisticated in these more highly evolved indigenous social dimensions, or both, that they simply failed to recognise what was laid out in front of them.⁹

In Tonga for instance, my own research has indicated that *Faiva* (see chapter 7), far from being a simple phenomenon, is more typical of the highly evolved and integrated social phenomena found in many Indigenous cultures. Not only is it multi-faceted and interwoven with other social phenomena, its nature is deeply epistemological and functional, making its meaning both implied as well as flexible across varying circumstances. As with many other similar indigenous phenomena, an understanding of *Faiva* does not come from what it may look like on the surface, but from an understanding of how it is interwoven within its social and historical contexts. Such phenomena are always deceptive, appearing somewhat simple, but in reality being well beyond any crude compartmentalization or simplistic linear

⁹ As Māhina for instance states: To forcibly impose one culture and language over another is to merely see the imposed culture and language in terms of the imposing culture and language, where the former is displaced by the latter (Hau‘ofa 1983, 1993; Helu-Thaman 2005; Manu‘atu 2000). Consequently, we witness the emergence of highly problematic theories as postmodernism, poststructuralism, feminism and structural-functionalism of the rationalistic, relativistic and evolutionistic sorts, disfiguring rather than freely presenting the true nature of Moana cultures (Hau‘ofa 1975, 2005; Māhina 1999a, 2008b). (Māhina 2009e:12)

understandings that may be imposed by some alien mind-set, or the Western scientific research that has traditionally been applied to them.¹⁰

Moana language itself is just such an example. My research has suggested that Moana “words” are themselves built on highly evolved and refined concepts and, like *Faiva*, are holistically and functionally interwoven with deeper ontology and epistemology giving, as Edward Tregear first pointed out in 1890, a “complex simplicity” to both their use and flexibility of meaning across varying contexts. In reality, as in the case of *Faiva*, Moana “words” often exhibit an enormous amount of sophistication and underlying implication and interconnections that exist, both ontologically and epistemologically.¹¹ My research indicated that the underlying holistic and social content of Moana language, both in the arrangement, and in the relations of “words” and their meanings or implications, and their intersectional construction and integration with an underlying Moana ontology and epistemology, in many respects makes the sophistication of Moana language unimaginable and unapproachable from the usual Western paradigm involving as it does, specific meanings of words built on their roots and grammatical rules or categories such nouns, adjectives, verbs and so on.

Today, even when indigenous researchers themselves carry out research in their own cultures, they most often do so from a background of Western academic training, and under the auspices of Western academic institutions. In the academic world generally, and in areas of indigenous research specifically, “good theory”, “good methodology”, “good research”, “good science” is almost by definition, Western. In this regard for instance, there is a general and widespread assumption that good scientific research should be based on the empirical and material, rather than (from a Western perspective) more esoteric or intangible aspects of the world. The modern tendency towards ethnographic styles of research in indigenous cultures for instance, with its emphasis on an empirical approach, often entirely misses the underlying sophistication of many indigenous cultures.

¹⁰ Paul Spencer for instance states: Venda music creates a special world of time that extends from the living to the dead and the world of the spirit, and makes them more aware of society as a system of active forces. (Spencer 1985:14)

¹¹ Cf. George Grace’s 1987: *The Linguistic Construction of Reality*.

In terms of indigenous theoretical and methodological perspectives then, a Western paradigm is problematic not just because it is a very one-sided approach, but because of its pervasiveness. Even though there is an increasing amount of research being carried out from a more indigenous perspective, there is still the tendency to frame everything in covert Western perspectives, resulting in an unintentional simplification of indigenous complexity and a furthering of Western cultural underpinnings. This has, and continues to result in an unfortunate situation where research and the results of research, is full of what can only be described as “foundational misunderstandings” on the part of many Western trained researchers.¹²

In other words, most Western based research at some point, either re-interprets, compares, equivalences or reframes indigenous cultural aspects into some Western category or other, in a process that often overlooks or even ignores whole dimensions that are non-Western, especially in many of the more sophisticated indigenous dimensions, or in more esoteric areas, where the intangible tends to be overlooked or ignored because it is (from a Western perspective) subjective and therefore unscientific. Even when research of indigenous spiritual or other esoteric cultural practices does occur, these too are most often pre-conceptualized and re-interpreted from an ethnocentric Western perspective, conceptualizing them as “shamanistic” practices full of “superstition,” or as “primitive” or “original forms of religion” (where religion is conceptualized in a Western way), or forms of “witchcraft” or “magic.” Because of these sorts of ethnocentric presumptions, in reality such approaches have proved to be less than empirical, and more like exercises in imposition. In the end, this sort of “colonization through research” so to speak, combined with the preclusion or omission of any real alternative, can only inhibit genuine indigenous research to the point that, even now, the knowledge found in

¹² Many examples of this can be found in: Britton 1976; Buckland 1999; Burrige 2006; Hart 1997; Hinton 1973; Jowit et al. 1990; Kaeppler 1967, 1967b, 1972, 1983, 1983b, 1985, 1987, 1993, 1993, 1994, 1995; Kennedy 1931; Moyle 1987, 1993, 2002; McLean 1981, 1995, 1999; Merriam 1974; Moulin 1979, 1989; Poort 1975; Radakovich 2004; Reynolds 1990; Shennan 1981; Spencer 1985; Van Zile 1976, 2004; Velt 1991, 2000, 2004, 2007.

indigenous cultures is being systematically reinterpreted, reframed, and redefined in Western terms.¹³

However one wants to view it, it is clear that good research should be, to some degree, an exploration into the unknown. What is perhaps less clear, is that “exploring the unknown” is a process that does not look kindly on those who would preemptively direct it. In fact those who begin their journey with alien assumptions and agendas, inevitably fail at arriving in those unknown places. In other words research, especially research in other cultures, is like navigating a boat to new and unseen place. If a researcher makes the mistake of directing it, using only their own existing cultural maps and references, they tend to arrive only in familiar places, or if those places are indeed new, they tend to recognise only what they already expected to find there.

The simple fact is, even if a researcher considers themselves to be a passive observer rather than an active director in their research, employing Western theoretical and methodological approaches, and framing their thinking using Western terms, cannot help but direct their research in all sorts of undesirable, and self-deluding ways.¹⁴

In contrast to a Western “mechanical, three-dimensional, lineal, intellectual and materialistic” understanding and a “time and space” which is compartmentalized into past, present and future, for instance, indigenous Moana cultural expression tends to

¹³ Referring to her “Decolonizing Methodologies” book, Smith states: One of the problems discussed in this first section of this body is that the methodologies and methods of research, the theories that inform them, the questions which they generate and the writing styles they employ, all become significant acts which need to be considered carefully and critically before being applied. In other words, they need to be ‘decolonized.’ Decolonization, however, does not mean and has not meant a total rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge. Rather, it is about centering our concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes. (Linda Smith 2005:39)

¹⁴ According to Urciuoli: Outside observers are far more likely to perceive the isolated bits that might fit into their own classification systems than they are likely to recognize a continuous system. This presents a fundamental problem of cross-cultural understanding. But what happens when the observer is more privileged than the observed? Representation is always political, mediated by those in a position to do so. In the worlds touched by Euro-American history, the mediators, often academics, are trained normative modes of representation’ investigation and publication are subject to approval by legitimating public institutions and private agencies. None of this is exactly news to anthropologists, sociologists, or historians, but the resultant intellectual and social baggage is very hard to sort out. We can see only what we see. The “facts” that fit the hegemonic scheme of representation become officially visible; everything else fades. (Urciuoli 1995:200)

be based in a “functional, multi-dimensional, fluid, emotional, and spiritual” indigenous “time and space” or “*tā*” and “*vā*” as the Tongans would conceptualize it, engendering the notion that the “past” is also the “future” and the “present” is only a point of negotiation between the future and past.¹⁵ For instance ‘Okusitino Māhina states:

Epistemologically, *tā* and *vā* are organized in Tonga in plural, cultural, collective, holistic and circular modes, as opposed to their arrangement in singular, techno-teleological, individualistic, atomistic and linear ways in the West (Anderson 2007; Māhina 2004a, 2004c). There is realism, criticism and aestheticism beneath the Tongan conception, in contrast to the Western conceptualization informed by idealism, evolutionism and rationalism. In Tonga, it is thought that, concurrently, people walk forward into the past, and walk back into the future, where the allegedly unchanging past and indefinable, yet-to happen future are historically altered and culturally ordered in the tensional, ever-moving present (Hau’ofa 2005; Māhina 2008b; Trask 2000). (Māhina 2010f)

As consequence, there are inherent limitations in Western approaches to researching many cultures and certainly in researching Moana cultural forms of expression such as those found in Tonga, Samoa, Hawaii, Aotearoa and all other Moana cultures. Yet historically research in the Moana has almost exclusively been the realm of Westerners. If a researcher fails to recognise this and instead, carries out their literature review believing they will be “standing on the shoulders of giants” by following existing research to discover new and different things, they will be defeated before they even start. This was certainly the case when reviewing literature to do with my own research on Tongan *Faiva* and, instead of a solid foundation upon which I could build, I found nearly all the existing literature to abound in Western reinterpretation, misinterpretation, and foundational errors caused by Western equivalencing and pre-emptive assumptions.

This sort of problem is not to be understated, and many otherwise excellent researchers, both Western and Indigenous, have fallen victim to its reality. In other words if we want to discover new things, we cannot and should not paint pre-emptive, familiar or predetermined scenes on the insides of our spectacles.

¹⁵ The Tongan words for the past is *kuongamu’a*, literally meaning “age-in-the-front”, present *kuongaloto*, literally meaning “age-in-the-middle” and future *kuongamui*, literally “age-in-the-back” (Hau’ofa, 2000; Ka’ili, 2007; Māhina, 2008b; Māhina & Nabobo-Baba, 2004d).

In fact, if Moana research is to develop in any positive direction and yield a more appropriate approach then, it is only through the adoption of a more appropriate paradigm right from the very beginning. If Moana theory allows a researcher to conceptualize their research in Moana ways, Moana methodology can also allow a researcher to prepare and carry out their research in a way that is not only culturally appropriate, but will allow their results to emerge in an appropriate Moana way. For instance, when speaking of the Moana methodology of *talanoa*¹⁶ (“discussion leading to consensus”) in research, Timote M. Vaioleti says:

Potentiality is a cultural aspect of *Talanoa*. It allows people to engage in social conversation which may lead to critical discussions or knowledge creation that allows rich contextual and inter-related information to surface as co-constructed stories. However, in research it is more than just potentiality. In a good *Talanoa* encounter, *noa* creates the space and conditions. *Tala* holistically intermingles researchers’ and participants’ emotions, knowing and experiences. This synergy leads to an energizing and uplifting of the spirits, and to a positive state of connectedness and enlightenment (see *mālie* in Manu’atu, 2002). It is the new knowing that has been missed by most traditional research approaches (Vaioleti, 2006)

That this has proved to be born out in my own research, is testament to the idea that, at least as far as the Moana is concerned, it is only if we always remain open to possibilities, do not pre-empt, pre-judge or preconceive what something is from a Western perspective, that along the way we will not only be able to find our way more clearly, but we will not have blinded ourselves before we arrive. In other words, the adoption of an appropriate paradigm, gives a researcher the best possible chance of both arriving in the richness of a hitherto unknown place, and also the ability to understand if and when they arrive. In fact, it was only when I went out of my way to avoid Western assumptions in my Moana research and only then, that I began to catch a glimpse of the deeper and truly sophisticated nature of *Faiva*.

Unfortunately today, much of what is in reality just a Western cultural view of the world, is not seen as just one culture’s conceptual construct but rather, reality itself. In other words, the sort of simplification and mass re-interpretation we see in indigenous research, comes from a type of “ethnocentric indexing” of everything, as if a Western

¹⁶ See also Halapua 2000, 2000b, 2007, 2008; Otsuka 2006.

perspective is some sort of ultimate truth rather than what it itself is, namely; a culturally constructed world view. In other words, what is only one culture's world-view has been adopted as "the reality" against which everything else is to be set "in reality".¹⁷

This is extremely problematic in research and creates enormous complexity in both the theoretical and methodological. In many cases this Western paradigm not only goes unnoticed and unquestioned, but forms a kind of mind-set that acts as a researchers perpetual frame of reference which in itself, makes it very difficult to "get outside the box" so to speak.

In practical terms then, in Moana research a re-evaluation needs occur on both the level of the Western concepts, ideas and practice in which Moana research has so often been embedded (background or field), as well as the specific theoretical and methodological approaches (foreground or subject) chosen to carry out the particular work.¹⁸

To exemplify and explain how this can work in practice, let us consider studies involving indigenous "dance-like" expression and the extensive use of Western "equivalencing" in research generally. This is particularly relevant to my thesis as one of the common misconceptions introduced by Western researchers of Tongan *Faiva*, and particularly of *faiva haka*, *faiva hiva*, *faiva ta'anga*, is that these are dance, music and poetry respectively, when in fact dance, music and poetry are Western concepts¹⁹ and, whilst these may share some superficial "look-alike" similarity they are conceptually different.

For the past thirty-five years, I have had an extensive professional career as a dancer, choreographer and teacher of dance. During this time I travelled widely and lived amongst people in many different cultures. In each instance, I took time to study the indigenous "dance" I found there. Throughout this time, I became increasingly aware

¹⁷ Cf. Smith 2005.

¹⁸ See discussions in chapters 3, 4 and 5 of this thesis

¹⁹ Cf. Kaeppler, 1967, 1972, 1978, 1983, 1985, 1993, 1994, 1995; Moyle 1987, 1991, 1993.

that these indigenous “dances” were in fact only superficially “dance-like” and were far more than simple performances, dances, or forms of entertainment, because they contained an enormous amount of deeper symbolism and non-Western ontological and epistemological content.

In the case of *Faiva*, in Churchward’s Tongan-English Dictionary, it is said to mean “work, task, feat, or game, etc., requiring skill or ability; trade; craft; performance, play, drama, item (at a concert, etc.); entertainment; film, moving picture” (Churchward, 1959:23). Adrienne Kaeppler on the other hand simply translates *Faiva* as “skill” (Kaeppler 2007:65), so *faiva haka* for instance, becomes “skilled dancing”. Like many attempts to translate indigenous cultural concepts into English, *Faiva* is actually difficult to define by equivalencing it to various Western concepts even its more specific forms like *faiva haka*. If we are to carry out research on what *Faiva* actually is then, we need to avoid pre-empting it with Western meaning in this way.

In fact, the issue of Western “equivalencing” in general, is extremely problematic in research and many Western researchers have fallen victim to seeing cultural “music-like” expression as just “music”, or “dance-like” expressive forms as just another “dance”, or “song-like” expression as just “music” and so on. In fact, in many Indigenous cultures many of these outward expressions are often part of something far removed from the Western concepts of “music”, “dance” and “songs”, and may enter areas that in the West would better be described as “history”, “sociology”, “education”, “art”, “poetry”, “literature”, “politics”, “health”, “psychology” and so on.²⁰

Kabini F. Sanga states for instance that, “among the Tikopia people, key historical knowledge is danced and sung, rather than being told as a story.” (Sanga 2004:46)

²⁰ As Brenda Farnell discovered: And then it happened; like Saul on the road to Damascus, it suddenly dawned on me that what I was writing down was what I thought they were doing – *I had no way at all of knowing what they thought they were doing*. In other words, I was busy interpreting and making judgements about the meanings of their body movements and their uses of the performance space entirely according to my own language and culture...I preface this chapter with what are now rather embarrassing aspects of my ‘personal anthropology’ because I continue to encounter similar misconceptions among would-be researchers about what kinds of knowledge and skills are required to understand dances and other systems of body movement in their cultural context. (Farnell, 1999:146)

In other words, many Indigenous forms of expression are better left as only “dance-like”, “music-like”, or “song-like” because in reality, they are not dances, music or songs per se, but may be parts of a formal pedagogy, or may embody important religious rites and ceremonies, or may be parts of initiations, or processes of health and healing, or may even serve important mythological, psychological or social functions, that are far removed from the conceptualization, or function of dance, music or songs in the West.

In reality, both generally and particularly in research, it becomes important that we make a conscious effort to avoid calling such things dance, music or song (or any other Western term) in non-Western cultures, because of the powerfully pre-emptive effects that such Western conceptualizations and their epistemological underpinnings can produce.

For instance, John Blacking states:

Movement, dance, music, and ritual can usefully be treated as codes of human communication on a continuum from the nonverbal to the verbal. All four modes can express ideas that belong to other spheres of human activity: social, political, economic, religious, and so on. What is anthropologically interesting about dance and music is the possibility that they generate certain kinds of social experience that can be had in no other way, and that they constitute a link between the behavioral and biological aspects of movement and the social and cultural aspects of ritual. Perhaps, like Levi Strauss’s ‘mythical thought’, they can be regarded as primary modeling systems for the organization of social life, so that we should look to dance and music for the more fundamental explanations of ritual. (Blacking, 1985:64)

Whilst it is clear that Blacking is aware that the “dance”, “music” and “ritual” he is referring to, have much deeper content, it is also clear that the statement itself imposes a very Western vision of things, simply by using words like dance, music, ritual, political, economic, religious and so on. I cannot help but wonder at the possibility that important understandings of an indigenous world view has been missed somewhere between the Western concepts of “movement, dance, music, and ritual” being “usefully treated as codes of human communication on a continuum from the nonverbal to the verbal” and them being “primary modeling systems for the organization of social life”. Indeed if a researcher was to go into an indigenous environment armed with these Western conceptual pre-emptions, or theoretical and

methodological approaches based on them, it is hard to see them ever extracting themselves intellectually from that influence.

Whilst there is actually a relative lack of serious academic studies in indigenous “dance-like” expressions,²¹ there are profound and on-going misunderstandings to be found throughout indigenous research in this area. Whilst the word “dance” has some obvious descriptive value, it is also, as already mentioned, a Western defined and framed concept that carries with it a whole raft of associated Western cultural assumptions and expectations. This is not only extremely misleading in conceptualizing research but may in many situations also represent a substantial factual error. Strathern for instance points out that the Melpa have no general term corresponding to the word ‘dance’ (Strathern 1985:120).

Whilst one is left wondering about the difficulties of translational “equivalents”, and what Strathern is referring to when he says there is no concept equivalent to “dance,” this of course does not mean that there are no “dance-like” expressions in these cultures that may easily be miss-construed as “dance” by a researcher.

Adrienne Kaepler for instance, also states that in many societies there is no indigenous concept that can adequately be translated as ‘dance’ (Kaepler 1985:92), and further that:

Western notions tend to classify all such movement dimensions together as ‘dance’, but culturally it would seem more appropriate to analyze them more objectively as movement dimensions of separate activities. The concept ‘dance’ may be masking the importance and usefulness of analyzing human movement systems by introducing a western category (Kaepler 1985:92)

Yet Kaepler has consistently approached her research on Tongan *faiva haka*²² as some form of Tongan “dance,” showing that even a researcher with considerable insight, may not be able to climb out of their own Western paradigmatic foundation and resulting theoretical and methodological constructions. This sort of Western paradigm then makes it nearly impossible to accommodate real and actual differences

²¹ Historically most anthropologists have not shown a particular interest in “dance”. Cf. Spencer 1985.

²² See Kaepler 1967, 1967b, 1972, 1983, 1983b, 1985, 1987, 1993, 1993, 1994, 1995.

in cultural perception without resorting, as Kaepler has done, to rather tenuous and accommodating expressions such as “poetry in motion” (Kaepler, 1993).

In many cross-cultural situations then, even when a researcher uses appropriate indigenous terminology, they continue to conceptualize indigenous “dance like” expressions as “dance.” This leaves their approach firmly fixed in an over-arching Western dance framework, and their theoretical approach, methodology and analysis of results, is completely distorted, with un-discussed and un-resolved Western epistemological underpinnings.

In all these respects, it is clear that such distortions are being introduced, simply by the inappropriate use of English vocabulary associated with a Western paradigm. In other words, the case of seeing Indigenous “dance-like” expression as “dance” may be interpreted as a very real form of vocabulary induced ethnocentricity.

When a researcher carries out research within his/her own culture, there is the usual amount of research problems to consider. Beyond problems of deciding on an appropriate terminology, the epistemological underpinnings of vocabulary, is not usually one of them. When in a different culture however, it can become one of the single most important problems a researcher faces. If not addressed, vocabulary can become, not only an insidious and completely unrecognized agent of ethnocentricity, but one that completely undermines every other aspect of that research.

Unlike other more obvious forms of ethnocentricity however, the power of vocabulary induced ethnocentricity, lies in the difficulty of even seeing it. This is especially true if it is utilized and framed within a Western paradigm that has also been applied methodologically and theoretically from the outset.

In my own literature review on *Faiva*, I have found that this is not a small or infrequent problem. Even when researchers are specifically aware of deeper cultural meanings and implications, and even when they state that a cultural expression is quite different from Western concepts, they may continue to conceptualize and talk about it as if it was the same. In the case of indigenous “dance-like expressions” for instance, even when a researcher points out unique non-Western features, they may

still proceed to discuss it as “dance”, “entertainment”, and a “show” complete with “dancers” and “audience”, “choreography”, “costumes”, “music”, “singing”, “rhythm” and so on. Needless to say, each and every one of these terms, like the word “dance” itself, embodies specific and often inappropriate Western paradigmatic underpinnings. This leads to research that is a confusing mixture of valuable insight into Indigenous expression on the one hand and Western dance terminology and conceptualization on the other.²³

The point that I wish to emphasize is this: When something looks superficially similar to something Western, and when an English “label” has been applied to it, it no longer “looks” similar but “becomes equivalent” in actuality. In other words it has been effectively placed inside a Western paradigm. This situation is not only confusing but can continue to effect a researcher’s mind so strongly, it becomes very difficult to change, or “get out of the box” so to speak, even when findings from their research indicate something entirely different.

Whilst it is clear that a researcher’s intent in the use of the word may be seen as a purely descriptive, or simply as an attempt to communicate to their English speaking audience, in the end, I argue that such non-specified definition, and the unqualified use of Western vocabulary in general, is often inappropriate and should be approached with extreme caution when studying or carrying out research in any indigenous culture.

When speaking of the form of *faiva haka* called *lakalaka* for instance, Adrienne Kaeppler states the following:

Danced socio-political statements are some of the house posts of the Tongan value system constructed by that most important builder of values, Queen Sālote. The construction of values through the selection of historical and cultural information can be found throughout the Tongan artistic system and each genre pinpoints specific values. *Lakalaka* in both movement and dress illustrates these values as well as the importance of Queen Sālote in

²³ Many examples of this can be found in: Britton 1976; Buckland 1999; Burrige 2006; Hart 1997; Hinton 1973; Jowit et al. 1990; Kaeppler 1967, 1967b, 1972, 1983, 1983b, 1985, 1987, 1993, 1993, 1994, 1995; Kennedy 1931; Moyle 1987, 1993, 2002; McLean 1981, 1995, 1999; Merriam 1974; Moulin 1979, 1989; Poort 1975; Radakovich 2004; Reynolds 1990; Shennan 1981; Spencer 1985; Van Zile 1976, 2004; Velt 1991, 2000, 2004, 2007.

construction of the cultural and political agenda of the nation heightened by emotion-bearing nostalgia. Deification of the past, performed in the present, created through dance and dress, shapes socio-political ends through the selection of historical and cultural information by those with authority to do so. Tongan *lakalaka* serve as frames for painting socio-political metaphors that encourage present-day Tongans to preserve old aesthetic forms while evolving these traditions into the modern world. (Kaepler 2005:166)

Even though Kaepler clearly and correctly identifies the strong socio-political and metaphoric content of *faiva haka* here (of which the *lakalaka* is part), not to mention traditional aesthetic content, she persists in reducing these as being simply transmitted in some form of representative “dance”. The point here, is that Kaepler should be referring to the role that *faiva haka* (or in this case *lakalaka*) plays in Tongan society, rather than presenting it as being some form of “dance.” The inclusion of the Western concept of “dance” in the above statement is both unnecessary and misleading.

In reality the sort of conceptual conflict Kaepler tries to resolve in the above statement, cannot be so easily overcome. In this case the concept of a “danced socio-political statement” seems to stretch the imagination somewhat. Leaving aside my own fantasies of politicians trying to dance their statements in Parliament, if Tongan *lakalaka* is as Kaepler paints it, one of the “house-posts of the Tongan value system,” or even if it is a “frame for painting socio-political metaphors that encourage present-day Tongans to preserve old aesthetic forms while evolving these traditions into the modern world,” then one must surely ask the question if such a powerful cultural process is in any way related to the Western concept that is induced by the word “dance”. Even if Westerners were to utilize dance as part of their expression in these forms (which they usually do not), these things would not be referred to as dance or part of dance, but rather, would be allocated to a more appropriate field of study such as Sociology, Political Studies, Education, and so on. Just as soldiers marching into battle to a drumbeat is not usually seen as a “dance” in the West, “dance-like” indigenous expressions should not be so readily classified either.

The point I am making here, is that once a particular word from another culture induces its conceptual imagery in a researcher’s mind, this kind of “pre-emptive distortion by naming” is very difficult to get rid of. Even when indigenous researchers are involved in researching their own culture, foreign words may be used without

realizing their conceptual content. Worse still, indigenous informants may use English words like “dance” to describe “dance-like” expression, not because they are, but because the informant thinks that a Western researcher will not understand anything else. Sadly this kind of apparent affirmation from an indigenous informant can only consolidate and perpetuate any misconceptions that the hapless researcher began their research with.

In actuality, I found from my own literature review that almost without exception, current research about forms of Indigenous “dance-like” expression is firmly and unquestioningly rooted with these sorts of Western conceptual underpinnings.²⁴

In fact, as mentioned previously, the study of Indigenous “dance-like” expression, having been historically ignored by anthropologists, is now in danger of becoming almost universally accepted as belonging to the field of “dance scholarship.” A proliferation of Western dance based research models in indigenous cultures, can only further contribute to a growing body of unsound academic “knowledge” in the area. I have no doubt that such a trend will continue, and that anything in Indigenous cultures vaguely resembling what Westerners refer to as a “dance” will become increasingly researched from this perspective. Because of the relative importance of the body and body movement as forms of expression in Indigenous cultures, this will inevitably mean that a great deal of unique indigenous cultural material and insight, will become further infiltrated with Western assumptions and pre-emptive conceptualizations and erroneous conclusions.

In reality, doing research on even relatively simple indigenous cultural phenomena, often leaves a researcher questioning their frame of reference. If a researcher is approaching their subject using a Western paradigm, they are often left asking: Is it art, is it performing art, is it psychology, is it philosophical, is it sociological or socio-political, is it religious, is it economic, is it educational and so on, or is it something entirely new. The inconvenient truth is that even simple indigenous phenomena, may be complex interwoven examples of all of these Western things in varying amounts in differing situations, and may only be understood in their own context. In other words,

²⁴ *Ibid.*

many indigenous phenomena, whilst they may superficially appear as something Western, should not be directly equivalenced to any Western concept. If this is not fully appreciated, a researcher may inevitably be misled, or be prejudiced to such an extent, that important elements are completely misunderstood or lost entirely.

In this respect, even the Western scientific tendency to categorize, compartmentalize and specialize, and to fit everything into a Western paradigm raises the question of whether or not the holistic nature of many indigenous expressions can be conceptualized at all, let alone approached from a Western methodological or theoretical perspective.²⁵

Carrying out cross-cultural research therefore, requires a lot of careful thought. In my view, this does not mean that a Western researcher cannot use their own language, (such as English) as the primary medium for descriptively communicating their research, but does mean that the unquestioned use of their own vocabulary, as some unspecified translation of what a researcher sees as an equivalent material reality in another culture, will most certainly raise inherent problems not only methodologically, but theoretically, philosophically, conceptually and analytically.

In the case of using English language for instance, it is important to keep to the role of English as a strictly descriptive tool and not a definitive one. In other words, a researcher should not approach their research with “dictionary in hand” so to speak, and should resist what sometimes amounts to an overwhelming temptation to assign Western “equivalents” pre-emptively. Instead, a researcher should adopt an attitude that they may not know what something is, even when it seems obvious. In many research situations the initial phase of research usually begins with a literature review. Unfortunately, in the case of my research on *Faiva*, I found much of the existing literature to comprise of research embodying the very faults under discussion. This meant that the early part of my research was made up of trying to reconcile the literature with the indigenous realities. This also meant that I was forced to try to sort out this confusion, before I could even consider the main intent of my own research. Of course the idea that the existing body of literature was misleading, or that I would

²⁵ Cf. Nisbet et al. 2001

have done better to do my literature review *after* my research, may sound somewhat back to front, or even problematic in terms of the usual process in Western research, but is an important point and one that needs to be emphasized here.

In Kabini F. Sanga's previous example of the Tikopia people, where key historical knowledge is danced and sung, rather than being told as a story (Sanga 2004:46) for instance, the "dancer" or "singer" is in reality not either of these things, but rather a "teacher" and the situation would be best described in English as a "school" not a "dance show" nor "concert". Even though this may also not be entirely accurate because of Western ideas contained in a Western approach to teaching, it may at least be close enough to allow a more appropriate approach and better insight and understanding. If we are truly to embark upon a journey of discovery in the area of any indigenous expression then, it is not just important to adjust "how we think about things" in English, but also how our English vocabulary may unwittingly define our theoretical and research perspectives.

Unfortunately, many of these issues are not identified, nor addressed in the current literature. Rather, there appears a proliferation of explanations, some very insightful, but in reality leading to a plethora of further complexities and confusion within the same old Western paradigm.

In short, if we are to do good research in non-Western cultures and if we are to use the English language as our basic language, it is important to remove as much as possible, any inappropriate agents that may influence our thinking. In this regard it should be clear by now that English itself can be the main agent by which pre-emptive terminology and concepts may enter our thinking, unless we exercise appropriate caution. In other words, whether a researcher is Western or Indigenous, a researcher's own language should not be used in researching another culture, without recognizing its ability to pre-empt and distort fundamental concepts or even the definition of material things in that other culture. Whilst this does not preclude the use of one language to describe things in another, I believe that this should only be done with a fundamental respect for how they are already defined or conceptualized in the culture in which they belong.

In the case of indigenous research then, where Western researchers approached things on the basis of what those things looked like in the West, and where those things were then treated as if they were in fact things like “dance”, “poetry” or any some other Western category, there is substantial grounds for skepticism. In my experience for instance, the majority of Moana research suffers from these problems and demonstrates results and conclusions that are at times, entirely Western.

In this regard, whilst we should not totally dismiss the wealth of anthropological, historical and significant amount of Western based cross-cultural insights, we do need to be careful, not only about what they may mean, but also about the assumptions they were built on.²⁶ In fact the merit (or otherwise) of all research, must in the end, rest almost entirely on the foundations upon which it was built.

Historically, not only was most anthropological/social research on indigenous Moana cultures, carried out within the rigors of an exclusive Western paradigm, but it has also transitioned historically through a number of Western theoretical paradigms from early functionalism, structural-functionalism, post-structuralism, to postmodernism and so on. In this case, we should not be deluded into thinking that this history is one of development and refinement, without ever once questioning the foundations upon which it was built. This is not to say that there has not been some concerted attempt at addressing the numerous ethnocentric issues that have been identified. More recently for example, the issues of ‘insider versus outsider’ in research, or the issue of ‘indigenous versus scientific knowledge’ to name but two.²⁷

However, these issues are themselves far from simple. When talking about Western researchers such as Crocombe, Geertz, Sahlins and Thomas, and the common Western-based educational backgrounds of indigenous researchers and scholars such as himself, Williams, Fonua, Tanielu, Hau’ofa and others, Māhina states:

²⁶ Margaret Mutu when speaking of historical Māori research for instance states: Yet there is a great dearth of written materials and publications about our own history and traditions as presented in our own dialects and from within our own world-view and descriptive frameworks. (Mutu 2004:56):

²⁷ See for instance, see articles by: Smith L., Nabobo-Baba U., Sanga F., Mutu M., Taumoefolau M., Filipo T., Baba T., Māhina ‘O., in Baba, T. et al (Eds.) (2004) *Researching the Pacific and Indigenous Peoples: Issues and Perspectives*. Auckland: Centre for Pacific Studies,

In this respect, both insider and outsider researchers, in the context of the cultural relativism-ethnocentrism dialectics, are prone to misconceive their topics, in terms of the form-content and quality-utility dimensions of knowledge. (Māhina, 2004f:191)

In other words the Western educational background itself, may have effectively induced an explicit and implicit cross-cultural relationship between researcher and participant, even when the researcher themselves is from the same culture as the participant.

Besides the language based issues I have identified, such situations as these can lead to a multiplicity of problems in all levels of research and in many cases can lead to incompatible and profound misunderstandings. For instance, Moana researcher Timote Vaoleti states:

In considering epistemology, which deals with the origins of knowledge, the nature of knowing and the construction of knowledge (Maykut & Morehouse, 1995), there is a danger in assuming that all Western, Eastern and Pacific knowledges have the same origins and construction so that, by implication, the same instruments may be used for collecting and analyzing data and constructing new knowledge. Researchers whose knowing is derived from Western origins are unlikely to have values and lived realities that allow understanding of issues pertaining to knowledge and ways of being that originated from the *nga wairua* (spirits) and *whenua* of Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Tuvalu or the other Pacific nations. (Vaoleti, 2006:22)

Like the issue of language, this situation may not be obvious in many cases, because outsider approaches have traditionally been so common as to be accepted as the norm in Moana research. Whilst these have resulted in a large collection of data per se, and have generated numerous theories, they have also created an almost exclusively Western academic precedent, even though they have inherent and serious failings both theoretically and methodologically.

Outsiders, according to Smith for instance, may interpret their research:

Within an overt theoretical framework, but also in terms of a covert ideological framework. They have the power to distort, make invisible, to overlook, to exaggerate and to draw conclusions based, not on factual data, but on assumptions, hidden value judgments and often-downright

misunderstandings. They have the potential to extend knowledge or perpetrate ignorance (Smith, 1992:53)

In this respect, questions about epistemology, methodology, selection of data, its interpretation, and even the subsequent use of research findings are certainly overdue. Unfortunately this situation itself is not obvious, nor particularly likely on a large scale, if research continues to be set in an unquestioned background of not just Western scientific paradigms, but a perception that this is progressive and modern.

Taufe'ulungaki adds her voice to this concern and in this respect, when she states:

One of the myths that we have internalised is the belief that scientific enquiry is neutral and objective....The competing assumptions, questions and procedures of research contain values that represent different perceptions about authority, institutional transformation, and social order. Embedded in research are issues of epistemology, political and cognitive theory as well as peoples' responses to their material existence" (Taufe'ulungaki, 2001:11)

Smith adds to this by saying:

Pacific people are used to being studied, or 'helped', by outsiders who have become the academic authorities of and on the Pacific. In that sense, one could argue that the Pacific has been authored by non indigenous Pacific scholarship in such ways that have marginalised the indigenous knowledge systems of the Pacific and Pacific authority over its own knowledge. (Smith, 2004:5)

From a genuine research perspective then, how do we actually go about developing an appropriate way of studying Moana Indigenous expression in any form?

As already mentioned, unless such study is based on knowledge of a cultures various epistemological and ontological understandings, including uses of spoken language, cultural conceptions of the person, their body, expressions, including notions of time and space, not to mention embedded-ness of all these aspects in a particular cultural perception of reality, what we will achieve will be empty of everything that makes a particular culture what it is.²⁸

²⁸ Cf: Anae 1998, 2001, 2002; Baba T. 2004; Ka'ili 2005, 2008; Helu-Thaman 2004; Smith 2004, 2005, 2005b, 2007, 2008; Filipo T. 2004; Halapua 2000, 2003, 2007, 2008; Hau'ofa 1982, 1993, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2008; Helu 1983, 1985, 1993, 1994b, 1997, 1998, 1999; Nabobo-Baba 2004; Sanga 2004; Māhina 2004f, 2004h, 2004i, 2007d, 2008b, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2010e, 2010f; Manu'atu 2000, 2000b, 2003; Mutu M. 2004; Coxon 2003; Taufe'ulungaki 2003; Taumoefolau 2004; Potauaine 2005, 2010; Puloka 1999, 2001; Williams 2004, 2009.

When speaking of Moana research for instance, ‘Okusitino Māhina says:

These issues and challenges amount to a host of problems that are thought to take place on two closely related fronts. The first relates to the form and content of research knowledge. Time and space are an abstraction of form and content, the concrete medium in which types of social activity are spatio-temporally structured and transformed. The second is to do with the quality and utility of research knowledge. Thus these two sets of problems are situated in the broader context of the complementary and opposed relationships between theory and practice in research generally. (Māhina, 2004f:188)

In all cases of Indigenous research, whether it be of “dance-like” expression, or associated concepts such as *Faiva*, it is not on the surface but in their depth that a researcher may find conceptual understandings and insights that indicate and embody a culture’s epistemological frameworks and philosophy, as well as its cultural aesthetic.²⁹

In the relationship between theory and practice then, at least in terms of objective knowledge, we need to avoid the major mistake of taking conceptually laden words, not to mention theoretical or methodological approaches from one culture, and applying them to another without any awareness. As already stated Western dance oriented assumptions, or Western dance methodology may well be acceptable when studying different genres of Western dance, but when it comes to researching Moana cultures, such an approach can pre-empt a researchers thinking in a way that directs their thinking almost obsessively.

For instance, to re-emphasize what Taufe‘ulungaki said:

Embedded in research are issues of epistemology, political and cognitive theory as well as peoples’ responses to their material existence. (Taufe‘ulungaki 2001:7)

²⁹ Paul Spencer when discussing Hanna for instance, states: More generally, she writes: ‘dance is metonymical to the motion of like and the Ubakala ethos of action. The processes of reproduction and re-creation in the human-supernatural cyclical pattern...merge. The ancestors continue their existence in the dancers’ bodies. For the Melpa there are two sources of re-creation: one the ancestral spirits, as with the Ubakala; the other, birds of paradise and their plumes, which evince remarkable powers of regeneration and attraction particular to themselves. (Spencer 1985:137)

Before we can embark upon the choice of such things as an appropriate theory or methodology³⁰ however, we need to take a step back for a moment and returning to basics, ask ourselves the question: What is it we are really after in our research?

Above all else it seems, what we are really wanting is the “true meaning” or some sort of “objective knowledge”³¹ of say, a particular form of expression.

In terms of cross-cultural research, whether the knowledge we seek is some definitive cross-cultural insights, or simply insights that can give us some further perspectives on where we need to go next, it is only after we have established a medium by which these three issues can be addressed, that we can then go on to reach some relatively tangible truth, or make some real comparisons. At the very least this process should begin to broaden our understanding of what we need to deal with in order to obtain our goals.

Like the old Taoist master, who tells the student he must “empty his vessel” before he can fill it again with new knowledge, as a researcher, we too must “empty” ourselves of our preconceptions, our knowledge, our view of the world, before we can fill it again with the beauty and breadth of another’s perceptions of a universe we all share. In this respect however, it is clear that nobody is actually capable of completely emptying their self, nor would we wish to abandon things of appropriate value, including those things of value from Western traditions. So how are we to “empty our vessel” without abandoning established value, and those things that underlie well-founded cross-cultural research, both theoretically and methodologically?

It should be noted in this regard, that voicing issues of appropriateness in Moana research is a relatively new phenomenon, whereas research based in a Western paradigm has been the historical norm and therefore is the only type of research that has a real history in the Moana. In most cases this history has shown itself to be less

³⁰ See chapters 3 and 4.

³¹ Taking this expression in the most general and best sense of its meaning, and leaving aside that this sort of expression can be fraught with hidden cultural bias and problematic interpretational issues.

than objective or scientific, and certainly less than helpful, in either understanding Indigenous Moana cultures, or in developing what could be considered a more appropriate form of research in the Moana. Generally these Western research traditions, and their subsequent development were, until very recently, entirely based on Westerners doing Western research in the Moana. In many cases the outcome of this research did not lead to a new understanding, nor insights into unique forms of Indigenous knowledge, but a form of reflection, and one that was more often just an affirmation of Western ideology and value systems. In fact, in the vast majority of cases up to and including the present, Moana research was not research into Moana cultures and their knowledge at all, but a Western re-definition and reframing of Moana cultures in Western terms, through a process of equivalencing, redefinition, selection and elimination, and an unquestioned imposition of a Western paradigm.

In this respect, whilst the last chapters (chapters 6 and 7) of this thesis contain the results of my research on Tongan *Faiva*, the following three chapters of this thesis propose a structure and format, of an alternative and far more appropriate form of Moana research paradigm:

- Chapter 3 is a discussion for developing an appropriate Moana theoretical approach such as Tongan Tā-Vā Theory of Reality of ‘Okusitino Māhina.
- Chapter 4 is a discussion for developing an appropriate Moana methodological approach.
- Chapter 5 is a discussion for developing appropriate understandings of Moana “vocabulary” and as a way of removing induced Western conceptualization in research.

In many cases it can be seen that a comprehensive Moana paradigm in research is itself still “at the very beginning” so to speak. In many regards it will also be seen that a Moana paradigm is quite different from the current and usual Western paradigm.

A Moana paradigm compared to a Western paradigm for instance, may appear at times as somewhat “back to front,” more circular and less goal orientated. As will be seen in later chapters (6 and 7) I have developed and applied a Moana paradigm that has made it possible to move “forwards” from theory and methodology to research, and “backwards” from research to methodology and theory. In this sort of flexible and circular Moana process, I have found an access to Tongan concepts such as *Faiva*, that is far more revealing than previous Western style research, and more fulfilling in terms of the overall intent of my research. By accessing *Faiva* through Tongan vocabulary, while using English vocabulary in a strictly descriptive and non-definitive way for instance, I was further able to avoid a substantial number of the pitfalls discussed so far in terms of the Western paradigm in which my research would otherwise have been caught.

As Hau’ofa so poetically states:

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 that we have resisted as our sole appointed places and from which we have recently liberated ourselves. We must not allow anyone to belittle us again and take away our freedom (Hau’ofa, 1994:37)

Chapter 3:

Tefua ‘a vaka Lautala

Boats gathered at Lautala

A Tongan expression referring to when people of great minds come together with the products of their thinking, exhibiting their sense of ingenuity and creativity.
(Māhina, 2004a:124)

Moana Theoretical Considerations and the Development of Appropriate Theory

Takalaua and Va‘elaveamata

Takalaua was his name
Tu‘i Tonga to acclaim
Sent his fisherman out to sea
To fetch a feast of delicacy
No fish was there, for them to find
But beauty so grand, upon the land
That would make men blind
Or something of a kind
If only it be just
Momentarily

Fishermen ride the ocean breeze
Bring this lovely dove to me
I will make her my Kuini
In the Me‘etu‘upaki
A treasure to seek
Ever so meek
The gentle dove
A queen to love
‘Ulukihelupe, was her name
Va‘elaveamata she became
Legs of beauty, her rise to fame

And so it is of social graces
When beauties of Tonga
Take their places
In the ranks of Royal procession
For the kings love obsession
To fa‘ahiula or ‘otuhaka
Fakaliku faiva for the King
On the Cliffside he did sing
Common ladies to bring
Maidens at hand
To walk upon the sand

Grandeur for the king to see
Filimali of ecstasy

And as the stories of old
In twilight times are told
Kaliloa, I employ
Beauty and grace
Imbedded in the Tongan race
Ancestors, courageous and bold
Love stories forever unfold
Faifaimālie, tau'olunga of old

(A *faiva ta'anga* for Siosiu Vaea Lotaki, by Helen Ferris-Leary 2010)

Whilst the need for an appropriate Moana theoretical framework has been discussed in previous chapters, in order to both understand and develop it, this chapter is divided into six parts.

- Part 1: Background issues
- Part 2: Foundations of an appropriate theoretical framework
- Part 3: Choosing and developing an appropriate Moana theory
- Part 4: The General Tā-Vā Theory of Reality
- Part 5: Theoretical issues in Moana language
- Part 6: The Hypothesis of Laumālie

Part 1: Background issues

As the modern world encroaches on the last remnants of an Indigenous world it has almost obliterated, whilst there is an enormous amount of research which reframes, reinterprets and colonizes Indigeneity, that research which could help preserve and formalize the unique non-Western perspectives of an Indigenous world-view, from a purely Indigenous point of view, is comparatively small and recent.¹

¹ Actually the situation was far more complex and is best understood in the following statement from Linda Smith: The globalization of knowledge and Western culture constantly reaffirms the West's view of itself as the centre of legitimate knowledge the arbiter of what counts as knowledge is generally referred to as 'universal' knowledge, available to all and not really 'owned' by anyone, that is, until non-Western scholars make claims to it. When claims like that are made history is revised (again) so that the story of civilization remains the story of the West. For this purpose, the Mediterranean world, the basin of Arabic culture and the lands east of Constantinople are conveniently

Despite this long history of Western reframing, reinterpreting and colonizing of Indigenous knowledge, there are some who would still argue that Western approaches to research remain valuable in the study of Indigenous cultures. If we are to explore such an argument in any depth however, we find little merit in the idea, if research continues on in its usual way without substantial modification. In fact, Western ethnocentricity has shown remarkable resilience in research, partly because it is perpetuated by the otherwise good principle that academic research and science in general, is about systematic development of previous work. There is no argument that such a process is sound and highly productive in principle, but it is important to realize that this is not always the case. For a start, it presupposes that previous work is sound and of good quality. When it comes to Indigenous research this is hardly ever the case and there arises a considerable number of extremely problematic issues, nearly all of which seem to stem from the pervasive, subtle and generally unquestioned imposition of Western ideas, concepts and practices.²

Part of this problem is also one of incumbency. Not only is my own field permeated by Western misunderstandings built on a history of Western based research, but also a range of well respected Western “experts” in the field. Any attempts to express non-Western philosophical, theoretical or Indigenous dimensions beyond this, is often not only in opposition, but further hindered because there is so relatively few academic precedents of non-Western research upon which to build.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, what is needed then, is not the building on and developing of previous work, but the development of something entirely new. Not only could this allow for healthy academic debate, but an overdue review of Western

appropriated as part of the story of Western civilization, Western philosophy and Western knowledge. Through imperialism, however, these cultures, peoples and their nation states were repositioned as ‘oriental,’ or ‘outsider’ in order to legitimate the imposition of colonial rule. For indigenous peoples from other places, the real lesson to be learned is that we have no claim whatsoever to civilization. It is something which has been introduced from the West, by the West, to indigenous people, for our benefit and for which we should be duly grateful. (Smith 2005:63)

² From an indigenous perspective Western research is more than just research that is located in a positivist tradition. It is research which brings to bear, on any study of indigenous, a cultural orientation, a set of values, a different conceptualization of such things as time, space and subjectivity, different and competing theories of knowledge, highly specialized forms of language, and structures of power. (Smith 2005:42)

cultural perspectives and assumptions that have become embedded in knowledge about the Moana, as well as in ongoing approaches to research, both theoretically and methodologically.³

In the following parts of this chapter, I discuss some of these issues, as well as develop an example of what is needed in terms of a more appropriate Moana theoretical framework. It should be noted in this regard, that whilst these discussions underlie the development of my own research theoretical perspectives, they are also intended as being thematic along the lines of what may be possible, and are presented here in the hope they may generate further debate towards a healthy evolution of an appropriate Moana paradigm.

Part 2: Foundations of an appropriate theoretical framework

Firstly, we need to start from what has been discussed in this thesis so far, namely, that the vast majority of research is still generally carried out, from within a Western paradigm. This however, does not presuppose that Indigenous research per se, nor Indigenous scholarship, cannot develop from this background into a new and more appropriate tradition.

As Linda Smith states:

The history of research from many indigenous perspectives is so deeply embedded in colonization that it has been regarded as a tool only of colonization and not as a potential tool for self-determination and development especially for re-establishing our own academic engagement with and scholarly authority over our own knowledge systems, experiences, representations, imaginations and identities. For Pacific peoples and other indigenous communities, research is embedded in our history as natives under the gaze of western science and colonialism. Research is a site of contestation not simply at the level of epistemology or methodology but in its broadest sense as an organized scholarly activity that is deeply connected to power. That suspicion of and resistance to research is changing ever so slightly as more indigenous and minority scholars have engaged in scholarly work, in research methodologies and debate about research with communities. (Bishop,

³ The more recent movement towards consolidating “Pacific Studies” as a separate academic discipline in its own right, and one that is founded on Moana languages and Moana indigenous knowledges, is to be welcomed in this regard. See Taumoeofalau 2010b.

1998; Humphery 2001; Worby and Rigney, 2002; Pidgeon & Hardy Cox, 2002). (Smith, 2004:4)

In the usual Western paradigm for instance, one starts with developing both a theoretical perspective and an appropriate methodology to carry out the research. Normally, this means one would research the past and current literature, to develop our theoretical perspectives and then, both the specifics of an intended area of research and one's methodology. In my doctoral proposal for instance, I was required to do this in order to develop a rational and thought out research plan, based on both existing knowledge and attainable research goals.

It rapidly became apparent however, things weren't going to be quite that simple. Rather than gaining a clear perspective and solid theoretical base from my literature review, as previously mentioned, I began to discover what can only be described as an overwhelmingly distorted and fundamentally Western re-interpretation of Tongan culture. On the other hand, I found a small amount of theoretical literature, and some varying discussion of methodology coming from indigenous Moana scholars. This Moana literature, whilst relatively small in amount, was extremely interesting in what it revealed, and clearly indicated not only the value of developing an entirely new Moana based theoretical perspective, but an appropriate Moana paradigm in general.

In particular I discovered the writings of the Tongan scholar 'Okusitino Māhina, as well as Moana scholars such as Tēvita Ka'ili, Konai Helu Thaman, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Sitiveni Halapua, Epeli Hau'ofa, 'I. Futa Helu, Tēvita Tonga Mohenoa Puloka, Melani Anae, Tupeni Baba, Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, Kabini Sanga, Margaret Mutu, Melenaite Taumoeofolau, Semisi Fetokai Potauaine, Linitā Manu'atu, Tipene Filipo, Nuhisifa Williams, and Ana Maui Taufe'ulungaki, amongst others.⁴

Whilst this Moana literature entirely supported my observations of Western distortions in Moana research on one hand, and showed the value of developing a

⁴ See for instance Māhina 1992, 1999a, 2000a, 2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2004b, 2004d, 2004f, 2004h, 2004i, 2007d, 2008b, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2010e, 2010f; Ka'ili 2005, 2008; Thaman 2004; Smith 2004, 2005, 2005b, 2007, 2008; Halapua 2000, 2003, 2007, 2008; Hau'ofa 1982, 1993, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2008; Helu 1983, 1985, 1993, 1994b, 1997, 1998, 1999; Anae 1998, 2001, 2002; Baba 2004; Nabobo-Baba 2004; Sanga 2004; Manu'atu 2000, 2000b, 2003; Coxon 2003; Taufe'ulungaki 2003; Taumoeofolau 2004; Potauaine 2005, 2010; Puloka 1999, 2001; Williams 2009.

more appropriate Indigenous research on the other, this seemed mostly and somewhat frustratingly, undeveloped. With some more recent exceptions, it appeared as a situation of thinking about it and about doing it, rather than actually doing it. It did however give a tantalizing glimpse into the possible outcomes, and some real directions for developing a new and more appropriate Moana research paradigm.

It has been pointed out by ‘Okusitino Māhina when discussing issues and challenges in Moana research for instance, that there is often no clear distinction between methodology and theory in Moana research:

At times, theory and methodology are fused together, while at other times, they are considered separate. Clearly, theory and methodology are continuous, if not one and the same entity. Basically, they are, in this instance, simply tools for seeing or ways of knowing things out there in reality. (Māhina 2004f:193)

And later when he states:

The preoccupation with methodology, underpinned by elements of post-structuralism, has the tendency to deal with ideas in isolation from time and space, leaving them unaccounted for in the process ... There is, fundamentally, a need to theorize the problems in new ways, where time and space are integrated in the process, restoring our common humanity with a sense of history, harmony and beauty. (Māhina, 2004f:198)

In other words, even though I have for the sake of convenience, divided this and the next chapter into “theoretical” and “methodological” chapters respectively, the usual Western vision of research with distinct theory and methodology sections begins to crumble in the face of the realities of carrying out good Moana research.

Apart from Māhina’s theoretical perspectives on *tā* (time) and *vā* (space), which I will discuss shortly in the next part of this chapter, what are we actually talking about when we come to say “theorize problems in new ways”?

Theorizing problems in new ways is not a new idea, even within Western science and many have raised it as an important corner-stone of all scientific advancement.

West for instance states:

With respect to creativity, the freshness of the child's view is not to be underestimated. When the world of the child is properly understood, then perhaps it is no surprise that Einstein said he was led to his discoveries by asking questions that "only children ask." (West 1997:25)

In terms of my own research and Moana research generally, Māhina's "theorize the problems in new ways" in his previous quote, simply means we need to theorize problems in non-Western ways. In other words, we need to examine important differences between Western cultural thinking that has led to the Western theory, methodology, and the analysis found in most research, and differentiate it from that of Indigenous Moana peoples ourselves. Whilst a comprehensive and detailed discussion of this is beyond the present scope of this thesis, we can at least identify one of the most important and fundamental of these differences.

In simple terms then, the individual-mechanistic-compartmental-linear type of thinking found in Western cultures (and science) vs. the social-functional-holistic-circular type of thinking found in the majority of Indigenous cultures, represents in my view, a significant and pervasive source of misunderstandings in Moana research.⁵ In other words, not only do we need to be clear about the non-Western nature of what we are actually researching and what this demands of us, but also, we must use and develop appropriate Moana social-functional-holistic-circular ways of researching and analyzing things, rather than the historical and current individual-mechanistic-compartmental-linear Western ways.⁶

Whilst developing a Moana paradigm seems both timely and a necessary step to take in Moana research, anything new in research or science in general, is not a path that should be taken lightly. In many regards it is not only more demanding intellectually, but can also have serious academic ramifications. Not the least of these, returns to the

⁵ Cf. Nisbett et al. 2001.

⁶ Ka'ili for instance states: In Tonga, people value the collectivistic and circular arrangement of tā and vā. In contrast, most people in the West privilege the arrangement of time and space in individualistic and linear manners (Māhina 2007:10). For example, in the West, people highly value their individualism and the linear marking of time from past (back) to future (forward). In Tonga, the aim of the collective arrangement of tā and vā is to bring all the numerous entities into harmony and beauty. (Ka'ili 2008:41).

issue of “encumbancy” and that of “building on previous work”. In my case, apart from a significant amount of Westernized research and Western interpretations offered by Kaeppler and Moyle,⁷ there was an almost complete absence of any more culturally appropriate research on Tongan *Faiva*. Not only this, but developing my position based only on my own research and resulting insights and ideas, without a solid foundation of other similar research to base it on is hard enough, without having to criticque the work of “recognised experts” in the field such as Moyle and Kaeppler. No matter how well founded, such a position is always problematic and in turn, can invite a degree of skepticism and/or unwarranted criticism from those same “experts” or from others in the field.

As William Beveridge in his 1957 book “Art of Scientific Investigation” states:⁸

Thus in subjects in which knowledge is still growing or where the particular problem is a new one, or a new version of one already solved, all the advantage is with the expert, but where knowledge is no longer growing and the field has been worked out, a revolutionary new approach is required and this is more likely to come from the outsider. The skepticism with which the experts nearly always greet these revolutionary ideas confirms that the available knowledge has been a handicap. (Beveridge, 1957:6)

On the other hand, by recognizing the importance of not simply perpetuating what I consider to be substantial and foundational errors in previous Moana research, I had the excitement of entering entirely new territory and genuinely exploring both new and undeveloped theoretical perspectives and methodologies to discover new knowledge, or should I say *re-discover* my own Moana knowledge: The knowledge of my Moana *tupu‘anga* (“ancestors”).

In a Moana paradigm then, it is only by developing appropriate Moana theory and methodology that we will be able to preserve the proper *fuo* (“form”), *uho* (“content”) and *aonga* (“function”) of the knowledge that is the legacy of these *tupu‘anga* (“ancestors”). It is only in this form that that knowledge, whether it be in the

⁷ See: Kaeppler 1967, 1967b, 1972, 1983, 1983b, 1985, 1987, 1993, 1993, 1994, 1995; Moyle 1987, 1993, 2002.

⁸ See also Kuhn 1962, 1963, 1970, 1977, 2000.

language, or in other forms they so painstakingly worked on and created, will be able to live amongst us and may in turn, do so with our children.⁹

Accomplishing this is not easy, as a new paradigm must embody both an appropriate theoretical, as well as methodological Moana perspective. This was particularly difficult in my case when there were few Moana models for me to choose from, and when research in my area had a different tradition, that is, a Western one.

When we recognise this situation however, we have come to our first real in-sight, that is, that we need to deliberately avoid pre-empting our understanding of what we are researching, either methodologically or theoretically, *before* we have done the research that has allowed us to understand it.

Whilst this may not be true for well established areas of knowledge, and may even sound completely back-to-front to many Western researchers, we do in fact need to address it with some serious consideration when approaching Indigenous Moana research. In other words, in research generally and in cross-cultural situations especially, and where traditions of research have only been carried out in a Western paradigm, we are in effect facing a sort of “*terra incognita*” so to speak. If we want to discover what something really is, we need to find a way of doing research to explore something, *before* we decide what it actually is. In other words, we need to make a concerted attempt to avoid pre-conceptualizing and cannot presume anything.

In the case of Tongan “*faiva haka*” for instance, as previously mentioned, it is widely referred to in most of the available research and elsewhere, as “Tongan dance”. In the case of “*faiva haka*” however, whilst it may appear to look like what Westerners call dance on the surface, there is much more to it. In other words, *faiva haka* is a Tongan term for a Tongan experience, both conceptualized and experienced in a uniquely Tongan way, without any real Western equivalent. (See chapter 7). Therefore, and

⁹ As Sanga states: Indigenous Pacific research needs to be more of itself, first. It needs to know more of what it really is and what it is not. Indigenous Pacific research must paint all its shades of brown, while remaining true to its philosophical roots. Whatever the level of debate, indigenous Pacific research must be consistent with its fundamental nature. Within this, the need is to mark out what are unique, distinctive or similar and then to explain these adequately and logically, using the logic of indigenous Pacific research. (Sanga 2004:50)

before we can even begin to do proper research on *Faiva*, it becomes essential that we clear our minds of such strongly pre-emptive Western concepts as “dance” and design an approach that lets us do research to find out what it really is, while we research it!

This returns us to the idea of developing a new and more appropriate approach to Moana research where we can take something as it is, namely *faiva haka* as *faiva haka*, and develop an approach that allows us to understand it in its own holistic context. In other words the fuller cultural context in which something like *faiva haka* is embedded, through an appropriate theoretical and methodological approach.

For an outsider in particular, this poses somewhat of a dilemma, because it may mean researching something to find out what it is, even if it appears at first glance to be something a researcher is familiar with in their own culture. In fact, an outsider doing research in another culture must be very vigilant, and particularly cautious not to make a raft of assumptions based on some apparent similarity to things in their own culture. This is a mistake that previous researchers of *Faiva* have made, namely for instance, they have pre-determined *faiva haka* as “dance”, and set out to research it as such, and been caught in confusing and distorted outcomes.¹⁰

Actually the situation is not quite as complicated as it sounds, but only if a researcher recognises that research in non-Western cultures must be appropriate and, in the case of Moana research, this means an interactive social and circular process, where theory develops methodology and methodology develops theory, and both develop knowledge and outcomes that, when analyzed, are appropriate and consistent with the culture in which research is being conducted.

In other words it is not necessary to pre-determine what *faiva haka* is, because a full picture of it will emerge if an appropriate Moana paradigm is used. Whilst such a process is an entirely circular model and may appear confusing to a Western trained researcher because of an apparent lack of where to begin, this is only because they are used to the usual linear theory-methodology-outcome Western model. In reality, non-

¹⁰ See: Kaeppler 1967, 1967b, 1972, 1983, 1983b, 1985, 1987, 1993, 1993, 1994, 1995; Moyle 1987, 1993, 2002

Western circular research models almost always employ theory and methodology in an interactive social process that evolves both knowledge and insight over time. In this respect, it is important for a researcher to realize, not only that these are the means by which Indigenous knowledge was first developed and created, but they are also ideal methods for retrieving that knowledge, without having to pre-conceptualize or presume anything at the outset.

In fact, at least as far as Moana research is concerned, once a researcher has gotten comfortable with the idea of social interaction and being more open and less reliant on the usual Western linear model, Moana models of research are inherently flexible and adaptable to the emergence of new information and insight, and can therefore be far more productive and rewarding, especially in discovering deeper levels of knowledge that would otherwise remain completely hidden.

Part 3: Choosing and developing an appropriate Moana theory

Firstly, in order to truly integrate any Moana research appropriately, it is not only necessary to develop a proper Moana social-functional-holistic-circular theoretical framework, but also to integrate it into a Moana social-functional-holistic-circular methodological process. In other words, a theoretical approach should not only help identify and promote a Moana social-functional-holistic-circular world view, but actively involve Moana participants in a methodology, that must in turn, be able to develop and identify appropriate Moana theoretical issues.

In this respect it is sometimes easy to forget, in a world that is dominated by Western approaches, that scientific investigation, individual research, critical inquiry, theorizing, knowledge development or whatever one wishes to call it, are not the exclusive domain of Western culture and were also carried out by non-Western cultures since ancient times. Moana people for instance, were so successful in their marine environment, that we not only invented and perfected such knowledge and technology as asymmetrical hull designs, centreboards, and fast ocean-going double-hulled canoes, but also knowledge of navigation and seamanship to such an extent, we were able to explore and settle the whole of the Moana, millennia before the first Westerners arrived. Whilst they may not be recognised as such, even today many of

the same traditional Moana “scientific” processes that developed the knowledge by which this was done, are still in place and intact, because they are holistically woven into Moana cultures.

Okusitino Māhina eloquently describes just such a process when he states:

Let us begin our *talanoa*, that is our *tālave*, the intellectual process of symmetrically ‘beating’ our diverse subject matters of shared interests in the production of objective knowledge. Intellectually, this is the state of harmony. The sustenance of this state of harmony is an expression of the critical spirit of inquiry, an eternally exciting state of ethereal, albeit real, beauty. In due course our *talanoa* will inevitably take on the form of *vavanga*, a reflexive apparatus through which we actively engage in *tālanga*, debating issues of enormous significance common to us all. Let us, therefore, *folaloa ē fala ka e alea ē kāinga*, symbolically roll out the mat openly and provide a front for our competing but interlaced points of view to passionately fight it out in our joint intellectual struggle. Now let us *haka he langi kuo tau* make merry in the ecstasy of critical thinking, that is in thinking in a different kind of intensified rhythm. (Māhina, 2004f: 188-9)

In other words, we can still identify some examples of these processes in Tonga. *Talanoa*, *vavanga*, *tālanga*, and *tālave*, are examples of these traditional knowledge developing processes, both theoretically and methodologically, and are still utilized in this way.¹¹

When we look closely at these sorts of processes, it is interesting to note they are rich with potential for developing knowledge in all highly socialized cultures, because they are intrinsically a social process that serve as an integrated and circular “theoretical-methodological-theoretical” knowledge producing model. Considering it is also by these means that Moana peoples successfully researched their world from ancient times, it is not at all surprising that these social processes lend themselves well to any researcher seeking deeper indigenous cultural knowledge, and must therefore I believe, hold an important place in any modern Moana research paradigm. In short, they are part of a genuine and traditionally practiced Moana “science”.

The first thing we need to establish then, is an appropriate Moana theoretical framework to act as an overarching and guiding set of principles within which to set

¹¹ *Talanoa* as a methodological process is discussed more fully in the next chapter.

our research. Historically in this regard, much of the misunderstanding between Westerners and Indigenous people generally, and within research specifically, has come about because of a basic conflict between how the world is conceptualized.

One important difference that has emerged, is to be found in a Moana re-consideration and re-definition of Western concepts of time and space. What becomes immediately apparent is a markedly different conception of time and space. No longer are these the material/tangible dimensions of the world that many Westerners take for granted, but involve sophisticated social and epistemological aspects in Moana cultures.

In this new Moana reality for instance, “time” no longer retains a simple linear progression from past to present and on to future. For instance, Epeli Hau’ofa (2000) argues that Moana peoples conceptualize the past as in front and ahead of them, whilst Lilikala Kame’eleihiwa (1992:22) also states that Hawaiians locate the past as the time in front and the future as the time that comes behind. The Moana concept of *tā* (“time”) is therefore circular, and whilst it may resemble the Western concept in that it is also related to natural cyclic events such as phases of the moon, stars, and seasons, it does so in a different social way.¹²

Moana scholars such as ‘Okusitino Māhina (2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004d, 2005a, 2007), Albert Wendt (1999), Epeli Hau’ofa (2000), Sa’iliemanu Lilomaiava-Doktor (2004), Sitiveni Halapua (2000), Sēmisi Potauaine (2010) and Tēvita Ka’ili (2005, 2008) amongst others, have all contributed to the Moana concept of “time”, or *tā*.

In a Moana reality “space” also takes on a new and unfamiliar aspect (to Westerners) becoming far more than the typical Western three-dimensional physical concept (defined by the xyz axes). Moana concept of *vā* (“space”) includes concepts of social

¹² The evolutionary-driven techno-teleological Western treatment of time and space is highly suspect, as in the Stone Age, Bronze Age and the Age of IT, in that it systematically excludes the other equally important variables such as the intellectual, cultural and social variables from the equation. (Māhina 2009e:4)

space/obligation and social relationships across time. This includes social relationships with dead ancestors etc.

Moana scholars such as ‘Okusitino Māhina (2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004d, 2005a, 2007) Sitiveni Halapua (2000), Konai Helu Thaman (1995, 2004a, 2004b), Albert Wendt (1999), Sa’iliemanu Lilomaiava-Doktor (2004), Sēmisi Potauaine (2010) and Tēvita Ka’ili (2005, 2008) amongst others, have all contributed to the Moana concept of “space”, or *vā*.

Whilst there are virtually no social elements in a Western version of “time and space” this is not the case with *tā* and *vā*. *Tā* is the ontological and epistemological rhythm of Moana people, or their way of being in the world. *Vā* on the other hand is their ontological and epistemological of concept of social-space through which Moana people interact.¹³ While some scholars emphasize time over space and others space over time and others emphasize both time and space; in Moana reality *tā* and *vā* are holistically integrated and inseparable in nature, mind and society.¹⁴

Of particular interest in these Moana discussions of the non-Western nature of “time and space” is the Moana General Tā-Vā Theory of Reality, involving *tā* (“time”) and *vā* (“space”), and proposed by ‘Okusitino Māhina. I intend to spend some time developing Māhina’s theoretical approach for the reader, as it not only demonstrates a Tongan approach to theorizing, but has been of particular value in my own theoretical analysis.

¹³ Early Moana settlers, some 3,500-4,000 years ago (Kirch and Green 2001; Māhina 1992, 1999b; cf. Hau’ofa 1993), for example, had a clear conceptual and practical understanding of *tā* and *vā* in their dealings across nature, mind and society evident in such human notions and actions as *faiva* (performing arts); *vaa’ihaka* (dance movements); *vaa’itā* (musical notes); *vaa’ivaka* (racing boats); *vātatau* (equal-status persons); *tāvao* (bush-clearing); *tāpopao* (canoe-building); *tāuho* (umbilical-cord-cutting); and *tāsīpinga* (example-setting), spatio-temporally, substantially-formally demarcating their shifting physical, intellectual and social relationships with their environment (Ka’ili 2007; also, e.g., Māhina 1992, 1999b). (Māhina 2009e:5)

¹⁴ A number of scholars emphasise *tā*, in comparative isolation from *vā* (Adam 1990; also see Mitchell 2004), while others deal with *vā* to the relative exclusion of *tā* (Duranti 1997; Halapua 2000; Helu-Thaman 2004a; Leslie 2002; Lilomaiava-Doktor 2004; Mafile’o 2005; Morton 1996; Poltorak 2007; Refiti 2008; Tuagalu 2008; Shore 1982; Wendt 1999). Many scholars propose that *tā* and *vā* are of the same order, i.e., *tā* is *vā* and *vā* is *tā* with both expressed as *vā* (Feinberg 2004; Smith 1999). (Māhina 2009e:6)

Part 4: The General Tā-Vā Theory of Reality

Basic terminology:

Tā the Moana concept of “time”

Vā the Moana concept of “space”

Acknowledging his philosophical roots in Anderson¹⁵ (1962, 2007), ‘Okusitino Māhina went on to construct his theory of Moana reality using Moana concepts of *tā* and *vā*, Moana “time” and Moana “space” (Māhina 2002a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2007; Māhina, Ka’ili, & Ka’ili 2006). Māhina calls his theory the “General Tā-Vā Theory of Reality” (Māhina 2007:10). Moana theorists that are at the forefront of developing the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality are: Māhina, 2004b, 2008b; Māhina, Ka’ili & Ka’ili 2006; Ka’ili 2005, 2007; Potauaine & Māhina 2010; and Williams 2009.

Māhina states the following:

As a General Tā-Vā (time-space) Theory of Reality, it has a number of both general and specific tenets (Māhina, 2008b; Māhina, Ka’ili & Ka’ili, 2006; Māhina, Māhina & Māhina, 2007e; also see Adam, 1990; Anderson, 2007; Harvey, 1990, 2000; Mitchell, 2004).

- that ontologically *tā* and *vā* are the common medium in which all things are, in a single level of reality, spatio-temporality or four-sided dimensionality;
- that epistemologically *tā* and *vā* are social products, involving their varying social arrangements across cultures;
- that the relative coalition of *tā* and *vā* across cultures is conflicting in nature;
- that all things, in nature, mind and society, stand in an eternal process of relations of cycle and exchange, giving rise to conflict or order;
- that conflict and order are permanent features of all things within and across nature, mind and society;

¹⁵As a philosophical system, Professor Anderson’s Realism basically advances a theory of independence of reality. Accordingly, this theory puts forward a view that all things exist independently on a single level of reality, (spatio-temporality or four-sided dimensionality), where they are logically connected in eternal relations of exchange. (Māhina 2009b)

- that conflict and order are of the same logical status, in that order is itself an expression of conflict;
- that *tā* and *vā* are the abstract dimensions of the *fuo* (form) and *uho* (content) of all things, in nature, mind and society;
- that the *fuo* and *uho* of things in nature are the concrete dimensions of *tā* and *vā*;
- that while *tā* does not exclusively correspond to form and *vā* entirely to space, both entities combined give form and content to all things of the one and only order of being;
- that while *tā-vā* is universal, all things in nature, mind and society have nevertheless further myriad and infinitely complex forms in dialectical relation to other countless and multifaceted contents; and
- that *tā* and *vā*, like *fuo* and *uho*, of all things are inseparable in mind as in reality. (Māhina 2010:2)

Māhina then goes on to say:

On the general level, the ontological dimension of *tā* and *vā* points to the unity of mind and *tā-vā* and the epistemological dimension to their relative social organization across cultures. The separation of mind from reality, spatio-temporality or substantiality-formality and its failure to comprehend time-space, form-content (and pragmatic) conflicts arising from their transcultural coordination give rise to problems of the idealist, dualist and relativist sort (Anderson, 1962; Helu, 1999; Māhina, 1999a, 2004c; Māhina, Māhina & Māhina, 2007e). This confirms the historical fact that errors in thinking are problems of mind but not of reality (Māhina, 1999a, 2004c, 2008a, 2008b; Māhina, Māhina & Māhina, 2007e). But, on the specific level, the philosophical fact that all things in reality stand in a process of eternal exchange relations and cycle to one another reveals the permanency of conflict and order within and across nature, mind and society. As a matter of convenience, reality can be divided into three divisions, i.e., nature, mind and society, where both mind and society belong in nature, with all having the same order of being. (Māhina 2010:2)

In other words, the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality is about intersection, conflict and resolution through mediation to give Moana reality. Both intersection and mediation in this context are ontological and epistemological in nature. In other words, the intersection that is a specific ontological and epistemological arrangement of *tā* and *vā* elements gives rise to conflicting forces between *tā* and *vā* and the ontological and epistemological mediation of these gives rise to Moana reality. This is how the Tā-Vā

Theory conceptualizes the reality that is formed in, and expressed by Moana ideas, concepts and practices.¹⁶

It is the intersection of *tā* and *vā* in this context then, that, according to the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality, gives rise to conflicting forces that in turn, give rise to “harmony” or “disharmony” in society and in the Moana world view in general. It is the mediation of *tā* and *vā* then, that is of particular importance in terms of any successful outcome, and it is this which gives rise to Moana concepts of *fuo* (“form”), *uho* (“content”), *tatau* (“symmetry”), *potupotutatau* (“harmony”), *mālie* (“beauty”), *vālelei* (“beautiful socio-spatial relations”) and so on. In other words to Moana forms of meaning in the world and to Moana society itself.

In contrast to Western ideas, the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality reflects a natural world where Moana peoples intersected with the Moana Nui in a type of intersection and conflict where their very survival depended on successful mediation. Whether that was survival through the intricate and coordinated intersection and mediation required for “navigation”, or the management of limited human resources across the vastness of the Moana Nui, each was a process of *tā* and *vā* intersection and conflict, requiring successful mediation. The process of this mediation for Moana peoples, is both collectivist and circular.¹⁷

In this regard, the treatment of *tā* and *vā* in the General Tā-Vā Theory of Reality and in Tongan ideas, concepts and practice, is also one of inseparable intersection of the two social aspects in nature: Mind and society. In all forms of Moana expression then, it is the intersection of the aspects of *tā* and *vā*, that form the type of conflict, that

¹⁶ Māhina for instance states: In critically exploring Moana cultures from a *tā-vā* theory of reality, focusing on their shifting formal and substantial relationships, the reality, objectivity and beauty underlying them are theoretically and practically revealed. The use of the Moana as a *tā-vā* theory of Moana anthropology, in respect of the counterpoising social, cultural and theoretical, intellectual relationships between them, is based on the realism, objectivism and aestheticism internally-embedded in Moana cultures. (Māhina 2009e:12)

¹⁷ Cf. Ka’ili 2005, 2008

becomes mediated to form reality. In this respect, the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality is both philosophical and empirical, in terms of form, content and function.¹⁸

For instance Sēmisi Potauaine states:

Likewise, the Tongan terms for time and space are *tā* and *vā* and form and content are *fuo* and *uho*. According to the time-space theory, *tā* and *vā* are the abstract dimensions of *fuo* and *uho*, which are, in turn, the concrete dimensions of *tā* and *vā* (Māhina, ‘O. 2008b, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c; Potauaine & Māhina 2010). From a Tongan perspective, there are four dimensions of reality or spatio-temporality. In concrete terms, *tā* is expressed as *fuo* and *vā* as *uho*. Additionally *fuo* is an expression of *tā*, and *uho* an expression of *vā*. Apart from *fuo* as one dimension, *uho* is made up of three dimensions that include *lolola* length, *ma‘olunga* or *loloto* and *fālahi* or *maokupu*. This is parallel to their equivalents in English, i.e., form, length, height or depth and width, with form corresponding to time and length, height or depth and width to space. As informed by the *tā-vā* theory, *tā* and *vā*, like time and space, and *fuo* and *uho*, like form and content, are inseparable in reality, or in other words, in nature as they are in mind and society (Māhina, ‘O. 2008a, 2010a also see Ka’ili 2005, 2007; Williams 2009). (Potauaine 2010:4)

The importance of adopting a theoretical approach such as the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality of ‘Okusitino Māhina as a foundation, and as an appropriate theoretical starting point for my own work on Tongan *Faiva* then, is that it not only helped me to understand the Tongan “world view” through the concept of intersection and mediation of “*tā* and *vā*”, but helped me to differentiate both the similarities and differences that have led to so many of the misunderstandings and misinterpretations in Western approaches to research in the Moana.

Looking at *faiva haka* for instance, *faiva haka* not only embodies deeper elements of cultural ontology and epistemology found in *tā* and *vā*, but is combined with the equally complex cultural expressions known as *faiva ta‘anga* (“poetic” expression), *faiva hiva* (“singing”) all of which are most often combined in a participatory social occasion, that is itself overlaid with occasion of both historical and social importance. All of this creates a complex non-Western cultural intersectional scenario where *uho* (“content”) *fuo* (“form”) and *aonga* (“function”) has, through social mediation,

¹⁸ Cf. Anderson 1962, 2007; Baker 1979; Helu 1999; Māhina, 1999a, 2008a, 2008b, 2010a; Potauaine & Māhina 2010, Potauaine 2010, Ka’ili 2005, 2008.

become imbued with Moana meaning well beyond anything that a relatively simplistic Western “dance” model could possibly provide.

In this regard, my research confirmed that having a Tongan theoretical framework such as the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality, was not only helpful in framing my research theoretically and analytically, but also in carrying it out methodologically and, most importantly, in understanding the results. This is because the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality, is itself not only rooted in Moana ideas, concepts and practices, but also exemplifies and explains Moana ideas, concepts and practices in general.

Part 5: Theoretical issues in Moana language¹⁹

Modern social science research in Western academic institutions is commonly “inter-disciplinary” to some greater or lesser extent. Usually, if an area of research calls for it, a researcher simply enters the theoretical or methodological framework of one or other of the currently accepted disciplines to facilitate their research agenda. Unfortunately in Indigenous research this often means utilizing approaches from other disciplines, which are themselves based on Western theoretical and conceptual frameworks. As a result of this, many researchers are often burdened with further unrecognized pre-emptive Western errors in both their approach and analysis of their Moana content.

As already mentioned, Western and Moana cultures conceptualize “time and space” differently. In a Western framework the intersection of time and space defines reality as very specific, amounting to actual point in time and space, in a type of “here and now” material version of reality that is both rigid and unchanging. In a Moana framework, the intersection of *tā* and *vā* creates an entirely different sort of conceptual reality, one that is holistic, non-material, non-linear and involving human interactive social relationships in a functional type of “intersection-mediation-

¹⁹ See also chapter 5

outcome” to generate a Moana version of reality that is both flexible and ever changing.²⁰

Different cultures therefore conceptualize reality in different ways and language is of course one of the primary ways in which this is expressed. In other words, language is not only structured in a particular way but its words also conceptualize and embody a culture’s version of reality.²¹ This does not mean that there is not a fundamental and natural reality for everyone living in the world, but that different cultures have different experiences of this reality and therefore perceive, conceptualize and structure it differently. It is especially problematic in the field of languages therefore and raises all sorts of issues, when Western ideas, concepts and practices in language, are imposed on another’s. In fact, it is quite clear that such a process is not about developing an understanding or any sort of knowledge about that other’s language, but an exercise in some form of linguistic imperialism and linguistic colonialism.²²

Unfortunately since Western philologists first began to study Moana languages, there has been a continuous and long history of doing precisely that. Not only has Moana language been reframed by analyzing it in Western grammatical terms and those such as noun, adjective, verb, prefix, suffix and so on, but also in re-conceptualized by giving Moana “words” Western definition through the use of Western “equivalents”. In fact *Faiva* and many other Moana concepts, have been so systematically “rewoven” and interlaced with Western ideas, concepts and practices, that any attempt at discovering their indigenous Moana structures, meanings or inferences, are often frustrated by this widely accepted imposition.

I have found in this regard, that whilst Churchward (1959) and authors of other Moana bi-lingual dictionaries offer valuable clues to underlying meaning and inferences contained in Tongan language, they have limits. I propose that unless a genuine attempt to reframe and modify dictionaries to suit a Moana paradigm is

²⁰ See: Māhina 2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004d, 2005a, 2007, 2009b; Halapua 2000; Thaman 1995, 2004a, 2004b; Wendt 1999; Lilomaiva-Doktor 2004; Potauaine 2010 and Ka’ili 2005, 2008.

²¹ See chapter 5. Cf. Berger 1966, Burger and Luckmann 1967, Grace 1981, 1987.

²² See: Mühlhäusler, 1996.

attempted, Churchward's dictionary despite its value in many other ways remains what it is, a Western imposition. In other words, a Western version of Tongan language, or a Tongan's guide to Western thinking, but not a Tongan's, nor Westerner's guide to the real *fu* ("form"), *uho* ("content") and *'aonga* ("function") of Tongan language. Whilst some may argue that this is not the purpose of a bi-lingual dictionary like Churchward's, it needs to be recognised that it represents a Western paradigm and as such, has definite limits in approaching Tongan language.²³ Although the idea of a "paradigm" was first clearly introduced by Thomas Kuhn²⁴ three years after Churchward's dictionary, Churchward makes comments that show, whilst he has made attempts at upgrading and ensuring the accuracy of his reference material, he is aware of various idiosyncrasies and tries to accommodate them.²⁵ In reality however, these are indications that he is imposing a completely alien paradigm.

In my own approach to research and my exploration of the concepts and meaning in Tongan language associated with *Faiva*, I therefore had difficulty in extracting underlying Tongan meanings from a seeming litany of Western interpretation and conceptual overlay. Not only are Tongan words often glossed with simple Western "equivalents", but are presented in the aforementioned Western paradigm that does not allow for, nor is intended to include more than this. When it comes to trying to understand a Tongan "word" however, understanding deeper layers of conceptual meaning and inference found in Tongan "words", and an understanding of Tongan epistemology and phenomena such as *heliaki* ("saying one thing, as symbolically meaning another") is of particular import. The problem here then, is not just one of

²³ Cf. Taumoefolau 1998.

²⁴ The concept of "paradigm" was first clearly identified by Kuhn in his "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" published in 1962.

²⁵ According to Linita Manu'atu: Churchward clearly states that the grammatical structure of Tongan bears even less resemblance to that of English, than the grammatical structure of English bears to that of Latin. For example, the parts of speech of Tongan language are interchangeable particularly in verbs, nouns, adverbs and adjectives unlike the English language. Tongan verbs are different from English verbs in many respects. Tongan verbs do not change, whether in passive or active forms. Also, words that are primarily verbs are used as nouns, adjectives or adverbs. Words that are primarily nouns are used as verbs, adjectives or adverbs. Words that are primarily adjectives are used as nouns or verbs and so on and so forth. Also there are numerous prefixes and suffixes that are added to root verbs to form more words that enrich the vocabulary of Tongan language. Churchward asserts that 'a revised and largely new terminology is needed' in order to explain Tongan language. (Manu'atu. 2000:78)

the intent or inherent limits of a Western approach, but with its paradigmatic focus on grammatical structures, word structure, and a literal approach to word meanings as if these are universally applicable to all languages. Presentation in this form, rather than being an intended abbreviation for purposes of a dictionary, can appear as if they are complete and in doing so, obscure important non-Western aspects as if they are not there. Moana languages for instance, have many non-Western conceptual connections and deeper epistemological layers of inference, which in turn form a complex and sophisticated poetic, cultural and philosophical intent in their meanings. The un-noted elimination of these aspects, the assigning of Western grammatical terms, or the abbreviation of meaning to fit the usual form of a dictionary within a Western paradigm, should be viewed with some concern.²⁶

In the case of Tongan language then, where the use of *heliaki* is still in common use, and where the language is both poetic, philosophical and rich with deeper conceptual meanings, the application of a Western paradigm is problematic. Not only this, but Western ideas of language being made up of discreet words forming a vocabulary, and bounded by Western grammatical rules, starts to unravel in the face of the reality of Moana languages in general. Not only are there hidden depths and associated epistemological relationships found in many Tongan words, but word meanings may not be fixed and are often found to have other dynamic dimensions in situations where they are intrinsically and inextricably partnered in combinations of *faiva ta'anga* and *faiva haka* and *faiva hiva*.

Indeed, any attempt to understand Moana words generally through isolation or outside their cultural context, through the application of a Western paradigm, either for the philological orderings of words, or for the purpose of understanding their Moana meaning, can only end in some kind of perceptually flawed, cross-cultural nightmare.

In the present thesis then, I have tried to avoid a purely Western approach in my study of Tongan *Faiva* and its vocabulary. I have done so because in reality, such an approach, combined with tendencies to Westernize the *fuo* (“form”), *uho* (“content”)

²⁶ Cf. Tregear 1891:xiii; Manu'atu 2000:78; Taumoevalau 1998; Laycock 1972.

and *'aonga* (“function”) of Tongan vocabulary, tends to defeat the possibility of arriving at the deeper essence of Tongan “words” and language.²⁷

The importance of Māhina’s Tā-Vā Theory of Reality in this regard, is that it not only emphasizes that things may be conceptualized and structured entirely differently outside the usual Western paradigm, but supplies a Moana theoretical model from which to conceptualize and analyze. In other words the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality not only infers an opposition to the usual and universal application of a Western version of reality by positing a Moana version of reality as a valid alternative, but also proposes holistic Moana ideas of intersection and mediation, as a foundation for both theoretical and practical analysis.

Part 6: The Hypothesis of Laumālie (“spirit”)

Not only did Moana cultures structure their perception of reality differently than Western cultures, but they also placed more emphasis on non-material aspects such as the “spirit”, often ascribing all things as having a “spirit”.²⁸ In Western culture by contrast, these aspects of nature were often dismissed as being intangible, scientific, un-measurable nor capable of analysis and therefore “un-real” and “unknowable” because they were beyond the realm of material reality. Even in the West however, the reality of the “spirit” of things is attested to by the fact that it is conceptualized as a word. Whilst any remnants of this type of thinking were formalized into Western religions, a spiritual belief in God required “faith” rather than because aspects of the spirit were seen as a tangible “reality” in their own right. In this regard, outside their own concept of religion, Western cultures often dismissed the concept of “spirit” in Moana reality as superstitious. The important conceptualization of the “spirit” however, was found in various forms throughout Moana culture, and was assigned readily to all aspects of nature. Unlike many Westerners, who selected only certain senses as reliable and often needed to “see something with their own eyes” for it to be real, for many Indigenous people the evidence that the “spirit” of things existed, was simply that it was felt.

²⁷ See chapters 5 and 6

²⁸ See: Spencer 1985; Steiner 1956; Collocott 1921, 1921b, 1923; Dewey 1902; Geraghty 1993; Gifford 1924a; Kalakaua 1972; Martin 1817; Shires 1979; and many others.

Across much of the Moana then, there is an understanding of, and subsequent naming of the “spirit” as an intangible form of reality. For instance, common Moana terms that embody the concept of “spirit” are: *Laumālie* (Tongan), *wairua* (Māori), *vaerua* (Mangaian), *varua* (Tahitian), *wailua* (Hawaiian), and so on. In Tonga for instance “*laumālie*” is accessed directly in many instances through various forms of *Faiva*. In this case it is associated with such concepts as *mālie*, *māfana*, *tau-e-langi* etc. *Faiva* has in these regards, been a traditional way of accessing, enhancing the experience of, and building a social ideology and cultural aesthetic based on and in, the ways of *laumālie*.

At this point then, I wish to introduce the “Hypothesis of Laumālie (spirit)” into my theoretical perspective on Moana language as a type of addition to the usual frame of *tā-vā* intersection and mediation found in the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality.

The purpose of this, is that I wish to create an hypothesis that can, at least theoretically, address what I have found from my research to be a “lack of specificity of meaning” in many Moana “words” until they are found in a particular and tangible context, that is; in a particular and tangible *tā-vā* intersection. In other words I want to indicate that, in the relatively abstract and symbolic realm of Moana “words” the intersections and mediation of structural elements forms a kind of “precursor of meaning” or “spirit” that, rather than having a specific meaning from the outset, has a wider ontological and epistemological generality, and one that only develops a more specific definition or meaning, in the context of mediation in a tangible *tā-vā* intersection.

In other words, and in contrast to a Western materialistic reality, resulting in a specific construction and definition of Western words, I wish to hypothesize that Moana “words” in general, were originally conceptualized so as to embody a *laumālie* or “spirit,” rather than having a specific materialistic meaning, and that this *laumālie* creates an inference that is creatively alive, and where actual meaning is determined by intersection and mediation across varying *tā* and *vā*.

My hypothesis then, is that Moana “words” embody a *laumālie* or “spirit,” and in the common case where many Moana “words” are themselves constructed from an intersection of two or more constituent “words”, the new “word” then expresses a *laumālie* that is the sum of the *laumālie* of each of its constituent “words.”

This inclusion of the *laumālie* of constituent elements to form an entirely new *laumālie* is by analogy, like *nimamea‘a lālanga*, where strands of fiber are woven into a fine mat, intensifying traditional patterns into a new form of pattern that is both beautiful and deeply symbolic, both ontologically and epistemologically. In other words, I hypothesize that Moana “words” were originally constructed by the intersection and weaving of the *laumālie* of constituent elements, to form a language that is built on patterns of *laumālie* that express Moana ideas of *tatau* (“symmetry”), *potupotutatau* (“harmony”) and *mālie* or *faka‘ofa‘ofa* (“beauty”) and are therefore poetic, philosophical and symbolic, both ontologically and epistemologically. Unlike *nimamea‘a lālanga* however where the beauty of patterns is in a fixed form, those created by “words” and the intersection and mediation of their *laumālie* within *tā* and *vā*, varies in differing combinations and across varying *tā* and *vā* to yield new and beautiful combinations. I believe this is why great orators and *Punake* (creators of *faiva haka*, *faiva hiva* and *faiva ta‘anga*) were treasured across the Moana, because of their ability to “weave” new and beautiful combinations that in turn gave rise to a feeling of *māfana* (“inner warmth”), *vela* (“fieriness”) and *tauelangi* (“climaxed elation”) and *vālelei* (“beautiful socio-spatial relationships”).

Western languages by contrast, tend to conceptualize words as discrete entities, having more or less specific meanings and a use that is specified through grammatical rules. English for instance, consists of many “borrowed” words which have been extracted and cut off from their many and varying ontological and epistemological sources, then modified, but with a “root” that is still connected to the original source. Not only do words in this form tend to become distinct entities, that is; “words,” but the meaning of a word is primarily determined by its root. In this context, Western words tend to exist as nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc., with variations in meaning accomplished by addition of suffix, prefix, so on. Words in this form tend to become fixed, definitive not only in spelling and meaning, but also with associated rules

governing their grammatical usage, and so on. Analyzing Western words then, is primarily a process of identifying the root.

In contrast to this, whilst Moana “words” in their simplest forms may appear as a single Western letter (as in *a*, *e*, *i*, *o* and *u*), I propose that longer or more complex Moana “words” may actually be multi-element “phrases” rather than “words” in any Western sense. The Hypothesis of Laumālie posits for instance, that Moana “words” are often woven of simpler Moana “words” (or even abbreviated “words”) that are then added in an intersection to create “phrases” or even “proverbs” or abbreviated forms of these “phrases” or “proverbs”, to give an overall *laumālie* or inference. Moana “words” therefore do not have specific meaning in the Western sense, but only a *laumālie* or inference. It is only in a particular intersection of *tā* and *vā*, that the meaning of Moana “words” becomes defined, and only in the context of that specific situation. In other words, unlike Western words, the meaning of a particular Moana “word” is not to be found in a root, but established in and across situations through a process of mediation of the intersection of its *laumālie* with varying *tā* and *vā*. The choices or woven patterns of elements and their subsequent structural arrangements in this form of language are often poetic and flexible. Not only this, but that it is also very common for constituent “words” to be represented in some abbreviated form. Even longer Moana “phrases”, or “proverbs” may also be included as part of a Moana “word” but represented only as an abbreviated part. Even in a reduced form however, I propose that these elements, whether an abbreviated Moana “word” or part of a “phrase” and so on, still carry their original *laumālie* and all of their associated inferences to deeper levels of ontology and epistemology. When two or more Moana “words” or parts of “words” are then intersected as elements in a new “word” the *laumālie* of the new “word” is a mediation of all the *laumālie* of its constituent elements along with inference to deeper levels of ontology and epistemology.

This type of hypothesis also explains why, from a Western viewpoint, Moana “words” may have multiple meanings, or be subject to “omissions”, “reversals”, “substitutions” or variation in the “spellings” or arrangements of elements within a “word”. When framed in this hypothesis, the usual Western issues of spelling, structure and definition, are far less important from a Moana perspective, because the

arrangement, order or omission of parts of constituent elements, may have little to no effect on the overall *laumālie* of a “word”.

Precepts of the Hypothesis of Laumālie

1. That Moana “words” or elements that make up Moana “words,” carry a *laumālie*, which is a form of meaning, that is expressed as an inference or potential, rather than an actual meaning, because it is rooted in and referenced, either literally, symbolically, poetically, philosophically, or contextually, to take on actual meaning only in a particular *tā* and *vā*, that is itself defined by an holistic ontological and epistemological Moana context.
2. The overall *laumālie* of a Moana “word” is formed through mediation of the addition and intersection of the *laumālie* of constituent elements.
3. The *laumālie* of constituent elements of “words” is not effected by their abbreviation, variations in spelling, reversals and so on.
4. The ultimate meaning of a Moana “word” is not fixed, but formed through mediation and intersection of its *laumālie* across varying *tā* and *vā*.

In terms of an understanding of Moana language then, it may often be more helpful to see Moana “words” as being multi-element “phrases” and to develop a sense of their intersectional construction and their *laumālie* rather than focusing on their spelling, or defining a Moana “word” as a noun, verb, adjective and so on. In other words it is not helpful and may be entirely misleading to approach Moana conceptualization, structure or even how meaning is assigned, from within a Western paradigm.

In all these regards then, a Western paradigm may demonstrate significant failings when it comes to representing or understanding a concept like *laumālie*, let alone accommodating the apparent lack of specificity or multiplicity of meaning arising from intersection of *laumālie* within differing *tā* and *vā*. Nor does a Western paradigm seem appropriate in representing or understanding Moana forms such as the common usage of direct and indirect inference (as in *heliaki*), Moana variations of

“spellings”, letter substitutions, partial “words” and abbreviated “word-phrases” in varying combinations, “back-to-front” orderings of not only “words”, but “sentence” structures, non-linear construction “logic”, “word” approximations and substitutions, not to mention class specific, or vernacular word variation; in other words, the real Moana language.

To return to Māhina’s Tā-Vā Theory, the inclusion of the Hypothesis of Laumālie under the division of “mind” is not particularly useful theoretically, as is the human cognitive ability (mind) not clearly defined by relegating it to that of society. Whilst it could still be argued that *laumālie* (spirit) itself fits into the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality on the level of “mind” or “culture”, I propose that from a theoretical perspective, and at least as far as Moana language is concerned, the Hypothesis of Laumālie offers a useful additional theoretical construct as a basis for further and specific research. In this case its value lies, like any theoretical construct, in its ability to elucidate and inform aspects of the thing being studied, in this case, Moana language and those aspects of Moana language with an inferential and less tangible nature.

It should be noted therefore, that I do not conceptualize *laumālie* as some sort of “religious aspect” to be added to the three aspects proposed by Māhina, but rather as a theoretical construct that is useful in both identifying and conceptualizing less tangible aspects, such as in the abstract and symbolic or inferential aspects of Moana language, that may lie outside both *tā* and *vā*.

In the case of Moana language then, I propose that Māhina’s Tā-Vā Theory of Reality could be usefully broadened to include the Hypothesis of Laumālie. Its identification as a separate fourth dimension, at least theoretically, would then be based on the idea that, unlike nature, mind and society, *laumālie* includes a theoretical perspective that is both timeless and dimensionless. Unlike the Western idea that all reality can be defined by a more specific time and space (Anderson 2007; Māhina 2001, 2004b), the Moana Tā-Vā Theory of Reality would then not only embody Moana conceptualizations of *tā* and *vā* but also the introduction of *laumālie* as a timeless and dimensionless Moana experiential construct. In other words, “reality” at least in terms of Moana language would be created by *tā* and *vā* plus *laumālie*.

For example, the word *Faiva*, when framed by the Hypothesis of Laumālie, has a *laumālie* that is close to *'ulungāanga faka-Tonga* (“the Tongan way”) (see chapter 7). The Hypothesis of Laumālie also makes it clear that it is in the context of various *tā-vā* intersections that the *laumālie* of *'ulungāanga faka-Tonga* itself may take on more specific meaning. Whilst it is common in a more general concept like *Faiva*, to intersect it with other Tongan words like *haka*, resulting in a more specific *laumālie*, this is still general in the sense that *faiva haka* itself only becomes more defined in a particular *tā-vā* intersection, that is; a particular and tangible situation. In other words the real meaning *faiva haka* will vary in different contexts, from being something approximating a Western form of “entertainment” in the case of a tourist group, to something that is both socio-political and value laden, on a more serious formal occasion. I believe that the Hypothesis of Laumālie helps to explain the sort of confusion that is expressed when Westerners try to specify the actual meaning of something like *Faiva*.²⁹

This is also why, approached from a mechanistic Western view for instance, a Moana “word” such as *Faiva* also becomes stripped of its deeper functional and contextual meanings and implications, to become a simple Tongan “word” meaning “work, task, feat, or game, etc., requiring skill or ability; trade, craft; performance, play, drama, item (at a concert, etc.); entertainment; film, moving picture” (Churchward 1959:23) or “any kind of task, feat, craft, or performance requiring skill or ability, or anything at which an individual or group is clever; dance (Kaepler, 1993:141). Similarly if we strip *haka*, *ta'anga*, and *hiva* of their deeper Moana functional and conceptual implications, *faiva haka*, *faiva ta'anga*, and *faiva hiva* would simply become the Western concepts of dance, poetry and singing respectively.

Clearly such Western re-definition can cause perceptual conflicts for any researcher when faced with these sorts of phenomena in their living Moana context, because a Western re-conceptualization no longer has any relation to their Moana reality and the ontological and epistemological richness they actually contain. If we wish to arrive at any real knowledge of these phenomena then, researching them through a Western, as

²⁹ See: Kaepler 1967, 1967b, 1972, 1983, 1983b, 1985, 1987, 1993, 1993, 1994, 1995; Moyle 1987, 1993, 2002; McLean 1981, 1995, 1999; and others.

opposed to an Indigenous Moana theoretical and methodological framework is not only inappropriate, but also a fundamental error.

Without going into further detail here, I have found the same is true in nearly all of the research that dominates my field, with researchers casually and inappropriately assigning Western categories of meaning and renaming everything with what they imagine are Western “equivalents”. I say casually and inappropriately here, not because these things may not exhibit superficial aspects that look similar to the Western equivalent they are re-named as, but because this Western transformation almost completely obliterates any further or deeper Indigenous Moana cultural meanings.

Research in new ways

In order to do good cross-cultural research then, we must be very careful we do not blind ourselves before we even start. If we are to allow for the emergence of anything new, if we are to add anything significant beyond what we already know, discover, isolate and define anything unique or unusual, we must first question the very rock upon which we ourselves stand....namely, our own ideas of reality, formed as they are, by our own cultural perspectives, conceptualizations and cultural agendas.

As Thomas G. West so simply puts it:

The important thing is that truly original discoveries sometimes require unlearning and relearning not only what one has been taught, but also fundamental and basic elements in the way one thinks about things in general, some of the most fundamental concepts at the core of one’s thought processes. (West, 1997:192)

West is not suggesting here that we can entirely, or need to completely unlearn what we have already been taught, but simply that we must certainly question it, and that we may need to re-think and question the very foundation of our own assumptions and the subsequent ways we approach or interpret things. This is especially the case when we carry out research in other cultures.

In this respect, we must also recognise that many of the subjects of research are already well-developed aspects of the culture in which they are embedded, and that each and every aspect of that culture is unique in its own way. In other words, each subject we may wish to study already has an appropriate language and terminology that contains and embodies not only the epistemology from which it was developed but also the ontology within which it flourishes.

If we are an outsider or even an insider and interested in approaching any form of objectivity in our research, we need to work entirely within a subject's context and with a profound respect for its cultural uniqueness. But this is not all, we must also seek for a theoretical perspective and a methodology that together will allow for this possibility, and the recognition that one from a different culture may defeat us even before we begin. In other words we cannot simply re-name something with what looks to us to be an “equivalent” form from another culture, and then apply an alien paradigm to its investigation.

In essence we need to be very clear about what our research actually demands of us. In my own case of researching *Faiva*, and in terms of the concepts contained in the Tongan language I needed to understand, I had to be extremely cautious that I didn't just approach things with “dictionary in hand” so to speak, or that I didn't account for the degree of Westernization that was pervasive in Tongan culture more generally. Not recognizing these aspects would have almost certainly pre-empted my thinking to such a degree that I may never have recovered, may never have been able to step “outside the box” so to speak, and would have prevented me from discovering anything new, or of seeing it if I had.

My next chapter discusses the development of an appropriate Moana methodology.

Chapter 4:

Vakai ki ai ki hono angafai, vakai koe he 'oku pehē.

See how it's done - this is how.

A Tongan proverb that refers to the best way of doing something (Māhina, 2004a:88)

Developing a Practical Moana Methodology: Redefining Appropriate Research in Practice

Faifai mālie

Cultural knowledge, lets not pretend
A new trend, not to offend
A *koha* to inspire
My deepest desire
Is to inquire
An interview with you

Thank you for telling me
For I teach the same principles respectfully
Back to traditions of our ancestry
Anticipate then reciprocate
Faiva for me and old religion
A spiritual condition

Old men listen
Their eyes do glisten
To hear the lali drum
But not a fraction
Of a re-action
When the bells toll
For the *pālangi* soul

Tu'ivakanō
A noble was he
Who taught me
And my beloved
Father Malukava
A punake forever he'll be

Tau'olunga
Graces me with spirituality
Māfana Taulangi
Fiefia Naulangi

I'm sad to say

Naulangi past away
Now with the ancestors
To stay
Gone to Pulotu
Inner-space
Far from here
In 'Otua-sphere
Where all things are made
Crystal clear

(A *faiva ta'anga* for Mele Naulangi Lea'aetala, by Helen Ferris-Leary 2010)

One of the purposes of my thesis was not just to describe Western imposition in Moana research, but also to discuss and develop an appropriate alternative. Having discussed some of the considerations in developing an appropriate Moana theoretical framework in the previous chapter, this chapter examines the issues that surround the development of an appropriate Moana methodology.¹ Whilst it may be clear by now that Moana methodology and theory are not strictly separate as issues and are more often intertwined and interrelated in the usual circular Moana fashion, if only for the purpose of discussing the issues that surround an appropriate Moana methodological approach, I have separated them here.

From the standpoint of what constitutes an appropriate Moana methodology then, I propose that this must include the following three aspects:

- An appropriate Moana ethical approach,
- An appropriate Moana research process by which to work, and;
- An appropriate Moana methodological framework within which to place that process.

¹ Cf. Kabini F. Sanga: The basic argument by proponents of indigenous Pacific research is this: that research with/ of Pacific peoples must use strategies that are Pacific in nature. Three examples of this debate, from the indigenous Pacific research view, are given. Samoan researcher Tupuola (2000) for instance, argues that the design of research involving Samoans must take into account the relational aspects of the participants and the researcher. As well, she thinks that participants should have a say in what the questions should be. Hereniko (1995) suggests that research involving Rotumans must use stories, songs dances, enactments and personal anecdotes, as these are the strategies used by Rotumans in their day-to-day existence. Siosiana Ungatea (personal conversation, 2002) of Tonga rejects the use of university ethics committee procedures as inappropriate for Tongan research. Instead, she suggests that Tongan protocols be used, as they take into account local societies practices and codes of ethics. (Sanga 2004:48-49)

This chapter is therefore written in three corresponding parts.

Part 1: Moana ethics

In Moana cultures, as in many other indigenous cultures, ethical issues have always been woven in to the sharing of knowledge with a person wishing to obtain it. In fact, in many situations knowledge was simply not given to those who were “not ready” to receive it. As will be seen later in this chapter, in this case “not ready” was both a personal and ethical issue.

Whilst ethical considerations are important in all research, in the Moana, they take on a unique emphasis because of the highly socialized nature of Moana cultures. It is therefore important for a researcher to realize that an appropriate Moana ethical framework (both personal and general) needs to be a part of their methodology. In this regard, it is only by a combination of Moana theory with Moana ethics and Moana methodology, that an appropriate Moana paradigm can be considered as complete.

This has obvious and important implications for modern Moana research. It is clear that, at least in Indigenous cultures, concern in knowledge sharing was not just with the ethics of how the information was obtained, or of the ethics of what was to be done with the knowledge as is more typical in the West, but also with what can only be described as the personal qualities of the person seeking and gaining the knowledge.

In this respect Konai Helu Thaman states there were:

Two types of knowledge in Polynesia: Communal knowledge necessary for day-to-day living and the highly specialist and often tapu knowledge. Special knowledge was *koloa* (treasure), belonging to certain *kāinga* (family kin) and kept *fakamolumalu* (sacred) by *tufunga* (learned people). *Tufunga* were also the *kaitiaki* (guardians) of those *koloa* and their persons were often tapu. When encountering these people, there are cultural protocols which must be strictly adhered to. Such was the importance of their knowledge for spiritual and economic security, as well as the integrity of their *fanau* (family), that they decided to whom to pass the knowledge in order to safeguard the *koloa* of their *fanau*. Only those whom the *tufunga* saw as *mateuteu* (ready), *fa ‘a kātaki* (tolerant, having endurance, loyal), *‘ofa, fakatoo ki lalo* (possessing humility,

respect for tradition) and who would use the knowledge for the benefit of the whole (*poto*) were given the special knowledge. (Thaman, 1998)

In other words knowledge was shared in a context that meant that the person who was gaining knowledge, would be more likely to use it wisely and also protect it in any unforeseen and undesirable circumstance that may occur at some future time.

In my own research on *Faiva* for instance, the fact that I took time to learn my subject matter itself and at the same time to develop my personal and ethical qualities was particularly important. Not only was it important to be able to perform *faiva haka* (the form of *Faiva* involving rhythmic use of the hands) and *faiva ta'anga* (the form of *Faiva* using rhythmic use of language, both oral and written), but also to begin to gather an understanding of *heliaki* (“to say one thing and mean another, or symbolic metaphor”), as well as my desire to approach *Faiva* from a genuine Tongan perspective. In other words to make myself *mateuteu* (“ready”), *fa'a kātaki* (“tolerant, having endurance, loyal”), *'ofa, fakatoo ki lalo* (“possessing humility, respect for tradition”) and be one who would use the knowledge for the benefit of the whole (*poto*). The importance of this aspect of my approach to research cannot be understated in terms of not only the access I was given to deeper knowledge about *Faiva*, but also in my ability to understand the real meanings of *Faiva* on that level. In other words my efforts to develop my personal/ethical aspects and integrate them into my methodology were of utmost importance, and much of my research would not have been possible without such a personal undertaking.

I am of the opinion therefore, that more emphasis should be placed on “the personal development” of a researcher in their ethical considerations in Moana research, and these should not be a separate issue from a researcher’s methodology as this aspect may in fact represent a type of “essential binding” or “*tufunga lalava*” (the “art” of *kafa-sennit-lashing*) that holds a Moana researcher’s methodological approach together.

The term “Moana ethics” itself is in many respects difficult to define as a whole, as ethics may be more specific to a particular context. Whilst this thesis concerns the study of Tongan *Faiva*, and is geared more specifically to Tongan culture, I refer here to ethical issues that I believe are quite common not only in Tonga but across many

Moana cultures. I therefore use the term “Moana ethics” as a generic term, in the same way I use the term “Moana research”.

As may already be apparent, in some respects Moana ethical demands differ from those that satisfy Western research ethics requirements. Western research ethics are certainly valid but tend to be more individualistic, objective and non-personal. Concern is generally more with how information is obtained and what is to be done with it.

For instance, the following headings are taken from Guiding Principles for Conducting Research with Human Participants at the University of Auckland (UAHPEC), 2008:

- Informed and voluntary consent
- Respect for the privacy rights of participants. [Refer to the Privacy Act 1993]
- Social and cultural sensitivity
- Acknowledgement of the Treaty of Waitangi
- Soundness of research methods
- Transparency and the avoidance of conflict of interest
- Minimisation of harm
- Human remains, tissue, and body fluids

Apart from Treaty of Waitangi obligations and appropriate honouring of human remains, only under the heading of “social and cultural sensitivity” is a wider cultural or social group specified, and then only to tell a researcher that she/he “has a duty to find and use appropriate channels for permission to work with such groups” and there is often “a duty to provide feedback of the results to the participants”. (UAHPEC 2008). There is in fact little reference to any personal qualities a researcher may or may not have, nor of the longer-term personal relationships that a researcher may or may not have with participants, or with the communities they are researching.

Whilst it is true, even in Western cultures, there is some expectation that a researcher be “ethical” meaning she/he also has personal qualities like honesty and respect, and whilst no one would want to share personal or even general information about themselves if they thought a researcher was an unethical or an unscrupulous person, this is not a given, nor is it explicitly stated. In other words, the way the aforementioned Western ethical guidelines are designed, they afford only a more

ethical gathering and ethical use of research, rather than any demand on the more personal aspect of a researcher. In fact, if a researcher was not *mateuteu* (ready), *fa 'a kātaki* (tolerant, having endurance, loyal), *'ofa, fakatoo ki lalo* (possessing humility, respect for tradition) and be one who would use the knowledge for the benefit of the whole (*poto*), they are, under the guidelines mentioned above, under no obligation to be so.

In the case of Moana research therefore, I suggest that the very nature of Moana cultures demands an ethical approach that includes specific considerations of a more personal nature concerning the researcher, and one that alludes directly to their long-term personal qualities. By extension, this would also involve a more demanding look at the personal relationship between researcher and participant, their additional and extended group or community and last but not least, the relationship the researcher has with the knowledge itself.

Despite a certain universal understanding that a person being given knowledge, was synonymous with them being given power² (because of the potential for that knowledge to be used to manipulate or control the larger community), in Western cultures, anonymity and personal privacy are often inherent, even for public and very powerful people. In socially oriented cultures like the Moana and elsewhere however, the well-being of the community depends more closely on continuous public scrutiny of both the integrity and personal qualities of each individual.

In the Moana therefore, I suggest that there exists not only a general obligation to handle both research and knowledge in an ethical manner like in the West, but also to do so in a further Moana manner. That is, a researcher may be required to exhibit the aforementioned personal qualities in their relationship with not only participants, but also their communities, before they can even expect to be given the information or special knowledge they seek.

It is interesting to note that the same qualities we are talking about as desirable for a Moana researcher, are also ideals embodied in Tongan ideas of personhood, being

² Cf. Micheal Foucault 1980. 1980b.

more or less equivalent to an ideal “Tongan way” of being. For instance, the following qualities taken from Vaioleti, are the sorts of personal qualities that I envision as appropriate to formalise as personal qualities for a researcher in the Moana:

1. *Faka‘apa‘apa* (respectful, humble, considerate)
2. *Anga-lelei* (tolerant, generous, kind, helpful, calm, dignified)
3. *‘Ofa fe‘unga* (showing appropriate compassion, empathy, *aroha*, love for the context)
4. *Mateuteu* (well prepared, hardworking, culturally versed, professional, responsive)
5. *Poto he anga* (knowing what to do and doing it well, cultured)

(Vaioleti 2006:30)

Following from, and implicit in these sorts of personal qualities, is not that a researcher be Tongan, but that they would understand the obligation to behave correctly, as well as, to treat findings and knowledge gained through research in a correct and respectful manner in the longer term.

In this way too, the establishment of an appropriate relationship with the researcher and his/her subject matter, places the knowledge itself in a particular context. For instance, in the study of *faiva haka*, it is important that a researcher is able to actually do *faiva haka*. In fact, it is also in this context that a researcher may come to understand the fuller conceptual framework in which that knowledge was both developed and embedded. Not only does this make for a deeper understanding, but an appropriate respect for the knowledge itself.³

What becomes clear from the discussion so far, is that many of the problems experienced by Western researchers in indigenous cultures, lies in their individualist and compartmentalised approach to research. These approaches tend to focus on methodologies that do not include references to the personal character of the researcher, but tend to see a researcher as someone (or anyone) “extracting” information or data from participants. Whilst this may be well intentioned and an essential starting point for any research, it does not address the cultural expectations

³ See also Filipo 2004:179; Smith 2005:120.

and imperatives found in Moana communities or in many other Indigenous cross-cultural scenarios.

In fact ethics based solely on a “non-personal” set of guidelines aimed at only how information is obtained or how it may be used, may itself represent inappropriate cultural behaviour on the part of a researcher. This is because in the Moana as elsewhere, research involving participants in reality, is a process of reciprocal sharing. Moana sharing for instance, carries with it an understanding of “social symmetry” and reciprocation (*tauhi vā*) between researcher and participant, and the participants wider community.⁴ In other words the Moana knowledge gathered from research, is not only related to knowing but also, to what is done in return for that knowledge.

In all these respects then, we need to go well beyond the current compartmentalised and individualised form of Western research, which is more methodologically driven and without many personal demands in an ethical regime that allows data or knowledge to be taken from research participants and to then be seen, as somehow no longer related to them, or worse still, as “data” or knowledge that is now “owned” by the researcher themselves.

In this regard, I believe Linda Smith makes an important point when she states:

From indigenous perspectives ethical codes of conduct serve partly the same purpose as the protocols which govern our relationships with each other and with the environment. The term ‘respect’ is consistently used by indigenous peoples to underscore the significance of our relationships and humanity. Through respect the place of everyone and everything in the universe is kept in balance and harmony. Respect is a reciprocal, shared, constantly interchanging principle which is expressed through all aspects of social conduct. (Smith, 2005:120)

In this context to not care was to show disrespect, not only for the wider community but also for the ancestors from which knowledge came. Such lack of respect in turn, could lead to significant harm for all concerned.⁵

⁴ See: Ka’ili 2005, 2008; Filipo 2004; Smith 2005; Thaman 2004, 2008b; Vaioleti 2006; Halapua 2000, 2000b, 2003, 2007, 2008.

⁵ The well being of Moana communities and even their survival often depended on the observance of *tapu* (see chapter 6). *Tapu* is not the same as the Western idea of being “sacred” and framed in some Western notion of indigenous irrationality (i.e. Some form of superstition/supernatural) but rather, a reference to something being in a state of both order and symmetry, creating *mālie* (harmony) and

Whilst we are not talking about the need for personal/cultural transformations on the part of a Moana researcher here, what is being said is that, if a researcher is from the West or another culture, and they adopt a genuine and appropriate Moana approach to research, they should expect to take on a process that may leave them personally changed. Moana ethics are not something applied to research, they are something that are applied to oneself as a researcher. In other words, by developing an appropriate Moana research approach, and by applying it, a researcher should expect to be as much on a personal/ethical journey, as on an academic/research one.

The importance of this approach cannot be understated in Moana research if a researcher wishes to generate a genuine, positive and mutually beneficial atmosphere in which to carry out their research. In my case, the outcome of my own personal development and alignment to my subject matter, and my willingness to develop my own integrity and have a genuine respect for my informants was essential.

Part 2: An appropriate Moana research process:

In all research, good results depend not only on the theory on which the research is to be based, but also on the practical application of that theory through methodology. But methodology itself also involves process. In other words, good results are dependent on the selection and application of an appropriate process by which theory and research methodology can be carried out. Due to the fact that both theories and research methodologies may exhibit complex intra and inter relational issues, not to mention a wide range of cross-cultural complexities, and whilst many may include the idea of process as being within their methodology, the idea of what is meant by “an appropriate Moana research process” in this thesis, needs some explanation.

In this regard, Māhina states:

Research can be regarded as a relationship linking the researcher and the researched in a process of inquiry into the operations of things in reality. It follows that the primary aim of research is itself objective knowledge.

faka 'ofo 'ofa (“beauty”). Such a state itself, being brought about by the rational application of Moana knowledge and ways of being in the world.

Knowledge in this context, leads us to another closely connected set of relationships. Like research knowledge can be taken as a relationship between the knower and the known. (Māhina 2004:188).

In reality therefore, my own research was not only concerned with making myself personally to be *mateuteu* (ready), so that I could discover truly indigenous concepts and meanings in the vocabulary associated Tongan *Faiva*, but in also developing and applying my methodology using an appropriate indigenous Moana research process. In this way I hoped to follow a path that would allow me to approach those understandings in a respectful and appropriate relationship with Moana participants.

Even though my own research was carried out in Tonga and amongst Tongan participants, it falls under the general term “Moana research”. Whilst there may be cultural variations across the Moana in general, the term “Moana research” is appropriate because of the many similar issues needing to be addressed. In Tonga for instance, whilst Tongans have their own distinct cultural aspects, many of the same methodological issues can be found throughout the Moana.

There is a growing engagement amongst researchers in Moana communities with the more qualitative research methodologies such as ethnographic research approaches, and whilst the qualitative approach is certainly more flexible, and can facilitate a more appropriate Moana oriented methodological approach, it does not in itself represent an appropriate methodological process per se.⁶ Whilst many discussions focus on the generality of either a qualitative or quantitative methodology, I have found in practice that there is also a third methodological consideration that needs careful and specific consideration and that is, the issue of cultural appropriateness in the actual process of carrying out research. In other words, whether a researcher is carrying out qualitative or quantitative research, there is also the issue of their

⁶ Sanga for example states: Consequently, the more appropriate research strategies are those that are qualitative in nature because they better serve the methodological purposes of Pacific research. A key purpose is the ability to obtain rich contextual details. As well, research must adequately stress process considerations and be able to capture realities as they unfold. (Sanga, 2004:48)

methodology being set in a culturally appropriate process of interaction with participants.⁷

According to the Pasifika Educational Research Guidelines published by the New Zealand Ministry of Education in 2001:⁸

The specificity or differences of the Pacific research context lies in the epistemological nuances of the collective responsibilities and ownership principles inherent and common in Pacific life practices and values. That is, familial and collective roles, responsibilities and ownership frame, influences and defines Pacific patterns of individual and group behaviour, Pacific values, Pacific notions of time, Pacific understandings of knowledge and its value, of ownership of things tangible and intangible, of gender, class and age relations and so forth. And so, it is the impact that these practices and values have on the research process that makes it possible to argue for the existence of a specific Pacific research methodology. (Ministry of Education, 2001:27)

Whilst it is clear that this statement supports an appropriate Moana methodological process in research, it is often interpreted as referring to the more simple aspects of a specific methodology rather than an overarching need for development of a specific and appropriate Moana methodological process. I believe this situation is due to a relative lack of development in both Moana methodological models and Moana theoretical approaches in Moana research generally.

In reality then, a Moana researcher may develop a specific Moana methodology without realizing they are still applying this using an inappropriate Western process of some kind. For instance a researcher may come with a set of predetermined and preemptive questions, and simply interrogate their informants. In these cases the researcher may have made what they think are legitimate attempts, by framing their research in indigenous terms, and may come to believe they are being appropriate in other ways, but remain trapped in an over-arching Western model, informed as it is by Western theoretical and cultural agendas.

⁷ Sanga for example states: As mentioned earlier, the active participation of insiders is integral to indigenous Pacific research. This allows for multiple realities to be captured, particularities to be spotlighted and each 'voice' to be heard. Such results can only be achieved when appropriate research designs and strategies are used. (Sanga, 2004:48)

⁸ See also Ministry of Education, Pasifika Education Research Guidelines (2001:28).

In my own case for instance, my literature review revealed clear and overwhelming tendencies of previous researchers to Westernize their subject matter.⁹ Since I intended my research to be carried out from a Tongan philosophical and conceptual perspective, and since I had read the most current literature and discussions relating to Moana research, it was clear to me that, in order to access *Faiva* through Tongan understandings of it, rather than that posed by previous Western researchers, I would not only have to review both my theoretical and methodological approach very carefully, but also my process. In other words, the whole methodological/theoretical model within which I was going to work, including the processes by which I interrelated to my informants, needed to be appropriate if I was going to address many of the critical issues involved in the Tongan epistemology and knowledge system I was researching.¹⁰

For instance, critical and theoretical concepts associated with *Faiva*, such as *tā* (“time”) and *vā* (“space”), *tauhi vā* (“art of socio-spatial relations”), *mālie* (“aesthetically pleasing, beautiful”), *māfana* (“feeling of inner emotional warmth”) *heliaki* (to say one thing and mean another, “symbolic metaphor”) and so on, needed to be investigated contextually, and through an appropriate process, if they were ever to be fully appreciated, or even understood. In other words my research needed to be carried out, not just with an appropriate Tongan methodology, but within an appropriate Tongan process that also integrated appropriate theoretical concepts and methodology, but also immersed me personally within the epistemology and ontology from which concepts or meaning actually emerges.

Whilst not speaking of research per se, when speaking of the Moana process of *talanoa* in resolving political conflict in Fiji, Sitiveni Halapua clearly illustrates a situation where an appropriate Moana process is critical to understanding and resolution:

Meaning in conflict and peace is to be found in the Pacific-based concept of space or *vā* within which the connections of rights and obligations are located.

⁹ Cf. Kaepler, 1967, 1972, 1978, 1983, 1985, 1993, 1994; Moyle, 1987, 1991, 1993, 2002.

¹⁰ Which also demanded both the willingness and ability to participate in a reciprocal manner.

Vā is the space i.e. the connections of rights and obligations of who we are, what we want and what we do that we nurture, preserve, enhance, and share in our different ways in life. The moral dimension of *vā* gives us the meaning in conflict and peace in our society. In that conflict means bad *vā*, and peace means good *vā*. This is manifested through the connections of: (1) our dialogic rights to speak, to hear and to speak-in-return good (or bad) ‘words’; and (2) our exchange obligations to give, to receive and to give-in-return good (or bad) ‘things’ in our continual interactions with one another over time. For example, we can witness the traditional construction and reconstruction of good *vā* between different lineage-groups in the symbolic presentation of words, *kava*, food, and mats etc. and the drinking of *kava* and redistribution of these cultural items in traditional feasts and ceremonies...

Understanding and respecting the diverse interests, needs, aspirations, and constraints of *vā* that different cultural and ethnic groups have to think, commit, and demonstrate in their own words and actions is something we must learn to appreciate through *talanoa*. I would suggest that we can and ought to rely on the process of *talanoa* to construct and reconstruct the peaceful pathways in the space we share between what we perceive as ‘them’ and ‘us’ in our different cultural ways in life. The process of *talanoa* involves frank expression without concealment in face-to-face storytelling. It embodies our understanding of the inner feeling and experience of the space of who we are, what we want, and what we do and share as members of different groups in life...

Talanoa helps build better understanding cooperation within and across our human relationships in *vā*. It advances narrative understanding and knowledge about our social identities, our extended families, our villages, our ethnic and tribal communities, our values, beliefs, and relationships, and our moral, economic, and political interests. (Halapua, 2003).

Whilst Halapua suggests that we need to appreciate one another and “can and ought to rely on the process of *talanoa*” to understand each other in political problems such as those in Fiji, in my view, the same understanding applies to a research situation. In fact, the appropriateness of processes such as *talanoa*, and concepts such as *tā* and *vā*, are particularly important when a researcher is striving to solve problems of meaning and a deeper understanding of culturally embedded social concepts across the Moana.

This is further emphasized by Albert Wendt, when speaking of Samoan culture, he states:

Important to the Samoan view of reality, is the concept of *vā* or *wa* in Māori and Japanese. *Vā* is the space between, the betweenness, not empty space, not space that separates, but space that relates, that holds separate entities and things together in the Unity-that-is-All, the space that is context, giving meaning to things...

A well-known Samoan expression is ‘*Ia teu le va*’ –cherish, nurse, care for the *vā*, the relationships. This is crucial in communal cultures that value group unity more than individualism, that perceive the individual person, or creature, or things in terms of groups, in terms of *vā* or relationships. (Wendt, 1999:402)

The process of *Talanoa*

In terms of my own methodology then, it was important to not only choose a research process that was appropriate for addressing an understanding of *Faiva* but also the many Moana issues conceptualized and interwoven within embedded social relationships.

According to Sitiveni Halapua:

The process of *talanoa* involves frank expression without concealment in face-to-face dialogue. It embodies our understanding of the inner feeling and experience of who we are, what we want, and what we do as members of a shared community termed the nation. I use the words “frank expression without concealment” precisely because the meaning of *talanoa* is derived from two different yet related meanings in the languages of Austronesian-speaking people: *tala* meaning talking or telling stories and *noa* meaning “zero or without concealment.” Our reconstruction of the meaning of *talanoa* tells us that it can mean engaging in dialogue with or telling stories to each other absent of concealment of the inner feelings and experiences that resonate in our hearts and minds. *Talanoa* embraces our worldviews of how we can and ought to live and work together collectively, and relate to one another as members of society. (Halapua, 2002:1)

In Tonga the word *talanoa* just means to talk generally. Whilst Halapua speaks of openness and freedom from concealment in the process he calls *talanoa*, openness and lack of concealment are not necessarily guaranteed.

In terms of my own research, or in any research for that matter, it is an historic certainty that a portion of information obtained from participants will always be questionable. This does not mean that there is necessarily any deliberate concealment, deception or dishonesty on the part of a participant, but rather, a good portion of any information obtained from participants in research is dependent on so many variables. Typically, the validity of information obtained from participants for instance, depends on variables such as the knowledge and/or ability of a participant to articulate

information, hidden influences such as unstated or unclear agendas on the part of researcher or participant, or simply from miscommunication, misunderstanding, and simple error.¹¹

Openness and lack of concealment, as in Halapua's case, is an ideal that is strived for perhaps through ethics and ground rules, rather than being implicit in the overall naming of the process as *talanoa*. In my own research for instance, the process of *talanoa* was certainly essential for what I was after, that is; a deep philosophical and theoretical discussion about concepts associated with *Faiva* leading to some sort of consensus about what *Faiva* actually is. In terms of the value of this approach, Moana societies have traditionally used the process of *talanoa* to not only develop knowledge but also to develop cooperation and understanding. It is a process that is not only an important part of social identity, but has also contributed to, and been part of a uniquely Moana way of viewing the world.

It must be pointed out however, that unless *talanoa* is explicitly integrated with the sort of Moana ethical issues discussed earlier, and combined with an appropriate Moana methodological model, it is not in its own right anything different than what would be called "general discussion" in the West. In other words, Moana ethics and appropriate ground rules are not an inherent part *talanoa*, and these need to be specified by a researcher in terms of how *talanoa* is carried out in any particular circumstance.

For instance, Timote Vaioleti states:

In a good *talanoa* encounter, *noa* creates the space and conditions. *Tala* holistically intermingles researchers' and participants' emotions, knowing and experiences. This synergy leads to an energizing and uplifting of the spirits, and to a positive state of connectedness and enlightenment (see *mālie* in Manu'atu, 2002). It is the new knowing that has been missed by most traditional research approaches. (Vaioleti, 2006:24).

The *talanoa* that Vaioleti is describing here is actually much more than just *talanoa*, but *talanoa* in an Indigenous environment. In this respect it is a culturally embedded

¹¹ In Tonga, there is also the issue of *faka'aki'akimui* ("indirectness") in people's formal and informal communicative exchanges. These are characterized by the notions of *heliaki* (to speak one thing and mean another) and *faka'esia* (*faka-*'esia; lit. to-make-a-handle; i.e., to cover up).

non-linear, responsive, and phenomenological process that is appropriate in Moana research. In this form *talanoa* offers an important dimension so often over-looked by Western approaches; it engenders an important sense of trust, security and respect amongst all participants in what amounts to a complimentary and cooperative enterprise, that addresses the social relationships of all participants in an appropriate way, or as Wendt (1999) would say ‘*Ia teu le va*’ (cherish, nurse, care for the *vā*, the relationships). In these regards, *talanoa* offers an opportunity for participants and researcher to learn from each other and to open new possibilities and insights that could never have been imagined by a researcher at the outset.

Moana research under these circumstances, becomes a cooperative enterprise, evolving creation of knowledge and insight, rather than the more typical Western versions of researcher and informant/participant. In this form *talanoa* can be more than a means to an end, but also a living and dynamic process in itself. This is something that is often overlooked in Western styles of research, and yet is an essential part of the human relationship between researcher and participant in the Moana. In other words, research based on Moana processes such as *talanoa* offer neither solution nor answer per se, but when combined with a Moana methodological/ethical context, elicits an appropriate kind of relationship between researcher and Moana participant and, as a consequence, an appropriate kind of relationship between researcher and Moana insight and knowledge.

In my own case, the rich metaphorical and poetical content of Tongan language appears to have posed special problems for researchers. *Heliaki* for instance, as mentioned, is a Tongan concept that refers to “saying one thing and meaning another”. As the Moana scholar ‘Okusitino Māhina states:

Heliaki, the equivalent of the Greek *epiphora*, can be viewed as an instrument through which qualities of two closely associated objects are exchanged in the event, where the qualities of one point to the real in the other. In varying degrees, the use of *heliaki* is applied to all the art forms of oratory, proverbs and poetry. (Māhina, 2004a:20)

In this respect, leaving aside what a researcher themselves may think, things an informant may say to mean one thing, can in fact refer to something entirely different.

In other words, *talanoa* in the right context, is an ideal vehicle for discovering the deeper concepts and meanings contained in Tongan *Faiva*, and also in clarifying and developing these. I believe in fact, the deeper concepts associated with Tongan *Faiva* may not be accessible in any other way.

Whilst there may be ongoing debate about the validity of *talanoa* as a research process in Western terms, this appears to be based on a lack of understanding of the appropriate context in which it is to be applied. In reality all research processes are subject to biases and limits, but their value tends to lie not so much in what they can't do but in what they can, especially when their limits are understood and they are applied appropriately and in the proper context. Whilst *talanoa* may always be entirely qualitative and, in Western scientific terms, subjective and unstructured, what it has to offer in the appropriate context, is not only a genuine overt relationship between researcher and participant, rather than the many types of covert reflexive relationships found in so many research situations, but also a clear evolvment of insight and discovery not possible in other ways. Actually, the rich potential that processes such as *talanoa* demonstrate, not only in terms of appropriate communication and sharing of information, but also in terms of possible outcomes, makes it in my experience not only essential, but also a fundamental process in any type of Moana research.

In my own work for instance, the appropriate use of *talanoa* along within an appropriate Moana methodological model, has exhibited a value that cannot be overlooked. In this respect, not only was *talanoa* an appropriate process of Tongan social interaction, but an exciting “tool” that was not only traditionally understood, but one that offered me a way of exploring, discovering, and refining deeper meanings and potentials for both myself and my participants.¹²

In my own case, research into Tongan *Faiva* and developing a deeper understanding of it in terms of its associated vocabulary, certainly required this approach. It was

¹² In Moana research a good Moana relationship is *mālie* and this in turn generates *māfana* warmth, *vela* ‘fieriness’ and *tauelangi* ‘climaxed elation’ when people of like minds meet together in the spirit of *tatau* symmetry, *potupotutatau* harmony and *mālie* beauty. Cf. Manu‘atu 2000, 2003.

clear therefore, that there was real value in adopting *talanoa* as a process, because of its cultural appropriateness. In this respect for instance, *talanoa* also offered me the opportunity to develop a reciprocal relationship between myself and my participants, one that was based on the appropriate personal qualities that also demonstrated my desire to safeguard this special knowledge. The “Moana way” has always been spoken rather than written, based as it is on oral traditions and oratory, and consequently a long history and tradition of verbal negotiation. *Talanoa* allowed me to be flexible, to discuss, question, modify and reassess ideas and beliefs, and in short, to create a better, deeper understanding of *Faiva* that would not have been possible if I had started with precise, fixed, pre-conceived questions and ideas.

What also became clear in my research, was not only the value of processes such as *talanoa* in modern research, but that Moana knowledge itself was always created in this way. In other words, for thousands of years *talanoa* has been part of a tradition where Moana peoples have established knowledge through their own research into their world. *Talanoa* is in effect, both the heart of an oral tradition, and part of this larger process by which Moana people have always negotiated their traditional ways of being in the past, present and future.

Part 3: An appropriate Moana methodological framework

Whilst *talanoa* has always been practiced across the Moana, it was also practiced in, and helped to develop appropriate Moana methodological frameworks. Whilst I came across a number of discussions of Moana methodological frameworks within the generality of “Pacific studies discourse”, I considered a combination of the Tongan “Metaphor of *Kakala*” (Thaman 1993, 1998, 2003b) together with my own “Metaphor of *No‘o‘anga*” (shark tying or noosing), as appropriate methodological Moana frameworks that, combined with *talanoa*, exhibited a specific Tongan approach that I could adopt in my research. In this way, my methodology embraced not only traditional Tongan processes such as *talanoa*, but a genuinely integrated Tongan approach on all levels.¹³

¹³ In other words an approach that involves not just Tongan protocols and practices, but also an approach that treated my informants with respect as active producers of knowledge, not just objects of study.

Metaphor of *Kakala*

In Tonga *kakala* are garlands woven from fragrant flowers for special occasions. Konai Helu-Thaman, describes her metaphor in the following way:

Sourced from my own (Tongan) culture, *kakala* refers to fragrant flowers woven together to make a garland, and has equivalent concepts in Oceania such as *lei* (Hawaii), *hei* (Cook Islands) or *salusalu* (Fiji). There exist in Tonga and elsewhere, etiquette and mythology associated with *kakala* making. *Kakala* embodies physical, social and spiritual elements and reflects the integrate nature of indigenous epistemologies and knowledge systems. *Kakala* are a weaving together of a variety of disparate elements which partake in a celebration of life, culture and aesthetic pleasure...

There are three major processes associated with the making of *kakala*: *toli*, *tui*, and *luva*. *Toli* is the collection and selection of flowers and other plant material that are required for making a *kakala*: this would depend not only on the occasion but also on the person(s) for whom the *kakala* is being made. It will also depend on the availability of the materials themselves. *Tui* is the making or weaving of a *kakala*. The time taken to do this would also depend on the complexity and intricacies of the flowers and the type of *kakala* being made. In Tonga, flowers are ranked according to their cultural importance with the *heilala* having pride of place because of the mythology associated with it. *Luva* is the final process and is about giving the *kakala* away to someone as a sign of peace, love and respect. (Thaman, 2003b:15)

According to Thaman (2008), others have added to this metaphor more recently to make it a five stage process: *Teu* as preparation in the very beginning, and then in the final stage: *Mālie* (beauty) and *Māfana* (inner emotional warmth generated by *mālie*) which equates to the measure of success. i.e. If there is no *Mālie* and *Māfana*, then there must be something wrong somewhere.

In terms of this metaphor, in my own research then:

- *Teu* equates to initial preparation and planning
- *Toli* equates with the stages where I identify the issues that I wish to research, choose the participants, and collect my information.
- *Tui* equates to my analysis and the weaving together of all the information I have gathered into a completed thesis.

- *Luva* equates to the publication and thereby my offering of my thesis to the Tongan and wider Pacific community and the participants in my research.
- *Mālie* and *Māfana* will be my measure of success in terms of the final outcome.

The primary aim of my research then, was not only to gather Moana knowledge and understanding as “flowers” from the Moana, but to also weave them in a Moana way for the adornment of Moana peoples. I see Moana peoples as far more than just subjects of research or resources to be tapped, but as active producers of knowledge, and participants who play an equal part through *talanoa*, and who can share mutually in the beauty (*mālie*) and feelings of excitement (*māfana*) that come from such an enterprise. In fact, it is only in this way that the true dimensions of a concept such as *Faiva* can be appreciated.

To come even closer to this in the actual practice of my own research however, I also felt that adopting the “Metaphor of *Kakala*” as a methodological model was not quite enough in terms of reaching the deeper levels of meaning in *Faiva*. In other words, what rapidly became apparent to me, was that I needed something that would prepare me, myself, in a personal way that has previously been discussed in the section on Moana ethics. In turn this would allow me to comprehend information from a more Tongan perspective and to enhance my understanding of the “knowledge context” so to speak.

In order to consolidate my methodological approach therefore, I have further refined my methodology by adding what I call the “Metaphor of *No ‘o ‘anga*”

Metaphor of *No ‘o ‘anga*¹⁴

No ‘o ‘anga (shark tying or noosing) is a traditional form of fishing in Tonga also known as *Siu*, and is unique to Tonga. Tongans believe that this form of fishing is the enactment of the legend of Sinilau’s courtship of Hina. Although sharks are notorious killers of fishermen across the Moana, *Siu*, involves the idea of personal and symbolic

¹⁴ See Ministry of Education. Tonga 1985:21-37, 1990:200-211.

preparation in order to carry it out. The testament to the validity of this approach in this dangerous situation is borne out by the fact that it has never been known to result in death or serious injury for those involved.

Siu is carried out by the 'Eueiki chief Tu'itufu and his *kāinga* during the months of February through June. From August to December the *kāinga* of Ha'apai carry out their *siu*. If there is a presentation ceremony at Pangai (officiating ground usually with the king present), Tu'itufu's *hala* (presentation), is a *kato'anga* (baskets of shark meat). He is usually joined by the *kāinga* of Nuku (chief of Kolonga) and the *kāinga* of Niutoua (villages of the eastern tip of Tongatapu).

The "Metaphor of *No'o'anga*" in my methodological approach then, is to do with the stages of preparation for *Siu*, which I have interpreted as follows:

Preparation of *Siu* (Shark-fishing) ¹⁵

In order for a voyage of *siu* to take place, these things must first be done.

1. Build a *falesiu* ("house of *siu*") or bless an old one to be a *falesiu*. Sometimes the house of the boat's captain (*tangata taumuli* or *'eikivaka*) is used. A large boat is prepared, and several *kele'a* (conch shells) are put on board.

I interpret this stage as being equivalent to seeking and finding the "house" of my mentors, and blessing it as a "*falesiu*" for my research voyage. This of course did not mean their actual house but rather the place they live academically. My mentors are those with highly specialized knowledge appropriate for my study of *Faiva*.

2. Make a *fāngongo* – several coconut shells strung together on a stick that easily bends, like *tutu'uli* or *hako'imoli*. The stick is bent into a circle and its ends tied. Also some garlands of *fā* (pandanus fruit) and some *sisi* (flower girdle) are made.

¹⁵ See: Ministry of Education, Tonga: 1985:21-37, 1990:200-211.

I interpret this stage as being equivalent to developing my theory, in other words, stringing Māhina's Tā-Vā Theory of Reality together with my own theoretical construct of the Hypothesis of Laumālie.

3. Make a *paletu 'a* (shield carried on the back) or *kali 'o Hina* (wooden headrest of Hina). Usually this is a branch of ironwood tree. This is the club with which the shark is struck dead. A long stick about eight *ofa* (unit of measurement from the middle of the chest to the end of the fingers of an outstretched arm of an adult.) or five meters long is prepared and the *mounu* or bait is tied to the end. The bait may consist of a leg of pork or dog. A strong rope is braided with *fau* (hibiscus bark), or a rope from a shop can be used now. This is the rope that is used to make the noose for the shark, to tie up the shark.

I interpret this stage as being equivalent to forming and developing my methodological processes such as *talanoa* and my methodological frameworks as a noose in which to capture the "shark" called *Faiiva*.

4. 'Oho (food for people travelling at sea) called *manava* is prepared, which is the underground oven-baked food for voyagers at sea. The food maybe pork, chicken, yam, anything, but there must also be *niumata* (green coconuts).

I interpret this stage as being equivalent to the *koha* (gifts) I used to sustain those participants who helped me in my research "Siu."

5. Just before the voyage sets off, the fishermen will gather together to for a kava-drinking ceremony. The *tou 'a* (person who pounds and mixes the kava) can be either male or female. When the kava is strained clean, the *tou 'a* will say so. The *taumuli* (captain of the boat) will then order the kava to be poured into a kava cup. He will order the first kava cup to be taken to Hina. The *angaikava* (one of the two persons sitting on either side of the *tou 'a*) will then walk with the kava cup and pour the kava into the sea. This is their homage to Hina. They will then each drink the first round. Then there will be a second and last round. After that they will board the boat.

I interpret this stage as being equivalent to my willingness to do *faiva haka* and *faiva ta'anga*...my “homage to Hina” which in this case was my “homage to *Faiva*” an offering to not only *Faiva*, but also to the greater wisdom of Tonga and the *Faiva* insights that I wished to summon from the great Moana Nui and into which it is inextricably woven.

My rationale in the addition of the “Metaphor of *No'o'anga*” methodological framework to that of “Metaphor of *Kakala*” was, as mentioned before, to entwine myself more deeply and appropriately in the knowledge and in the ways of the knowledge I was seeking, both methodologically and personally. In other words, it is not only necessary to be entirely open-minded to avoid, or at least minimize, pre-emptive Western conceptualizations and paradigms, agendas, or methodology that may interfere, but also, to weave my *kakala* with specific Moana cultural values, and particularly with the ethical/personal beliefs that pervade all forms of sharing in Moana life.¹⁶

It is appropriate that *no'o'anga* is also itself considered to be a *Faiva* in Tonga, namely *faiva no'o'anga*. In other words *no'o'anga* done in the way of *Faiva*. In this context *Faiva* also means *'ulungāanga faka-Tonga* (the “Tongan way”).¹⁷

It is interesting to note here, that my study of Tongan *Faiva* taught me that my research itself needed to be done in the way of *Faiva* if it was to progress beyond the more superficial aspects of *Faiva*. The Westernizing of Moana knowledge and consequent lack of any real depth in many pieces of Moana research, and in much of the academic literature that is built on, bears stark testimony that such essential preparation and personal transformation was not done by those researchers.

If a researcher is to reach more deeply into his/her Moana subject matter, like the courtship of Hina, the knowledge and understanding a researcher seeks is like a shark that needs to be summoned appropriately and caught properly. Whilst knowledge may come towards them, emerging as it were, from the depths of the Moana Nui, they will

¹⁶ See Thaman 2004a, 2008b; Ka'ili 2005, 2008.

¹⁷ See chapter 7.

need to be prepared to be the “right person” so that the knowledge may, like the shark, not loiter (*mamio*), but rather, swim directly to them and be able to be captured correctly by them. In other words, both the attraction of knowledge and the understanding of what to do with that knowledge are dependent on a researcher being properly prepared as in *faiva no ‘o ‘anga*. In this respect, the results of my research has borne out the idea of not only the importance of appropriate methodological and theoretical frameworks but also that the personal/ethical dimension is of prime importance in Moana research.

This brings me to perhaps the most important point in this whole discussion, that is, in developing Moana methodological (and theoretical) approaches, we are not discovering new ways of researching, but recovering time-honored Moana traditions that made up a very real and complete “Moana natural science” in every sense of the concept. In other words, Moana traditions that were always equal in their integrity and outcomes to any Western approach, and ones that not only generated an enormous amount of sophisticated and valuable knowledge, but also a large amount of social and personal structures to perpetuate and further refine that knowledge.

From ancient times Moana people were successful in not only colonizing the whole of the Moana, but also at developing the knowledge required for a deep and lasting success in what is seen by some as one of the most unforgiving of all environments, namely the ocean. To put this accomplishment in its true perspective, the sea-going nature of Moana cultures allowed them to thrive in an ocean empire far greater than any of the land based ones of the Westerner who came to dominate them. To not consider how this was possible, is to not recognise that Moana peoples had an extensive and highly developed knowledge base, not only in seamanship but also in navigation, agriculture and social structure. Most people for instance, do not appreciate the degree of social cohesion that is required in all those who would venture across the vast wastes of the Moana, or to live within the immensity of its realm, let alone the endurance and sophistication required in both navigation and seamanship.¹⁸

¹⁸ See Thomas 1987; Lewis 1978; Heyerdahl 1951.

Of course the research that underpinned this extensive and valuable Moana knowledge, and the traditions that perpetuated it were not the same as those found in the West, but highly sophisticated oral and other traditions. Not only was this knowledge developed and perpetuated through *talanoa* for instance, but also preserved through various forms of *Faiva* and *tala-e-fonua* (“oral histories”), and was itself further refined by these processes, and in models of social process as demonstrated in the Metaphor of *Kakala* and more personal processes as in that of the Metaphor of *No‘o‘anga*. In this respect, knowledge was also consolidated and preserved in formal education of those who were considered to have ethical qualities. In other words, those who were worthy to be trusted with such knowledge and who would perpetuate it for the benefit of the people.

Finally it is important to note that in the case of Tonga, *Faiva* itself is at the heart of such processes. Knowledge was both recorded, preserved and perpetuated by means of *Faiva*. For instance *faiva ta‘anga* (poetic expression), *faiva hiva* (song like expression), *faiva haka* (dance like expression), *faiva lea* (oratory), *faiva faifolau* (Moana voyaging) to name but a few classes of *Faiva*, all play their part in not only recording, but also perpetuating and refining knowledge and all theoretical aspects of that knowledge. It is important to note in this context that the word *Faiva* is often translated as “the art of” but has much deeper and important implications in Tongan culture. Whilst this will be discussed more fully,¹⁹ it is enough here to say that *Faiva* is more equivalent to being *‘ulungāanga faka-Tonga*, or the “Tongan way” of doing something, which includes every aspect of what the “Tongan way” implies, personally, socially, spiritually and within a Tongan knowledge context.

In all these respects, when I came to do my own research, I have simply modeled it on the soundness of Moana traditions, ones that have not only proven to be extraordinarily effective in the Moana environment, but ones that are still embedded and preserved in much of Moana cultures ways of being.²⁰

¹⁹ See chapter 7.

²⁰ As Kabini F Sanga states: Indigenous Pacific research needs to be more of itself, first. It needs to know more of what it really is and what it is not. Indigenous Pacific research must paint all its shades of brown, while remaining true to its philosophical roots. Whatever the level of debate, indigenous Pacific research must be consistent with its fundamental nature. Within this, the need is to mark out

My methodology then, not only embraces the process of *talanoa* to collect and refine information, or “flowers for my *kakala*”, but was also conducted in accordance with all the previously stated personal, ethical and culturally appropriate qualities in place. My research showed that it was all these components together and holistically, that formed the very strength of the thread upon which a *kakala* of this nature is woven, or upon which a successful *siu* is subsequently carried out. In particular, by seeking to weave my *kakala* in the *‘ulungāanga faka-Tonga* (the “Tongan way”), for the benefit of Tongans, I was in fact performing the very thing I had come to study...*Faiva*. It is I believe, only by having these intentions right from the beginning, that a researcher can hope to perform an appropriate *Faiva* type of “research” as well as come to understand the processes by which the sophistication and beauty of Moana knowledge was itself attained and retained through thousands of years of traditional Moana research.

I firmly believe that it is only by these means that an integrated Moana personal/theoretical/methodological process involving respect, reciprocity, communalism, gerontocracy, humility, love, service and spirituality, that my methodology and my research outcomes have come to more truly reflect a genuine Moana research approach and the subsequent outcome: A beautiful “*kahoa*”...one that is non-exploitative and firmly rooted in Moana values, assumptions, knowledge, processes and practice.....one that is woven with Moana philosophy and aesthetics, to create both *mālie* (beauty) and *māfana* (inner emotional warmth), for all concerned. In other words, the real *Faiva*.

My methodology in summary:

- Respect and appreciation for traditional Moana (natural scientific) methods as valid “scientific” approaches to research.
- Respect and appreciation for how this knowledge is still embedded and preserved in Moana cultural practices.

what are unique, distinctive or similar and then to explain these adequately and logically, using the logic of indigenous Pacific research. (Sanga 2004:50)

- *Talanoa* as a socially appropriate process to refine and develop theory, methodology, and knowledge.
- Socially based methodology as in the Metaphor of *Kakala*.
- Personally based methodology and preparation as in the Metaphor of *No‘o‘anga*.
- Ethical and responsible, together with personal skill development, so a researcher may become *mateuteu* (ready), *fa‘a kātaki* (tolerant, having endurance, loyal), *‘ofa, fakatoo ki lalo* (possessing humility, respect for tradition) and one who would use the knowledge for the benefit of the whole (*poto*).
- A move away from what I believe to be unrealistic Western ideas of a Moana researcher being an “uninvolved” individual who tries to be an “objective” observer, to a more appropriate Moana social participant who is capable of both reciprocating (*tauhi vā*) and participating in *talanoa*.

A final note:

The development of Moana theory and methodology as discussed in this and the last chapter has been used to set the overall appropriateness of my theoretical and methodological environment. As my research also concerned the study of vocabulary surrounding *Faiva*, in other words the cultural context of *Faiva*, and as this has been entirely imposed on and re-interpreted by Western concepts and ideas about language, it has also been necessary to explore and discuss the development of an appropriate approach to Moana language itself. Whilst the theoretical modification of Māhina’s Tā-Vā Theory with the addition of the Hypothesis of Laumālie was specifically for this purpose, the following chapter further discusses some of the reasons for needing this approach and its application in more detail.

Chapter 5:

Tā ē lango kei mama‘o

Cutting wooden cradles in time.

When preparation is made in time for a coming event (Māhina 2004a:201)

Application of a Moana Research Perspective: Preparing for the Study of *Faiva*: The Use of Appropriate Vocabulary

Ancient Language

Ancient language weathered in time
Reveal peoples' reasons and their rhyme
How did they think?
What did they say?
People of the ancient way

Ancestors of the earth and sky
Your spirits at rest your time gone by
You call to me through hiva and haka
People of the land in the sea
Why do you speak to me?

The man whose skin is white
Came at the time of twilight
Is this a warning?
Of a new dawning
Life in a new age
For us to engage
But dialogue on a page

Let Pālangi have their say
But don't give our language away
Is it for us to do?
Leaving the old for what seems new
For in its place an empty space
And a language not our own
And when we speak
We see his face
He's made us his colonial clone

People of the Moana
I know what I say
For Pālangi thinking blocks my way
Back-to-front and going astray
It's taken time to set me free

To say “I’m not Pālangi,”
 Except what you made me be

People of the ancient time
 Now I know your forgotten rhyme
 Revealing to me your sacred tones
 Rhythms felt deep in my bones

Preserving our language is a must
 For Pālangi records gather dust.
 Our generations yet to be
 Tangaloa and Maui of our sea.

(A *faiva ta’anga* for ‘Ilaisaane Kakala Taumoefolau, by Helen Ferris-Leary 2010)

<p><i>Fakamolemole ‘a hou ‘eiki mo ngaahi ha ‘a He ‘oku mama ‘o mo faingata ‘a ‘a e fa ‘anga Ko e tolutalu na ‘e tu ‘u holo he ngaahi halanga Kuo fu ‘u puli pea ‘alu mo hono to ‘utangata Ka neongo ‘ene vao fihi mo te e va ‘ava ‘a Kae fai pē ha vavaku mo si ‘a fa ‘ala Kia Touia- ‘o-Futuna ko e ‘uluaki maka Na ‘e fai mei ai hotau Kamata ‘anga Kehe ko e talatupu ‘a ia mo e fananga ‘Oku utuutu mei ai si ‘a kau fa ‘a</i></p> <p>Tāfolo</p>	<p>Pardon me, noble chiefs and lineages For the searching place is now far and difficult The plantations once scattered on the road Have now quite disappeared and gone with them their generation But although they now lie in very thick bush Search will be made at any rate For Touia- ‘o-Futuna, the first rock Where our origin began Though these are only myths and legends ‘Tis here the inquirers get their facts</p>
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(Gifford, 1924a)

Like the difficulty of searching in the thick bush for lost plantations, or the seeking of knowledge in myths and legends in the poem above, searching for knowledge in Indigenous cultures is at its best overgrown and entangled, and at its worst obstructed or obliterated.

Like any other problem, the solution usually relies on our ability to clearly identify the relevant issues. In terms of cross-cultural research, as in the present case, these are most notably tied to our ability to communicate, and our ability to communicate in turn, is tied to our language.

Apart from my various informants, I investigated many published sources of information for the research that is behind this chapter. As many of the insights and ideas in this chapter are my own and not attributable to any of the following authors, but sometimes formed as a generality or an indirect result of the existence of others work,¹ I have wanted to give reference to them and have done so below in a general list of relevant authors, the titles of their works appearing in the bibliography. Of course, where I have discussed or expressed any of their, or others ideas, or when my ideas were based directly on their work, I have credited or referenced them in that part of the text.

Moana dictionaries:

Andrews & Andrews 1944; Andrews 2003; Baker 1897; Biggs 1990; Capell 1941; Churchward 1953, 1959; Collocott 1925; Colomb 1890; Hazelwood 1979; Inia et al. 1998; Milner 1978; Ngata 1993, Pukui 1986; Rabone 1845; Rensch 1984; Ryan 1997; Schneider 1977; Simona 1986; Sperlich 1997; Thompson & Thompson 1996; Tregear 1891, 1899; Tu‘inukuafe 1992; Wahlroos 2004; Williams 1975; Williams 1844, 1871.

Other works:

Arbib 1986; Bauman & Briggs 1990; Bernardo 1996, 2000; Berger & Luckman 1967, Biggs 1968; Blust 1991; Britton 1976; Buckland 1999; Burrige 2006; Cassirer 1946; Collocott & Havea 1922; Hart 1997; Helu 1999; Heyerdahl 1951, 1958; Hinton 1973; Farrell & Frenz 1979; Finney 1973; Gifford 1923; Grace 1959, 1981, 1987; Hau’ofa 1993a, 1994, 1998, 2008; Helu 1999; Ji, Zhang & Nisbet 2004; Jowit et al. 1990; Kaeppler 1967, 1967b, 1972, 1983, 1983b, 1985, 1987, 1993, 1993, 1994, 1995, 2005; Ka’ili

¹ For instance, the idea that Moana language has been historically and currently approached exclusively through a Western paradigm is based in part, on that commonality in the Moana dictionaries in my list.

2008; Kalakaua 1972; Kalavite 2010; Kamakau 1991; Kepa & Manu'atu 2006; Kennedy 1931; Kolo & Māhina 1983; Lātūkefu 1968, 1973; Laycock 1972; Lewis 1978; Logan 1986; Māhina 1992, 2000b, 2004a, 2004b, 2004d, 2005a, 2005c, 2005d, 2007d, 2009b, 2010a; Māhina & Māhina 2007; Manu'atu 2000, 2000b, 2003; Malinowski 1945; Marck 1996; Martin 1817; McLean 1981, 1995, 1999; McLean & Orbell 2002; Moyle 1987, 1991, 1993, 2002; Memmi 1991; Merriam 1974; Moulin 1979, 1989; Muhlhausler 1996; Nandy 1989; Nettle & Romaine 2000; Pawley 1985; Poort 1975; Potauaine & Māhina 2007; Putman 1975; Radakovich 2004; Reynolds 1990; Rogers 1986; Said 2003, 2004; Salzmann 2007; Sapir 1958; Schweitzer 1998; Schwimmer 1968; Shennan 1981; Shirres 1979; Shumway 1977; Smith 2005; Spencer 1985; Thomas 1987; Tiliai 1987; Taumoe folau 1998, 2004, 2004b, 2010; Thompson 1859; Tregear 1885; Urciuoli 1995; Van Zile 1976, 2004; Velt 1990, 1991, 2000, 2004, 2007; Vitebsky 1993; Welsh & Biggs 1966; West 1997; Wendt 1976, 1996, 1999; Whorf 1956; Wolfgramm 1993; Wood-Ellem 2004.

In order to approach my study of *Faiva* then, I found it necessary to develop not only the general Moana theoretical and methodological approaches discussed in the previous chapters, but also a further perspective on Moana language. This extra step was necessary due to an unquestioned application of a Western paradigm to Moana language, both historically and currently.

I developed this last part of my holistic Moana approach then, not only to facilitate an understanding that Tongan vocabulary and language is conceptually, functionally and relationally different to English but also, to demonstrate the inherent dangers in trying to approach an understanding of Moana “words” utilising a Western paradigm. My research showed in fact, that the imposition of a Western paradigm is so usual in historical and current attempts at understanding Moana languages as to have become the norm and therefore, to go largely unquestioned.

In the case of Tongan “words” this is extremely problematic and is not made any easier by a modern Tonga that in many ways is very Westernised, with many Tongans being fluent in English. Not only has the Tongan language itself undergone changes

as a result, but access to its true *fu*o (“form”), *u*ho (“content”) and ‘*a*onga (“function”) is made more difficult by a presentation in dictionaries, that are themselves a Western paradigm.

As mentioned at the end of the last chapter, whilst a theoretical modification of Māhina’s Tā-Vā Theory of Reality with the Hypothesis of Laumālie,² was specifically for the purpose of accommodating the various non-Western issues in Moana language, this chapter discusses some of the reasons for needing such an approach to Moana language in general, and an indication of its application. It was and is however, beyond the scope of this thesis to develop a fuller and more detailed treatise on the subject.

This chapter is therefore divided into seven parts

- Part 1: What words are made of and the effect of language on our reality
- Part 2: Inappropriate use of “equivalents”
- Part 3: Western imposition on Moana language
- Part 4: An example of Western imposition
- Part 5: The *fu*o (“form”), *u*ho (“content”) and ‘*a*onga (“function”) of Moana language
- Part 6: Applying a more appropriate analysis to Moana language
- Part 7: Moana language on its own terms

Part 1: What words are made of and the effect of language on our reality

At first sight language may appear to be just words and ways of using them within a certain context. In this respect it appears that different cultures simply have different words for the same things, although they may have different arrangements of combining and saying those words. As many cross-cultural researchers have previously done, it appears that we can simply choose an informant and, with a good translator, or dictionary in hand, we will be able to communicate successfully.

² See chapter 3.

In reality, it is clear from the discussion so far that it is not at all that simple. In fact many languages are not translatable directly. Even very knowledgeable translators can have difficulties in translating works from one language to another and often two translators will render entirely different meanings from the same text. This is not a question of incompetence on the part of a translator, but rather, because language embodies far more information than just words. Words for instance, may embody many different and complex innuendos or inferences. These may be conceptual, philosophical, or even spiritual, not to mention the fact that there are sometimes no equivalents of words in other languages, or no equivalent concepts through which to express the meaning of words in another language.³

On the subject of words for instance, Melenaite Taumoefolau states:

One way of understanding a people - their culture, their values, their beliefs, their thought or mentality - would be to study their language because their language is, in a very real way, their thought. When I say “language”, I mean specifically the meanings of the words in a language. After all, what is language without meaning? A word is not a word unless it represents some kind of meaning. I use the word “language” only with great reservation because by using it, we often envisage a thing that is somehow separate from meaning - we think only of a system of symbols that are arrangeable into grammatical constructions by the use of grammatical rules. That mechanical view of language distances it from meaning, and therefore the idea of thought. The word “meaning”, on the other hand, is the thought or idea behind a word. Thus, to study the meanings of words in a given language is to study also the substance of the thought system of the users of that language. (Taumoefolau, personal communication, May 2010)

The importance of getting a correct and appropriate perspective on Moana language in all these regards, is essential in any and all Moana research. That this is the case can be exemplified by considering the work of George W. Grace in his book *An Essay on Language* (1981), and again in *The linguistic Construction of Reality* (1987),

³ Many Tongan words have no English equivalent and, therefore, cannot be translated correctly and effectively. Some examples include the words expressing the core values such as lototō, fua kavenga, and mamahi‘i me‘a. The language used for teasing people and the special speech style to show deference for royalty and nobility does not have an English equivalent, for example, the word tangaki synonymous to the word hila for the king that means “to glance” or “turn the eyes”. (Kalavite 2010:44)

where Grace expressed the idea that language is the one essential tool in the social construction of reality itself.⁴

Grace for instance, when referring to Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman's 1966 book "The Social Construction of Reality" in his book "The Linguistic Construction of Reality" (1987) states:

The human species –and no other- possesses the one essential tool which makes a social construction of reality possible. That tool is language. Not only is language the means by which this kind of reality construction is accomplished, it is also the means by which the realities, once constructed, are preserved and transmitted from person to person and from generation to generation. Hence it is entirely appropriate to refer more specifically to the *linguistic* construction of reality. (Grace, 1987:3)

Of course in the present discussion on Moana language, I would emphasize that while Grace's ideas are usually thought of as applying to language specifically, they also apply equally to Western constructs that surround the Western approach to languages in the first place, including the foundation and development of Western ideas in the field of linguistics. What this means in the present context, is that it is not only problematic to assign Western words as "equivalents" to Moana words or concepts, but equally, to apply Western ideas and concepts involving words, as nouns, verbs, adjectives, or word meaning stemming from a root, modified by suffixes and prefixes and so on, or even a Western concept of what constitutes a language in the first place. In other words, these are all part of a Western paradigm.⁵

According to Melenaita Taumoefolau:

The Reality Construction function of language means there can be differences across languages that may lead to languages having different concepts, leading

⁴ Actually the idea that language has an intimate relationship with culture has a long history. Salzman for instance states: The nature of the relationship between language and culture was under consideration long before anthropology became recognized as a scholarly field in its own right. Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), a well known German diplomat and scholar, was one of those who had very definite thoughts on the subject. He wrote, "The spiritual traits and the structure of the language of a people are so intimately blended that, given either of the two, one should be able to derive the other from it to the fullest extent...Language is the outward manifestation of the spirit of people: their language is their spirit, and their spirit is their language; it is difficult to imagine any two things more identical." (Salzman 2007:49).

⁵ Cf: Berger & Luckman 1967; Grace 1981, 1987; Sapir 1958; Whorf 1956.

to non-translatability. Some aspects of Pacific worlds are different and may be accessed through concepts encoded in the vocabulary. Researching the vocabulary of say, *faiva*, would yield word-concepts that are important in *faiva* and may not be accessible through study in another language. (Taumoefolau, personal communication, May 2010)

What this also means, is that across cultures there exist not only significant differences, some of which arise directly from an experience of living in a particular culture, but also many more from the “knowledge production” and subsequent “reality construction” aspects of language. In this regard, it is also important to note human beings ability to use language to think and develop philosophical, theoretical or religious/spiritual beliefs beyond the tangible and material. The substantial cultural differences that can occur, again emphasizes the difficulty in correct translation or even in the suggestion of real equivalences from one culture to another. Not only is this extremely problematic, but may be in some cases simply impossible to resolve.

The sociolinguistic idea of a socially/linguistically constructed reality rather than simple material reality has, in my opinion, not been satisfactorily explored in the present context of indigenous research. This and the work of Sapir (1958) and Whorf (1956) for instance, demonstrates the need for a careful re-evaluation of the pre-emptive power of social constructs inherent in language, and how this may directly effect what a researcher perceives when carrying out cross-cultural research. In other words, whilst on a purely physical plane, material reality is the same for every culture, perception of that material reality, namely perceptual reality, may not be the same. In this respect, and much to the vexation of many a researcher, even when a researcher is absolutely convinced of their material equivalence, similar looking material things across cultures, because they may be conceptualized entirely differently, are effectively, to be considered as not the same in material reality.⁶

⁶ Even seemingly simple material objects may fall in this category. Taumoefolau for instance discusses the Tongan word *mohenga* meaning “bed”: Nowadays the *mohenga* includes a European bed and mattress, but traditionally, mats and tapa make up the *mohenga*, the quantity and quality of which are a mark of status and a symbol of the willingness of the bride’s family to give away their daughter to the groom. This cultural significance of the *mohenga* is an important part of the meaning of the word. (Taumoefolau 1998:46)

The Sapir-Whorf linguistic relativity hypothesis also presents us with the idea that culture through language, influences peoples thinking.⁷ Logan (1986) offers the idea that language may also effect reasoning styles, and that learning the Western phonetic alphabet has created an abstract conceptual framework, which in turn has structured Westerners perception of reality and style of systematic thought and logic style. A recent study by Ji, Zhang and Nisbet (2004) suggests that cultural background does indeed effect reasoning. In this regard, Piers Vitebsky (1993) discusses how even something as seemingly as tangible as death, may be perceived differently across different cultures.

When we think about the implications of all this in a cross-cultural research context, we can begin to see the true enormity of this problem. As mentioned, one fairly commonly used research approach for instance, has been to develop relationships with informants in another culture. Ideally these informants spoke some English, or a translator was employed to facilitate information gathering from them. In this case it is rather obvious that the translation itself has become pivotal, not just in gathering information, but also in what is being asked, how it is asked, how it is answered, and so on. In many cases we see informants, or translators, not only giving inaccurate translation, but even changing information to suit their perception of the researcher themselves. In other words a translator may re-phrase a statement in order to accommodate what they see as a researcher's ability to understand it. This can be particularly true in places like Tonga, where many Tongans are not only capable of expressing themselves well in English, but where both Western styles of education and research has been a common experience.

This type of distortion can have significant power over a researcher, because it may neatly fulfill a researcher's preconceptions and expectations, especially if the informant or translator has, unbeknownst to the researcher, had prior experience of

⁷ Such caution is well founded in cross-cultural research as demonstrated by Whorf's discussion of his linguistic relativity hypothesis in comparing the Apache equivalent of the English phrase "It is a dripping spring" (referring to a source of water): "Apache erects the statement on a verb *ga* 'be white (including clear, uncoloured, and so on).'" With a prefix *no*-the meaning of downward motion enters: "whiteness moves downward," Then to, meaning both 'water' and 'spring,' is prefixed. The result corresponds to our 'dripping spring,' but synthetically it is 'as water, or springs, whiteness moves downward.' How utterly unlike our way of thinking!" (Whorf 1941:266).

other researchers and their perceptions and expectations. Such “re-construction” of information to suit a researcher, is in effect a “re-construction of reality,” which can clearly misrepresent important facts and obscure important clues to the deeper epistemological underpinnings of a culture, and be completely misleading for a researcher. Even assuming that an informant has knowledge of these deeper dimensions (which many do not), this situation is clearly unworkable in terms of any research that seeks any sort of genuine Indigenous knowledge on its own terms.

In many ways and to varying degrees, these sorts of issues, and problems of poor translation, never goes away, even when a researcher is an insider from a particular culture. Their attempts to convey non-Western ideas, concepts and practice, may be further confounded by a need to produce academically acceptable work, often in English, for Westernized academic forums. In other words, we are not just dealing with translating words from one language into another but rather, the somewhat Herculean task of trying to match one cultural reality with that of another.⁸

Whilst this realization may appear as impossibly daunting, it also offers a simple solution. Since a culture’s language embodies not only the ability of individuals within that culture to communicate, but also their cultural ideas, perceptions, reasoning and conceptualizations of the world itself, it is a good candidate for the purpose of preserving and encapsulating some sort of tangible and ongoing “meaning” in that particular culture, and of setting it in the correct “cultural field” for both researcher and informant. In other words a cultures own language embodies both its epistemology and ontology.

As Melenaita Taumoefolau so clearly states:

Our language is like a container-inside that container is the set of values and beliefs that makes us what we are as a people. Our behaviour, customs, traditions, our ways of thinking our fa’a-Samoa, our anga faka-Tonga, are all packed into this container called language. We lose the container, we lose also

⁸ As Salzmann states: The implications of Whorf’s ideas concerning linguistic relativity and determinism are quite serious. If the worldview and behaviour of a people are significantly affected by the structure of the language they speak, and if languages differ in structure, then cross-cultural communication and understanding are likely to be noticeably impaired, if not impossible to achieve. (Salzmann 2007:55)

the contents. We lose the language, we lose also our distinctive ways that define us to ourselves and to the world.

In cultures where the languages are still central in carrying the values, beliefs and customs of the speakers, it is turning out that language is far more profound and peremptory in our lives than just a structural entity. It is partly the way we think, part of our psychology, part of our subconscious, so for the most part we cannot help but be the persons that we are, because our language has conditioned and is directing our minds and the ways in which we categorize our world. It is for this reason that I believe Pasifika peoples who still have strong Pasifika languages often have defining characteristics imposed upon them and their ways of thinking by their languages. (Taumoefolau, 2004:64-65)

In other words language is not only a form of communication, but is a powerful and important conceptual tool by which human beings construct and philosophize on a purely cognitive level. This understanding is important, because language embodied conceptualization and philosophy has given rise to a great deal of specific vocabulary that is derived from, and embodies a culture's perceptual reality of particular cultural aspects.⁹ This specialized and unique vocabulary in a particular culture offers us not only that cultures view of the real world, but imagined and supposed ones as well. Recognizing this dimension is particularly valuable for a researcher, not only in the gathering of research materials, but in the processing, sorting, prioritizing, and in the analysing and projecting supposed relations and theory.

In this regard, one of the most important things for a researcher to realize, is that everything a researcher may want to study in another culture is already part of an integrated and sophisticated knowledge system, and has already been conceptualized perfectly adequately in that other culture and in its own vocabulary. Great caution should therefore be exercised in any attempt at translating key terminology into any form of Western "equivalents" if at all.

It is clear for instance, that Tongan vocabulary associated with *Faiva*, embodies both a sophisticated and elegant conceptual and philosophical framework associated with *Faiva*. This is particularly interesting in view of previous research and approaches

⁹ For instance Salzman states: Language is a part of human genetic endowment, whereas a (particular) language must be learned during childhood along with the many nonverbal facets of the particular culture. In a sense, then, a language is just as culture-bound as are the traditional habits and value orientations characteristic of the society whose members use it. (Salzman 2007:57)

that represent various forms of *Faiva* as simple Western “equivalents”. *Faiva haka* for instance is nearly always presented as Tongan “dance”, and where the word “dance” is then seen to infiltrate the ensuing research with a whole raft of Western dance related assumptions and expectations. The Tongan *Faiva* framework that actually exists on the other hand, embodies an extensive non-Western philosophical and conceptual framework that has considerable cultural implications extending well beyond the Western concept of dance.

Choosing appropriate language however is not enough on its own. Language itself is always framed by context. Even in English, the contextual use of a word can change its meaning, or amplify particular dimensions of that word. The same situation occurs in indigenous Moana cultures as well. Before I began my research of Tonga *Faiva* vocabulary for instance, it was important to frame my approach in an appropriate methodological approach (including processes such as *talanoa*), and an appropriate theoretical perspective so I could understand it. In other words I needed to establish an appropriate “cultural field” to give a proper context.¹⁰

The real importance of this approach is that it sets the researcher themselves in an appropriate context and thereby gives them important clues to the deeper contextual realities involved. The issue here is one of consistency. For any researcher interested in the unknown of another culture, it is only under these circumstances that new insights and original knowledge can be fully explored or discovered. In many cases the true *fu* (“form”), *uho* (“content”) and *aonga* (“function”) of Moana “words” or concepts can only be revealed in this manner.

Part 2: Inappropriate use of “equivalents”

In the case of my research on *Faiva* then, I also tried to limit my use of English to describing things rather than to defining them. In other words whilst it is problematic enough that I have used English terms in quotation marks¹¹ throughout to give an idea

¹⁰ See chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis.

¹¹ Quotation marks in this thesis are used to signify an approximation or metaphorical relationship with a term, not one of equivalence.

of something, I have not attempted to define key terms by referencing them directly as a Western equivalent, or by saying they *are* those things, and used the original Tongan term in preference. This was especially true where I felt the original Tongan terms were of a more complex, or sophisticated nature, or that they were not translatable or similar to any Western concept.

Not only is it unnecessary and misleading to re-name things using Western languages such as English, but I have found in my own research and certainly as far as Tongan language is concerned, that Indigenous meanings emerge more easily, when things are not renamed or Westernized. In this case, if the research process (both theoretically and methodologically) is also such, that it is entirely appropriate to the cultural realities involved, a researcher may find themselves in the fortunate situation, where the process itself allows for the deeper conceptual meanings of Moana “words” to more easily emerge over time, within their own aesthetic, comprehensive, and genuine context.

Of course this does not preclude the use of Western languages such as English, but rather, clearly defines its role as one of describing things rather than defining them. Appropriately, a researcher may then leave some concepts as untranslatable and without equivalence in English because there may be none, while others may be differentiated as to their difference and/or similarity to Western concepts, but in a descriptive way that it is clearly stated. In this way I was able to attain a better understanding not only of the derivation and development of *Faiva*, but also the perceptual reality of *Faiva* and the deeper cultural implications associated with *Faiva*, on its own Tongan terms. In other words, not only did I make a serious and concerted attempt to move away from a position of Western imposition in my research approach, but shifted to one of Indigenous mediation and negotiation.

This approach cannot be undervalued, and it is no small matter when applying research such as in my own case. There is in fact, a remarkable ability of language from one culture to create enormous ethnocentric pitfalls in cross-cultural situations, especially if it is not identified as an issue. In this context the use of inappropriate words and their ability to “switch on” inappropriate and culturally specific “thinking patterns” in a researcher’s brain, cannot and should not be underestimated. These

thinking patterns are in fact so pervasive, that they are almost impossible to subsequently “switch off” or break out of, even when confronted with contradictory evidence presented by the research itself.

One of the major researchers in Tonga for instance has been Adrienne Kaeppler. Unfortunately her research on “Tongan dance” has in my opinion led to limited outcomes, because the word “dance” has pre-emptively effected her thinking to such an extent, that she appears to have had real difficulty in extracting herself from thinking in those terms. Even when it has become apparent to her that there are other deeper issues involved in *faiva haka*, issues that go well beyond the Western idea of “dance”, or that the use of the word “dance” is actually inappropriate, she has often persisted on these terms, albeit at the same time attempting to address the discrepancies by coining new Western based descriptive terms like “poetry in motion” (Kaeppler 1993). Put simply, the power of using the word “dance” in the first place, has directly obstructed her ability to abandon it, even in the face of deeper and uniquely Tongan aspects contained in the Tongan phenomenon referred to as “*faiva haka*”. Whilst still clinging to the Western concept of dance then, to her credit, even by 1993 Kaeppler often gives the reader tantalizing yet unexplored glimpses of some of the deeper issues associated with *Faiva*.¹²

So what does this mean for us? Well, at the very least it means that we need to struggle to keep an open mind. Kaeppler herself is a very able researcher, yet apparently falls easy prey to the pre-emptive power of the single word “dance” even some forty years after her primary research in Tonga. Even though she clearly identifies such issues as the socio-political and metaphoric content of *faiva haka* (Kaeppler 2005:166) not to mention traditional aesthetic content, she often persists in reducing these as being simply transmitted in some form of representative dance. As already mentioned in chapter two, if Tongan *lakalaka* is as Kaeppler paints it above, one of the “house-posts of the Tongan value system” or even if it is a “frame for painting socio-political metaphors that encourage present-day Tongans to preserve old aesthetic forms while evolving these traditions into the modern world” (Kaeppler 2005:166), then one must surely ask the question if such a powerful cultural process is

¹² See Kaeppler 1993, 1994, 2005, 2007.

“dance” in the Western sense at all. As mentioned in chapter 2, in the West, whole fields of study are allocated to these things and are usually referred to as Sociology, Political Studies, Education, and so on. The word “dance” in these forums is hardly ever mentioned and anyone in those fields would certainly think twice before reducing any of their tenets as being built on some form of dance expression!

With this in mind, we can see that the mixture of genuine insight and complex explanations offered by Kaeppler,¹³ is a product of the need to explain a very real conceptual conflict between her Western pre-conceptions and the Tongan realities, where what *Faiva* is, becomes less important than the *tā-vā-laumālie* intersection which defines it in a given context or situation. In other words *Faiva*, like all other Tongan words, refers to a concept that is non-Western and intrinsically functional, not something that is mechanistic and fixed. In this context, there is in fact no need to try to find a fixed definition that is all embracing, nor to assign inadequate and inappropriate Western “equivalents” where there are none.

In general the research surrounding Tongan *Faiva* has been almost exclusively Western in both its approach and analysis, and a relatively large body of knowledge has been established that is not only misleading but obstructive to the establishment of a genuine indigenous understanding. Not only is this research now an obstacle to understanding Tongan *Faiva*, but it is so well accepted that even many Tongan scholars and informants refer to various forms of *Faiva* as “dance”, “poetry”, “music” and so on.¹⁴ As previously noted, these are Western terms that carry their own Western conceptual framework, and do not represent the deeper levels of Tongan conceptual knowledge.

One of the reasons Westerners have always sought “equivalents” in other cultures is from a genuine desire to take home and communicate to other Westerners what they have found. In the modern world, English itself is rapidly becoming the universal language in terms of trade and has for some time been so in the academic world. Certainly in anthropology, the field was and still is, almost entirely dominated by

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Some of my informants directly stated that the Western academic world and even some Tongan academics had misrepresented *Faiva*.

Westerners that share a common Western epistemological base even if some are German, English, American, and so on, and even though they often spoke their own language rather than English. Even the new wave of emerging Indigenous scholars and researchers, are often trained and are required to operate within a Western based academic and research paradigm, and especially, to communicate in English.

Whilst many researchers are certainly well intentioned and otherwise very professional, they are still subject to a Western paradigm that distorts both their work and interpretation of non-Western cultures, especially if they are unaware of it. Whilst the concept of ethnocentrism has been under discussion in academic circles for some considerable time, the universal application of a Western paradigm in researching or interpreting non-Western cultures as a form of institutionalized ethnocentrism is commented on but seems to go largely un-remedied. Perhaps the worse aspect of this is an overriding assumption that Western paradigms in many areas are universally factual and therefore applicable to all aspects of researching Indigenous peoples, or as Linda Smith puts it:

Research ‘through imperial eyes’ describes an approach which assumes that Western ideas about the most fundamental things are the only ideas possible to hold, certainly the only rational ideas, and the only ideas which can make sense of the world, of reality, of social life and of human beings. (Smith 2005:56)

The extent of this type of ethnocentrism is remarkable both in its pervasiveness and subtlety, and in its apparent invisibility to a majority of researchers.

To exemplify the problem of working within a Western paradigm when researching and discussing a non-Western concept such as *Faiva* and its associated vocabulary, or even in making simple comparisons or implying equivalence between aspects of *Faiva* and what may be Western look-alikes can be problematic. As mentioned, this is particularly true in Tonga, where a large portion of the population themselves speak English. Further problems may arise in doing research in Tonga, because a cultural propensity for indirectness. For instance ‘Okusitino Māhina states:

Basically, the structuring effects of language as a symbolization process have, for the Tongan consciousness, generated a high degree of indirectness (*faka‘aki‘akimui*) in people's formal and informal communicative exchanges. These are characterized by the notions of *heliaki* (to speak one thing and mean

another) and *faka'esia* (*faka-'esia*; lit. to-make-a-handle; i.e., to cover up). Whereas the former is associated with the verbal arts, especially poetry, oratory and rhetoric, the latter is appropriated as the means of communication in a less formal context relating to the symbolic everyday dealings of people. (Māhina 1992:5)

It is clear at least in Tonga, there is real potential for error in collecting statements from informants. In fact the issue of *faka'aki'akimui* (Tongan “indirectness”) and *heliaki* (symbolic inference) mentioned by Māhina may raise serious questions about not only the information obtained by an outsider researcher who relies too literally on information obtained Tongan informants, but also by Tongan informants own use of Western “equivalents”.

Part 3: Western imposition on Moana language

Whilst I appreciate the purely descriptive possibilities of a system such as Western linguistics, such a framework tends to introduce inappropriate forms of thinking that may mask important insights, and induce undesirable Western patterns in what is essentially a non-Western conceptual scenario.

For instance, by stating that a word is made up of a stem or root and modified by prefix or suffix for instance, creates a tendency to place an unnecessary and misleading emphasis on one or other. Not only do Moana words often have no clear stem or root, but many are philosophical, poetic, epistemological and functional in their construction and use. Because of this, Moana words do not fit the usual Western grammatical patterns and may for instance, shift from what would be called a noun in English, to become an adjective, or verb, or appear in variant forms, or partial forms and in combinations with other words, without any inherent change to their deeper conceptual meanings or implication.

In fact the application of Western ideas about language in the Moana has always been recognised as leading to problems.¹⁵ Accordingly Tregear (1891) who states his

¹⁵ Cf. Taumoevalau 1998; Laycock 1972; Tregear 1891.

genuine desire to “comprehend the exact meaning of words used by the Māori people” in the preface of his Māori Comparative Dictionary also writes:

I have carefully avoided the use of letters to mark words as substantive, adjective, verb etc. It is unwise, if not a mischievous, effort to make if we endeavour to force the rules of grammar which fit (more or less) the modern usage of the English tongue upon a language belonging to the utterly unequal-period in which the Polynesian speech is now found...

The effort to adapt Māori words to rules of English grammar is evaded by the complex simplicity (if I may use such an expression) of the native language, where one word may serve either as verb, noun or adjective, according to its context, and wherein particles whose use only practice can render familiar, are libel to link words into sentences capable of rendering very subtle and sensitive expression. If we attempt to retain these particles in the net of English grammar, we shall be in the unpleasant situation of having to lay down rules with more exceptions than examples. (Tregear, 1891:xiii-xiv).

Even Williams, who is apparently motivated less by understanding Māori, and more by ethnocentric and racist beliefs that “the New Zealand language should be discouraged as much as possible, and that the Natives should at once be instructed in English” and that “It must be allowed that, if such a plan were practicable, the advantages arising from it would be great: and civilization cannot advance so favourably without it” (Williams, 1871:v), finds it necessary to spend time discussing difficulties in approaching Māori through the use of Western ideas about language such as grammar. For instance, in a section entitled “Disguised Words” he states:

Well known words may sometimes be met with in such a disguise that it is difficult, at first sight, to recognise them at all. The disguise may be effected 1. by the transposition of single letters, or syllables: or 2. by the substitution, for one letter, of another which has, or may be assumed to have affinity with it: or 3. by the substitution, in a compound word, for one of its elements, of another word having some signification. (Williams, 1871:xi)

Unfortunately, it appears today as if Tregear’s attempt to “comprehend the exact meaning of words used by the Māori people” has been overridden by a somewhat “Williamsonian” desire for the imposition of a Western paradigm.

For instance, Melenaite Taumoe folau states:

The grammatical view of language is currently dominant in mainstream linguistics. In this view, language is a system of signs (words) that are arranged in particular ways by grammatical rules to express and communicate

ideas. Defining a language from this perspective lays emphasis on grammatical rules and the ways in which they enable the signs to be arranged in certain ways to form sentences. In mainstream linguistics, the analysis of a language usually means the description and analysis of its grammar or syntax, which is the central focus, and then the lexicon is described in a dictionary, but this second descriptive phase is considered to be subordinate, and is peripheral to the main focus of the analysis of the grammar of the sentence. (Taumoeofolau, personal communication, May 2010)

In contrast however, the “Tregearian” tradition is still alive but remains largely unexplored, as evidenced in the following statement by Tongan scholar Linitā Manu’atu:

Studies of the grammatical structure of Tongan language suggest that the grammar is very different from that of English. As stated in the aim of the book, *Tongan Grammar*, Churchward says that his text being written in English is intended to display whether the grammatical structure of Tongan resembles that of English. Churchward clearly states that the grammatical structure of Tongan bears even less resemblance to that of English, than the grammatical structure of English bears to that of Latin. For example, the parts of speech of Tongan language are interchangeable particularly in verbs, nouns, adverbs and adjectives unlike the English language. Tongan verbs are different from English verbs in many respects. Tongan verbs do not change, whether in passive or active forms. Also, words that are primarily verbs are used as nouns, adjectives or adverbs. Words that are primarily nouns are used as verbs, adjectives or adverbs. Words that are primarily adjectives are used as nouns or verbs and so on and so forth. Also there are numerous prefixes and suffixes that are added to root verbs to form more words that enrich the vocabulary of Tongan language. Churchward asserts that ‘a revised and largely new terminology is needed’ in order to explain Tongan language.

There are numerous linguistic discussions on the differences and similarities of words and meanings within languages of Polynesia. There appears to be no specific study of Tongan language that offers a philosophical interpretation of the grammatical structure of the language. Nor does there appear to be interpretations of the kind of world-view that could be assumed to underpin the structure of the language. (Manu’atu. 2000:78)

Of course this raises the issue of the how any non-Western “language” is to be approached, especially when it was originally only in “oral” form, and was then written down by Westerners themselves. It is important to realize in this respect, that not only is writing based on the structure and use of Western languages, but even the concept of a “word” itself is a Western paradigmatic one. Whilst arguments about the universal application of linguistics, or what even constitutes a “language” is well

beyond the scope of this thesis, the idea of applying alien perspectives concerning both the structures and use of language remains extremely problematic.¹⁶

In the Moana, for instance, what still appears as an elegant, integrated and extraordinarily sophisticated language, was seen by early philologists, as a “simple” language because it was “native” and therefore “uncivilized”, and amenable to analysis, inscription, translation, and formalization by a more “sophisticated” Westerner.¹⁷ I would suggest rather, that the many exceptions encountered in the application of any Western approach to Moana language, should demonstrate that Western ideas of language were and are inappropriate in the situation, and some serious consideration should still be given to what is appropriate. The fact that this was not done from the very beginning was an example of a very crude approach that had in fact, more to do with Western attitudes of superiority than the actual reality. This same crude and compartmentalized view was perpetuated right across the Moana, resulting in a Western division of what appears to have been a single Moana language, albeit with many dialect variants, into Māori, Tongan, Samoan, Hawaiian, and so on.

Whilst the wisdom of this in terms of understanding, or representing some insight into the Moana language as a whole is extraordinarily problematic, the inclination to do so was originally missing (apart from Tregear) and the intentions were certainly elsewhere. As mentioned above, whilst Williams, writing in the preface to the first addition of his 1844 book “A Dictionary of the New Zealand Language” stated that

¹⁶ An example of this is to be found in Western linguist attitudes to so called “sign languages” in Indigenous cultures. Farnell for instance states: West’s work was pioneering because sign languages were not considered by linguists and educators at that time to be real languages—a battle that is still gong on in the education of the Deaf today. In conjunction with a long-standing cultural bias against the body generally, sign languages were considered to be simple codes, probable precursors to spoken language in the evolutionary scheme of things. Indeed considerable interest had been shown in PST by nineteenth-century anthropologists such as E. B. Tylor, precisely because they seemed to provide indisputable evidence of a primitive state. The predominance of iconic or representational gestures in sign languages was viewed by some as evidence of an earlier stage of development when language was a direct representation of nature prior to the development of arbitrariness in the spoken language sign. The possibility that the so called “savages” might be more sophisticated than Europeans because of their systematic skill in the linguistic use of both movement and sound, was certainly ignored. (Farnell, 1995:85)

¹⁷ Cf: Memmi 1991; Nandy 1989; Said 2003, 2004; Smith 2005; Thompson 1859; Urciuoli 1995 and others.

discouraging Māori from speaking Māori and instructing them in English would favorably advance civilization, goes on to lament that:

That it will be difficult to persuade the Natives, as a people, to adopt our language to the disuse of their own, may be inferred from the fact, that the Irish and Welsh, even though living in the heart of English towns, continue to use their favorite tongue, and that, too, after our connection, as one people, has continued for centuries. (Williams, 1871:v)

Williams then reveals the real motives for his work when, speaking of Westerners, he states:

While therefore, every encouragement should be given to the Natives to learn English, it will not be the less necessary for those, whose position brings them into frequent communication with this people, to learn their language; and, it is interesting to know that many are ready to make use of every help which may be afforded them. As these attempts are persevered in, it is likely that a great accession of valuable materials will ere long be made from various sources. If in the meantime, the present Compilation shall be the means of assisting those who are disposed to prosecute the study, - though it be only as ground-work for something more extensively useful hereafter, it will have served the purpose for which it was undertaken. (Williams, 1871:v)

In other words, early dictionaries such as Williams, were written and structured to give Westerners access to Moana language, and were not intended to represent, in any way, either the real structures, or the richness, or knowledge inherent in Moana language. Simply put, Western knowledge and the “civilization” of natives was considered to be far more preferable. Williams dictionary was for Western use, and structured and presented accordingly.¹⁸ Unfortunately more genuine attempts at understanding Moana language that could have grown out of understandings in Tregear’s 1891 Māori Comparative Dictionary, seem to have all but vanished.

Remarkably, the notion that Western cultures and language were more civilized and sophisticated, and could therefore be applied to understanding a lesser has, in the current form of applying a Western paradigm to Moana languages, never really gone away. In this regard, it should also be noted that some modern bi-lingual dictionaries of Moana languages are just expanded versions of earlier works such as Williams and

¹⁸ Taumoefolau states: Laycock (1972) points out of Pacific bilingual dictionaries published to date that they have rarely been conceived for the benefit of indigenous populations and that usually they have been written by and designed for the missionary in the past and the linguist in the present. (Taumoefolau 1998:36).

therefore still carry some of their original *mana*. Modern bi-lingual dictionaries of Moana language for instance, often present content in an entirely Western manner, and do not comment on the elegant, multi-layered epistemological sophistication of Moana language.

Obviously the form of a dictionary will vary depending on who it is intended for, and whilst current bi-lingual dictionaries may be more than adequate for a Westerner who wishes to ask directions, or even to begin a study Moana languages from a Western perspective, in reality they often serve to demonstrate a lack of sophistication in Western insight itself. This is an important consideration for modern Moana scholars who are either studying the deeper meanings of Moana language based knowledge such as myself, or those who are concerned with the real nature of Moana language use and meaning.¹⁹

In general then, other than a certain ease of access in “looking things up” modern Moana bi-lingual dictionaries are often extremely problematic in that they represent a Western paradigm that is alien to the Moana paradigm in which Moana languages are set and cannot therefore accurately represent Moana language in *fu*o (“form”), *u*ho (“content”) or *a*onga (“function”). Categorizing and framing meaning for Tongan “words” for instance, according Western linear grammatical structuring, versus their highly evolved native Moana circular, relational (functional) conceptual and intersectional layer groupings for instance, may be extremely misleading and inappropriate.²⁰

It should also be pointed out here, that the apparent complexity of English grammar, and the English language itself, does not in fact represent as some early philologists believed a “superior stage of civilization” nor a sophistication that would have allowed its universal application, but rather, the historical roots of English culture itself and an extensive history of word borrowings from many cultural groups

¹⁹ Cf. Taumoeolau 1998.

²⁰ Taumoeolau for instance states: In speaking of his dictionary of Samoan, Milner concedes that the “professional” approach of the linguist or lexicographer to Tongan or Samoan from a Western point of view may leave out their deep poetical and emotional associations, born of hundreds, thousands perhaps, of years of intimate relationships between the speakers of the language and their culture, their joys, sufferings, victories and defeats. (Taumoeolau 1998:40).

including German, French, Celtic, Scandinavian and so on, that in turn produced through necessity, an intense and complex set of grammatical rules and structures, in order to facilitate any sort of coherent usage.

Compared to Moana languages, where each and every word is integrated into an elegant and sophisticated multi-layered epistemologically and ontologically based conceptual system, to create the “complex simplicity” observed by Tregear (1891), the complex grammatical structures required to coordinate the multiplicity of alien words found in English, seems more like “simple complexity” rather than anything else. In these terms English can claim to be neither superior, nor indeed more civilized, and certainly not for universal application, other than to follow in its usual footsteps of borrowing more words for inclusion into its lexicon.

Part 4: An example of Western imposition

In this section, I give examples of the sorts of issues that are raised and the problem that occurs, when a Western paradigm is imposed on Moana language in an attempt to understand or represent a Moana concept.

If we look at a typical Western style Moana bi-lingual dictionary then (such as the one written by Churchward (1959), what we generally find is a mechanistic linear approach, including a Western alphabetical arrangement of words, and each with meaning or a list of meanings for that word in various situations. Whilst this may appear “normal” to many, this format is a Western cultural construction, representing as it does a Western world-view of language based on a Western understanding of the structure and use of Western languages. In other words, whilst this may give valuable inferences as to meaning, this paradigm is an alien one, both in representing the conceptualization of, and portraying the living use of Moana language.²¹

In the previous example of the Moana “phrase” *faiva haka* for instance, the Churchward dictionary does not even list types of *Faiva*, and one needs to look up

²¹ According to Linita Manu’atu in her previous quote, Churchward himself was aware of some of these issues. (Manu’atu. 2000:78)

faiva and its multiple English “equivalents” and then *haka* which is glossed as having three classes of meaning, one of which is to “move the hands rhythmically, esp. while singing” (Churchward 1959:207). If we look up the English section of Churchward’s dictionary on the other hand to find “dance” we find only a very simple entry of “*hulohula; me’e* (q.v.). Cp. *Teki-faiva*” (Churchward 1959:620). *Hulohula* when looked up means “to dance in the European style” (Churchward 1959:235), *me’e* more generally means “to perform a dance or action song of almost any kind” (Churchward 1959:357) and *Teki-faiva* to “feel like dancing, to be in a dancing mood” (Churchward 1959:477). Influenced by this same Western equivalencing, *faiva haka* has elsewhere been translated as “skilled dancing” or even loosely referred to as just “dance”.²²

Clearly, this is a somewhat confusing and superficial mixture of meaning, and an almost total loss of the deeper cultural content in *faiva haka*, especially in Tonga where even “moving the hands” in *faiva haka*, is itself extraordinarily rich with cultural symbolism, meaning and content. In the case of Māhina’s *tala-e-fonua* (1992), again we do not find this expression in the Churchward dictionary and need to look up its constituents, all of which have a confusing array of English equivalences. If we look up the English section of Churchward’s dictionary on the other hand under “history” we find only “*hisitolia*” a clearly “Tonganized” version of the English word, and with absolutely no roots to any Tongan cultural meaning whatsoever.

In fact, Moana language, may not contain any of the usual grammatical or syntactical arrangements, nor any of the conceptual meanings of the so called “equivalents” found in the West, except where Western influence has itself structured them superficially to be so. Regardless of this, Western approaches have been applied extensively and almost entirely without question to Moana language.²³ As a result the real richness of the conceptual, philosophical and poetical arrangements of Moana “words” have been almost entirely obscured, or lost, and any attempt to get at whole layers of meanings beyond the explicit, has been made far more difficult. Certainly in

²² Cf. Kaeppler, 1967, 1972, 1978, 1983, 1985, 1993, 1994, 2005; Moyle, 1987, 1991, 1993, 2002.

²³ Apart from various discussions on specific difficulties in each approach, there seems little if any discussion about the much larger issue of the appropriateness of applying a Western paradigm itself. Cf. Taumoevalau 1998.

the case of bi-lingual Moana dictionaries, there is a tendency to organize or categorize Moana words in a Western way which is both mechanistic and linear, and where Moana “words” are invariably conceptualized with Western “equivalents”. Using this style of Moana dictionary to establish meaning, and then assigning a Moana “word” or “phrase” like *faiva haka* into a Western subject category like “dance”, can mislead a researcher into investigating and describing it, not only in the inappropriate Western framework of dance, but also in combination with other misleading Western dance related concepts, such as choreography, entertainment, show, costume and so on.

In the following quote from Richard Moyle for instance, we can clearly see not only how Moana cultural expressions like *faiva hiva* and *faiva haka*, are just assumed to be “song” and “dance” but also how underlying Western assumptions can lead to an approach that may entirely miss important observations that suggest Moana forms of expression may be part of a different yet single conceptual reality:

From ethnohistorical accounts we know that the 19th century saw several dance-genres spreading from one island group to another, and the early European descriptions provide valuable information on these dances soon after their importation. On the broadest level, the geographical distribution of specific dance-related terms attests to the legitimacy of the single term “Polynesian”, where referring to the region as a whole. At least two dance genres – *ula / hula / hura* and *haka / saka / caka / saqa / ha‘a / ‘aka / saga / yaka* – are found in both western and eastern Polynesia, while the western Polynesia *seasea / sea / he‘a*, the eastern Polynesia *upaupa* and the Outlier *anu / a‘u* delineate subgroups. The close relationship between dance and song is evidenced in the Proto-Polynesian term *siwa*, occurrences of which are nearly evenly balanced referring to song and dance; it seems quite possible that the Proto-Polynesian term referred to the two together. (Moyle 1991:48)

I suggest that the two “word” forms that Moyle portrays as “dance genres” actually represent forms that in Tonga are referred to generally as *Faiva* and are called *faiva haka* and *faiva hiva*, where *faiva hiva* generally refers to a “song-like” component that is combined with *faiva haka* and also with *faiva ta‘anga* or “poetic” arrangements of the words that are “sung”. The statement that these are two different “dance genres” appears to me to be incorrect, and more likely a geographical naming preference for either *haka* or *hiva*. Because of the usual integration of *haka* with *hiva* (and *ta‘anga*) as a form, it appears that a geographical preference for a particular name is not referring to any real difference at all. I would further suggest that the so-called “Proto-

Polynesian” word *siwa*, is so extraordinarily close in sound to the word *hiva*, as to be one in the same. The point here is, that by describing two different “dance genres” and suggesting a single “Proto-Polynesian” word as meaning both, on the basis of the “close relationship between song and dance,” is a Western style of analysis and draws a conclusion that moves away from any insight that may lead to a deeper understanding of a trans-Moana integrated form of expression that is neither “song” nor “dance” in the Western conceptualization of those terms. (See chapter 7 for a fuller discussion of *Faiva* in this context).

Part 5: The *fuo* (“form”), *uho* (“content”) and ‘*aonga* (“function”) of Moana language

An insight into what I believe to be the true *fuo* (“form”), *uho* (“content”) and ‘*aonga* (“function”) of Moana language has taken me some considerable research and time to develop.²⁴ This process not only involved an understanding of the issues of Western imposition (past and present) that came out of my developing a more appropriate Moana paradigm for my research, but also from carrying out the research itself. The use of appropriate theoretical models such as the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality, the Hypothesis of Laumālie and appropriate Moana methodological approaches carried out through *talanoa*, including a demand on informants to explain concepts in Tongan rather than in Western terms, served to highlight many of the issues under discussion in this chapter.

Tongan “words” like *Faiva* and “words” associated with *Faiva*, like many Moana “words” are not only not literal like many Western words, but fundamentally Moanan in nature. In other words, Moana “words” contain implied conceptual and holistic systems of knowledge, and are also functional, relational, philosophic and poetic in their usage. Apart from embodying forms of inference like *heliaki*, they often contain important and culturally specific knowledge that is variably philosophical, ecological, genealogical, historical, mythological and so on, making them quite different, and in many situations specifically and uniquely non-Western.

²⁴ See my list of dictionaries and other works at the beginning of this chapter.

Tangaloa for instance, is seen by the West as a single “word” and as the Moana name of the god of the Moana Nui.²⁵ Whilst this is superficially true, and whilst Tangaloa has become imbued with much meaning through the telling and re-telling of myths and legend, applying the Hypothesis of Laumālie to the name Tangaloa it can be seen to be a “phrase” combining the “words” *ta*, *nga* and *loa* and that these generate a *laumālie* that only acquires specific meaning when it intersects with a particular *tā* and *vā*. *Ta* is an abbreviation of *tā* and infers “beating rhythmically” (Churchward, 1959:436) and is abbreviated to *ta* without effecting its *laumālie*. I suggest that *nga* in this context is an abbreviated form of *tangata* and because *tangata* infers “human beings” (Churchward, 1959:454) *nga* carries the *laumālie* of *tangata*. *Loa* has the inference of “a long time” as well as “black storm clouds” (Churchward, 1959:297). The combination as *ta-nga-loa* therefore infers a somewhat poetic *laumālie* combination of: The rhythmic beating (*tā*) of ocean waves, and of human beings (*nga*) being for a long time (*loa*) beaten (*tā*) by waves and winds in great ocean storms (*loa* as black storm clouds) continuously (*tā + loa*) on long (*loa*) voyages. Even in its simplest form, the *laumālie* of the “word” Tangaloa may be: “beat (*tā*) person (*nga*) for a long time (*loa*).”

According to the Hypothesis of Laumālie then, what Tangaloa actually means depends on its *laumālie* being in a particular intersection of *tā* and *vā*. In other words the complete meaning of Tangaloa is only gained, through experience and an appreciation of living with the many aspects the Moana Nui itself. In the case of the “word” Tangaloa then, its construction is such that it captures both the powerlessness and endurance of humans in the physical ocean environment, as well as symbolism, philosophy, and poetry of Moana peoples themselves. In other words, in Tangaloa we do not have a single Western style word being the name of a god, but a Moana “phrase” that embodies through its *laumālie*, not only the living reality of a person on the ocean, but a millennia of Moana voyaging traditions and culture. In these regards Moana language is extraordinary in that it is not only poetically and philosophically linked to the natural and human environment that created it, but also to the deeper layers of ontology and epistemology across the whole Moana.

²⁵ Actually in Tonga, Tangaloa is usually seen as the great god of the sky, whereas in Māori Tongarua is seen more specifically as the great god of the Moana, both versions however can be seen as equivalent.

This type of Moana construction is therefore both elegant and sophisticated. The arrangement of constituent elements is not only symbolic, philosophical and poetic, but is also functional and practical. In fact it is this sort of additive and intersectional construction and the use of abbreviations for longer “words,” that gives rise to a multiple layered *laumālie*, and one which takes on more specific meaning only through intersection and mediation within a specific *tā* and *vā*. I propose that this is typical of the *fuō* (“form”) and *uho* (“content”) in Moana language in general. Its ‘aonga (“function”) rests in its social mediation across varying intersections of *tā* and *vā* to give meaning.

For these and other reasons discussed in the previous chapter, I have tried to avoid the use of Western ideas about language, including Western terminology, which is based on Western understandings of Western languages. Whilst almost all languages can be re-interpreted, or redefined to fit a Western paradigm, I argue that this requires a substantial reshaping of their Indigenous *fuō* (“form”) and substantial elimination of their Indigenous *uho* (“content”) and ‘aonga (“function”), not to mention a process of rationalizing the many exceptions that arise. In terms of any universal application then, a Western paradigm can be both inappropriate and misleading outside its own context. In the case of approaching Moana language using Western ideas, concepts and practice, it is only in some forms of Western poetry that I have been able to find the sort of metaphoric inference and creative flexibility that may approach what is common in everyday Moana language. In this regard only Western ideas of artistic or poetic license may be of use in understanding a Moana “words” *laumālie*, variation in spellings, re-arrangements or abbreviations, and the deeper epistemological aspects of Moana “words”.

In general then, I suggest that a Western paradigm is not helpful in understanding Moana language. For instance, insistence on applying terminology and structural analysis developed for Western languages, can act to obscure important aspects of Moana language. Defining the root of a word and then suffix, or prefix for instance, whilst being correct and appropriate in English, may obscure the reality that many Moana “words” because of their very nature, do not have a clear root, and what one may define inferiorly as suffix, or prefix, may in fact be very misleading. As a further example, the many “word” variants derived from single words across the Moana can

further be misconstrued as linguistic doublets when they are in reality not “two words having the same meaning” as in the West, where words have often been borrowed from different sources, but represent a single *laumālie*, from a single Moana conceptual heritage and origin. Simply put, the use of terminology such as root, prefix, suffix, verb, noun, adjective and so on, or the assignation of specific word meanings, English “equivalents” and so on, induces an inappropriate Western frame of reference, and one that may completely obliterate the real structures and use of “words” across the Moana.

I have also found Indigenous languages such as those in the Moana, to have important tonal and rhythmic patterns that are not only non-Western in their form, but may effectively include “song-like” and “poetic” tonal expressions and rhythmic patterns as a normal part of everyday speech. In Western cultures by contrast, while both singing and poetry use common language, the tonal and rhythmic patterns found in both singing and poetry are usually quite distinct from those found in everyday speech.

Part 6: Applying a more appropriate analysis to Moana language

My approach therefore has been one of relating Moana “words” and “phrases” based on their appropriate conceptual and functional relationships, recognizing not only their combinations and layers of conceptual content, but also the intersection and mediation of both *fuō* (“form”) and *uho* (“content”) in their own Moana terms. In this regard, it is not my intention and well beyond the scope of this thesis to develop a fuller treatise on Moana language construction and meaning, but it is important for understanding the context of my research, to point out some simple realities. As will be seen in the following discussion, and as has been pointed out so far, many Moana words are functional and relational, often organized around culturally specific epistemology, which is neither grammatical nor simple in its meaning outside Moana culture. In other words there are no simple Western “equivalents”, nor Moana “words” codified or utilized in a Western manner.

In accordance with Māhina’s Ta-Va Theory of Reality and the Hypothesis of Laumālie, I propose (as in the case of Tangaloa above) that Moana “words” are in fact

constructed from intersections of other Moana “words” or abbreviations of “words” rather than having a specific linguistic root, and each “word” or “abbreviated word”, implies through its *laumālie*, multiple and deeper layers of epistemological and ontological content. In other words, a single Moana “word” may be an “additive” construction using intersections of other “words” or even abbreviations of other “words” in order to include their *laumālie*.

In the case of Māori language for instance, “*u*” may also be an abbreviated version of the Māori “word” for the mythological *Papatuanuku* (the great “Earth Mother”). Even in this abbreviated form “*u*” means “a woman’s breast” which has a *laumālie* of “nourishment and nurturing” and is conceptually related to *Papatuanuku* with all that that implies philosophically, ecologically, genealogically, historically, mythologically and so on. In fact *Papatuanuku* may commonly become *papa*, *nuku*, or just *u*. Framed in the Hypothesis of Laumālie then, these are not four separate words as they would be in the West, representing linguistic “doublets” or representing changes of word due to contextual usage, but are fully interchangeable because they have the same *laumālie*.

In terms of the Hypothesis of Laumālie I propose that in Moana language, “words” or new “word” combinations, are often formed by these sorts of additions to create intersections that are poetic, rhythmic, tonally pleasing, deeply epistemological and yet functional and meaningfully practical. For instance, the Tongan word “*huhu*” becomes *huhua* meaning milk, or *fehuhu* meaning nursing mother, *faka huhu* to suckle, *huki* to hold in the lap, *gahu* meaning damp or moist. In other words the *laumālie* in one “word” is simply added in an intersection with the *laumālie* of other “word/words” to form a new “word” or “word phrase,” in poetic, epistemological, ontological, or tonal combinations that are both pleasing and practical. In this form, unlike English, not only is spelling not so important, but neither is the order of addition or intersection, nor whether they appear in abbreviated form, or are interchanged with other “words” with the same *laumālie* for poetic or tonal reasons.

This may also explain some of the difficulties early philologists encountered in trying to analyze Moana language.²⁶

To use Western ideas of a word's construction and conceptualize “*hu*” as the “root” in these cases seems, at least superficially, to be obvious. A primary focus on the “root” of a word however, usually means the unfortunate element that is allocated as “suffix” or “prefix” in this situation, tends to be overlooked as a mere linguistic modifier, instead of recognizing that it too may have equally important conceptual Moana epistemological or ontological roots. “*Fe*” for instance, in *fehuhu* above, may be a shortened version of *fei* which has its origins in *fai*, which is not only contained in the word *Faiva* but also I believe, implies it in this situation. In other words *fe* may be conceptually not different than *Faiva*, in that it carries the same *laumālie*. Whilst some of the conceptual meaning of *Faiva* is discussed directly below in the context of *faiva haka*, it must be appreciated that *Faiva* itself is a multifaceted and a deeply epistemological/ontological concept that is holistically woven into the very root and formation of Tongan culture.²⁷ Further to this, “*hu*” and “*u*” can be variants of the same word, and trace a common Moana genealogy where both “*hu*” and “*u*” may themselves be abbreviations and therefore single variants of the name *Papatuanuku*. This in turn may imply the mythological story of *Ranginui* (“The Great Sky Father”) and *Papatuanuku* (“The Great Earth Mother”) and their separation by their son *Tane*.

In a Moana context then, *fehuhu* does not just mean “nursing mother” but also implies a more holistic cultural role of a mother in Tongan society, both epistemologically and ontologically, not to mention a hint of the deeper symbolism of children and their role in the “creation of the world” in which humans live. Without analyzing the conceptual difference between Tongan and English words for “mother”, in the West, the term “nursing mother” is much more literal and refers specifically, to a mother who is breast-feeding her child. The addition of *fe* to *huhu* in this situation is therefore

²⁶ The Hypothesis of Laumālie may help to explain why Williams found difficulty with the variants of some Māori words and states: Well known words may sometimes be met with in such a disguise that it is difficult, at first sight, to recognize them at all. The disguise may be effected 1. by the transposition of single letters, or syllables: or 2. by the substitution, for one letter, of another which has, or may be assumed to have affinity with it: or 3. by the substitution, in a compound word, for one of its elements, of another word having some signification. (Williams 1871:xi). See also discussions in Tregear, 1891:xiii-xxiv; Williams, 1871:vii-xv.

²⁷ See chapter 7.

better understood as a Moana conceptual intersection of the *laumālie* of each “word” which can then only be understood in a specific *tā* and *vā* context. In other words, the various roles of both actual mothering, and mothers’ nurturing roles in Tongan society, both ontologically and epistemologically.

In this Moana context, it is clear that a Western paradigm may be entirely misleading not only in its conceptualization of what is root, suffix, prefix for instance, but also, that the sorts of Western conceptualizations brought on by so called “equivalents” like “nursing mother” can obscure both the wider Moana conceptual relationships found in intersectional combinations as well as a Moana “word’s” *laumālie* that give it its unique Moana character and variation in meanings across varying *tā* and *vā*, not to mention any *heliaki* that may be intended.²⁸

In simple terms then, I suggest that Moana words tend to be constructed to have an underlying conceptual and implicative content in their intersections and may be combined in various ways with other words representing other concepts that add their *laumālie* to that of the first concept in an appropriate epistemological, functional and practical way. In this way Moana “words” contain both content and *laumālie* in any new combined form, representing all the meanings and implication contained in their constituent elements. Further, I suggest that even this combination itself may be epistemological in nature, expressing culture specific philosophical, mythological or poetic concepts and even general historical, ecological and other events of social significance or understandings.²⁹ Moana “words” may also have their own culturally specific conceptual “genealogy” with common “ancestors” as well as related words that could be seen as present day “aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, mother, father, grandmother, grandfather” so to speak. In other words, concepts and implicative and inferential structures forming everyday relational groups to which they belong historically, conceptually, ontologically and epistemologically.

Because of this sort of construction and an oral tradition, Moana “words” not only have a genealogy and a long tradition of poetic, rhythmic, and tonal combination, but

²⁸ See the discussion on *heliaki* in chapter 6.

²⁹ Cf. Taumoefolau 1998:40.

also enormous depth and character, both philosophically and practically. I suggest that great *Punake* (creators of *faiva haka*, *faiva hiva*, *faiva ta'anga* and *faiva lea*) across the Moana were traditionally prized for their ability to create beautiful intersections and combinations that enhanced some, or all of these dimensions. The appreciation of both the *fuoa* (“form”) and *uho* (“content”) of these creations however, is also not Western, involving as they do Tongan ideals of *tatau* (“symmetry”), *potupotutatau* (“harmony”) and *mālie* or *faka'ofa'ofa* (“beauty”).

In the case of the Moana “phrase” *faiva haka* for instance, applying the Hypothesis of Laumālie, we see that “*faiva haka*” combines the *laumālie* of the “words” “*fai*”, “*va*”, “*ha*”, and “*ka*”. Starting with the word “*fai*”, we have the Western concept of doing something with skill and knowledge (Cf. Churchward 1959:19). This is not just skill and knowledge however, but involves Moana “cultural skill” (involving appropriate skill in social custom, such as etiquette, respect for social position etc.) and “cultural knowledge” (understanding and awareness of the appropriate cultural wisdom such as genealogy, history, mythology etc.). *Fai* in this case is therefore implicative of, and carries the *laumālie* of *Faiva*.³⁰ Moving on to the word “*va*”, often translated as the English word “space” the word “*va*” here involves a concept of space not just as a dimension, but also one of social obligation and how relationships are arranged in Tonga, including socio-political structures and their implications of hierarchy and cultural expectation and duty³¹, as in *tauhi vā*³² and carries this *laumālie*. In this context the *laumālie* also includes the relationship the living have with their dead ancestors. Looking at the concepts contained in the intersection of “*ha*” and “*ka*” we find the same kind of cultural depth and inference. In the case of “*ha*” we have the concept of “breath”, but in this case it has a *laumālie* of not only breath as in life and vigor, but also of oral traditions and the “singing” and “oratory” of culturally significant events and ancestral lineage, by which means Moana culture is transmitted from past generations to the present. In other words, the overall *laumālie* contained in the word “*ha*” may be nothing less than the “living breath of the ancestors expressed (breathed) in the present.” Finally in the word “*ka*” we find the concept of fire, or

³⁰ See chapter 7.

³¹ See Ka'ili, 2008: *Tauhi vā: Creating Beauty through the Art of Sociospatial Relations*.

³² See Thaman 2004a, 2008b; Ka'ili 2005, 2008.

being ignited. Its inclusion here as a combination with “*ha*” is one that would imply that one is ignited, or inflamed by “*ha*”. In other words, combining the *laumālie* of *ha* and *ka*, we get a *laumālie* of being “ignited by, or inflamed by the living breath of the ancestors” and all that that implies in Moana culture. Overall then, we have in the “phrase” *faiva haka*, an intersection that when mediated in *tā* and *vā* gives a deep and meaningful cultural experience and an integrated part of a world-view, encompassing not only the living, but also past and future generations and the perpetuation of cultural traditions.

Moana words and phrases to varying degrees, all exhibit this underlying yet important cultural dimension to meaning-making and many, like the “word phrase” *faiva haka*, are not translatable into English without the loss of much, if not all of their real content and meaning. Like other Moana “words” and “phrases” they are conceptualized entirely differently than what many take as Western “equivalents”.³³ To make matters more complex, many Moana “words” and “phrases” are in essence just variable combinations of *laumālie* (however complex) and, because they are from the same cultural epistemology, they may be understandable to a Moana person even when quite loose in arrangement or format. As mentioned previously, this makes them relatively flexible both in terms of order and even omission of parts of a “word” or combination of “words” for ease of use, or through familiarity, or due to the usual “linguistic drift” that may occur over time or place. A simple example of this is *faiva haka* itself, which may interchangeably be expressed as “*faiva*” or “*haka*”, without losing any of its deeper cultural meanings, because the other “word” of the “phrase” *faiva haka* has become implicit.

The structures of Moana “words” therefore, may not be what they appear to be to a Westerner, nor are they borrowings from other cultural roots such as found in English, with extensive grammatical rules and syntax to accommodate usage. Moana language is in fact far more “pure” in the sense that its origins are integrated in a conceptually holistic and implicative way that is not fixed, nor expressed in a way that yields itself to any Western paradigmatic analysis. This is not to say that a Western paradigm could not be imposed by *saying* something is a root, prefix, suffix, particle, verb,

³³ *Faiva haka* is often translated simply as “dance”. See Kaepler, 1967, 1972, 1978, 1983, 1985, 1993, 1994, 2005; Moyle, 1987, 1991, 1993, 2002

adjective, noun and so on for instance, but rather, that to do so is not only misleading, but obscures and obstructs some of the foundational aspects of Moana language in its *fu*o (“form”), *u*ho (“content”) and *a*onga (“function”).

Part 7: Moana language on its own terms

The purpose in my study of Tongan *Faiva* then, was to approach and render a proper understanding of the deeper Tongan meanings and conceptual content that is to be found in *Faiva* and important Moana “words” associated with its cultural context.

It should be clear by now that setting any such study in, or furthering any Western research tradition in my field of study, would have entirely defeated any attempt at understanding the real nature of *Faiva*. In fact, I have only been able to carry out my research by avoiding as much as possible such a tradition, and employing not only Moana theoretical and methodological models (described in previous chapters), but also by approaching *Faiva* through its associated vocabulary, but only in a way that recognizes its relational and functional usage in an appropriate Moana way. In other words I have tried to avoid (where possible) previous interpretations of *Faiva*, based as they were on Western designed and interpreted research, as well as the Western tendency to use English “equivalences”, or implied equivalences and instead, have tried only to use English in a descriptive role, that is, in the description of Moana concepts and meanings themselves.³⁴

I wish to emphasize that my research confirmed that an understanding of Tongan *Faiva* can only be attained through a consistent application of a comprehensive Moana paradigm in all aspects associated with a piece of research. In this way I was also able to avoid to a large extent, the aforementioned tendency of Moana bi-lingual dictionaries to supply confusing cross-referencing of meanings for each word. In these cases, lists of possible English equivalences or meanings only adds to any confusion, especially when apparently wide variations of meaning, appearing to have little or no relevance to each other, are proposed for a single Moana “word.”

³⁴ As stated in the beginning of this thesis, I have also enclosed English terms in quotation marks. Quotation marks in this thesis are used to signify an approximation or metaphorical relationship with a term, not one of actual equivalence.

Returning to the “word” *haka* for instance, according to the Churchward dictionary it can mean: “to stew or boil (food); to boil (clothes); to smelt (iron, etc.); to melt, render (fat); to brew (beer).” Alternatively it can mean: “to move the hands rhythmically, esp. while singing.” Or it can mean a “hole made in the base of a coconut palm for catching and holding water.” We see that *haka* may also be *haka’i* and that it can also be *hakahaka*. If we look down the page *hakahaka* also means: “to be jubilant, to express joy or exhilaration, esp. by movements of the hands and arms” but so does *hakalangitau*. (Churchward, 1959:207). Without discussing the nuances of actual usage here, and leaving aside previous discussion on the deeper content of the word *haka*, not only has the meaning of *haka* become very confusing, but virtually all of its unique Moana character has been lost, either through re-framing it in this way or by simple omission.

In this regard, and for this reason, I have also been led to question the value of simple alphabetical listings in bi-lingual dictionaries of Moana languages. For instance, if we take a typical (Western style) bi-lingual Moana dictionary, the meanings of words are usually listed alphabetically and as having an English equivalent in a “this equals that” manner. In order to accommodate the difference between the Western style of language and that found in the Moana language, the dictionary is then often required to go on to expand its explanation to something like: “this word means this, except when it means that, except when it means something else which is here, or in some situations it might mean this, or it has also been known to mean this as well, or possibly in special circumstances it may also mean that”. Often, to avoid this seeming complexity, dictionaries such as Churchward’s Tongan-English one, make multiple listings of the one word, with a different aspect and meaning assigned to each. This type of “mechanistic” attempt at word meaning is in reality, a thinly disguised nightmare within which it becomes difficult to make sense of the real meaning of a word at all, and every time we discover its use in a new context, the text, and the nightmare grows.

In all these regards it is important to note that the Moana language was never a written, but an “oral tradition”. The subsequent recording and formalizing of the Moana language, was not only done in the present compartmentalized fashion, but

also in a non-standardized and relatively haphazard way by a range of Westerners themselves. In fact Moana language was approached, recorded and conceptualized by Westerners from differing language backgrounds such as English, French, German, Spanish and so on, and later also by Indigenous people, all from various backgrounds and with varying degrees of education and ability. Consequently, whilst a single underlying unity of all these Moana “languages” is still very clear, it is most probable that many of the current differences, such as variants in spelling, pronunciation and even in use of words, may sometimes be less actual, and more an artifact of this varied history.

For instance, by replacing the “r” in Māori words, such as the name “Tangaroa” with an “l” we get the Tongan name “Tangaloa”, each of course with identical meaning and referring to the “God” of the Moana. In fact, if we generally replace the “r” in many Māori words with “l” what we get are in fact Tongan words, with almost identical conceptual meaning in each case. Whilst many Māori and Tongan words look different as they are currently written, (Māori with the “r” and Tongan with the “l”), they are often less different in reality. In fact, when we look at the correct pronunciation of the “r” in Māori words and the “l” in Tongan words, what we find is that they are almost identical in sound, suggesting that the Westerner who chose to standardize its spelling with either “r” or “l” as the case may be, was doing so arbitrarily or through a lack of discrimination in each case. The same situation exists with “wh” in Māori, becoming “f” in Tongan words, or “w” in Māori becoming “v” in Tongan and so on. Without going in to further detail here, the fact that making these sorts of simple letter substitutions gives us similarity in languages right across the Moana, suggests that they were originally part of one language.

In this regard, not only was it unimaginable to Westerners of the time, that Moana peoples may have had extensive and regular contact with each other back and forth, right across the Moana for perhaps thousands of years before Westerners arrived, but those Westerners who recorded Moana language appear to have done so on some underlying assumption that this meant “one culture = one language”. In other words, when Westerners visited far-flung island groups, over what they considered “impossible” distances across the Moana, they took apparent cultural differences and

simply assumed them to be different peoples,³⁵ not only naming them as different, but also recording their “different” languages in non-standardised ways. Apparent similarity was then only attributed to some “Proto-Polynesian” ancestral language of a long forgotten past, along with simplistic “accidental drift” theories to explain distribution.³⁶

Whilst groups of Moana peoples have certainly developed their own distinctive cultural styles and dialect variations over the millennia, it has been Western perceptions, historical or otherwise, that have been largely responsible for building the modern perception that Moana peoples speak relatively distinct languages called Māori, Tongan, Tahitian, Hawaiian and so on. It is ironic that many of the distinctions between these languages, rather than being definitive, may represent formalized historical Western errors.

Further to this, and leaving aside the aforementioned intent of Williams (1844) to primarily make Moana language accessible to Westerners, it is important to understand that even the use of a twenty six letter Western alphabet to represent in written form, the rich tones and nuances of Moana language, let alone the inability of many Westerners to even discriminate some of these, seems far from adequate. For instance, Rogers (1986:7) states: “There is no standard orthography for the Tongan language”.

All this leads us to the conclusion that what to many may appear as a simple rendering of Moana language into a written form, is in fact a “translation” involving redefinition, reinterpretation and re-framing using a Western paradigm, with all the

³⁵ Albeit with the same ancestral origins.

³⁶ Moana navigation and voyaging was so sophisticated that it enabled Moana peoples to not only colonize the whole of the Moana Nui, but also have regular contact for millenaea before the time when Westerners first entered the Moana. Many continued to do so until relatively recently. In 1983 Stephen Thomas spent time amongst navigators in the Caroline Islands who were still practicing traditional navigation. David Lewis in 1978, when speaking of the *ppalu* (traditional “navigators”) of Puluwat in the Carolines states: The scope of present day Carolinian navigators has naturally contracted as distant voyaging has declined, but is still extensive. Of Pulawat’s 400 people, for instance, 18 are trained *ppalu*, navigators with status higher than chiefs. In a recent sixteen month period, Puluwat’s 15 deep-sea sailing canoes made 73 inter-island passages. So skilful are these sea people, that no canoe has been lost at sea for 30 years. (Lewis 1978:129). See Lewis 1978; Velt 1990; Heyerdahl 1951, 1958; Thomas 1987.

associated paradigmatic distortion and problematic issues found in such a process, not to mention the afore-mentioned formalization of historical Western errors. In this regard it should also be noted that Moana language is usually integrated into other dimensions of expression. Arbitrary division and compartmentalization of these into Western categories of “music” or “song” or “dance” and so on, has also obscured these dimensions both in real terms and as being investigated as possible structural or even “grammatical” parts of a Moana “language” itself. In other words, instead of some recognition of the integrated and intersectional realities of the Moana epistemology and ontology generally, a Western paradigm been imposed in a systematic and wholesale manner, subjecting everything in its path to a Western “translation” to match Westernized pre-conceptions. Worse still, such a process has been, and in many ways still is, presented as legitimate, scientific and factual.

In this regard, the Western application of its own paradigm as being “scientific and factual” in representing and analyzing Moana language, and the exclusion through separation and compartmentalization, of such aspects as *faiva haka*, *faiva hiva* and so on, is extremely problematic. Further, by dividing Moana language, based on a Western perception of differences between say Māori and Tongan “languages” and defining their similarity as only belonging to a more ancient “Proto-Polynesian” common “language,” further obscures an understanding of one integrated and widespread Moana “language”. In this regard, re-defining “Proto-Polynesian” as “Pre-Western” and re-examining ideas about what constitutes a Moana “language” in this instance, seems to be wide open to appropriate investigation.

Adopting an approach that Tongan “language” is itself part of a present day greater Moana “language” for instance, and that deeper meanings of Tongan words can be accessed and understood by analyzing the wider used Moana words they are similarly built from, has real potential. In fact, by grouping Tongan words with other Tongan words based on their apparent native Moana relational qualities and underlying conceptual meanings, reveals that their meaning, rather than becoming more complex, becomes both deeper and less complex, as do their relationship with other Moana words such as those found in Māori, Hawaiian, Tahitian, Samoan, and so on.

In fact, when Moana words are categorized and able to be referenced under apparent relational (functional) groupings within their native Moana *fuoa* (“form”) *uho* (“content”) and *aonga* (“functional”), not only are the similarities of all Moana “languages” clear, but entirely different (to Western) meanings emerge. In this context, relations of words often become explicit, and further layers of relational meaning can be comprehended. In other words, an understanding of an integrated and holistic Moana language and a comprehensive Moana world-view across the whole Moana becomes clearer, and Tregear’s (1891) notion of “complex simplicity” begins to have an aura of real insight.³⁷

Further to this, there is real potential in terms of Moana “language” if the aforementioned dimensions found across the Moana, namely those currently separated by the West into “dance” “music” “song” are included. In the case of *Faiva* above for instance, whilst we have seen the deeper content and concepts in the words themselves, many forms of *Faiva* are also what they are, namely, elaborate and integrated social forms of expression, the various combinations of which, form a non-Western type of “language” system. In this regard, at least in the Moana, this integrated and holistic “language” is from the very beginning a Moana person’s way of understanding, conceptualizing and communicating in their world, a world that is both formed by and is informed by their relationship with others in their culture. In other words, the true Moana “language” may contain not just “words” but “dance” “music,” “song” and so on. This holistic integrated type of “language” is also woven in intersections with deeper cultural and contextual knowledge,³⁸ that is not only associated with communication, but with an ongoing construction of a wider Moana reality.³⁹

³⁷ See Tregear 1891:xiii.

³⁸ Cf. Bott 1981, 1982; Caillot 1914; Collocott 1921, 1921b, 1924, 1928; Cowling 1988, 1990; Cummins 1977; Filihia 1998, 1999, 2001; Gifford 1924a, 1929; Grijp 1993; Hau’ofa 1975, 1983, 1993a, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2005a, 2008; Helu 1983, 1986, 1993, 1995, 1998, 1999, 1999b, 1999c; Hereniko 2000; Kaeppler 2005, 2007; Kamakau 1964, 1991; Kolo & Māhina 1983; Lātūkefu 1968, 1973, 1980; Māhina 1990, 1992, 1993, 1999c, 2002a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004i, 2005a, 2005c, 2007a, 2007d, 2009, 2009d, 2010; Māhina & Māhina 2007; Mark 1996; Mariner 1991; Meyer 2008; Muhlhausler 1996; Nettle & Romaine 2000; Potauaine & Māhina 2007, Potauaine 2010; Puloka 1999; Pusiaki 2008; Ralston 1990; Shumway 1977, 1981; Smith 2005; Taumoefolau 2004; Trask 2000; Wolfgramm 1993; Wood-Ellem 2004; to name but a few.

³⁹ See for instance chapter 7, where I discuss the multiple facets of *Faiva*.

This is not to say that we cannot approach our research in one aspect such as “words,” but that we need to do so with a full awareness of all other aspects that may be relevant. In this thesis for instance, Tongan “words” offer important insights and clues, but when these are combined with the context of their fuller expression (*faiva haka*, *faiva hiva*, *faiva ta’anga*, and so on), we can gain better access to not only a Moana culture’s instrument of thinking, knowing and understanding in the present, but also of communicating and perpetuating itself in future generations.

In the case of Tongan “words” for instance, even the use of simple everyday “words” can depend on social class, or social situation, with formal and informal variants of “words”. With a culture that requires adherence to social values and conventions including things that are *tapu* (“sacred/prohibited”) and requiring individuals to be *molumalu* (“dignified”) and show *faka’apa’apa* (“respect”), *mateaki* (“loyalty”), *fakai kilalo* / *faka’aki’akimui* (“humility”), and *talangofua* / *taliangi* (“respectful obedience”) not to mention social conventions of *tauhi vā* (“reciprocal exchange and caring”), the language may often reflect an “indirect” way of expression. Tongan “language” for instance includes extensive use of *heliaki*, or “saying one thing to imply another”, especially in *faiva ta’anga* (“poetic” expression), often employing “words” whose intersections create a rich in symbolic or culturally iconographic meaning, in preference to directly talking about a subject.

In all these regards, it is not surprising that the Tongan “language” is quite different from English. ‘Okusitino Māhina for instance, states:

Tongan language is strictly poetical. This is in complete contrast to the English language, which is predominantly scientific. The time-space, form-content conflicts in the poetic and scientific arrangement of the two languages are constantly under negotiation (Māhina, 2004a:25)

Of course, as already mentioned, there is more to Moana “language” than the words themselves (lexicon), or grammar, or even the deeper epistemological content, as language, especially languages from “oral traditions”, are often enriched with rhythms, pitch, articulation and tones, let alone unique ways in which expressive thinking is ordered. This is not just a comment about what are in customary Western linguistics, often sidelined as “paralanguage” elements, and other dimensions

currently separated into Western concepts of “dance” “music” and “song”, but an emphasis on important aspects of many Indigenous “languages”.

In Tonga for instance, as mentioned above, well-known forms *Faiva* involving “language” (as in “words”) are often “poetic” in nature and expressed in combination with “dance-like” expression, and “singing”, in a contextual and participatory cultural and social setting, all together forming a total in terms of expression. All of these expressive elements together, are intended as a holistic expression of culture and knowledge, embracing both the ontological and epistemological in an atmosphere rich with the “mythical”, “poetical”, “musical” and “philosophical”, and all of which are designed to form a complex contextual and meaning modifying scenario. Tongan “language” then, is more appropriately defined and understood in this total context. This total experience in turn, and therefore Tongan “language”, can only be appreciated by understanding its related conceptually rich terms, such as *tala-ē-fonua* (“oral traditions and histories”), *uhinga* (a concept related to “identity”), *hohoko* (“genealogy”), *mālie* (a concept related to “aesthetics and beauty”) *māfana* (a concept related to “emotional inner warmth”), *laumālie* (a concept related to “spiritual”) and *tapu* (a concept related to order, symmetry and harmony, through the practice of traditional knowledge and ways of knowing the world).

Unlike the Western concept, where language is almost entirely focused on words and their arrangements (grammatical and otherwise), a large portion of the Moana “language” may in fact include many other things besides “words”. There are in reality so many aspects of Moana “language” that relate to, include, or are interwoven on multiple layers with the “poetical”, “philosophical” and “mythological”, not to mention “dance-like”, “music-like” and “tonal” expression, but also “symbols” and “patterns” found in *Tufunga* (“material arts”), that it is hard to think that *all* these things may not in actuality, constitute an holistic “grammatical structure” of general expression, thereby moving well beyond a modern Western compartmentalized approach to Moana “language”.

For instance Veronica S. Schweitzer when speaking of Hawaiian “*oli*” and “*pule*” chants states:

Each name in a genealogy chant carried the *mana* (power) of the ancestor. All names were linked by birth. The longer this link of names in the chant, the more *mana*. The accumulation of power, which was sacred, could lift a person to the ranks of the gods among mortals. (Schweitzer, 1998)

She then goes on to state:

The *pule* was as important as the *oli* in the preservation of the Hawaiian race, and in the survival of the people. The chants were about pleasing the gods and the ancestors, and about accumulating *mana* by reciting the words. Therefore, recitation followed strict rules. The *oli* had prolonged phrases all chanted in one breath, and often a trill (ii) at the end of each phrase would emphasize the words. The utterance of the chant was like a charm. Any mistake - such as breathing before the end of the phrase, or even the slightest hesitation in pronouncing the long list of complicated names - weakened the good fortune and could cause the displeasure of the ancestors and gods. Certain chants required absolute clarity and control of voice. (Schweitzer, 1998)

To take this even further, in his exploration and investigation of traditional forms of *tufunga lalava*, contemporary Tongan artist Filipe Tohi indicates a deeper and more significant level, than what appears superficially and to many Western eyes, as merely “decorative rope lashing”. In an interview with Tohi in *Lulutai* magazine it is stated:

Tohi believes that these patterns have been modified into symbols of human interaction. These designs teach us how to: Live/interact/be. As these lashings were used on canoes, they often reference navigation knowledge....the names of the patterns refer to guiding stars (the Pleiades, the Southern Cross, Venus), fish, and conceptual knowledge. (*Lulutai*, Issue.1. 2003:16)

Karen Stevenson, in an introduction to Tohi’s work also states:

The patterns created in lashings are also seen in tattoo, bark cloth, plaiting and on Lapita ware. This suggests that these designs are more than a pleasing aesthetic; they are integrally entwined into Pacific lives and have been part of this cultural whole for thousands of years. Referencing astronomical, navigational, and environmental knowledge, these motif, were, in essence, mnemonic devices that allowed for the dissemination of knowledge. (Stevenson, 2000:17).

Of course, whilst Stevenson simply relegates *lalava* patterns to “motifs” and “mnemonic devices” this still raises the unexplored possibility of them being part of a larger conceptual framework related to the intersections found in Moana “language” well beyond the word based Western concept, or even as part of an underlying

conceptual structure not only permeating the use of spoken language, but even representing what could be seen as a non-Western form of “writing”.

This is further exemplified by the Rongorongo script from Rapanui (Easter Island), a series of hieroglyphic writings, consisting of 120 characters (as yet un-translated) that give a tantalizing glimpse of what appear to be epistemological references, or mythological “stories”. Mirroring early Western attitudes that Egyptian hieroglyphic inscriptions were purely decorative, if either Schweitzer’s or Tohi’s insights, or Rapanui Rongorongo script are what they appear to be, it raises serious questions about the Western conceptualization of what both the spoken and written forms of language should look like. In this regard, the common Western view that Moana “language” was “only an oral tradition” also seems open to question.

Even the term *faiva ta’anga*, which refers to “poetic” forms of expression in Tonga, and includes the use of *heliaki*, suggests a deeper integration of Tongan “language” with cultural ideas of aesthetic in forms mirroring those in *Tufunga* (“material arts” such as *lalava*), in a type of relationship that is uncommon in Western poetry.

Melenaite Taumoefolau for instance, when speaking of forms of *heliaki* (“using one thing to symbolize or indirectly refer to another”) in Queen Sālote’s poetry, and specifically to Queen Sālote’s referencing her royal genealogical kinship lines or *lau’eiki*, says:

But instead of describing these connections directly or explicitly, she refers to them using symbols. Two main kinds of symbols are used: flower (or other plant parts) symbols, in Tongan *laukakala*, and symbols for places, in Tongan *laumātanga*. *Heliaki* is the name of this Tongan poetic device, which is used pervasively by Queen Sālote. *Heliaki* may be described as speaking or writing in symbols or riddles, or speaking or writing figuratively. (Taumoefolau, 2004:107)

I would point out here, the striking similarity of the use of symbolism in forms of *Tufunga* such as *lalava* and that which occurs in Tongan word usage through *heliaki*. Indeed, this total and holistic integration of every aspect of a culture to every other aspect, is not uncommon across the Moana.

Even without considering the implications of Schweitzer’s descriptions of Hawaiian *oli* and *pule* chants, Tohi’s insights into *lalava*, Rongorongo script, or the Tongan use of *heliaki*, or *Faiva* in general, to simply apply a Western conceptualization of language to the Moana, in a type of Western based “translation” of *fuo* (“form”), *uho* (“content”) and *‘aonga* (“function”), seems fraught with potential misunderstandings from the very outset. In this respect, whilst it is certain that the current Western versions of Moana “language”, makes it more conceptually Western and therefore more accessible for Westerners (which was of course, the original intent of Williams (1844) dictionary amongst others), this Westernization is in fact, a real barrier to developing a deeper understanding of the genuine Moana “language” in either *fuo* (“form”), *uho* (“content”), or *‘aonga* (“function”).

Let us imagine for a moment (because there are not any), a Moana “language” dictionary based on the functional and conceptual/relational realities of Moana epistemology and ontology, rather than the usual Western mechanistic ones we currently find in libraries and booksellers. Not only would there probably be a single Moana dictionary to cover what are at present divided by Western linguists into Tongan, Samoan, Māori language and so on, it would also contain an important feature: After each word entry it would say something like this...“the *laumālie* of this word is as follows...”. It would then go on to say: “and this *laumālie* may be found in the following words with related conceptual contexts” and “epistemological meanings set this word in the following group...”. Each word would then be cross-referenced to lists of words that share common concepts, not as suffix or prefix, but anywhere or in part. Tēvita O. Ka’ili in his 2008 PhD thesis for instance, presents a range of appendices of Tongan terms containing the root words: *Tā*, *vā*, *mālie*, and *tāmaki*. Of course the whole work would have to be structured to include a cross-referencing into each cultural group of speakers, such as Tongan, Samoan, Māori and so on, so as to include the local “dialect” variation of pronunciation and a notation on the difference in spellings.

That this would be impractical in any Western written form of Moana dictionary seems to be obvious and is probably one of the main reasons why bi-lingual Moana dictionaries have not attempted it, either in the past or currently. Ironically, considering the discussion of Western forms being inappropriate for Moana

“language”, Moana “language” as a multilayered intersectional and inferential construct and mediated across varying *tā* and *vā* in this context, is ideal for, and lends itself especially well to a modern computer format. In other words, “dialect” variation, more complex Moana *laumālie* inferences and interrelationships between Moana “words,” or discussions similar to that for *faiva haka*, or more complex explanation and discussion, could be accessed on a computer through simple links from each and every “word”. In all these regards it is interesting to note that this is because Moana “language” was not a written but an “oral tradition”. In other words the modern computer format, which allows immediate and quick cross-referencing of large amounts of factual, conceptual and inferential information, matches more closely all “oral” forms of language, where the real-time ability of the human brain to access, create and cross-reference the fuller cultural and contextual inferences become important to, and part of what a speaker intends. Not only this, but computer formats can allow immediate and comprehensive access to everything from pictures and video to audio files, not to mention embedded internet links to information, which altogether, would allow a comprehensive possibility for both the holistic inclusion and preservation of traditional and associated elements in Moana “language”, as well as the ability to update information on regular intervals, or when new information became available through appropriate research. Like all computer programs it could itself be updated at regular intervals.

Of course some linguists might argue that such a “multimedia” creation is encyclopedic and not a “dictionary” at all,⁴⁰ and they would be right in a Western sense....but that has been my point all along: that dictionaries in their current form are a Western paradigm, and are not really appropriate to represent the sophisticated multilayered and inferential holism of Moana “languages”, let alone where meaning is contextual and so often mediated in “multimedia” scenarios.

In fact, if Moana “language” was presented in this form, not only would this type of “dictionary” be in a more appropriate format, but it would also allow for a better understanding across a multitude of target audiences and the different cultural groups

⁴⁰ Cf. Taumoefolau 1998.

within the Moana itself.⁴¹ That is, when Moana “words” are understood in their proper context and foundation, they also become easier to learn both in meaning and conceptual use, and in *all* cultural groups at the same time. Any modification or variation in usage could then be referenced to make a speaker not only conversant in Māori for instance, but also in Tongan, Samoan, and many others at the same time. Whilst an approach conceptualizing a single Moana “language”, with adjustments in its use depending on location, may be challenging for a speaker, it is not nearly as challenging as the current Western method of dividing Moana “language” into separate “languages” and then presenting these “languages” in individual dictionaries, and every one of them with a confusing overlay of Western grammar, multiple listing of word “equivalences” depending on situation, convention or context, in a written format that does not allow for integrated and instant cross referencing.

In terms of Moana “language” in general then, applying the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality, together with the Hypothesis of Laumālie in understanding its combinational *laumālie* constructions across varying *tā* and *vā* intersections, together with its deeper intersecting layers of epistemological and ontological content, seems far more promising than a Western paradigm involving Western styles of grammar, or creating a simple “equivalence lexicon.” As will be seen in chapter 7 in the case of Tongan *Faiva* itself, the “sum of its parts” creates a whole new “thing” when in various *tā-vā* intersections. In other words, an experience that is far greater than any one of its individual parts and one that varies across differing situations. In this regard for instance, *Faiva* is a multifaceted concept rather than a simple word or thing, and may be seen as having multiple meanings and functions in Tongan culture such as: An original source of Tongan cultural “creation”, a cultural “portal” for accessing *laumālie*, and even as a traditional Tongan non-Western form of “indigenous religion” to name but three (See chapter 7 for a the fuller discussion of *Faiva* in its various roles in these and other regards).

⁴¹ This “linked” format would overcome many of the current difficulties in how to express content, who for, and how much to express and so on, and obviate the need for varying approaches found in monolingual or bilingual dictionaries, as information could be accessed at any level of inquiry.

A final note:

It must be remarked, that with increasing Westernization of Tongan culture and education, the real Tongan “language” (in whatever that form may actually be), may eventually lose much of its richness and depth of meaning, due to loss of both its epistemological roots and its ontological context, and therefore its intersections with a more traditional *tā* and *vā*. In other words, as Tongan culture becomes increasingly Westernized, the effect of an imposed alien *tā* and *vā* will change the social and cultural context in which Tongan “language” is used. In this situation Tongan “words” particularly, may become cut off and lose their original *laumālie* to become like English words, but with a Tongan root that is varied by prefix, suffix and so on. This loss of epistemological depth, conceptual structure and relational and inferential intersection with other Tongan “words”, and particularly of their *laumālie*, would no longer present an obstacle to being organized in Western dictionary form like any other Western language.

Fortunately, whilst there is some evidence of this already having occurred, as is exemplified by both the format of the Churchward and other dictionaries, and the inclusion of a wide range of “Tonganized” western words,⁴² this tendency has not reached its final conclusion. It is hoped amongst other things that the sort of issues discussed and presented in this thesis, will demonstrate a need for considering and researching alternatives in terms of both representing and understanding of Tongan (Moana) “language” before it is gone forever.

In the following chapter then, I will explore and further discuss and analyze Moana language through the example of five Tongan “words” associated with *Faiva*, and as they are found in a Moana based context.

⁴² Churchward in his 1959 Tongan dictionary includes “Tonganized” English words but marks them with a “cross” to indicate that he has done so. Churchward also adds his own “invented” words, which he marks with a “double-cross” (Churchward 1959:viii).

Chapter 6:

Nimoi 'i talafau

Not seen yet hidden

When something is thought to have been lost, but in fact it is still hidden around the place. The term *talafau* refers to the plaited area at the bottom of a basket made of coconut leaves. (Māhina 2004a:170)

Insights into the Conceptual Structure of Moana Languages **Five Members of the Faiva Kāinga (family)**

Under the Heliaki Tree

In the morn before the dawn
I sit in my favourite place
I see the sun rise
And before my eyes
The sky line, begins to shine
A curved line, for all time
The divine, Sunshine

As did Maui meditate
On what God did create
I listen to the trees
Blowing in the north breeze
What do the leaves say?
In a heliaki way
Laumālie laulau māmālie

From Gods own imagination
His creation, man and tree alike
The spirit of our ancestors
Is as the wind blows through the leaves
As the rivers flow beneath the seas
As the sun floats on high
As the moon and stars in the night sky
Reflected images of me
Mirrors the sky in the sea
Nature must be Heliaki

The conception of all creation
Faiva ta'anga, faiva hiva, faiva haka
Is Faiva Christianity?
Fruit from the Toa Tree,
fakahoifua to God
Before a congregation

I express my adoration
My tradition
Faiva sinatala mālanga‘i faiva

This is my prayer
Do I dare, to say it aloud
Before the crowd
Bringing intuition, to fruition
hakahokohaka my ongo’i laumālie

Indigenous ancestral knowledge is
Cosmology and ecology
Tongan epistemology and ontology
A production of a symphony, in harmony
Creating beauty
All told through Heliaki

Birds and trees, sky and sea
The Moana man and this land
Is of the same creative plan
Rhythmically, tā
Spatially, vā
Spiritually, laumālie

Telling story
Man in his glory
Punake PhD in Heliaki
My mothers, mothers, brother
Lelenoa, is his name
Matāpule is his fame
The grandfather of Malukava
A scared place he did make
The punake’s call
A little shack in the back
Was where I learned it all
My years were eight
Never too late
To learn the rest by Fall
Beginning with the stars
Planet Venus and Mars
tulolo, olo toli, kako tui
Kako, toli, ao, aotapu
kakotapu, tulou, lolou
Tuingaika, toloa, ‘umu
fakahalafononga
haka of ‘UHINGA

These hands of mine in space and time
Conceal no crime, my only desire is to
Truly inspire the passion of faiva katoa

Beauty beyond compare laulau māmālie

(A *faiva ta'anga* for Tēvita Tonga Mohenoa Puloka, by Helen Ferris-Leary 2010.)

During extensive *talanoa* about *Faiva*, I found my informants consistently using certain “words” over and over, in their attempts to convey a fuller explanation of *Faiva*. I soon realized that any deeper understanding of *Faiva* could only be achieved by an understanding of “words” that surrounded *Faiva* as well. In fact, across the Moana generally, it is understood that knowing another person is not attained by separating them from their *kāinga* (“family”) but rather, by knowing their *kāinga*. I believe that this is also true with many Moana “words.” In other words, the concept of *Faiva* and the Tongan “words” chosen as examples in this chapter, not only reflect Moana dynamics, but are a part of the relational totality that embodies an ontological integration and formalization of their Tongan (Moana) epistemology.

I have chosen to explore and discuss five Tongan (Moana) “words” in this chapter. These five “words”, like *Faiva*, are important examples of how knowledge and insight into deeper cultural meanings, may also only emerge in the context of a complete and holistic theoretical and methodological approach. As the “proverb” at the beginning of this chapter suggests, the cultural knowledge contained in these words is not lost, but simply hidden at the bottom of a “basket of vocabulary” so to speak. In other words, these “words” embody and contain Tongan conceptual knowledge and, if approached from a Moana theoretical and methodological perspective, reveal important insights not only about Moana language in general, but about the Tongan world-view in which *Faiva* is also embedded.

Whilst I often utilize the Churchward dictionary to access more superficial meaning for the Tongan “words” in this chapter, what follows are proposals that are built on a wide range of sources,¹ including deeper discussions with my Tongan informants. This has led me to not only have insights into Tongan *Faiva*, but also into the formulation and conceptual structures of Tongan “words” in this chapter. As in previous chapters (chapter 3 and 5 especially), this has led me to theorize and

¹ See lists of Moana dictionaries and other sources of information at the beginning of chapter 5.

interpret how each Tongan “word” is structured in a Moana sense and also what each “word” may signify in terms of its *laumālie* or ultimate meaning in intersection with a specific *tā* and *vā* (see the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality and the Hypothesis of Laumālie in chapter 3). That this may conflict at times with the view that is current in dictionaries such as the Churchward (1959), is not to say that my presentation is less valid, but rather, that it comes from a different perspective on language, and one that is arguably closer to an original Moana conception and is therefore I believe, more appropriate than the Western paradigm that is currently so usual, as to have become the norm.

Like my previous discussion of the “name” Tangaloa (in chapter 5), I have kept my discussion of each “word” in this chapter to what I consider to be an appropriate yet simple analysis, to explore how I believe each “word” was originally constructed from a Moana perspective.

In general then, Moana “word” construction is consistent with Māhina’s Tā-Vā Theory of Reality together with the Hypothesis of Laumālie. It is therefore one of intersection and combination of the *laumālie* of constituent elements forming an overall *laumālie*, and with specific meaning resulting from mediation of this overall *laumālie* in a particular *tā* and *vā* (see both chapter 3 and chapter 5). Further, that this construction was accomplished not only by adding elements based on their *laumālie*, but also in an intersectional arrangement that is mediated by both ontological and epistemological reasoning. This also means that parts of constituent “words” can be abbreviated, their spelling changed, reversed, re-ordered, or undergo other non-Western processes without any loss of *laumālie*. In this sense Moana “words” carry only a *laumālie* not a specific meaning. I propose in fact, that Moana “words” are structured in this way so as to intentionally facilitate a process of meaning through the social creative mediation of *tā* and *vā*. Unlike the specificity that is assigned to Western words (and reflected in their structure), this gives Moana “words” their inherent flexibility of both use and meaning across differing situations and contexts. Without understanding this sort of conceptual structure and the sort of mediation of a “words” *laumālie* in a specific *tā* and *vā* situation that defines meaning, it is far more difficult to comprehend the processes, let alone discover the elegance of construction, or the poetic eloquence of Moana language in general.

In the following discussions then, it is also hoped that my approach demonstrates a value in developing an understanding of Moana “words” well beyond that found in current Western forms of dictionary. Further, I believe that my approach, if expanded beyond my proposals in this thesis with further research, will not only validate much of what I am saying about Moana language, but will eventually unfold a hitherto unrecognized richness and depth in many Moana “words”, leading not only to a re-integration of the language itself, but also to an understanding of the elegant yet profoundly poetic sense in Moana “words” and in their relationships with other “words” or forms of expression such as when *Faiva* takes the forms of *faiva haka*, *faiva hiva*, *faiva ta‘anga*.

As *talanoa* with my Tongan informants often demonstrated, understanding of concepts was more a process of intersection with varying *tā* and *vā*, or “contextual setting” rather than specific meaning. It is not my intention in the following discussions therefore, to arrive at a specific definition in English for each Tongan “word”, nor to portray it according to the usual Western ideas of structure but rather, to explore possible scenarios of structure and variations in meaning based in my theoretical approach. It is hoped therefore that the reader will suspend any Western tendency to want to define what a particular “word” is, either in Western ideas of structure or meaning, and allow themselves to entertain a wider range of possibility by developing a “generality of feeling” that is, the *laumālie* in each “word” that may then be applied across many situations, that is, in various intersections of *tā* and *vā*. Whilst this may sound un-scientific or worryingly non-specific from within a Western structural linguistic paradigm, I propose that it is only through these means that a person can develop an appreciation of the real *fu* (“form”), *uho* (“content”) and *‘aonga* (“function”) of Moana “words”.

What follows is a discussion of five Tongan “words”, chosen because I believe each has an important relationship with *Faiva*, and also because the following discussions demonstrate forms of conceptualization found in “words” not only in Tonga, but across the Moana generally. It should be noted however, that there are many Tongan “words” that could rightfully be chosen as being associated with *Faiva* because of its many and varied forms and I have discussed some of these in other contexts

throughout this thesis generally. The following “words” are therefore used only as examples and only as a small part of a much greater *kāinga* to which *Faiva* belongs.

‘Uhinga

The “word” *‘uhinga*, is a good example of the complexity and depth of inference contained in a single Tongan (Moana) “word”. It is also a good example of how Moana “words” may lose much of their nature if their understanding is attempted from within a Western paradigm. I will therefore spend more time discussing *‘uhinga* than for subsequent “words”, as an understanding of *‘uhinga* is also helpful in the consolidating the type of Moana conceptual and contextual ground, upon which other Moana “words” may be more fully appreciated.

Churchward simply describes the word *‘uhinga*, also as *‘uhi*,² being a “noun” meaning “meaning; reason, inc. object or purpose; argument, contention, position, view, attitude, as in *‘eku ‘uhinga*, my contention etc.” and so on...(Churchward, 1959:569).

Melenaite Taumoefolau on the other hand states: *‘Uhi* means life-producing, so a mother pig that is *‘uhi ua* has two offspring. *‘Uhi* has to do with having the capacity to produce life, so *‘uhi* relates to productivity, to the ability to sustain life, life-giving, life-nurturing. (Taumoefolau 2009).

Taumoefolau states further that the word *‘uhi* is a doublet of the word *‘uli*, both having the basic meaning of “life essence” (Taumoefolau 2009). Churchward similarly suggests that *‘uhi* may be a doublet of the word *‘uli*, but says that *‘uli* also means “black”. (Churchward 1959:569).

Potauaine & Māhina in this regard, suggest that *‘uli* as the color black, has an association with *kula* meaning the colour red. Further, that this does not just mean

² Churchward also states that *nga* is a modificatory suffix. In this case a noun-forming suffix (Churchward 1959:382).

“black and red” as simple colours, but that each has far deeper Moana epistemological implications:

In Tonga, *kula* and ‘*uli*, like *tā* and *vā*, are, by way of form, content and function, generally projected beyond the physical to both the mental and the social, as opposed to the relatively strict confinement of red and black or time and space to the physical, especially in terms of the empiricism underlying both science and technology, in the West. Herein, the symmetry and asymmetry concerning the constant interchange between the entities of *kula* and ‘*uli* will be investigated in terms of red hole and black hole, in nature, enlightenment and ignorance, in mind, and division of functions amongst men and women, in society. Given that all Tongan forms of human activity, across nature, mind and society, espouse both quality and utility, where things are produced for their aesthetic qualities but also for their usefulness, formally, substantially and functionally combining knowledge production and knowledge application, ontology and epistemology or ways of being and ways of knowing. (Potauaine & Māhina, 2007:1)

As an example of the sort of implication we are talking about here, not only do Potauaine & Māhina discuss the implications of *kula* and ‘*uli* in their varying forms and functions in Tongan culture through *tufunga lalava* (“kafa-sennit-intersecting binding”), but also that associated with gender. For instance, in terms of gender, Potauaine & Māhina go on to talk about ‘*uli*:

The word for night is *pō*, which is, by virtue of its being ‘*uli*, is also known as *pō ‘uli* (black night). In fact, a range of *pō*-oriented events are called to mind, such as *pō fananga* (night of legend telling); *pō me’e* (night of dancing); *pō talanoa* (night of talking); *pō lotu* (night of praying); *pō ako* (night of learning); and *pō hele ‘uhila* (night of film-seeing), suggesting that they were performed during the night. The word ‘*uli* is predominantly featured in forms of social activity closely associated with women. For example, the *mā ‘uli* (midwife) conducts the fine art of *faifā ‘ele* (birth-giving), whereby the *tama* (child) is separated from the *fa ‘ē* (mother). In the performance art *faiva ‘eva* (courting), the *moa ‘uli* (match-maker) acts as a go-between, offering expert advice to the suitor in wooing his sweetheart. Also, *fiē ‘uli* (sex instinct), which literally means a man “wanting to be black”, i.e., “wanting to have sex”, in this case, with a woman. Both positive and negative human emotions are variously categorized in terms of *kula* and ‘*uli*, as in ‘*atamai maama* (light mind), *loto ma ‘a* (clean heart) and ‘*ate lelei* (good liver), in contrast to ‘*atamai ‘uli* (black mind), *loto ‘uli* (black heart) and ‘*ate ‘uli* (black liver). (Potauaine and Māhina, 2007:11)³

³ Māhina more recently stated that even *tā* and *vā* may be classified along gender lines: In this regard Māhina further states: In my critical engagement in developing the *tā-vā* theory of reality (Māhina, 2002a, 2004a; Ka’ili, 2007; Potauaine, 2005; Williams, 2009), I have encountered the fact that time and space, as ontological entities, are epistemologically classified along gender lines, in formal, substantial and functional ways, within and across nature, mind and society. The epistemological classifications of time and space, therefore, have a bearing on genealogy. This is seen in the treatment

Whilst many English words also have deeper implicative meanings, it should be clear even from these small quotes, that Moana “words” are in this regard, even more implicatively and symbolically tied to their underlying ontology and epistemology.

In fact, because of the complex inference generated by ‘*uhi*’ alone, Tongan linguist Taumoeofolau proposes a range of variations on its meaning:

‘Uhinga as genealogy and place of origin

‘*Uhi* (life sustenance) + *-nga* (process suffix) gives ‘*uhinga*, which refers to everything that contributes to giving a life. This translates into the meaning descent, pedigree, ancestry, genealogy. Another life-related meaning of ‘*uhinga* is that which gives life, referring to the niche, habitat, ecology, reason, or cause for living. This meaning of ‘*uhinga* refers to one’s place or places of origin. This meaning of ‘*uhinga* approximates with the notion of one’s identity – identity in Tongan is never just the individual self. Neither is it a matter of choice – of who you want to be. Because one cannot choose one’s ancestors, and one cannot choose one’s places of origin. It refers to one’s *people* and one’s *places* – these are the things that produce one, and the things that one is known to the world by. Tongans almost instinctively introduce themselves as the child of so and so, or the descendant of so and so, and they come from the *fa’ahinga* of so and so, and they hail from the village of so and so. These, and not the individual solely, make up a person’s identity. One derives one’s essence and one’s social and cultural being from one’s ancestry and surroundings. Identity is the village, the clan, the *kāinga*, the *kolo*, *nu’u*, *motu*, etc. When one goes overseas, Tonga is the niche, the ‘*uhinga*.

‘Uhinga as Path trodden, the places travelled, lived on, visited

From the verb ‘*uhi* – meaning to use that path from time to time. This meaning has cognates in other Polynesian languages. I think the derived word ‘*uhiki* connotes path as well, the trail, used by the offspring following their mother. ‘*Uhinga* refers to that well-trodden path, the *hala kuo papa*, the path trodden, and this is related to the concept of *anga faka-Tonga* – the pattern of behaviour that has been made *papa*, delineated and shaped creating the path. All that is ‘*uhinga*.

of red kafa-sinnet and black kafa-sinnet as male and female respectively. Belonging in the male realm are *tā* (time), *fu* (form), *kula* (red), *la’ā* (sun), ‘*aho* (day), *mo’ui* (life) and *maama* (enlightenment) amongst others, and in the female domain are *vā* (space), *uho* (content), black (‘*uli*), *māhina* (moon), night (*pō*), *mate* (death) and *fakapo’uli* (ignorance) amidst others (Māhina, Ka`ili and Ka`ili, 2006; cf. Māhina 2002a; Rees, 2002). (Māhina 2009b).

'UHINGA as meaning, that which gives meaning

The word *'uhinga* also means “meaning”, such as the *'uhinga* of a word. The very use and import of a word lies in its *'uhinga* (meaning), in what it signifies. The *'uhinga* of a word is its life, or its soul or spirit. Figuratively the offspring of a word, that which is projected by a sound or symbol, the reason, the purpose of the word.

A related verbal sense of *'uhinga* is to make sense, if something makes sense to one, we say it is *'uhinga* to one. This connects with the identity meaning – because something makes sense if we are comfortable with it, and it is culturally compatible with us. This is the sense of *'uhinga* that gives rise to the multimorphemic word *mahu'ingamālie* – comprehensible, sensible, logical, rational, compatible with one’s reasoning.

When the prefix *ma-* is added to the word *'uhi*, we get *ma'uhi*, which is the origin for the word *mahu'inga*. Phonology teaches us that Tongan sometimes makes use of the process called metathesis. Metathesis is when two consonants in a word change places. In the word *mahu'inga* the *h* and the *glottal stop* have changed places, resulting in the metathesised *mahu'inga*. An event is *mahu'inga* because it is able to be perceived as sensible, able to be appreciated, compatible with one’s expectations.

'UHINGA as Identity

Let me sum up the meaning of *'uhinga* then. The *'uhinga* of a person refers to all the collective entity that provides one’s life essence, all that which makes one meaningful as a living being. *'UHINGA* refers collectively to one’s home and family surroundings because these are the things that molded one and are the things that one is known by – one’s niche, symbols, places, lineages, friends, relations, one’s rivers, mountains, trees, fishes, birds, animals, islands, towns, villages, districts, roads, beaches, cliffs, ponds, even waves and winds, as well as one’s tombs and graveyards, *'esi* or raised platforms, *kakala*, garlands, fine mats, *ngatu*. (Taumoefolau, 2009.)

As mentioned previously, analysing languages within a Western paradigm can be misleading in non-Western contexts. Consequently, whilst Taumoefolau’s analysis of *'uhi* is appropriate to its indigenous Moana paradigm, identifying *'uhi* as the root and *nga* only as a simple modifier (process suffix) for *'uhi*, is a Western paradigm that mis-identifies *nga*.

I suggest that the Moana “word” *nga* in its own Moana paradigm, is a lot more than the suffix that a Western paradigm says it is. Applying the Hypothesis of Laumālie for instance, I suggest that *nga* is a Moana “word” that has an important *laumālie* in its own right and that, just like the “word” *'uhi*, *nga* has deep ontological and

epistemological implications across the whole Moana. Its *laumālie* is therefore chosen as an addition to the *laumālie* of *‘uhi* above and for addition in intersectional constructions with the *laumālie* of other Moana “words” extensively across the Moana.

Whilst Churchward also only defines *nga* as a prefix, noun-forming suffix, modificatory suffix (Churchward 1959:382), I believe this to be an inappropriate Westernization of *nga*, based on how Western philologists conceptualized its use. In contrast to this however, Edward Tregear (1891), some seventy years earlier than Churchward, hints at a wider perspective on *nga* across the Moana, not only in a meaning denotes the plural or multiple of something, but also of variations of *nga*, as in *ka* (South Island Māori) *na* (Tahitian, Hawaiian, Marquesan) comparing it to *gaahi* (Tongan), and its equivalence to *ngā* (to breathe) (Tregear 1891:272-3). Whilst one could persist in interpreting *nga* within a Western paradigm in this context by claiming *nga* as a suffix (or prefix) that denotes the plural of something, I believe this again imposes a Westernized paradigm that obscures the important Moana inferences and intersectional relationships that *nga* has with other Moana words.

In this context then, whilst one could continue to argue that *nga* could denote the plural of *‘uhi* in the discussion above, in other words “many identities”, “many things that give meaning”, “many paths trodden”, “many places of origin”, or that it is as Churchward suggests, a noun-forming suffix, or modificatory suffix, to create the “noun” *‘uhinga* meaning “reason, inc. object or purpose; argument, contention, position, view, attitude” (Churchward 1959:569) and so on, I do not believe that this is anything more than a constructed Western form of reality.

Applying the Hypothesis of Laumālie in the case of *‘uhinga* then, I propose that *nga* in the context of its intersection with *‘uhi* was originally chosen not as some sort of suffix to modify *‘uhi*, but as an important intersection with *‘uhi* and to combine the *laumālie* of each. As the explanation of Taumoefolau above amply illustrates, *‘uhi* in its own right has sufficient inference to give meaning, without any need for modification by the addition of a suffix in a Western sense, or the use of suffixes. In contrast, I propose that *nga* was deliberately chosen to intersect with *‘uhi* because in

this instance, it is an abbreviation of the Moana “word” *tangata* and carries its *laumālie*.

The “word” *tangata* in Tonga is the same as the Māori word *tangata* and in simple terms infers “a Moana person”. Utilizing the Hypothesis of Laumālie, I propose that *tangata* itself was originally constructed as *nga* in a double intersectional relationship with the “word” *ta* to become the “word” *ta-nga-ta*. In this context I suggest that *nga* itself may be an abbreviation of the “word” *ngā* which infers “to breathe” and that *ta* may be an abbreviation of *tā*, which infers “to beat” (as in the rhythm of breathing and in the heart beating).

Further to this, I suggest that *tangata* may also be seen as an intersection between *tanga* and *ta*, where *ta* is an abbreviation of *tā* and *tanga* may be an abbreviated form of Tangaloa (Tangaroa in Māori). In this case the intersection is deeply epistemological and the resulting mediation results in an inference that a Moana person is Tangaloa-*tā*, creating a some what poetic *laumālie* for *tangata* that infers that a Moana person (*tangata*) is conceptually the “heartbeat of Tangaloa”.⁴ Leaving aside the obvious structural connections between *tangata* and Tangaloa (because *tanga* is in *tangata* and Tangaloa), and also that between *nga* and Tangaloa (because *nga* is also in Tangaloa), and taking *tangata* as simply *ta-nga-ta*, I suggest that even in this simple form, *tangata* may infer the human heart beating, as in “beat-breathe-beat” and/or the rhythmic breathing of a human being, and hence to a mediated *laumālie* inferring “a living person”.

I believe that it is because of this sort of intersection and its resulting *laumālie*, that *nga* is used as an abbreviated form of *tangata* in intersection with numerous “words” and found extensively across the Moana. In the case where *nga* also infers “more than one,” I suggest that *nga* was used as an abbreviation of *tangata* because it also denotes a plural form of *tangata*. Many Māori tribal names for instance make extensive use of constructions involving intersection with the “word” *nga* (Nga Ruahine, Ngapuhi, Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Whātua, Ngāti Awa, to name but a few). The Tongan word *kāinga* (“family”) may originally have

⁴ see also the discussion of Tangaloa in chapter 5.

been constructed from an intersection of *kai* and *tangata*. Even the word Tonga itself may have originally been constructed using an intersection of *to* and *tangata*, and been abbreviated to *to* and *nga*. Applying the Hypothesis of Laumālie, and where *to* means to plant or sow, the appropriate mediation of this intersection would result in a *laumālie* for the “word” Tonga, that it is “the place where people are planted or sown” in the fuller sense of a person not only being created in this place, but also nourished and developed to become uniquely “Tongan”.

In this way then, the original choice to construct Moana “words” that contain an intersectional relationship with *nga* would have been because *nga* was an abbreviation of *tangata* and adds its *laumālie*, that is; a “Moana person” to the overall *laumālie* of any word it is intersected with. I suggest that these sorts of abbreviations, intersectional structures and the associated inferences that are generated, are not only part of a wider a non-Western structure in Moana language, but that this is directly obscured by the imposition of a Western paradigm in the form of suffix, prefix and so on.

As far as *‘uhinga* is concerned then, I suggest that *‘uhinga* was not structured in the usual Western sense. Both the inception of *‘uhi* and *nga* and their intersectional combination as *‘uhinga*, is conceptually Moanan. The meaning of *‘uhinga* needs to be considered not only in its Moana forms of construction, but also in the context of a multilayered *laumālie* based in Moana ontology and epistemology. In fact I suggest that it is this underlying connection with ontology and epistemology, both literally and symbolically, that not only give rise to the choice of intersectional combinations for Moana “word” but a “word’s” overall *laumālie* and the mediation in *tā* and *vā*, that may give rise to variations in specific meaning. The many variations in meaning of *‘uhinga*, like other Moana “words”, are therefore testimony to this sort of reality.

Tauhi vā

Tauhi vā is an interesting Tongan concept in that it strikes deeply into the very meanings of human relationships across all Moana cultures. Ka’ili for instance, conceptualizes *tauhi vā* as the Tongan art of socio-spatial relations (Ka’ili 2008:1).

Applying the Hypothesis of *Laumālie*, I propose that the “word” *tauhi vā* itself was originally constructed as an intersection of the *laumālie* of the “words” *ta*, *‘uhi* and *vā*, and where *ta* is an abbreviated form of *tā*. Like all other Moana intersections, it carries with it, not only the *laumālie* of each individual word, but a new *laumālie* formed from the intersection of *ta*, *‘uhi* and *vā* and, like other Moana “words” the specific meaning of *tauhi vā* depends on the mediation of its overall *laumālie* within and across various intersections of *tā* and *vā*.

‘Okusitino Māhina states:

The term *fe ‘uhi ‘aki*, made up of *fe- ‘uhi- ‘aki*, where *fe* is a contraction of “*fai*”, meaning to do, and *‘uhi*, meaning to visit [each other], and *‘aki*, meaning to do it back and forth, i.e., a two-way-movement. The same applies to the term *fetauhi ‘aki*, made up of *fe-ta-uhi- ‘aki*, meaning to look after each other. So, *tauhi va*, made up of *ta-uhi-va*, means to keep each other's relations by performing their respective social obligations, as in parents doing their and children theirs in promoting the collective well-being of the group. The term *tauhi* is used to mean keeping or looking after something, for example, *tauhi ngoue*, meaning to look after one's garden, *tauhi kakai*, meaning to look after one's people as a designated leader and so on. (Māhina, personal communication June 2009)

The Tongan “word” *‘uhi* in this context carries with it its *laumālie* as discussed in the context of *‘uhinga* above. Both *tā* and *vā* also have a *laumālie* based on deeper Moana relationships, both with each other ontologically and at the epistemological level, not only in the *tā-vā* relationship underpinning Māhina's Moana based Tā-Vā Theory of Reality, but also in relation to their *laumālie* found throughout Tongan culture in the *tā* “rhythmic patterns” and *vā* “social-spacings” that contextualize Tongan culture. For instance, the *tā-vā* relationship that is found in *Faiva* in all its varying forms such as *faiva haka*, *faiva hiva*, *faiva ta ‘anga* and so on (see chapter 7), as well as in more material relationships such as in various forms of *tufunga* (“material arts”).

In this regard Ka’ili states:

In this dissertation, I conceptualize *tauhi vā* as the Tongan art of sociospatial relations. In Tonga, as well as most Moana (Oceanic) cultures, artists symmetrically or rhythmically mark time (*tā*) in space (*vā*) to create beauty (*mālie*). This artistic marking of time (*tā*) in space (*vā*) is visually displayed in the *kupesi* – intricate and elaborate geometrical designs – that adorn Tongan

tattoos, carvings, fine mats, barkcloths, and sennit lashings. Furthermore, this time-space configuration is expressed in the rhythmic patterns that define Tongan drumbeats, music, dance movements, and poetic compositions. I argue that *tauhi vā*, the Tongan art of sociospatial relations, also marks time (*tā*) in a symmetrical form in space (*vā*). Specifically, *tauhi vā* arranges time through the mutual performance (*tā*) of social duties (*fatongia*). The mutuality of the performance creates symmetry, and symmetry gives rise to beautiful sociospatial relations (*vālelei*). (Ka’ili 2008:2).

In this respect not only does the construction of *tauhi vā* embody Moana *tā* and *vā* relationships, as well as the individual *laumālie* of both *tā* and *vā*, but also that of *‘uhi* and by implication the fuller *laumālie* of *‘uhinga* as previously discussed. I further suggest that the concept of *tauhi vā* is also closely related to *Faiva* (see chapter 7) and is part of dynamic conceptual model and process by which Tongan society is maintained, defining every Tongan’s rhythm (*tā*), identity (*‘uhinga*), and social space (*vā*). In other words, a Tongan’s way of relating, thinking and being in the world. In this regard the overall *laumālie* of *tauhi vā*, is very similar to that of *Faiva* and could be described as *‘ulungāanga faka-Tonga* (the “Tongan way”).⁵

Heliaki (see also discussions of *heliaki* in chapter 5)

Churchward defines *Heliaki* as the same as *heliheliaki* (r.c), v.i, or v.t. with *lea*, *talanoa*, *fakamatala*, etc., as obj., or adv., qualifying *lea*, etc., to speak ironically, or to say one thing and mean another.” (Churchward 1959:219).

Like this Churchward definition of “to speak ironically, or to say one thing and mean another”, *heliaki* has usually been described in the literature as some form of “indirectness” (Helu 1999, Herda 1995, Kaepler 1993, 2005, 2007, Māhina 1992, 1993, 2003c, 2004a, 2005a, 2007a, 2010; Māhina & Māhina 2007; Moyle 1987, Taumoefolau 2004; Wood-Ellem 1999, 2004).

⁵ As both *Faiva* and *tauhi vā* are so central to *‘ulungāanga faka-Tonga*, it is not surprising that they carry the same *laumālie*, and like other Moana “words” their differentiation occurs only through intersection and mediation of a specific *tā* and *vā*.

Māhina is more revealing when he states:

The age old artistic and literary concept and practice of *heliaki* function as an epiphoric and metaphoric device for the mediation of spatio-temporal, substantial-formal (and functional) conflicts in human meanings in Tongan formal language (Crittenden, 2003; Māhina, 2002a, 2003b, 2008a, 2008b; Māhina, Māhina & Māhina, 2007e). The term *heliaki* is the equivalent of the Greek word *epiphora*, both of which involve qualitative exchange between two things (Crittenden, 2003; Māhina, 2003b). Put simply, *heliaki* involves an exchange of two closely related qualities between two objects, events or state of affairs, on the one hand, and approximate cultural and historical connections between two places, things or states of affairs, on the other. It is possible that *heliaki* is a corruption of *hiliaki* or a contraction of *fehiliaki* both literally meaning “placing-one-over-another,” i.e., an intersection. (Māhina, 1999b, 2004a, 2005a, 2005b, 2007a, 2007b; Māhina, Ka’ili & Ka’ili, 2006) (Māhina, 2010:8)

As previously stated, in the case of Moana language in general, I propose that an understanding of *heliaki* is best approached through an understanding of *laumālie* across varying *tā* and *vā*.

For instance, Taumoefolau, when speaking of Queen Sālote’s poetry states:

Laukakala and *Laumātanga*

Tongan language has complimentary ways of speaking about places and peoples that are used to strengthen Tongan people’s *vā* (ties) with the homeland. These literary practices are called *laumātanga* (reciting scenic spots) and *laukakala* (reciting fragrant flowers) to refer metaphorically to beloved places and peoples. These are the techniques used by Queen Sālote to talk about her *‘uhinga*. And she is all the more attached to her people and *kāinga* using those modes of speaking. So superficially she is talking about flowers and scenic spots, but she is in fact referring to her illustrious ancestors. She celebrates them in her joys and sorrows alike. She rarely sees anyone as an individual. She sees everyone in the wider context of the entire *ha’a*/clan, their places of origin, as well as throughout several generations. So identity is a whole world – it consists of people, as well as islands, districts and villages, tracts, roads or pathways, rocks, channels, beaches – *fanga*, cliff-bound coasts – *liku*, ponds, streams, mounds – *sia*, raised platforms – *‘esi*, garlands – *tui*, fragrant flowers – *kakala*, guiding stars, birds, boats, bush, trees, and winds, even waves. (Taumoefolau, 2009)

Whilst Taumoefolau is talking about Queen Sālote’s poetry here, clearly her appeal to the Tongan people is because the *laumālie* of *heliaki* is deeply embedded in the Tongan language generally and in the Tongan psyche specifically.

Whilst Māhina (2010:8) states that *heliaki* has been the subject of much scholarly reflection, and that this has failed to give a true account of its philosophical nature, he proposes there are actually two types of *heliaki* viz., *heliaki fakafehauaki* (epiphoric, qualitative *heliaki*) and *heliaki fakafekau'aki* (metaphoric, associative *heliaki*) (Māhina, 1999a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004b, 2005a, 2005b; Māhina, Māhina & Māhina 2007e). In each case however the association may be actual, or socially constructed through *Faiva* and *tala-e-fonua* (“traditional history”) and in myths and legends such as *talatupu'a* (the Tongan creation “myth”). In other words *Heliaki*, comes in two expressive forms: 1. To do with the exchange of closely related qualities between two or more objects. 2. The exchange of closely related qualities between to or more objects, which are culturally or historically associated.⁶

Applying the Hypothesis of *Laumālie*, I propose that the “word” *heliaki* itself, is actually the intersection of the *laumālie* of *he*, *li*, *a*, and *ki*. In this case Churchward (1959:217) states that “*he*” has meanings of “this, that, these, those”, as in this place, or that place, and also “to go astray.” Its *laumālie* would therefore be something like “going astray between two places, here and there”. “*Li*” on the other hand, according to Churchward (1959:294) has meanings like “to contribute, to donate” and may therefore have a *laumālie* inferring some form of exchange from one thing to another. Churchward states that “*a*” is untranslatable as such, but may be used for the sake of politeness or emphasis (Churchward, 1959:1); “*a*” itself may also be a shortened version of *afa*, which has meanings of “being somewhat like, to resemble to some extent (Churchward, 1959:1). In other words “*a*” may have a *laumālie* of “politely referring to a resemblance of one thing to another.” Finally “*ki*” according to Churchward (1959:262) has meanings of “to” and “to make a show of oneself by one’s talk or behaviour, or; habitually acting in this way.”

Overall then if we examine the intersection *he-li-a-ki*, we get an overall *laumālie* that is something like, “going astray (*he*) between this or that place or between these things and those things (this and that, or these and those) (*he*) in a donation or some type of contributory exchange (*li*), for the sake of politeness (*a*) or, between things

⁶ When discussing forms of Tongan “indirectness” (*faka'aki'akimui*) such as *faka'esia* (“to cover up”) and *heliaki*, Māhina states: Whereas the term *faka'esia*, in particular, simply refers to the use of the language of respect in ordinary discourse, the notion of *heliaki* is utilized in ceremonial contexts such as weddings and funerals or other socio-economic exchanges between groups. (Māhina 1992:5)

that are alike or resemble each other to some extent (*afa*) in order to (not) make a show of oneself by one's talking (*ki*) and perhaps habitually doing this (*ki*). (The negative “not” used with “to make a show of oneself by talking” is inferred here, because across the Moana, whilst great orators are highly regarded, it is generally considered impolite, disrespectful and arrogant for a person “to make a show of oneself by talking”).⁷ As is the usual case with Moana “words” I propose that successful mediation of its *laumālie* in intersection in various *tā* and *vā*, in other words the meaning of *heliaki*, is itself variable depending on the context in which it is used.

Māhina for instance states:

As a polished concept and practice of great beauty and complexity, *heliaki* comes into play in formally and substantially (and functionally) structuring contradictory human intentions in such art forms as *faiva talatupu'a*, *faiva maau* and *faiva lea heliaki*. Evidently, *heliaki* comes into operation at the crossing point of symbolism and historicism, formally and substantially differentiating between the symbolic, on the one hand, and the historical, on the other, embedded in Tongan formal language (Collocott & Havea, 1922; Feldman, 1980, 1981; Moala, 1994; Rabone, 1845; Taliai, 1987; Tu'inukuafe, 1997). In essence, symbols are merely pointers to actual things, in a single level of reality, i.e., time and space (Anderson, 1962; Helu, 1999; Māhina, 1992, 1999a; Māhina, Māhina & Māhina, 2007e). (Māhina, 2010:8)

In a recent discussion concerning *heliaki* in terms of the English concept of metaphor, Māhina stated that “*heliaki* is also derived from the word *hiliaki*:

Hiliaki means ‘to place one on top of the other’ which brings it back to the concept of an intersection. In *heliaki*, you are intersecting two things by meditating them for example: The sun is *heliaki* for power, so you have here sun, and the power there, then you mediate the inter-section. There is more to it than metaphor as a form of imposition. (Māhina, personal communication 2012)

⁷ Māhina for instance when discussing Tongan *faka'aki'akimui* (“indirectness”) in social interactions states: In fact, this mode of behaviour, of socially downgrading oneself by upgrading the other and vice versa, of symbolically reducing the object through obscuring its literal/true character, tends to cut across the entire spectrum of both the Tongan formal and informal universe of discourse. Generally speaking, the effects of the working of society is such that it highly discourages boasting about one's own achievements, socially regarded as a source of embarrassment. (Māhina 1992:5-6)

Whilst some have argued that the real meaning of *heliaki* may never be determined conclusively, it is in fact not helpful to try to define it in the usual Western manner, because the sort of *laumālie* that emerges from seeing *he-li-a-ki* as an intersectional Moana construction, and with a specific meaning derived only from an ontologically and epistemologically mediated outcome of *tā* and *vā*, means that its meaning, like other Moana “words” will vary depending on its specific *tā* and *vā* context. This approach certainly matches the idea that the “word” *heliaki* can have varying forms of expression such as *fakafehauaki* (epiphoric, qualitative *heliaki*) and *heliaki fakafekau ‘aki* (metaphoric, associative *heliaki*).

In summary, when *heliaki* is conceptualized as part of a process of intersection and mediation its *laumālie* takes on an inference of indirectness, when seen as a concept in its own right its *laumālie* takes on an inference of “poetic” or “philosophical metaphor.” In either case the *laumālie* of *heliaki* could be described simply as “symbolic inference.”

Tapu

According to Churchward *tapu* means: forbidden, prohibited. As a noun: prohibition, sacredness, holiness. Also sacred relic or reminder (Churchward, 1959:457)

In a personal communication to myself however, Māhina explained that *tapu* was not the same as the Western idea of being “sacred” and framed in some Western notion of indigenous irrationality (i.e. Some form of superstition/supernatural) but rather, a reference to something being in a state of both order and symmetry, creating *mālie* (harmony) and *faka ‘ofa ‘ofa* (“beauty”). Such a state itself, being brought about by the rational application of Tongan knowledge and ways of being in the world. In this regard he further stated that *tapuaki* as not just a Western idea of a “blessing” (Cf. Churchward 1959:457) but as inferring the bringing of order, symmetry and harmony out of chaos, and that *fakatapui* and *fakatapui*, similarly inferred an act of bringing “orderliness” to the world (in Tongan terms of *mālie* and *faka ‘ofa ‘ofa* etc.). Hence in Tonga, the custom is to *fakatapui* a new *fale* (house) or *vaka* (boat). (Māhina, personal communication, 2010).

Applying the Hypothesis of Laumālie, I propose that *tapu* is made up from an intersection of the *laumālie* of *ta* and *pu*. Whilst *ta* (see the previous discussion) is associated with *vā* and may also infer a “Tongan way of being in the world” according to Churchward, *pu* can mean to break wind, or simply to descend or go down (Churchward, 1959:418). Across the Moana however *pu* in ancient times usually referred to types of musical instruments such as the flute and conch trumpet (Tregear, 1891:363).

Firstly, I suggest that the “word” *pu* may in Tonga also be an abbreviation of Pulotu and may therefore carry its *laumālie*. Pulotu was also known in ancient times as *Bolotoo*. (Mariner, 1820:329).⁸ This more ancient spelling of *Pulotu* may also be why the more ancient spelling of *tapu* was *taboo*.

Māhina states:

According to the Tongans, they originated in Pulotu, which is believed to be an actual island lying somewhere to the northwest of Tonga. Through sacred sanction, Pulotu was a land of plenty, filled with the best of vegetables and other food, thus experiencing no scarcity of supplies. Given that the goddess *Havea Hikule‘o* dwelt in Pulotu, the island had an aura of divinity, which subjected mortals (*maama*) from *Maama* when entering there to death and serious illness. Items of high cultural value in Tonga, considered to be *tapu*, are said to have originated in Pulotu. Some of the *kakala* (plaited sweet-smelling flowers), socially arranged into *kakala tapu/hingoa/‘eiki/mo‘oni* (lit. *kakala* of-the-sacred-named/chiefly/genuine) and *kakala vale* (lit. *kakala* of-the-fools/foolish; commoner *kakala*), or *‘ufi* (yams; *Discorea alata*), classified into the *‘eiki* (chiefly) and *tu‘a* (commoner) classes of Tongan society are reported to have been brought from Pulotu. (Māhina 1992:62)

It is noteworthy that this quote not only includes references to *tapu* items coming from Pulotu, but also the association of Pulotu and *kakala*.

The word *pu* also has other meanings across the Moana singly and in intersection with other words. Whilst *pu* in Māori means “to blow” or “a tribe”, in combinations such as *tupu* (to grow), *puaki* (to come forth), *puhipuhi* (growing in bunches), *hapu* (pregnant), *puna* (a spring), *punua* (young of animals), *tupua* (a spirit), *tipuna* (an ancestor) *mapu* (a plant), *tupui* (to nurse), *papua* (fruitful), *tupu* (genuine), and *pure* (a

⁸ William Mariner lived in Vava‘u under the patronage of the powerful Finau ‘Ulukālala-‘i-Feletoa from 1806-1810. See Mariner and Martin 1991; also Martin 1817.

ceremony for removing *tapu*). (Tregear,1885:11,20). It is significant that even in Māori, *pu* may reference the luxury, fecundity and divinity of an ancestral place such as Pulotu of the Tongans.

Secondly, I suggest that *pu* may be an abbreviation of the Tongan word *pua* which is a tree bearing white flowers with yellow centres (frangipani) cf. *kalosipani*. Churchward states that *Pua* is also the flowering bush *fragrea berteriana*. (Churchward, 1959:418). It is interesting to note that *pua* itself may have originally been made up of *pu* and *a* where *a* in this intersection may be an abbreviation of *Maama*, the ancient name for Tonga. In other words, in *pua*; the name of a tree bearing white fragrant flowers and collected for *kakala*, we may have a poetic inference of it being “*Pulotu in Maama.*”

Perhaps also because of this sort of association, in Tonga trees are often assigned importance as symbols of genealogy and social structure. For instance Māhina, when speaking of the death of Talatama who was the twelfth Tu’i Tonga, states:

Upon his death there was no successor to the title, as it was supposed to pass from father to son, for Talatama had no children. Literally, a piece of *tou* wood, as if it was a real king, was made to symbolically succeed Talatama. The investiture of the wooden king to the title was conducted with proper protocol and ceremony; a woman was even assigned to cohabit with him as wife. (Māhina, 1992:148)

Fragrant flowers are also much sought after as *kakala*. The deeper ontological and epistemological implication of *kakala* can be seen in a statement by Helu-Thaman:

Sourced from my own (Tongan) culture, *kakala* refers to fragrant flowers woven together to make a garland, and has equivalent concepts in Oceania such as *lei* (Hawaii), *hei* (Cook Islands) or *salusalu* (Fiji). There exist in Tonga and elsewhere, etiquette and mythology associated with *kakala* making. *Kakala* embodies physical, social and spiritual elements and reflects the integrate nature of indigenous epistemologies and knowledge systems. *Kakala* are a weaving together of a variety of disparate elements which partake in a celebration of life, culture and aesthetic pleasure... (Helu-Thaman, 2003:15)

Applying the Hypothesis of Laumālie then, I propose that the intersection of *ta* and *pu* (*pua*, *boo*) that generates its *laumālie*, not only infers a Tongan epistemology but also the ontological weaving of this in a rational reality of intersection-mediation. I further

propose that its *laumālie* therefore also carries Tongan ideals of *tatau* (symmetry), *potupotutatau* (harmony) and *mālie* or *faka'ofa'ofa* (beauty) and that these are not the same as artistic ideals as may be found in the materialism of Western cultures, but are deeply epistemological and relate to the world as determined by the “gods” who formed and ordered it. This means that the concept of *tapu* in Tonga, as I believe it does across the whole Moana, carries an overall *laumālie* that infers a systematic management of intersection and mediation in various *tā* and *vā*, that is deemed essential in maintaining this divine system of order in the world and all that encompasses it in ontological and epistemological reality. This includes the maintenance and perpetuation of spiritual, social and political structures. In Tongan *tala-ē-fonua* (traditional history), this model came from Pulotu.

In all these regards then, I propose that the overall *laumālie* of *tapu* is “the rational ordering and preservation of a divine state of beauty: A delicate balance of the intersection between *tatau* (“symmetry”), *potupotutatau* (“harmony”) and *mālie* or *faka'ofa'ofa* (“beauty”) as ordered by the gods.” The mediated outcome of this sort of *laumālie* in intersection with varying *tā* and *vā*, will also result in its meaning varying accordingly. It should be noted that whilst the Western equivalences chosen by Churchward vaguely relate to *tapu*, they do not in any way reflect its dynamic reality.

Punake

According to Churchward, *Punake* just means poem or poet. (Churchward 1959:422) ‘Asilika Pusiaki (2008) however states that “a *punake* is a master craftsman who composes poetry, music and actions for Tongan dance” and goes on to say:

Tongan music and dance have always formed an integral part of Tongan culture, interwoven with both the social organization and history of the nation. Since the earliest days, music and dance together with poetry have been used to express cultural identity of the Tongan people. A *punake's* duty is to *pukepuke* ‘hold on to’ important characteristics of Tongan culture by creating compositions that illustrate them. (Pusiaki 2008:5)

Apart from Pusiaki’s equivalencing of *faiva hiva*, *faiva haka*, and *faiva ta’anga* to Western music, dance and poetry respectively, it is clear that a *punake* is a lot more than Churchward’s “poem or poet”. It is also clear, and certainly in the case of a

punake, that *faiva hiva*, *faiva haka*, and *faiva ta'anga* are not just Western music, dance or poetry, but are forms of social expression that are intimately connected with not only the preservation of *tauhi vā* (Tongan socio-spatial relations), *tala-ē-fonua* (Tongan traditional “history”), and *‘uhinga* (“identity”), but with Tongan ontology and epistemology more generally.

As a consequence of their important function in Tongan society, and unlike a Western composer of music, choreographer of dance, or poet, a *punake* may also come to have, as Pusiaki puts it; “a ‘duty’ to *pukepuke* ‘hold on to’ important characteristics of Tongan culture” (Pusiaki 2008:5). In other words, theirs was literally one of preservation and perpetuation of everything Tongan.

Applying the Hypothesis of Laumālie then, I propose that the “word” *punake* itself, may have originally been constructed as an intersection of the *laumālie* of the “words” *pu*, *na* and *ke*. Looking at these individually, we can see that *pu* may be associated with both *pu* in *Pulotu* and also *pu* as in *Tapu*. I suggest that *pu* may also be a shortened version of *puna* meaning to fly, to leap, jump, spring or bounce (of liquids) to squirt, issue forth (Churchward 1959:422) In Māori *puna* also means a spring of water with similar or related meanings in Samoan, Tahitian, Hawaiian, Marquesan, Rarotongan, Mangarevan etc. (Cf.Tregear 1891:372). In line with this conceptually, *pu* in Māori also means origin, foundation (Tregear 1891:372). *Na* in Tongan means “they” (two), (Churchward 1959:373). From previous discussion of *‘uhinga*, *na* may also be an alternate spelling of the “word” *nga*. In fact *nga* is often spelled *na* in Māori, Hawaiian, Tahitian, Marquesan etc. (cf.Tregear 1891:272). I suggest in this case that *na* is both a reference to the Moana “human element” (*tangata*) and *‘uhinga* in the fullest meaning of both. In Tongan, *ke* means “to” (sign of inf.), “that” (followed by may, might or should) (Churchward 1959:260). *Ke* may also be short for *kei* meaning “still” (continuing as before), also *kei* may be a variant of *kai*, (Churchward 1959:260) where *kai* means to eat, or food, and also means to experience, to enjoy or suffer, esp. as the result of what one has done (Churchward 1959:243). *Kai* of course, may also be an abbreviation of *kāinga* meaning “family” in the Moana sense.

I propose therefore, that the overall *laumālie* of *punake* is; “The issuing forth (*pu* as in *puna* spring and *pu* as in *Pulotu*) of the origin (*pu*, and *Pulotu*), what is sacred, symmetrical, harmonious, and in divine order (*pu* as in *tapu*) which infers (*ke*) a continuance of (as in *kei*) the nourishment (*ke* as in *kai*) of the human element/family and identity (*na* as in *nga*, and *na* as *nga* in ‘*uhinga*). In other words the *laumālie* of the word *punake* infers that a *Punake* is a person who is a “creative wellspring” that continually nourishes and perpetuates Tongan culture.

A final note

I wish to emphasize that Moana language, rather than being the simple or primitive language that Westerners first took it to be, can be seen to be extraordinary in its sophistication. Whilst the Hypothesis of *Laumālie* indicates that the addition and intersection of the *laumālie* of constituent elements may be relatively simple, the inferences that are generated are far more complex, often with poetic or philosophic references to ontology and epistemology. Ironically, the “complex simplicity” which Tregear himself mistook as coming from a language in a “less advanced stage of evolution” (Tregear, 1891: xiii) is indicative rather, of a “complex simplicity” born, not from some lower level of evolution, but from the refinement of a highly evolved and integrated language involving complex intersectional addition of elements to give an overall *laumālie* which was then mediated in a particular *tā* and *vā* to give meaning.

Even today, I believe the mistaken perceptions of early philologists remain unidentified and enshrined in Western understandings of Moana languages. In other words, modern Western approaches to language are themselves neither appropriate, nor may they even be sophisticated enough to represent or define the nuances and subtleties of usage, the complex tonal structures, nor the holism and multilayered intersections and interweaving of epistemological and conceptual refinement found in Moana languages. Like the Moana culture that formed them, many Moana “words” not only embody sophisticated and poetic intersectional relationships, but rational expressions of *tatau* (“symmetry”), *potupotutatau* (“harmony”) and *mālie* or *faka’ofa’ofa* (“beauty”) and each with a beautifully refined and elegant *laumālie* awaiting definition through social mediation in a particular *tā* and *vā*. Not only does this *laumālie* represent a poetic and philosophical relationship with the world, but

embodies ancestral lineages and origins preserved in *tala-e-fonua*, and also of identity, place and highly evolved social relationships amongst Moana peoples themselves and with their ecology.

Today, not only does Moana language reflect the uniqueness of its evolution, but it has undergone a further inclusive evolution. The Tongan language today for instance, reflects not only purely Tongan aspects, but intersection with a substantial history of Western contact, with consequent changes in structure and the inclusion of many English words as Tonganized variants.⁹

In this regard, ‘Okusitino Māhina states:

The time-space transformation of sound brings about a change in the form, content and meaning of languages. In both abstract and concrete terms, this kind of time-space transformation -i.e. change in the form and content of things in reality – is evident in the Tongan language. On the abstract level, there has been an unconscious shift in the Tongan language, where the sentence structure has been slowly but surely moved towards the syntax of the English language. The shift from Tongan to English has been from a uniquely verb-subject-object (vso) structure to a predominantly subject-verb-object (svo) syntax. The causal relationships that have been responsible for bringing out this change are many, but those arising powerfully from the Western capitalist democratic culture, and scientific and technological ways of thinking have played a crucial role. In one way, the shift has been from an obligation-led philosophy of life to one that is self-centred. (Māhina 2004a:24)

What this means in terms of research is somewhat disturbing. On the one hand, whilst the nature of culture and language always involves a process of natural evolution and change, on the other hand, because of a systematic and sustained history of Westernization, it is becoming more and more difficult to find Indigenous cultures and Indigenous languages that still reflect a traditional “world view” unencumbered by Western imposition. In this respect, even an equally long and concurrent history of research and study of Indigenous cultures, has not resulted in their preservation, but of their destruction through the insidious and pervasive practice of imposition, not only

⁹ Tregear in his 1891 dictionary, states that he has made a deliberate attempt to exclude words that may have had a European origin (Tregear 1891:xxiv). Churchward in his 1959 Tongan dictionary on the other hand, does include these words but marks them with a “cross” to indicate that he has done so (Churchward 1959:viii). Churchward however goes a step further and also adds his own “invented” words, which he marks with a “double-cross” (Churchward 1959:viii). Obviously, if Churchward is used as a basis for future works, these qualifications may be lost and these words may become embedded as if they were always part of Tongan language.

by Western ideas, concepts and practice, but through re-conceptualization using Western “equivalences” and reinterpretation by researchers themselves.

In this respect, whilst we have already lost a great deal, it is important to recognise that Indigenous languages still retain and embody a distant reflection of the Indigenous world that created them. In other words, Indigenous languages in many cases, carry the last remnants of important and unique cultural knowledge and insights. This is found not only in Indigenous “vocabulary”, but also in the language structures themselves. In this chapter I have tried to show how many Moana “words” may encapsulate what could be seen as an intersectional ideal in the arrangement of Moana language structure and in Moana culture more generally.

In a modern Westernized world, where many Indigenous languages are already extinct or rapidly entering the “endangered species” list of languages so to speak, it has become critical that we not only record them, but that we do so in a way that does not further obscure or totally eliminate them. Unfortunately, in the face of what has often amounted to the total destruction of many Indigenous lifestyles and patterns, and a concurrent Western reinterpreting and reframing of the structures found in Indigenous languages, it has become far more difficult to see their real form, or access their content and non-linear and circular poetic intersectional structures. Modern bilingual dictionaries in particular, whilst often well intended, also serve to further obstruct such a process.

In the case of Tonga, whilst there has been a tremendous amount of Western influence, along with the inclusion of a large body of “Tonganized” Western vocabulary, there is in fact a significant body of language-based knowledge still in existence. Whilst I have used simple examples and intended that this chapter only as an introduction, it has become critical that we begin to investigate and research Moana language on its own Moana terms.

Whilst some may want to disagree with my approach, it is both my intention and my hope that many of the proposals I have made in this chapter, will initiate much needed *talanoa* and be the subject of further research and investigation. If we do not attempt such an enterprise, Tongan language, along with other Moana “dialects” (cf. Tregear

1891: ix, x, xii etc.), will finally succumb and disappear into what is rapidly becoming a drastically reduced, yet universal and uniform Western theory of everything.

Chapter 7:

Toka mo e kafa

Lying entangled in *kafa* (sennit).
Caught up in the thick of things. (Māhina, 2004a:87)

Faiva: A Moana Analysis

Tears in My Kava

Silent are the tears in my kava
Tears of bitterness and of sweet
Let words be discreet
When spirits meet
fuakava complete

A Royal Commission
Men of position
Our culture refines
A Composer designs
The ancestral lines
Heliaki, an illusion
Of fusion, confusion
Lau kakala, lau matanga
lau kainga, lau ‘uhinga

Pulotu ta‘anga
A creator of rhyme
Like the fruit from the vine
That makes fine wine
Aphrodisiac, is red and black
Tufunga langafale
Tufunga lalava, tufunga fo‘uvaka

A reflection of faka-Tonga
Tala ē fonua, talatupu‘a
Tangaloa and Va ‘epopua

Pulotu hiva
Will write the wrong of this song
And say to where it may belong
A confession of oppression
Passion and glory
An age-old story
Joy and sorrow
Freedom tomorrow

From aristocracy to democracy
The map of colonization
Is domination, exploitation

Now let me speak
Of the treasures you seek
The knowledge of
hohoko entwine
Faiva haka, faiva hiva, māfana divine

Tavake in flight
Like the punake's insight
To see beyond
This earthly plane
A spiritual gain
Of vision is tuition
By which Faiva a submission
Of cultural tradition

Like prophets of old
So I am told
Faiva for king's desirers
To take wives
By scarlet fires
Burn bright in the night
Heavenly delight
When the moon and stars do shine

On the Divine
Sacred line
Tu'i Tonga
Tu'i Ha'atakalaua
Tu'i Kanokupolu

Let words be discrete
Malukava I did meet
fuakava complete

(A *faiva ta'anga* for Malukava Vaekona Kavaefiafi, by Helen Ferris-Leary 2010)

It must be noted in this chapter, that without having an appropriate Moana theoretical perspective and a methodological process such as *talanoa*, and methodological framework that included the weaving concept of *kakala*, and the personal development aspects of *faiva no'o'anga*, a picture of *Faiva* would not have so clearly emerged. In fact it is only through this process that I came to realize the true importance of an appropriate theory and methodology, both conceptually and in

practice. In this regard *Faiva* is very much like the shark hidden in the depths of the Moana to be captured only by a noose woven into a *kakala* from other Tongan concepts and in an ontological and epistemological frame expressed through Moana methodological and theoretical perspectives. If I had adopted a more commonly used Western theoretical framework or methodology for instance, and approached my informants with a set of preconceived questions about *Faiva*, I believe I would have “noosed a shark” from an entirely different ocean.¹

In this regard, I wish to emphasize that the following results of my “*siu*” on the subject of Tongan *Faiva* was not only made possible through Moana theory and a Moana methodology, but also through *talanoa* with some special Tongan informants. Whilst I have listed them in my acknowledgments, I also wish to pay tribute to them in this chapter, as it is the place where I describe the nature of the beautiful and vibrant Moana “shark” that together we caught:

Malukava Vaikona Kavaefiafi, Tēvita Tonga Mohenoa Puloka, Siosiu Vaea Lotaki, Pasemata Vi Taunisila, Mele Naulangi Lea‘aetala, ‘Okusitino Māhina, ‘Ilaisaane Kakala Taumoefolau, ‘Uheina Taumoefolau, Melenaite Taumoefolau, Saane Taumoefolau-Saafi, Sione Saafi, Sakalia Pusiaki, Suli Lolohea, Losalio Milika Pusiaki ‘Aleva, Penisimani ‘Aleva, Filipe Tohi, Lopeti Taufu, Siatukimoana Vaea, Niulala Helu, Anahere Te Whata.

Of course I cannot pay tribute to my informants in my *faiva no ‘o ‘anga* without also paying tribute to the many Moana authors who shared their unique vision of a Moana world and whose writings helped to paint a picture of the great Moana Nui in which my informants and I carried out our *siu*. They are as it were, my “*falesiu*” or “house of *siu*” from which our *siu* began. I therefore pay tribute to the following authors:

Queen Sālote Tupou III, Epeli Hau‘ofa, ‘I. Futa Helu, ‘Okusitino Māhina, Tēvita O. Ka’ili, Konai Helu Thaman, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Mere Kepa, Sitiveni Halapua, Timote Vaoileti, Albert Wendt, Tēvita Tonga Mohenoa

¹ Such as *faiva haka* being “dance” with all its associated terminology. Cf. Kaeppler 1969, 1972, 1978, 1983, 1985, 1993, 1994, 1995; Moyle 1987, 1991, 1993, 2002; Velt 1991, 2004, 2007 and many others.

Puloka, Linitā Manu‘atu, ‘Ilaisaane Kakala Taumoefolau, Melenaite Taumoefolau, Melani Anae, Tupeni Baba, Helen Lee Morton, Margaret Mutu, Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, Sa‘iliemanu Lilomaiava-Doktor, Kabini F. Sanga, Nuhisifa Williams, Ana Maui Taufe‘ulungaki, Sione Lātūkefu, Ani Mikaere, Sēmisi Fetokai Potauaine, ‘Asilika Seli Pusiaki.

For reasons mentioned in previous chapters, it is not my intention to look for, nor to find a definitive Western equivalent for *Faiva* in this chapter, because I do not believe there is one. As with the Tongan “words” discussed in the previous chapter, trying to impose a Western equivalent on *Faiva*, not only raises the inherent problem of Western conceptual imposition, but also of applying an inappropriate specificity to an intrinsically holistic concept. I suggest that even the idea of a “definition” in many holistic contexts is fundamentally a Western imposition.

This does not mean that a concept like *Faiva* is without definition per se, but that meaning is often established in an entirely non-Western way. In the case of *Faiva* for instance, based on extensive *talanoa* with my Tongan informants, I propose that like many Moana “words” it is best understood as an intersectional and multilayered concept involving the Hypothesis of Laumālie. In a more generalized concept like *Faiva*, the further intersection and mediation of its *laumālie* with the *laumālie* of other “words” (such as *haka*, *hiva*, *ta‘anga* and so on), results in the overall *laumālie* of each of its many forms. The actual meaning of each of these forms however, may only become apparent in intersection and mediation of the *laumālie* of that form, within and across varying *tā* and *vā*.

In the case of *faiva haka* for instance, its true meaning is not to be found by defining it as the Western concept of “dance”, because its “definition” will vary depending on whether it is expressed as *lakalaka*, *me‘etu‘upaki*, *pō me‘e* and so on, and then only in intersection with the *laumālie* of each of these concepts in a specific *tā* and *vā*. As this *tā* and *vā* context is itself holistic and may involve not only a range of cultural practices but multiple forms of *Faiva* (in such combinations as *faiva haka*, *faiva ta‘anga*, and *faiva hiva*), it carries an inherent flexibility that may varyingly be interpreted as “political”, “educational” or just “entertainment.” Forms of *Faiva* in

these contexts should not be defined beforehand, because they were never conceptualized that way in the first place.

In order to overcome what to a Westerner, may look like a lack of definition in many indigenous scenarios then, as previously mentioned, Western style dictionaries often choose to make lists of “definitions” gleaned from varying usage of single Moana “words” in different contexts and many Western researchers choose to isolate and compartmentalize their fields of interest accordingly. The case of Tongan *Faiva* has been no exception to this and researchers such as Moyle (1987, 1991, 1993, 2002), Kaepler (1969, 1972, 1978, 1983, 1985, 1993, 1994, 1995), Velt (1991, 2004, 2007) and others, have chosen to focus on specific areas or specific forms of Tongan *Faiva* in relative isolation from their holistic context. Whilst this compartmentalized approach is usual in a Western research paradigm, it is inappropriate to an holistic Moana context and is further complicated with wide-scale pre-emptive use of Western “equivalents” such as music, dance and so on, complete with their associated Western terminology.²

As mentioned previously, not only does this sort of approach Westernize both theory and methodology as well as any analysis or outcome of research, but it obscures important non-Western conceptual and relational elements that are essential to a proper understanding of holistic concepts like *Faiva*.³ In other words they effectively remove forms of *Faiva* from *‘ulungāanga faka-Tonga* (“the Tongan way”), that is; the unique conceptual and cultural context that integrates and engenders both the fuller cultural aspects of *Faiva* as well as its *laumālie* that gives variations in meaning

² When referring to forms of *faiva haka*, Kaepler herself acknowledges: Contemporary Tongan language does not have a single word which truly translates the Western concept of ‘dance.’ The old term *me‘e* is close but probably would not include *ula* or *tau‘olunga*. The modern term *faiva* can include all kinds of dance but also includes performances that are not dance. (Kaepler 1993:6).

³ In fact when speaking of the holistic nature of *Faiva*, *Tufunga*, and *Fakamea‘a* (“Fine art”) Māhina explains that: Tongan arts are genealogically connected within and across all three genres, either as a conflict in human meanings or an intersection of lines and spaces. Generally, material arts are connected with intersecting lines and spaces, as shown by *tufunga tātatau* (tattooing) and *tufunga tāmaka* (stone-cutting). Like material arts, fine arts are principally concerned with line-space intertwining. Belonged in fine arts are *nimamea‘a lālānga* (mat-weaving), *nimamea‘a koka‘anga* (bark-cloth-making) and *nimamea‘a tuikakala* (flower-design-plaiting) amidst others (Māhina, 2002a, 2005a, 2007a, 2008a, 2008b). (Māhina, 2009b)

across differing *tā* and *vā*. As a consequence, several of my informants stated that Western approaches to studying *Faiva* have resulted in significant distortions in the literature, both in content and interpretation.

How the imposition of Western ideas, concepts and practice in this way has misrepresented Moana research and resulting knowledge in general, has already been discussed in earlier chapters. My point in raising it again here, is because I wish to re-emphasize the inherent problems in approaching the study of a subject like *Faiva*, let alone in trying to describe non-Western concepts in English. As previously stated, I have addressed this problematic issue not by isolating it so I can be definitive in Western terms, nor by finding “equivalents” for things as others have done, but by using English descriptively, as well as demanding that my informants stay within a Moana paradigm by describing *Faiva* in Tongan rather than Western terms.

The rest of this chapter then, is a discussion and summary of the results of my “*siu*.”

Defining *Faiva*:

The term *Faiva* is found in many different forms of Tongan expression.⁴

Whilst Tongan *Faiva* is most often discussed in association with Tongan “performing arts”⁵ it is also associated with a wider and varying range of activities. For instance, whilst *Faiva* includes a range of aspects that appear to “look like” the Western performing arts in *faiva hiva* (“music”), *faiva ta’anga* (“poetic” expression), *faiva haka* (“dance-like expression”), and in associated forms such as *faiva maau* (“poems”), *faiva lea heliaki* (reciting “proverbs”), *faiva talatupu’a* (reciting “myths”), *faiva lea* (“speech giving”), *faiva fakamamahi* (“art of tragedy”), *faiva fakaoli* (“art of comedy”), *faiva fananga* (“mythmaking”), it also includes a diverse range of seemingly unrelated practices such as *faiva faifolau* (“voyaging”), *faiva ‘eva* (“courting”), *faiva no’o’anga* (“shark noosing”), *faiva ukuloloto* (“art of deep-

⁴ Cf. Māhina 1999, 2004, 2008, 2008, 2010; Martin 1987; Helu 1999; Kaeppler 1993, 2005, 2007.

⁵ Often the term *faiva* is not used or hardly mentioned, as it has already been subsumed by Western researchers as dance, music or poetry, etc. Cf. Kaeppler 1969, 1972, 1978, 1983, 1985, 1993, 1994, 1995; Moyle 1987, 1991, 1993, 2002; Velt 1991, 2004, 2007 and others.

diving”), *faiva siu* (“art of fishing”), *faiva hī’atu* (“art of bonito-fishing”), *faiva pakimangamanga* (“art of bonito-related fishing”), *faiva taumāta’u* (“art of line-fishing”), *faiva makafeke* (“art of octopus-luring”), *faiva taumatu* (“art of matu line-fishing”), *faiva lafo* (“disc-throwing”), *faiva sika* (“javelin throwing”), *faiva fuhu* (“boxing”), *faiva fangatua* (“wrestling”), *faiva fānifo* (“surfing”), *faiva lovavaka* (“boat-racing”), *faiva lova’a’alo* (“art of canoe-rowing”), *faiva kakau* (“art of swimming”), *faiva heulupe* (“pigeon snaring”), *faiva tāfangufangu* (“nose-flute-playing”), *faiva teuteu* (“clothing-fashion design”), to name but a few.

This has led some, including Churchward in his dictionary, to conclude that *Faiva* should be defined as “work, task, feat, or game, etc. requiring skill or ability; trade, craft; performance; play; drama; item (at a concert, etc.); entertainment; film; moving picture.” (Churchward 1959:23) In this light *faiva ‘anga* becomes “a stage or other place where dances, feats of skill, etc., are performed.” *Faiva aki* becomes “to be skilled or clever at, to be very good at.”(Churchward 1959:23). Kaepler also states that *Faiva* is “any kind of task, feat, craft, or performance requiring skill or ability, or anything at which an individual or group is clever; dance.” (Kaepler 1993:141)

As mentioned in previous chapters, whilst all these sorts of Western “equivalences” or definitions can offer valuable clues to underlying content and understanding the many inferences contained in Tongan language, it imposes a Western paradigm that is somewhat problematic. Even when modern Tongans themselves may utilize such terminology in these contexts (especially when explaining *Faiva* to Westerners), I argue that these represent a change in *fuo* (“form”), *uho* (“content”) and *‘aonga* (“function”), being brought about by either a desire to package its meaning to accommodate an outsiders reality, or is an outcome of colonization and Westernization in Tongan society. I suggest therefore, that both Churchward and Kaepler’s attempts at defining *Faiva* through these sorts of Western ideas, is a case of simplification and reduction of *fuo* (“form”), *uho* (“content”) and *‘aonga* (“function”) based on an inappropriate Western paradigm that almost completely ignores the fact that *Faiva* is embedded firmly in an holistic Moana ontology and epistemology. In fact, many of these forms, and the concept of *Faiva* itself, are not to be thought of as isolated or particular forms as they may be in Western cultures, but to be understood as being part of a wider holistic frame of reference involving not only

Tongan ontological practices but historical, ecological and epistemological aspects. Many forms of *Faiva* for instance, are variably intertwined with, or involve aspects of *tauhi vā*, *tufunga*, *tala-ē-fonua* and so on (see discussions later in this chapter).

Māhina for instance, whilst still using common Western “equivalences,” gives a slightly different perspective on *Faiva*:

The three arts, poetry, music and dance, are generically classified under performance art, known in Tongan as *faiva*, which literally means ‘to perform or beat space.’ (Cf. Helu 1999, Māhina 1999, 2002; also see Kaeppler 1993, Moyle 1987). In Tonga these three arts are known as *ta’anga*, *hiva* and *haka* literally ‘place of beating’, ‘tone in space’ and ‘sharp movement’ respectively all expressions of time and space. In this context, we are provided with the basis on which to make specific definitions of the three arts. So, poetry, music and dance can be defined as the symmetrical ‘beating’ of language, sound and body, all with a common purpose of producing harmony and beauty. (Māhina 2004g: 91)

Considering that Tongan ideas, concepts and practice, conceptualize time (*tā*) and space (*vā*) differently than in the West, and also what is harmonious and beautiful, the concept of *Faiva* in the above statement, gives indications that *Faiva* is in fact, something quite unique and distinctly non-Western.

In a further personal communication, Māhina (2012) explained that *Faiva* referred to those activities that were “body-centred”, whereas such things as *Tufunga*, were more material or “object-centred.” In other words *faiva haka*, *faiva hiva*, *faiva ta’anga*, and even *faiva faifolau*, are all expressions involving the body or “from the person” so to speak, as a medium of expression, compared to say *tufunga langafale* (“house-building”), *tufunga tāmaka* (“stone-cutting”), *tufunga lalava* (“kafa-sennit-intersecting”), *tufunga fonolei* (“jewelry-making”), *tufunga tongi ‘akau* (“wood-carving”) and so on, which all involve expression using a more material or an “object” medium.

In this regard, to return to the definition of *Faiva* offered by Churchward, we can see that *Faiva* is not so much about it being “work, task, feat, craft, or performance requiring skill or ability, entertainment; film; moving picture, etc. (Churchward 1959:23), nor as Kaeppler portrays it as “any kind of task, feat, craft, or performance

requiring skill or ability, or anything at which an individual or group is clever; dance.” (Kaeppler 1993:141). Rather, *Faiva* is about these things being carried out in a particular manner, that is; “body-centred” or something “from the person” in those varying contexts. This may sound like a fine point, but it is a really important one, because the former imposes a Western materialistic version of “doing something”, whereas the latter is a Moana non-materialist socially mediated version involving an emphasis not just on what is done, but also on the person doing it, that is; who they are and what they express about themselves and even how they relate to others, whilst they are doing it.

For instance, if we define say, *faiva haka* as “dance”, we have effectively removed not only its holistic implications and context, but also how it is conceptualized both contextually and culturally by imposing a Western version of reality that quite literally “denatures” *faiva haka*. Like all *Faiva*, *faiva haka* is not defineable in any Western way, partly because it is conceptualized as an expression of *laumālie* in varying contexts and is viewed and interpreted from a Tongan ontological and epistemological perspective. The concept of *faiva haka* in Tonga for instance also involves *laumālie*, or expressions of the “spirit” of the person doing it, as well as the deeper epistemological inferences and the ambience of a participatory social occasion, not just skill in the appropriate movements.

This sort of *fuo* (“form”), *uho* (“content”) and *aonga* (“function”) is entirely non-Western and cannot be referenced except indirectly as in a Western bi-lingual dictionary such as Churchward. As mentioned earlier,⁶ to compensate for this reality, what Churchward and others have usually done, is to approach Moana “words” by listing a range of “meanings” from various common situational uses for each “word” (and perhaps some further examples of more unusual contexts of use). As previously stated, whilst this allows for valuable insight, it imposes none the less, a Western paradigm that is not only somewhat inappropriate, but reduces much of the ontological and epistemological richness and inherent flexibility in Moana words, to a relatively simplistic (and often confusing) set of Western “equivalents”. My concern in this case, as with all the other aspects under discussion, is to return to an

⁶ See chapter 5

understanding that includes not only an appropriate Moana context, but the conceptualization of various aspects from within a Moana paradigm.

Applying the Hypothesis of Laumālie then, in the case of the “word” *Faiva*, I propose that *Faiva* was originally constructed as an intersection to combine the *laumālie* of the two Tongan “words” *fai* (“to perform, or behave”) and *vā* (“social space”) where *vā* was then abbreviated to become *va*. (Actually *vā* and *va* are alternate versions of the same “word”). In this case the general *laumālie* of *Faiva* is simply “to perform or behave in a social space,” but where both that performance or behaviour and the social space in which it was carried out, were to be of a Tongan form, that is, *‘ulungāanga faka-Tonga*.

Looking at the first “word” *fai* then, Churchward defines *fai* as:

To do, to attend to, to carry out, carry on with, engage in, perform, to hold (a meeting) to cook and prepare (food); to make or go on (a journey, fononga); to make, give, tell, deliver, utter, perform, etc. (an explanation, story, speech, song, dance, etc.): to write (a letter; cp. Fa’u). to do things, to act or behave. Na’e fa’a fai pehē ‘a Talafaiva. Constantly acted in this way. Na’a nau fai leva he teuteu. They got on with the preparations at once. Ko e feitu’u ‘oku fai ai ‘a e vela. The place where the fire (conflagration) is (or was) going on. And in fai mai, fai atu, fai ange, fai pē, etc., and faifai (q.v.), as indicating the continuance of an action or a state, or simply the passing of time. See also ‘o fai atu and ka na’e fai. N., doing, deed, etc. Hence: ‘etau ngaahi fai ta’e totonu (or ta’e taau), our miss doings; hangē do hono fai, according to the way in which it is done (or customarily done). Angafai, fei, ngaahi, ngāue. (Churchward 1959: 19)

Churchward also proposes that *fe* may possibly be a contraction of *fai* or *fei*, as indicating doing habitually or vigorously or quickly (cp. *Fei mo*), and hence doing together, and hence doing to each other, and hence doing hither and thither (Churchward 1959:147)

Tēvita Ka’ili on the other hand, when speaking of *fai* in terms of *tauhi vā* states:

There are multiple examples of *tauhi vā* in the daily social transactions of Tongans in Maui. Most of the examples are visible in the performance of social duties (*faifatongia*) in birthdays (*fai’aho*), weddings (*faimali*), funerals (*faiputu*), prayer vigils (*failotu*), and kava drinking gatherings (*faikava*). Interestingly, these cultural events are linguistically marked with the Tongan

prefix *fai-* (*fai'aho*, birthdays). *Fai* is a form of *tā* (time). It means to perform or engage by intersecting actions (*tā*, time) in space (*vā*). For example, a *fai'aho* (birthday celebration), in one sense, is the intersection (mutual engagement) of people (*tā*) and things in space (*vā*) to commemorate a birthday. If the intersection is symmetrical, it produces harmonious and beautiful social spaces (*vālelei*). Conversely, if the intersection is asymmetrical, it produces dissonance and disharmonious social spaces (*vātamaki*). (Ka'ili 2008:143)

Clearly, even in Churchward's definition of *fai*, the term *fai* is to be seen as expressed in Tongan terms, that is, in a highly socialized context. In this context I suggest that the use of *fai* in many cases, may actually be an abbreviation of the term *Faiva* itself.

Now, in the case of the second "word" *vā* or *va*, Moana scholars have also noted the social dimensions in the conceptualization of *vā* across the Moana. Tēvita Ka'ili (2008:18-24) discusses many of these including: Feinberg (2004:148-149, 232-233), Shore (1982:136), Duranti (1997:343-345), Mageo (1998:81), Allen (1993:157) Morton (1996:245), Leslie (2002:301), Halapua (2000, 2003), Thaman (2004), and Wendt (1999:402). Māhina (2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004d, 2005a, 2007), and Lilomaiava-Doktor (2004), have also contributed to the Moana concept of *vā*, and its various social and relational dimensions. Ka'ili himself conceptualizes *vā* as "the social space that relates" (Ka'ili 2008:18)

Like the "words" discussed in the previous chapter, according to the Hypothesis of Laumālie, the conceptual construction of *Faiva* involving *fai* and *va* establishes a general *laumālie* which, through the mediation of a multilayered intersection across varying *tā* and *vā* comes to mean different things in different situations.

Faiva ta'anga for instance is not the same as Western poetry. This is not just because it is concerned with a different sort of cultural content and "grammatical" practice, but because it involves, from the very beginning, an intersection of ontological and epistemological nuances, including a different conceptual approach to both material and spiritual dimensions. The extensive use of *Heliaki* (see discussion of *heliaki* in the chapter 6),⁷ not to mention the ontological and epistemological framing of content,

⁷ See also: Collocott & Havea, 1922; Feldman, 1980; Māhina, 1992, 1999a, 2003b, 2004a, 2004b, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2007a, 2010; Māhina & Māhina 2007; Rabone, 1845; Taliai, 1987; Taumoeofolau 2004.

when added to the motivational and cultural circumstances which define both creation and expression in *faiva ta'anga*, makes it distinctively non-Western in its *fu* (“form”), *uho* (“content”) and *aonga* (“function”). Not only this, but *faiva ta'anga* is often intended to be combined and integrated with *faiva lea*, *faiva hiva*, and *faiva haka*. In other words, like many aspects of Tongan society, *faiva ta'anga* is a highly evolved and finely interwoven and mediated intersectional practice, involving the ontological expression of a deeply epistemological and integrated Tongan world-view.

Therefore, in all cases of *Faiva*, such as *faiva ta'anga*, *faiva haka*, *faiva hiva*, and so on, either through direct contextual relationship, or through implication (or even by the process of *heliaki*), *Faiva* comes to share the *laumālie* of all of its constituent elements, be these other “words” such as *haka*, *hiva*, or *ta'anga*, or variations in *tā* and *vā*, such as in social or political events, or other contexts. All together this represents and intensification of all of its elements, forming a new phenomenon containing the *laumālie* of every constituent, yet still depending on definition across varying *tā* and *vā*.

In summary then, *fai* is “to do something”, but this is not “to do” in a Western way. *Fai* is an holistic Tongan practice of doing, where successful outcome depends on mediation of the intersection of multiple layers of ontology and epistemology. Its construction with *va* (*vā*) implies that *fai* is carried out in a social context. This means that *Faiva* also depends on mediation of the intersection of the multiple layers of the Tongan social relationships involved, that is, *tauhi vā*. In other words, the *laumālie* of *Faiva* is “the process of mediating the intersection of multiple layers of *tauhi vā* with multiple layers of ontology and epistemology across a range of Tongan practices and in intersection with varying *tā* and *vā*.”

Whilst I have utilized the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality along with the Hypothesis of Laumālie in analysing Moana language and in this case *Faiva*, it is interesting to note that, in many cases, Moana theoretical frameworks can become more real than theoretical. In this case, the intersectional and meditational aspects of the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality can also be considered as a description of the actual in the

functional realities of Tongan culture.⁸ Whilst this is often just the mark of good theory, in that it reflects reality, in this case I take it to mean that it also serves to underscore the intersectional, mediational and holistic nature of that reality. In other words in Moana reality, the theoretical and the practical may at times be indistinguishable.⁹ It is noteworthy in this regard that the more practical form of *Faiva* called *faiva faifolau* (Moana “voyaging”) seems to have contributed a fundamental theoretical model upon which this sort of reality involving intersection and mediation, seems to have been built (See discussion of *faiva faifolau* below).

Faiva and *tā* and *vā* :

According to Ka’ili:

In Tonga, artists mark time (*tā*) in a symmetrical fashion to create beauty (*faka’ofa’ofa, mālie*). This artistic marking of time (*tā*) in space (*vā*) is displayed in the geometrical designs (*kupesi*) that adorn Tongan tattoos, carvings, fine mats, barkcloths, and sennit lashings. Furthermore, this time-space arrangement is expressed in the rhythmic patterns that define Tongan drumbeats, music, dance movements, and poetic compositions. *Tauhi vā*, the Tongan art of sociospatial relations, also marks time (*tā*) in a symmetrical form in space (*vā*). Specifically, it arranges time through the mutual performance (*tā*) of social duties (*fatongia*). The mutuality of the performance creates symmetry, and symmetry gives rise to beautiful sociospatial relations (*vālelei*). (Ka’ili, 2008. Abstract)

Whilst Ka’ili is discussing *tauhi vā*, it is no coincidence that he also refers to the *kupesi*, of Tongan tattoos, carvings, fine mats, barkcloths, and sennit lashings, as well as the “drumbeats, music, dance movements, and poetic compositions” of *Faiva*. In the case of *Faiva*, no matter which form of *Faiva* is being discussed, whether it is *faiva hiva* (“music”), *faiva haka* (“dance-like expression”), *faiva ta’anga* (“poetic” expression), or *faiva faifolau* (“voyaging”), *faiva ‘eva* (“courting”), *faiva no’o’anga* (“shark noosing”) and so on, the *tā* and *vā* relationships expressed in the *fuo* (“form”) and *uho* (“content”) and *aonga* (“function”) of *Faiva*, also create *tatau*

⁸ For instance in realities of *tā-vā* intersections and mediation in: *Tauhi vā, Tufunga, Faiva* and so on.

⁹ In discussing Moana research for instance, Māhina states: At times, theory and methodology are fused together, while at other times, they are considered separate. Clearly, theory and methodology are continuous, if not one and the same entity. Basically, they are, in this instance, simply tools for seeing or ways of knowing things out there in reality. (Māhina 2004f:193)

(“symmetry”), *potupotutatau* (“harmony”) and *mālie* or *faka’ofa’ofa* (“beauty”) that in turn give rise to *vālelei* (beautiful sociospatial relationships) in Tongan society.

In all these regards, an understanding of a Moana view of reality, as expressed in Moana based theories such as Māhina’s Tā-Vā Theory of Reality, or my own Hypothesis of Laumālie, is essential in understanding the *fuō* (“form”), *uho* (“content”) and *’aonga* (“function”) in the context of the finely interwoven and holistic world of Tongan ideas, concepts and practices.

Faiva as “a foundation of Moana culture”

Whilst it could be said that voyaging was responsible for expanding and spreading Western culture and founding colonial empires around the world, it might sound strange to claim that voyaging actually founded Western culture itself. For Moana peoples however, *faiva faifolau* (Moana “voyaging”) was responsible for not only their very survival, but also for the founding of a great Moana culture across the whole and vast Moana Nui. Usually if one “looks up” the history of “Pacific exploration” it is dominated by accounts of early Westerners. Names like James Cook and Abel Tasman are widely known. In reality, except to the Western world, Cook and Tasman are a mere footnotes a long history of Moana exploration. Of course Moana peoples’ history was not written down like Cooks, but still lives in *tala-e-fonua* and in some forms of *Faiva*. Whilst the names of great Moana navigators like Maui, Kupe, Toi and even Cook’s own navigator Tupaia, are less known to the world, in reality their names not only stand alongside that of Cook and Tasman, but they, instead of Cook and Tasman, are the first and only discoverers of Aotearoa and all others in our “sea of islands”.

In this regard, the importance of traditional “navigators” practicing *faiva faifolau* cannot be understated, not only in terms of the colonization and settlement of the Moana, but also in the ongoing support and development of Moana culture. The very existence of Moana culture could therefore be seen as being a product of *faiva faifolau*. The importance and the status of traditional “navigators” is embodied in the Tongan term *’eiki vaka* indicating someone of royal or chiefly status in a voyaging

canoe.¹⁰ In Tonga a “ceremony” expressing the importance of both chiefly rank and *faiva faifolau* in Tongan culture¹¹ is still to be found in the continuing practice of *taumafa kava* (also *fai kava*), practicing the *kava* “ceremony”.¹²

As Epeli Hau’ofa and others have argued, Moana peoples were not small land-based cultures on small islands, spread out across vast tracks of ocean, but a great maritime one spanning the whole of the Moana Nui.¹³ Like the great desert cultures of the Sahara who are not defined by the small oases that sustain them, Moana cultures should not be defined by the islands that act as “oases” across the vastness of the Moana. In fact, almost the whole of the Moana was settled and traversed regularly, long before the first Westerners even began their explorations. In all regards it could be argued that *faiva faifolau* was the one thing that made everything else possible. Not only did the practice of *faiva faifolau* accomplish such widespread exploration and settlement, but also formed and sustained the very basis of daily life, not just for exploitation of resources, trade and contact over large parts of the Moana, but also in the very essence of a world of extensive and extended voyaging. The successful practice of *faiva faifolau* in the Moana meant life, failure meant certain death.

Understanding *faiva faifolau*, is not to be found by translating or conceptualizing it as an equivalent to Western voyaging through “navigation” even though it could be described as such because of what it accomplishes. If we do we are liable to miss not only its deeper levels, but also that which represents a real and tangible Moana knowledge base, and one that is conceptually different to the Western style or concept of voyaging or navigation.

¹⁰ It is interesting to note the term *‘eiki* referring to someone “of chiefly rank” in the context of Moana navigators, indicates a similar relationship to that found in Western ships, where unquestioned authority was bestowed upon the captain, who of course, was also the navigator. This appears in both cases to be a logical and perhaps essential outcome of functioning in a marine environment.

¹¹ Māhina when speaking of the possible navigational symbolism of the trilithon named as Ha‘amonga-‘a-Maui and ‘Alo-tolu, after the constellation of Orion, also states: In view of Tu‘i Tonga imperialism, navigation was central in sustaining the socio-economic, peripheral-central links in the political interest of the Tu‘i Tonga. (Māhina 1992:136)

¹² See: Cowling 1988; Feldman 1980; Filihia 1998, Lester 1941; Newell 1947; Tomlinson 2004.

¹³ See Hau’ofa 1993a, 1993b, 1994, 1998, 2005b, 2008.

For instance, when Westerners entered the Moana, navigation was mathematically determined latitude and longitude in “position and target orientated” navigation that depended heavily on a compass and instruments like the sextant and taking a noon-sight (the sextant angle establishing the height of the sun at noon) and by calculation, the latitude. Longitude was usually developed from moon sightings and tables, and a log that measured distance travelled each day as a rough check (called “dead reckoning”) on both latitude and longitude. Later a chronometer (accurate clock) based on Greenwich meridian-time was used to establish longitude. A daily “position” was defined by the intersection of latitude and longitude, from which the course to a target destination could be calculated and adjusted. A tradition of “noon sight and extreme care” was developed around both sextant and chronometer, without which a ship would become “lost”.

The “navigational” aspects in *Faiva faifolau* on the other hand involved *kupesi* (“intersectional patterns”). This was not like a specific Western mathematical intersection and compass direction, but derived from a process of continual mediation of *tā* and *vā* with natural intersectional patterns of not only place of origin and destination, but of navigational stars, sun, moon and natural patterns such as weather, winds and those that signaled land (clouds, wave patterns, birds, etc.), as well as the social relations and management of the resources of voyagers themselves during the voyage. Moana “navigators” also learned extensive sets of “sailing directions” to various destinations, and formal “rituals” associated with voyaging, such as what is known in Māori as *karakia*, or in Tongan as *tapuaki*, and used for safeguarding against “navigational” error, sharks, storms and so on. It is interesting to note here, that both *karakia* and *tapuaki* themselves were often misinterpreted by Westerners as “prayers or charms” or something verging on the superstitious, but in reality, refer to “songs, chants or ritual” that are part of the concept of *tapu*, that is, to bring *tatau* (“symmetry”), *potupotutatau* (“harmony”) and *mālie* or *faka‘ofa‘ofa* (“beauty”) through the practice of traditional knowledge and ways of knowing the world, in this case *faiva faifolau*.

Kupe for instance, was known to Māori as a famous Moana “navigator”. According to Māhina the word *kupe* in Tongan means to intersect and is in the name Kupe, as well as in *kupenga* and *kupesi* which can all be associated with *faiva faifolau*. The universe

(heavens and stars) is conceptualized as a huge *kupenga* or fish net like *mata kupenga* (a spider web) and *kupenga* is also a place where things are intersected. Kupe was an “intersector” and the concept of *kupesi* infers that intersection is at the heart of *faiva faifolau*. (Māhina 2012: personal communication)

In summary, because *faiva faifolau* was so important in the physical foundation and maintenance of Tongan culture itself and because it was so successful as a conceptual system for survival in the Moana,¹⁴ I suggest it was subsequently adapted as a model for many other aspects of Moana cultures.¹⁵ In Tonga in this regard, not only does *Faiva*, in the form of *faiva faifolau*, represent an important and fundamental model of multilayered intersection and mediation in a flexible arrangement across *tā* and *vā*, but also the intersection and mediation of *tauhi vā* within that context. I suggest that this model also underpins other Tongan ideas, concepts and practices,¹⁶ and that in the present context, forms a conceptual basis of *Faiva* itself across other of its various forms.¹⁷

¹⁴ Cf. Lewis 1978; Thomas 1987; Heyerdahl 1951, 1958.

¹⁵ Māhina for instance states: The Moana-led concept *vaha‘a* is transposed onto the *fonua* (land and its people), seen in the temporal and spatial organization of people, such as *vaha‘a kolo* (*vā* between villages), *vaha‘a nofo* (*vā* between people); *vaha‘a fonua* (*vā* between countries); *vaha‘a ‘api* (*vā* between homes); and *vaha‘a tofi‘a* (*vā* between noble estates). Similarly, *vaha‘a* is, in terms of *tā-vā*, attributed with a sense of physicality as in *vaha‘a mo‘unga* (*vā* between mountains); *vaha‘a luu* (*vā* between holes); *vaha‘a va‘e* (*vā* between legs); *vaha‘a tu‘ungaiku* (*vā* between buttocks); *vaha‘a fa‘ifine* (*vā* under armpits); *vaha‘a uma* (*vā* between shoulders); *vaha‘a mata* (*vā* between eyes); *vaha‘a telinga* (*vā* between the ears); *vaha‘a fale* (*vā* between houses); *vaha‘a loki* (*vā* between rooms); and *vaha‘a matapā* (*vā*-defining door frames). (Māhina 2009e:8)

¹⁶ The practice of *Faiva*, *Tufunga*, *Fakamea‘a* all involve an understanding of intersection of lines and spaces. In the case of *Faiva* this involves an understanding of the intersectional relationships of *‘uhinga*, *kāinga* and *hohoko*. *Tufunga* is connected with intersecting lines and spaces, as shown by *tufunga tātatau* (“tattooing”) and *tufunga lalava* (“sinnet binding”). Forms of *Fakamea‘a* (“fine arts”) are also principally concerned with line-space intertwining. Cf. Māhina, 2002a, 2005a, 2007a, 2008a, 2008b, 2009b.

¹⁷ Māhina when discussing both *Faiva* and *Tufunga* states: There also exist other types of expertise directly linked to the moana phenomenon, such as those who possess expert and specialist knowledge and skills specifically known as *toutaivaka* (long-distant voyagers) and *toutaiika* (deep-sea fisherman). The term *toutai* is an alteration of the word *tautahi*, literally meaning “warriors-of-the-sea”, as in *tovave* as an adaptation of *tavave*, both are variations of *tā-vā*, pointing to a faster yet shorter successive points in time (Ka‘ili 2007). These knowledgeable and skilful specialists are collectively called *kaivai*, literally meaning “eaters-of-waters”, a symbolic reference to their foremost expertise, which are *faifolau* (voyaging) and *siu* (fishing). (Māhina 2009e:10)

What I have done in the rest of this chapter then, is to discuss *Faiva* as it appears in these other forms in Tongan society.

In this regard I begin my discussions with various common understandings of *Faiva*, as well as misconceptions introduced directly by Western imposition, including forms of misinterpretation caused by Western “equivalencing”. Later discussions are of what I consider to be more appropriate understandings of *Faiva*. In all cases I have drawn on information from my Tongan informants as well as my own research and insights.

I have also applied my theoretical approach to reach an explanation of *Faiva* in its various roles, by considering how its *laumālie* intersects with the *laumālie* of other concepts and by mediating this overall *laumālie* across varying intersections of *tā* and *vā* within the holistic matrix of Tongan culture. It should be noted however that each role is conceptualized so as to give an indication of the influence of *Faiva* in those various aspects of Tongan culture, rather than in trying to be definitive as such and that *Faiva* is an holistic concept and in many cases one role may overlap to a greater or lesser degree with others.

Faiva as “work, task, skill” etc.

All my informants discussed *Faiva* in a completely different way than this conceptualization would indicate, although some did discuss *Faiva* in the context of their father teaching them “skills” in *faiva haka* for instance. Even in this case, the emphasis was more on their family lineage in terms of *Faiva*, not on “skills” per se, and this sort of discussion was always in the context of a wider one involving *uhinga*, *kāinga* and *hohoko* (“genealogy”).

This aspect is a common Western interpretation of *Faiva*. In Churchward’s Tongan dictionary today we find that *Faiva* is “work, task, feat, or game, etc., requiring skill or ability; trade; craft; performance, play, drama, item (at a concert, etc.); entertainment; film, moving picture” (Churchward, 1959 pg. 23).

The point I wish to make here is that unqualified definitions like “work, task, feat, or game, etc., requiring skill or ability; trade; craft; performance, play, drama, item (at a

concert, etc.); entertainment; film, moving picture” are misleading. Whilst *Faiva* in some situations may be similar to these Western concepts, especially where Tongans themselves have adopted Western practice, Western jobs, Western games (sport) and so on, and where *Faiva* may at these times be exactly these things, these sorts of Western definitions may give the wrong impression of what Tongan *Faiva* actually involves.

As already discussed, forms of *Faiva* such as *faiva haka*, *faiva hiva* and *faiva ta’anga* are not the same as Western dance, music and poetry respectively. Neither are many skills, tasks, trades, nor crafts conceptualized in the same way as Western ones except where they actually are Western ones associated with modern Tonga. In fact, in Tonga many “skills, tasks, trades, and crafts” are not conceptualized as *Faiva* but as *Tufunga* or *Fakamea’a* as in forms of *Nimamea’a*. For instance, *tufunga fo’uvaka* (“boat-building”), *tufunga langafale* (“house-building”), *tufunga tāmaka* (“stone-cutting”), *tufunga lalava* (“kafa-sennit-intersecting”), *tufunga ngaohikulo* (“pottery-making”), *tufunga tongi akau* (“wood-carving”), *tufunga fonua* (“socio-spatial-relations-making i.e. Leadership”), *tufunga nimatapu* (“dead-handling, undertaking”), *tufunga tātatau* (“tattooing, or lit. symmetry-making”), *tufunga fei umu* (“food making”), and *Fakamea’a* as in *nimamea’a lālanga* (“mat-weaving”), *nimamea’a koka’anga* (“bark-cloth-making”) and *nimamea’a tuikakala* (“flower-design-plaiting”).¹⁸

Along with *Faiva*, all of these forms are holistically integrated with *’ulungāanga faka-Tonga*, in other words Tongan ideas, concepts and practices, which are more often different to those found in the West. Defining Tongan “words” by making lists based on Western perceptions is always problematic and appears to have left Churchward for instance, unable to clearly distinguish *Faiva* from both *Tufunga* and *Nimamea’a*. In fact Churchward further compounds this by defining *Tufunga* as a “noun”, being a “skilled workman, artisan, craftsman, esp. carpenter” and no longer as *Tufunga*. In the case of *tufunga fo’uvaka* (“boat-building”) for instance, Churchward defines it as the actual person who carries it out, that is, a “boat builder”

¹⁸ Cf. Māhina 2000a, 2000b, 2002a, 2004g, 2008a, 2009b; also see Helu, 1999; Kaepler 1993b, 2005, 2007.

(Churchward 1959:504-505). Likewise *Nimamea'a* is not seen as a “fine art form” such as mat weaving, but as “clever with one’s fingers, skilled in fine handcraft” (Churchward 1959:377). In other words, despite Churchward acknowledging a possible lack of completeness due to the multitude of situational use of Tongan “words” and some further non-Western issues outlined in his book on Tongan grammar,¹⁹ he does not discuss any possible confusion in applying what amounts to a Western paradigm²⁰ to Tongan language. To the contrary, he affirms his dictionary is “far more accurate and reliable, than any Tongan dictionary or vocabulary hitherto published” (Churchward 1959:vii).

In summary then, it is important to realize that Moana languages such as Tongan are based on, and conceptualized entirely within a Moana paradigm, not a Western one, which is different.²¹ Defining *Faiva* as “work, task, feat, or game, etc., requiring skill or ability; trade; craft; performance, play, drama, item (at a concert, etc.); entertainment; film, moving picture” (Churchward, 1959 pg. 23), in terms of a proper understanding of *Faiva*, is somewhat problematic.

Faiva as “entertainment”

Several informants mentioned *Faiva* in this context, but only to lament that *Faiva* as entertainment was in many ways destroying the essence of *Faiva*. For instance they singled out *Faiva* in tourism as being the main agent in doing this.

The interpretation that *Faiva* is some form of “entertainment” is for me at least, perhaps the most contentious of the various roles of *Faiva*, not because there isn’t an obvious “entertainment” aspect to certain forms of *Faiva*, and not because many forms of *Faiva* aren’t extremely enjoyable and entertaining generally but rather, because this aspect of *Faiva* has led to the most misunderstanding in the context of Western based research on *Faiva*.

¹⁹ See Churchward, 1953.

²⁰ Actually the concept of a “paradigm” was not clearly defined until Kuhn did so, some three years after Churchward published his dictionary in 1959. See Kuhn, 1962.

²¹ Cf. Nisbett et al. 2001.

Originally, when I started my research on *Faiva*, I myself expected to be doing my research in “Tongan music, dance, song, and poetry”. Certainly during my early literature review, there was not much to dispute this interpretation.²² It was only as I began to look more critically at *Faiva* and the inferences and meanings found in its associated vocabulary, that I realized there was a complete absence of information beyond the superficial idea of it being some form of Tongan “entertainment” or “performing art” similar to, or even exactly the same as Western music, dance, song, or poetry.

Whilst Churchward starts his definition of *Faiva* as “work, task, feat, or game, etc., requiring skill or ability; trade; craft” he also goes on to say that *Faiva* is a “performance, play, drama, item (at a concert, etc.); entertainment; film, moving picture” (Churchward, 1959 pg. 23). The fact that Western culture itself employs music, dance, singing and poetry in film, drama, plays, etc. for the purpose of entertainment, means that this second part of Churchward’s interpretation of *Faiva* has become a major Western interpretation of *Faiva* and one that is generally thought of even in Tonga today. *Faiva haka* for instance, is almost always presented as “Tongan dance” and any tourist if interested, may find pictures in glossy brochures, or be able to catch a “real performance” of a *lakalaka*, a “show” complete with “authentic costumes” and “native dancers” during their visit to Tonga.

As will be seen in the following discussions *Faiva*, apart from being a multidimensional and holistic cultural phenomena, is also an important and integrated form of socialization or even “Tonganization” for Tongans. In other words, beneath its superficial “entertainment” quality *Faiva*, like many other indigenous phenomena, is culturally quite profound. Despite being a concept that has deeper epistemological connections and what amounts to an important ontological role in Tongan culture, such significance seems to have been entirely overlooked, even in research, in favor of a superficial Westernized view of it being some form of Tongan “performing art.”

²² See: Britton 1976; Buckland 1999; Hart 1997; Helu 1999c; Hinton 1973; Jowit et al. 1990; Kaeppler 1969, 1972, 1978, 1983, 1985, 1993, 1994, 1995; McLean 1981, 1995, 1999; Merriam 1974; Moulin 1979; Moyle 1987, 1991, 1993, 2002; Ness 2001; Poort 1975; Radakovich 2004; Shumway 1981; Spencer 1985; Van Zile 1976, 1988, 2004; Velt 1991, 2004, 2007; and many others.

In the highly socialized context of Tongan culture then, whilst *Faiva* may be seen as being related to “Tongan performing arts” the concept of *Faiva* goes beyond the Western concept of “performing arts.” Not only is it deeply interwoven with ‘*uhinga* (“identity”), *tauhi vā* (“socio-spatial relations”), *hohoko* (“genealogy”) and *tala-e-fonua* (“oral traditions and history”), but also with other Tongan phenomena such as *Tufunga* (“material arts” such as house building, etc.) and *Nimamea ‘a* (“fine art” forms such as mat weaving), because all are founded in the same underlying conceptual model of multilayered intersection and mediation.²³ I can only repeat that cultural phenomena from such a reality are non-Western in their nature, and attempts at definition through Western “equivalence” can be extremely problematic, even for seemingly more tangible aspects such as those found in *Tufunga*.

Tufunga fo ‘uvaka for instance is often glossed as “boat building” but is not the same as Western boat-building, not just because it is concerned with a different sort of boat and structural practice, but because it involves, from the very beginning, a complexity of ontological and epistemological practice, including both the physical, and spiritual dimensions. Whilst the word *fo ‘uvaka* may be roughly equivalenced with “boatbuilding” in the West because of what it does, *tufunga fo ‘uvaka*, is something that goes well beyond the usual Western understanding of the practice of boatbuilding. Not only this, but *tufunga fo ‘uvaka* also involves *tufunga lalava* (“sennit lashing”), *tufunga tongi ‘akau* (“wood-carving”), each with its own ontological and epistemological traditions. Like forms of *Faiva*, *tufunga fo ‘uvaka* is a highly evolved and finely interwoven practice, both practically and epistemologically. In other words, the building and completion of a *vaka* (“boat or canoe”) through the process of *tufunga fo ‘uvaka*, is nothing less than the ontological and epistemological fulfillment of an integrated Tongan world-view, involving *tatau* (“symmetry”), *potupotutatau* (“harmony”) and *mālie* (“beauty”). In this way *Tufunga fo ‘uvaka* itself becomes finely interwoven and inextricably linked to not only *Faiva*, but also to ‘*uhinga*, *hohoko* and ‘*ulungāanga faka-Tonga*.

²³ Cf. Māhina 2000, 2001; Tohi 2002; Potauaine 2010; Potauaine & Mahina 2007, 2010. See also previous discussion on *faiva faifolau* as a model of intersection and mediation.

In all these regards then, the history of research in Tonga has shown that, at least in the case of *Faiva*, what *Faiva* looks like on the surface, and perhaps the fact that Tonga was to some degree Westernized and that many Tongan informants also spoke English and may have used English “equivalents” to communicate, became so highly seductive even amongst well respected Western researchers, as to eliminate any caution they may have felt toward the systematic imposition of a Western paradigm.

The dimensions of various forms of *Faiva* researched and portrayed as just some Tongan variant of a Western concept of “entertainment” or “performing art” in this context then, has already been explored more than it should have been through this formulation.²⁴ Whilst I value both the inclusion of indigenous terminology, and some of the insights these studies reveal, I suggest they are problematic in that they contain many unresolved and un-noted paradigmatic conflicts, discussed throughout this thesis. It is of note that several of my informants commented that research in this form has distorted an understanding of *Faiva*.

In an attempt to give a further understanding of *Faiva* in the context of *Faiva* as “entertainment” or “performing art” then, the following discussions will attempt to resolve a range of shortcomings in the following sections headed “*Faiva* as dance,” “*Faiva* as music,” and “*Faiva* as poetry.”

Faiva as “dance”

Although my informants spoke about *faiva haka*, the Western concept of “dance” was never really mentioned except in reference to Pālangi interpretations. Contrary to this the idea of *faiva haka* always seemed to stimulate and raise issues of ‘*uhinga*, *kāinga* and *hohoko* (“genealogy”).

Faiva in the form of *faiva haka* is often referred to as Tongan “dance”. Whilst this may be what it looks like on the surface, especially to a Westerner, this interpretation is, as is the case in many Indigenous cultures, an entirely superficial one. As I have

²⁴ Cf. Kaeppler 1967, 1972, 1978, 1983, 1985, 1993, 1994, 1995; Moyle 1987, 1991, 1993, 2002; Linkels 1994, 1998; McLean 1981, 1995, 1999.

stated elsewhere, where a look-alike is equivalenced to something Western, there occurs a loss of deeper levels and serious distortions in its *fu* (“form”), *u* (“content”) and *aonga* (“function”).²⁵

As if to thoroughly reinforce this rather single-minded Western interpretation even academically, many forms of *faiva haka* have been researched, written about, and thoroughly portrayed in this light, creating a whole academic literature to support the notion of such things as “Tongan dance”. Despite valid attempts at including names for forms of *faiva haka* like *lakalaka*, *tau’olunga*, *mā’ulu’ulu*, *’otuhaka*, *ula*, *me’etu’upaki* and so on, as well as the Tongan terminology for many more specific aspects like movements found in these sorts of *Faiva*, even well respected authors have produced books or written research papers entitled “Tongan Dance” or “Tongan Dance and Music” or some other Westernized variant.

Beginning her research in and around 1967, Adrienne Kaeppler is probably the most well known of the researchers to approach *faiva haka* as “dance”. By 1985, based on her Tongan experience, Kaeppler had the insight to state: “In many societies however there is no indigenous concept that can adequately be translated as ‘dance’. (Kaeppler 1985:92).

Even by her own acknowledgement then, by this stage she is concluding that there are difficulties in reconciling her Western ideas of dance. Yet by 1993 she appears not to have resolved this issue and, in order to accommodate the inevitable discrepancies in her Western “dance-based” research framework, she is describing Tongan “dance” as “poetry in motion” (Kaeppler 1993).

Then in 1999 Kaeppler re-iterates her 1985 statement, but states that “dance” is now “introduced”:

Cultural forms that result from the creative use of human bodies in time and space are often glossed as ‘dance’, but this is a word derived from European concepts and carries with it preconceptions that tend to mask the importance and usefulness of analysing the movement dimensions of human action and interaction. Traditionally, in many societies there was no category comparable

²⁵ *Ibid.*

to the western concept although in many languages it has now been introduced. (Kaepler 1999:13)

The continuing power of her original misconception can be clearly seen when in 2005, Kaepler continues to frame and conceptualize her statements in the context of some form of dance:

Dances and dancing are surface manifestations of the deep structure or underlying philosophy of a society, and a person can communicate and activate this knowledge by dancing or by observing dance. It is misleading to assume that dance is a universal language as many have done in the past. Except on a most superficial level, dance cannot be understood or communicated cross-culturally without understanding individual dance traditions in terms of the culture in which each tradition is embedded (Kaepler, 2005:155)

It can only be said in this regard, that Kaepler is an intelligent and able researcher and if she had not started out with the idea that *faiva haka* was “dance”, perhaps her research would have generated a level of understanding unencumbered by notions of “dance” and more clearly about forms of *Faiva* as the tip of far deeper levels of conceptualization and holism in Tongan culture.²⁶

Faiva as “music”

In my *talanoa* with my informants about *faiva hiva*, the Western concept of “music” was never a focus of any discussion and again was rarely mentioned except in reference to Pālangi interpretations. Instead the idea of *faiva hiva*, like *faiva haka*, was always discussed in terms of ‘*uhinga*, *kāinga* and *hohoko* more than anything else.

Faiva in the form of *faiva hiva* is often referred to as music. Along with Kaepler, perhaps the most well known researcher of *faiva hiva* is Richard Moyle.²⁷ Again, like

²⁶ Such as when she also makes unexplored statements like: Tongan *lakalaka* serve as frames for painting socio-political metaphors that encourage present-day Tongans to preserve old aesthetic forms while evolving these traditions into the modern world. (Kaepler, 2005:166).

²⁷ Cf. Moyle 1987, 1991, 1993, 2002.

Kaepler, Moyle conceptualizes both *faiva hiva* and *faiva haka* as Tongan “music” and “dance” respectively.

Again, it can only be said that this is a rather superficial view of what in reality is an integrated and holistic part of something much greater. In fact the *fuō* (“form”), *uho* (“content”) and *aonga* (“function”) are such, that *faiva hiva* like *faiva haka*, clearly represents a much deeper and profound way of seeing the world from a Tongan perspective on reality. Its investigation as “music” whilst appearing as superficially appropriate, becomes a Western imposition and, like in the case of *faiva haka* as “dance,” an obstacle to moving beyond the Western concepts of “dance” or “music.”

This does not mean that researchers such as Moyle do not have their insights, but these remain restrained within a pre-emptive frame of Western music. For instance Moyle himself points out:

The early literature, replete with such descriptions of performances as ‘wild’, ‘savage’, ‘discordant’, and ‘harsh’, bears unintentional witness to the existence of systems of music structure and performance far removed from those of Western Europe. (Moyle, 1991:4)

From my own experience of researching *Faiva*, I would suggest that perhaps these “performances” have nothing to do with “music” and are more likely an integrated and holistic expression of something far more profound, and that “wild, savage, discordant, harsh” are irrational ethnocentric interpretations of something entirely rational in another’s world view.²⁸

Like in the case of *faiva haka*, approaching the Tongan phenomena surrounding *faiva hiva* as related to Western music, pre-empts any ability to move beyond a Western paradigm, to a more appropriate foundation of *faiva haka* and *faiva hiva*, that is, to the level of how they may be conceptualized within a Tongan (Moana) paradigm.

²⁸ Unfortunately ethnocentric statements from early Europeans are commonplace and often tell us more about the observer than what they are observing. I suggest that it is somewhat of a mistake to try to further interpret this with Western ideas of “existence of systems of music structure and performance” when Western concepts of “music” or “performance” may not even exist in another culture with other non-Western paradigms. This is of course, also true of “dance”.

Faiva as “poetry”

Although my informants spoke about *faiva ta‘anga*, the Western concept of “poetry” was never mentioned except in reference to Pālangi interpretations. *Heliaki* however was discussed a lot in this context, along with *tala-e-fonua*. Queen Sālote’s *faiva ta‘anga* were often mentioned, but these, like other *faiva ta‘anga* were appreciated on the level of *heliaki*, *‘uhinga*, *kāinga* and *hohoko*.

Whilst *Faiva* in the form of *faiva ta‘anga* has been “equivalenced” as “poetry”²⁹ *faiva ta‘anga* in Tonga was originally an “oral” tradition³⁰ and perhaps therefore, should be more accurately described as “oratory.” In modern Tonga, *Faiva* in the form of *faiva ta‘anga* (“poetry”), *faiva maau* (“poems”), *faiva lea heliaki* (“reciting proverbs”), *faiva talatupu‘a* (“reciting myths”), *faiva fakaoli* (“creating comedy”), or even in *faiva lea* (“speech giving”), is often recorded in written form and is therefore sometimes referred to as being Tongan “literature.”³¹ The most well known form of *faiva ta‘anga* in this regard, are the “poems” of Queen Sālote.³²

Again it should be emphasized however, that *faiva ta‘anga* is an integrated Tongan form of expression, most commonly found not in isolation, but in an holistic context, and in combination with other forms such as *faiva haka* and *faiva hiva*.³³ Of course, unlike *faiva haka* and *faiva hiva*, which must be “performed” even to be recorded,³⁴ modern versions of *faiva ta‘anga* such as the poems of Queen Sālote, all tend to be written down. Whilst it is fair to say that this is more an issue of *fuō* (“form”) rather than *uho* (“content”), it should still be noted in this regard, that the constraints of using Western alphabetical representation imposed as it is on Tongan language, may have reduced or eliminated many important tonal, rhythmic and other aspects that

²⁹ See: Māhina 1993, 2003c, 2004a, 2005c, 2007a, 2009, 2010, 2010b; Māhina & Māhina 2007.

³⁰ See: Māhina 1990, 1992, 1993.

³¹ Of course the Western concept of “literature” can also seriously distort an understanding of *faiva ta‘anga*.

³² See: Wood-Ellem, 1999, 2004; Taumoefolau 2004b; Māhina 2005a, 2009.

³³ Cf. Kaeppler 1993: Poetry in Motion.

³⁴ Actually, *faiva hiva* in many cases is written down using Western musical notation.

may have been intended and certainly would have occurred in any original oral form. These are often important integrational elements within its usual context of being combined with *faiva haka* and *faiva hiva* and so on.³⁵

It is important to note therefore, that despite written forms of *faiva ta'anga* being in a Western *fuō* (“form”) that make them appear similar to Western poetry that it is only in this isolated context that their *uho* (“content”) may also appear similar, although Tongan in nature. It should be pointed out however, regardless of their *fuō* (“form”) *faiva ta'anga* still possesses an *uho* (“content”) and *'aonga* (“function”) which, if one understands both *heliaki* and deeper levels of Tongan epistemology and ontology, is often sufficient to differentiate it from being considered as “poetry” in a Western sense.

Whilst the *uho* (“content”) of Western poetry may itself represent a wide range of deeper social, political and philosophical issues, unlike Western poetry, *faiva ta'anga* (like *faiva haka* and *faiva hiva*, and other forms of *Faiva*) is conceptually integrated within a unique Tongan paradigm that, unlike Western poetry, makes it part of a conceptual holism that includes other “non-literary” forms of Tongan expression, such as *faiva no'o'anga* (“shark noosing”), *faiva faifolau* (“voyaging”), *faiva 'eva* (“courting”), to name but a few, as well carrying an underlying relationship to other practices such as *Tufunga*, *Nimamea'a* and so on. To isolate *faiva ta'anga* from this Moana context, by making an “equivalence” to Western poetry, may superficially seem appropriate (especially when seen in written form), but in reality obscures many of the underlying intersectional and meditational layers³⁶ which generate much of its deeper significance and meanings within Tongan culture.

Faiva as “Tongan language”

Although my *talanoa* with most informants was about *Faiva* and not about Tongan language per se, it was clear that *Faiva* in the form of *faiva ta'anga* especially,

³⁵ Queen Sālote’s *faiva ta'anga* are in Tongan, but written using the English alphabet. For discussion and translation of some of Queen Sālote’s works, see Wood-Ellem 1999, 2004.

³⁶ Cf. the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality and the Hypothesis of Laumālie.

focused on Tongan language in various aspects such as *‘uhinga*, *kāinga* and *hohoko*. It was certainly clear from these *talanoa* that these aspects as well as *tala-e-fonua*, were deeply embedded in Tongan language in a way that in Western languages they are not.³⁷

My earlier suggestion that *faiva faifolau* was fundamental in establishing a conceptual model that is based on the mediation of a multiple layered intersection through varying *tā* and *vā*, and that this was emulated in the conceptual construction of many other aspects of Tongan (Moana) culture (and included in Māhina’s Tā-Vā Theory of Reality), is also appropriate in understanding the construction of Tongan (Moana) language in *fuo* (“form”), *uho* (“content”) and *‘aonga* (“function”). As I have previously discussed,³⁸ Tongan language appears to have been originally constructed as an intersectional and multilayered concept involving the Hypothesis of *laumālie*, in other words, the additions of *laumālie* of constituent elements and intersection with *tā* and *vā* to give meaning.³⁹

In the case of *faiva ta‘anga* for instance, I propose that it embodies the highest ideals of Tongan language expression through intersectional forms such as *heliaki*.⁴⁰ Not only this but I suggest that Tongan “everyday” language is itself woven with *heliaki*, and the construction of “words” is itself a form of “intersectional *kakala*” (garlands woven from fragrant flowers for special occasions),⁴¹ but where the “fragrance” comes from *laumālie*, and the “flowers” from Tongan ontology and epistemology, that is, *tupu‘anga* (“ancestors and genealogy”), *tala-e-fonua* (“oral tradition”), *talatupu‘a* (“mythology”), ecology, and so on.⁴²

³⁷ Except perhaps in some aspects of Western poetry itself.

³⁸ See especially chapter 5.

³⁹ See chapters 3, 5, and 6.

⁴⁰ See chapter 5 and 6.

⁴¹ See chapter 4.

⁴² Cf. Māhina 2004a.

In this way I suggest Tongan language itself as a type of *Faiva*, not only because of its deep and holistic intersections through the concept of *faiva ta'anga*, but also because each time it is spoken, it could be seen to include (both in *heliaki* sense and literally) forms such as *faiva ta'anga*, *faiva maau* (“poems”), *faiva lea heliaki* (“reciting proverbs”), *faiva talatupu'a* (“reciting myths”), *faiva fakaoli* (“creating comedy”), *faiva lea* (“speech giving”), all of which express ‘*ulungāanga faka-Tonga* (the Tongan way) through language.⁴³

Faiva as ‘ulungāanga faka-Tonga (the Tongan way).

This is certainly the most obvious impression of *Faiva* that I gained from my informants. Every one of them discussed *Faiva* in some relationship to themselves, both personally and as Tongans. Some discussed it in a way, unlike anything I have experienced in Western cultures, and it was clear that they considered it a central and very personal part of their way of expressing themselves in the world and of Tongan culture more generally. In this respect *Faiva* was clearly related to ‘*uhinga* and *tauhi vā*.⁴⁴ As with previous interpretations, it was clear in all respects that *tauhi vā*, ‘*uhinga*, *kāinga* and *hohoko* were so bound up with *Faiva* as to make it inseparable from either my informants or Tongan culture.

In terms of ‘*ulungāanga faka-Tonga* then, I propose that *Faiva*, can also be interpreted as a major agent of both ‘*uhinga* and *tauhi vā* and perpetuation of Tongan reality.⁴⁵ In other words *Faiva* not only serves as a focal point of Tongan ‘*uhinga* (“identity”), and reinforces ideas of appropriate *tauhi vā* (Tongan socio-spatial relationships), but also includes deeper philosophical and historical content, acting as a perpetuator of both a Tongan reality and spiritual meaning through *māfana*.⁴⁶ In other words *Faiva* can be conceptualized not only as social education,⁴⁷ but also as

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ See chapter 6. See also Ka'ili 2008, Thaman 2004a, 2008b.

⁴⁵ Cf. Ka'ili 2008; Kaepler 2005.

⁴⁶ See Kaepler 2005.

⁴⁷ Cf. Māhina 2007d: *From Vale, Ignorance, to Ilo, Knowledge, to Poto, Skill, The Tongan Theory of Ako, Education: Theorizing Old Problems Anew.*

being an agent of social construction and cohesion, that teaches important and integrated Tongan values and aesthetics, through models of *tatau* (“symmetry”), *potupotutatau* (“harmony”) and *mālie* (“beauty”).⁴⁸

For instance, the importance of the role of *Faiva* in Tongan society can be seen in the role of the *Punake*.⁴⁹ In my discussion of *Punake* in the last chapter I suggested that according to the Hypothesis of Laumālie, the *laumālie* of *punake* was: “The issuing forth (*pu* as in *puna* spring and *pu* as in *Pulotu*) of the origin (*pu*, and *Pulotu*), what is sacred, symmetrical, harmonious, and in divine order (*pu* as in *tapu*) which infers (*ke*) a continuance of (as in *kei*) the nourishment (*ke* as in *kai*) of the human element/family and identity (*na* as in *nga*, and *na* as *nga* in *‘uhinga*). In other words a *Punake* is a person who is the “creative wellspring” that continually nourishes and perpetuates Tongan culture, or as Pusiaki states, they “*pukepuke* ‘hold on to’ important characteristics of Tongan culture by creating compositions that illustrate them.” (Pusiaki 2008:5)

Whilst this refers to the role of the *Punake* and therefore more specifically to *faiva hiva*, *faiva haka*, *faiva ta‘anga*, I propose that this is also true in all other forms of *Faiva*, even when it is not explicit or obvious. The reason for this is that *Faiva* itself implies and infers *‘ulungāanga faka-Tonga*, or the “Tongan way” of doing something. In a typical Moana circular model, *‘ulungāanga faka-Tonga* was built on knowledge of survival in the Moana, and the practice and perpetuation of all forms of *Faiva* not only embodied, but perpetuated and further refined and developed that knowledge, which in turn formed *‘ulungāanga faka-Tonga*. *Faiva* could be described in this way, as an inductive model of *‘ulungāanga faka-Tonga* in such a profound manner that in many respects, the word “*Faiva*” when attached to something (such as *haka*, *hiva*, *ta‘anga*, *no‘o‘anga*, *faifolau*, *‘eva*, *fananga*, and so on) is the same as saying that that thing is done in the manner of *‘ulungāanga faka-Tonga*. In other words *Faiva* is both a producer and refiner of *‘ulungāanga faka-Tonga*, as well as its product. Almost by definition then, *Faiva* embodies the whole physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual dimensions of *‘ulungāanga faka-Tonga*.

⁴⁸ See Māhina 2005a.

⁴⁹ See chapter 6.

Faiva as “personal identity”

As mentioned in the previous discussion, all my informants spoke of *Faiva* in some relationship to themselves, both personally and as Tongans. To extend this with the idea that *Faiva* is also *‘ulungāanga faka-Tonga* (the Tongan way), means that *Faiva* acts as a model for personal identity in Tonga.

Not only do many forms of *Faiva* embody the ideals for the social and political structures present in Tonga, but also other ideals from Pulotu, that is; *tatau* (“symmetry”), *potupotutatau* (“harmony”) and *mālie* (“beauty”). Whilst these represent ideals in terms of *Faiva*, they are also held as desirable for every Tongan, both in individual expression and in their relationship with others. Through the practice *tauhi vā* (“socio-spatial relations”) for instance, expectations are set not only for social relationships, but for a personal identity that is shaped by *tauhi vā*. This sort of social-personal identity, in contrast to the individualism of the West, forms an identity that is one of the foundations of Moana cultures. In fact, because of this, in many Moana cultures it is difficult to determine where the personal, social and political divide from each other if at all. In most cases they are simply interwoven to make up an holistic personal-social-political value system.⁵⁰

From the discussion of *‘uhinga* (identity) in the previous chapter, it was seen that Taumoeolau (2009) presented and discussed *‘uhinga* in the context of “genealogy and place of origin”, “that which gives meaning”, “paths trodden, the places travelled, lived on, visited”, and summed up by saying:

The *‘uhinga* of a person refers to all the collective entity that provides one’s life essence, all that which makes one meaningful as a living being. *‘UHINGA* refers collectively to one’s home and family surroundings because these are the things that molded one and are the things that one is known by – one’s niche, symbols, places, lineages, friends, relations, one’s rivers, mountains, trees, fishes, birds, animals, islands, towns, villages, districts, roads, beaches,

⁵⁰ To repeat an earlier statement by Kaepler: Danced socio-political statements are some of the house posts of the Tongan value system constructed by that most important builder of values, Queen Sālote. The construction of values through the selection of historical and cultural information can be found throughout the Tongan artistic system and each genre pinpoints specific values. (Kaepler 2005:166)

cliffs, ponds, even waves and winds, as well as one's tombs and graveyards, 'esi or raised platforms, *kakala*, garlands, fine mats, *ngatu*. (Taumoefolau 2009.)

It is clear, at least as far as the content of many forms of *Faiva* is concerned (especially *faiva haka*, *faiva hiva* and *faiva ta'anga*), that this is also the substance of *Faiva*. *Faiva* perhaps, is one of the most important of ways by which both personal identity and a person's relationship with others are taught, as well as perpetuated in Tongan culture.

In fact, as Māhina explained earlier, the idea that makes *Faiva* distinct from other activities and why certain activities are classified as *Faiva* in the first place, is that *Faiva* is an activity that is “body-centred” or “from the person” so to speak, as opposed to *Tufunga* say, which refers to “object-centred” activities such as *tufunga tāmaka* (“stone-cutting”), *tufunga lalava* (“kafa-sennit-intersecting”), *tufunga tongi 'akau* (“wood-carving”) and so on. (Māhina, personal communication 2012).

In other words and in all regards, *Faiva* can be seen not only as a form of expression “from the person,” but also as a social model for ways of being, representing a fundamental process in both forming and expressing personal identity in Tonga.

Faiva as *tauhi vā*

Whilst only some of my informants ever made direct references to *tauhi vā* in the context of our *talanoa* about *Faiva*, it became clear that *Faiva* was so intertwined with all aspects of 'uhinga, *kāinga* and *hohoko*, and with 'ulungāanga *faka-Tonga*, let alone with expressing themselves as Tongans, that it is certainly realistic to consider *Faiva* and *tauhi vā* as being closely intertwined.

Faiva, like *tauhi vā*, is a unique and complex intersectional integration of Tongan socio-spatial relations, deeper epistemology and *laumālie* (spiritual dimensions). In fact, as seen in *faiva 'eva* (“courting”), and even in *fāivavale* (“thoughtless, inconsiderate”), some forms of social relations in Tonga are conceptualized as forms of *Faiva*.

It is interesting to note that in the case of *fāivavale* Churchward defines it as “to act thoughtlessly or inconsiderately” (Churchward 1959:23), but proposes that *fāivavale* is from *fai* (not *faiva*) and *vale*. I believe this to be an incorrect interpretation because, not only is *fāivavale* consistent with being related to *faiva* in combination with *vale*, (and *fai* is also part of, and related to the word *faiva*), but its meaning is also consistent with someone who is *vale* (ignorant) of *Faiva*. In other words, because they are *vale* (ignorant) of *Faiva*, they are unable to *fai* (“perform”) their *vā* (“social space”), which is what makes them “act thoughtlessly or inconsiderately.” In fact the Māori equivalent of *vale* is *ware*, and not only means “ignorant”, but also “a person of mean extraction; low; of ignoble birth; to occupy a mean social position” (Tregear 1891, pg.595). Here we see that the word *vale* itself also contains the word *va* (or *vā*), so ignorance here is being specifically tied to the performing of *va* (“social space”), and by implication therefore, to not possessing *‘ulungāanga faka-Tonga* (the Tongan way).

In this context *Faiva* takes on a direct inference concerning “performance” of “social space”, or performing social duty and obligation, that is; *tauhi vā*. Anyone who is unaware of, or does not perform their *tauhi vā* (social duties and obligations), could be said to be *fāivavale*.

I suggest that Tēvita Ka‘ili is also talking of *Faiva* when he states:

The performance of *tauhi vā* requires artistic skills. In Tongan society, performers who are skilled (*poto*) in *tauhi vā* are competent (*potohe-anga*) individuals, and performers who are unskilled (*vale*) in the art of sociospatial relations are inept (*vale-he-anga*) individuals. Furthermore, the skilled performance of *tauhi vā* brings dignity (*ngalipoto*) to the performer, and the inept performance of *tauhi vā* brings disgrace (*ngalivale, matavalea*) to the participants. (Ka‘ili 2008:47).

Faiva as “Moana science”

As mentioned in chapter 3, knowledge was developed, preserved, perpetuated and refined by means of *Faiva*. For instance *faiva ta‘anga* (“poetic” expression), *faiva hiva* (“singing”), *faiva haka* (“dance-like” expression), *faiva lea* (“oratory”), *faiva*

faifolau (Moana “voyaging”) all play their part in not only preserving, but also perpetuating and refining knowledge and all theoretical aspects of that knowledge in Tongan ideas, concepts and practice, both socially and practically. *Faiva* is not only ‘*ulungāanga faka-Tonga* (the “Tongan way” of doing something), but includes every aspect of what the “Tongan way” implies, personally, socially, spiritually and within a Tongan knowledge context.

In other words what we have in various aspects of *Faiva*, is an important part of an holistic and practical “Moana natural science”. My discussions in chapters 3 and 4 lead us to conclude that Moana perspectives that make up a Moana paradigm, whilst being different to those in a Western paradigm, are equal in both integrity and outcome. The evidence for this is simply that Moana cultures flourished across the Moana, in an environment that required a high level of sophistication and knowledge, whether that was in *faiva faifolau* or in the various *Faiva* associated with the management of resources,⁵¹ or the social and educational processes and structures that underlay such success.

For instance, in discussing Linitā Manu‘atu’s *Mālie-Māfana* pedagogical model, Kalavite states:

The notion of *māfana* is associated with the notion of *mālie* [where] *māfana* is a movement of warm currents that energises the process of *mālie*... *mālie* and *māfana* are inseparable... as they are the process and energies” (Manu‘atu, 2000b, p. 77). Manu‘atu (2000a) suggested that *māfana* and *mālie* produced in the context of the *faiva* is generated in good pedagogy, and contributes to Tongan students’ success because *mālie* espouses a philosophy of process, energy and transformation of cultural productions that provide access to cultural knowledge. Therefore, Manu‘atu’s “*Mālie-Māfana*” pedagogical model proposes that both Tongan teaching (researching/researcher) and learning (researched/participants) are the process and outcome, as in Tongan *faiva* (performing arts), where “both performers and viewers are symmetrically unified in harmony in order that they commonly experience *mālie* (the aesthetically pleasing state) and the emotional feeling of *māfana* (warmth)” (Māhina, 2008, p. 72). (Kalavite 2010:121)

⁵¹ Such as *faiva no‘o‘anga* (“shark noosing”), *faiva ukuloloto* (art of deep-diving), *faiva siu* (art of fishing), *faiva hī‘atu* (art of bonito-fishing), *faiva pakimangamanga* (art of bonito-related fishing), *faiva taumāta‘u* (art of line-fishing), *faiva makafeke* (art of octopus-luring), *faiva taumatu* (art of matu line-fishing), and so on.

In all these respects *Faiva* not only generated an enormous amount of sophisticated and valuable knowledge, but also preserved it through *Faiva* in the educational, social and personal structures that perpetuated and further refined both social and practical knowledge.

The Tongan word for research is *fekumi*. Ka'ili (2008:67) states that *fekumi* is drawn from two Tongan words *fe* (mutual, communal, reciprocal) and *kumi* (to search, to look for, to seek). Churchward proposes that *fe* may possibly be a contraction of *fai* or *fei*, as indicating doing habitually or vigorously or quickly (cp. *Fei mo*), and hence doing together, and hence doing to each other, and hence doing hither and thither (Churchward 1959:147).

I suggest that this sort of conceptualization also demonstrates the inherent relationship between *fekumi* and *Faiva*, where *fe* is related to both *fai* and to *vā*, and *vā* is related to *kumi* in that traditionally, to search, to look for and to seek (in terms of research) were most often communal activities involving *talanoa*, and *tā* and *vā*.⁵²

In this regard I have found that my own *fekumi* (research), has certainly demonstrated this relationship and is itself very much an example of *Faiva*. In fact, whilst Ka'ili uses the term “*fekumi*” for Tongan research, I would propose that appropriate Tongan research would better be described by a term “*faiva fekumi*.”

As previously discussed, the importance of *faiva faifolau* in the development and refinement of Moana knowledge of intersection and mediation cannot be understated as a successful conceptual model. My proposal that this was emulated in the conceptual construction of many fundamental aspects of Tongan culture, certainly qualifies this form of *Faiva* as an essential element in all aspects of a natural “scientific” methodological approach and also theorizing in Moana research, as well as a process of further refinement and development of Moana knowledge itself.

⁵² Cf. also *faiva faifolau* as a “communal activity”.

Faiva as “preservation of knowledge, tradition and history”

Whilst it is clear from the previous discussion that *Faiva* may be conceptualized in a role of natural “scientific” method and theory in Moana research and as a process of refining and developing Tongan knowledge, as mentioned, *Faiva* also played an important social role in preserving, perpetuating and refining that knowledge.

As previously stated, all my informants discussed *Faiva* in terms of ‘*uhinga*, *kāinga*, and *hohoko*, and also *tala-e-fonua*.

As seen in the discussion of *Punake* in the previous chapter, the duty of *Punake* was “to *pukepuke* ‘hold on to’ important characteristics of Tongan culture” (Pusiaki 2008:5). In other words, theirs was literally one of preservation and perpetuation of Tongan knowledge, tradition and history. Of course this was usually done through *Faiva* in the forms of *faiva haka*, *faiva hiva*, *faiva ta’anga*. As stated previously, when discussing *lakalaka*, Kaeppler herself acknowledges that it represents:

Deification of the past, performed in the present, created through dance and dress, shapes socio-political ends through the selection of historical and cultural information by those with authority to do so. Tongan *lakalaka* serve as frames for painting socio-political metaphors that encourage present-day Tongans to preserve old aesthetic forms while evolving these traditions into the modern world. (Kaeppler, 2005:166)

‘Okusitino Māhina’s wonderful thesis *tala-ē-fonua* (“oral history”), is also in my opinion, very much a type of *Faiva*. Originally its content would have been expressed in various forms of *Faiva* such as *faiva lea* (“speech giving”), *faiva talatupu’a* (“reciting myths”), and *faiva fananga* (“mythmaking”). In other words, *Tala-ē-fonua* was an integrated concept that involved the holistic intersection and preservation of knowledge, tradition and history through forms of *Faiva*.

Faiva as “social metaphoric-imperative”

Whilst I have argued that *Faiva* is in many respects also ‘*ulungāanga faka-Tonga* (the Tongan way), that way in many cases is also one of indirectness through “inference”. I propose in this regard that Tongan “inference” is so marked as to seen as some form

of socialized metaphoric-imperative throughout Tongan culture, and is conceptualized as *faka'aki'akimui* (Tongan “indirectness”). In *faiva ta'anga* this same sort of “inference” is conceptualized as *heliaki* (“symbolic inference”).⁵³ In fact many forms of *Faiva* are alive with “inference” of one form or another, especially *faiva haka*, *faiva hiva* and *faiva ta'anga*. As these and other forms of *Faiva* also play an essential part in the forming of Tongan identity and social relations more generally, not to mention other aspects discussed in this and other chapters, including *Faiva*'s relationship *tauhi vā* and *Faiva* itself being *'ulungāanga faka-Tonga*, it is not surprising that it may also form the basis of *faka'aki'akimui* and its perpetuation in Tongan society.

It is interesting to note that the issue of *faka'aki'akimui* (Tongan “indirectness”) together with such phenomena as *heliaki* (symbolic inference) raise certain questions in research. Both are so apparent in many exchanges between Tongans themselves and with others, that it may raise issues with information obtained, especially by a Western researcher who may take information obtained from Tongan informants too literally.

Perhaps the best example of *faka'aki'akimui* (Tongan “indirectness”) is to be seen in the case of Captain Cook's visit to Tonga in 1777. Despite Tongan plans to kill Cook, he was completely unaware of any such intent and was led to believe that Tongans were one of the most hospitable of all indigenous peoples, leaving Tonga with this impression and naming them the “the Friendly Isles”. (Cf. Mariner 1820)

Faiva as “an original indigenous Tongan religion and spiritual model”

Leaving aside the Western theism that defines Western religious ideas, concepts and practice, as well as many Western anthropological attempts to define or conceptualize the idea of “religion” in other cultures, let us explore this aspect of *Faiva* from a Tongan perspective.

⁵³ See discussion on *Heliaki* in chapter 5 and 6.

During my *talanoa* with informants, *Faiva* was referred to several times, as an original indigenous Tongan “religion.”⁵⁴ In Tongan culture, like many other Indigenous cultures, there was a strong pre-existing “spiritual” relationship with nature, and cultural traditions abound with a complex ontology based on an extensive mythological epistemology in this regard.⁵⁵ Tongans, perhaps more than many, wholeheartedly embraced Western religions, almost as if there was a religious void that was ready to be filled, or at least, that there was nothing to compete with their introduction.

Taking a closer look at *Faiva* however, what we have seen in this chapter is that it is an extremely important concept that lies close to the very heart of being Tongan. This is more than just *‘uhinga* (identity), and *Faiva* connects Tongans to their *tala-ē-fonua* (“history”), *hohoko* (“genealogy”), deeper epistemology and ecology. In the case of *me‘etu‘upaki* (a *faiva haka* “performed” standing with paddles) for instance, it could be said that there is a connection between this expression and *faiva faifolau*, along with historical/mythological figures such as Maui and “gods” such as Tangaloa and therefore, to the very creation of an holistic Tongan world that appears as both secular and spiritual at the same time.

If indeed *Faiva* was an original indigenous Tongan “religion” it is clear from discussion in this chapter, that it was both integrated and holistic. In fact it appears even today, as if *Faiva* is so thoroughly interwoven into Tongan cultural life and of such a different nature to the compartmentalized Western styles of religion, that it has never been recognised as a “religion”, nor has there been any major conflict with Western ideas of religion that may have brought it into question from the first Western missionaries.

⁵⁴ One of my informants also stated that he considered Christianity itself as a type of *Faiva*.

⁵⁵ Cf. Caillot 1914; Campbell 2001; Collocott 1921b, 1924, 1928; Cowling 1988; Cummins 1977; Ferdon 1987; Filihia 1998, 1999; Geraghty 1993; Gifford 1924a; Ginn 1990; Grijp 1993, 1994; Helu 1986, 1999; Kaeppler 1971, 1983, 1993, 1995, 2005; Kalakaua 1972; Kamakau 1991; Māhina 1990, 1992, 1993, 1999c, 2003b, 2003c; Mariner & Martin 1991; Orbell 1995; Puloka 2001; Shirres 1979; Spencer 1985.

Of course there was the usual conflict with what Missionaries saw as “savage” and “immoral” behaviour, some of which were to be found in forms of *faiva haka* such as *pō me‘e*, which was held at night and may have involved sexually suggestive movements. Consequently *pō me‘e* was banned and more orderly changes were introduced by Western religion such as re-forming *me‘elaufola* to become *lakalaka* (Kaepler 1993:17). It appears, that whilst Western religions sort to eliminate any form of *Faiva* that it perceived as “immoral” it did not recognise it as a “religion” per se.⁵⁶

When it comes to conceptualizing or describing *Faiva* in a “religious” aspect then, what both Western religion and anthropology would describe as only some form of “cultural expression” may in fact still function as a some form of Tongan “religion”. In fact, it could also be argued in this respect that *Punake*, may be the equivalent of “minister” in the sense they interpret and perpetuate models of the spirit world of Puluotu, through ideals of *tatau* (“symmetry”), *potupotutatau* (“harmony”), *mālie* (“beauty”) to create *vālelei* (“beautiful socio-spatial relations”) generating both *māfana* and *tau-e-langi*.⁵⁷ In these regards, Tongan ideals of *tatau*, *potupotutatau* and *mālie* or *faka‘ofa‘ofa*, may even be considered a type of “theology” from Puluotu.⁵⁸

Whilst it is clear from previous discussions that *Faiva* forms the basis of what is considered “proper” or even “moral” expression in both personal expression and interpersonal relations (*tauhi vā*) in Tonga, in this case it is also responsible for generating “spiritual” feelings of *māfana* and *tau-e-langi*, and at the same time, is built on and expresses a “spiritual structure” from Puluotu as well as. In other words, whilst *Faiva* in forms such as *faiva haka*, *faiva hiva* and *faiva ta‘anga* are expressed in secular forms, these are arranged so as to generate in Tongans, deep feelings of

⁵⁶ This is extremely fortunate, as it has allowed *Faiva* to continue and persist largely intact until the present.

⁵⁷ Cf. The discussions of *tapu* and *Punake* in chapter 6.

⁵⁸ One of my informants expressed the conflict he felt at not being able to include aspects of *faiva haka* into his Christian sermons, as he felt this would allow him to express his faith in a genuinely Tongan way.

mālie (“joy”), *māfana* (“inner exhilaration”), *vela* (“burning”) *tau-e-langi* (the highest form of *māfana*) which in this context, could only be described as being “spiritual”.⁵⁹

For instance, Soisiua Vaea Lotaki states:

Tau-e-langi means “reach the sky” and is achieved through *Faiva* and expressed through *māfana*. When *māfana* reaches extreme heights, the term *tau-e-langi* is used. *Māfana* is a state of elation, exaltation of the spirit, a state of supreme happiness, and it embodies all the values of the Tongan people. (Lotaki, personal communication 2010.)

Māhina, when discussing *mālie* and *māfana*, is also revealing of these deeper “spiritual” aspects when he writes:

As a measure of real beauty, *mālie* is intrinsic to all good works of art as a function of rhythm, symmetry and harmony achieved through the intensification of *tā*, time and reorganization of *vā*, space. The transformative effects the state of *mālie* has equally on performers and audience alike, are ones of *māfana*, warmth, *vela*, burning and *tauēlangi*, ‘reaching-the-sky’. These emotional responses are characteristically ‘fiery’, suggesting a flow of energy through which both the producers and consumers are transformed. The aftereffect is effectively hypnotic. As a form of climaxed elation, *tauēlangi* has an orgasmic effect. While *mālie* is internal to good works of art, *māfana*, *vela* and *tauēlangi*, which affect both performers and audiences, are extrinsic to them (Māhina 2005a:172)

In all these regards, the conceptualization of *Faiva* involving Pulotu (the Tongan “spirit world”) is also clearly stated in such terms as *pulotu fa’u* (“composer/poet”), *pulotu haka* (“choreographer”), *pulotu hiva* (“musician”). In other words, *Faiva* as set in its own context of Tongan reality, could be seen as a tangible medium by which a journey can be made into the “spirit world,” a world where ancestors become enjoined with both living and future generations, a world where Tongans can walk forward into the past and walk backward into the future, where the past and the future are constantly fused and diffused in the ever-changing, conflicting present.

⁵⁹ According to Māhina for instance: The term *tauelangi* literally means “reaching-the-sky”, pointing to a dialectical time-space movement of sustained series of conflict and resolution, as in the case of poetry, music and dance. The association with *langi* (sky) depicts an emotional state of some “divine” experience characteristic of this noble feeling. (Māhina 2009b)

Modern day Tonga is still very much dominated by Western religions from various denominations. Leaving aside the variable definitions of what constitutes a “religion” outside of the usual Western versions, I suggest that *Faiva* is not just an important social phenomenon modeling ways of being socially and culturally, but that it qualifies for consideration as some form of indigenous and original Tongan “religion.”⁶⁰

Summary and conclusion

Finally then, what is *Faiva*? Is it just skill? Is it entertainment (Cf. *faiva haka, faiva hiva, faiva ta‘anga*)? Is it social education and a personal and cultural model of the Tongan way of being as “identity” (Cf. *‘uhinga, tauhi vā*), or is it social construction, giving rise to social cohesion, order, symmetry, harmony, aesthetics and beauty? Is it a natural “scientific” theory and method, in the process of refinement and development of knowledge, or is it just the preservation of that knowledge? Is it a spiritual model (Cf. Pulotu) and in this regard, is it a traditional Tongan “religion”? Is it a model for language (Cf. *faiva ta‘anga, heliaki* etc)? Is it a social metaphor, or is it just a good drama or movie? (Cf. Churchward 1959:23).

There are few Western tourists visiting Tonga today, who would not assume that a massed “performance” of *lakalaka* (a form of *faiva haka*), was not just a Tongan form of the Western concept of “entertainment” and a wonderful one at that. In a perfect example of how a person from one culture may not see or understand what they are looking at in another because of pre-emptive conceptualization, not one of them for instance, would ever dream that they had just witnessed the opening of a spiritual portal, connecting every Tongan to their dead ancestors and at the same time educating every Tongan child present, not only with a model for their personality, but also formatting and creating the very structure of Tongan culture itself, both in the past, present and future. Nor would they dream that what they had just witnessed was part of a profound and larger system of *Faiva*, woven with care by generations of Tongans into the very roots of their culture, not just for survival, but for generating social stability, harmony, beauty and a profound sense of the spiritual.

⁶⁰ One of my informants said that many of the old men were far more spiritually excited upon hearing the *lali* (drum) in *Faiva*, than in hearing the bell calling them to church services.

Faiva haka for instance, is not usually seen as an end in itself as would be its more materially conceptualized Western concept of dance, but as a medium of *'ulungāanga faka-Tonga* through which Tongans can reach a state of *māfana* or *tau-e-langi*. In other words *faiva haka* along with other forms of *Faiva* could be conceptualized as a medium through which one travels to another state of being, a situation that is to be judged, like *faiva faifolau*, by whether one arrives at all. Not only is there skill involved on the part of any “performer” but such a journey involves participation on the part of the “audience”, as well as the ambience of a particular occasion. This is the *'ulungāanga faka-Tonga* of *Faiva* and in *'ulungāanga faka-Tonga*, *Faiva* is truly profound.

Whilst a fuller understanding of *Faiva*, is therefore also experiential and beyond the written descriptive, especially when it is written work in English rather than in Tongan, I have in effect, also created and “performed” a type of *Faiva* in the writing of this thesis. Whilst it is also in a written form that is out of its social and cultural context, and where its underlying richness is likely to be lost on those who are not Tongan, at the same time it is relevant because it shows what a type of *Faiva* could be in a different media, and a media that is mainstream in the academic world.

The answer to questions about what *Faiva* is then, is that *Faiva* is at one time or another, and sometimes simultaneously, many things. For instance, is the practice of *faiva haka*, *faiva hiva*, *faiva ta'anga* conceptually different from the practice of *faiva faifolau*? The answer is no, not because *faiva faifolau* isn't voyaging across the Moana, or because *faiva haka*, *faiva hiva*, *faiva ta'anga* aren't different, even from each other, but because the “word” *faiva* tells us they are all bound through *'ulungāanga faka-Tonga*, to a Tongan version of reality. It is a system that is both Tongan and at the same time a deep reflection of the ways of a greater Moana culture. *Faiva* is about being Tongan, not only in relationship with others, but with a greater Moana past, and where every Tongan's future is also in their past and their past in their future. In short *Faiva* in all its forms is something one does in *'ulungāanga faka-Tonga* (the Tongan way), and something one is part of in *'ulungāanga faka-Tonga* and is something one can only understand in *'ulungāanga faka-Tonga*.

In the final analysis then, *Faiva* is expression creating *'ulungāanga faka-Tonga* and *'ulungāanga faka-Tonga* also creates *Faiva*, in an endless cycle of intersection and mediation, creating *fuō* (“form”), *uho* (“content”) and *'aonga* (“function”) across varying *tā* and *vā*. It is only in this vitality then, bound as it is in the endlessly changing and intertwining rhythms of *Ta-nga-loa*, that we may find any insight or real understanding of the living essence of the many and varying forms called *Faiva*.

Chapter 8:

Leveleva e malanga kae tau atu

My speech now ends, may it reach you.
An expression of hope that one's message has been properly communicated to others.
(Māhina 2004a:60)

Tātuku: Conclusion

The Gates of Pulotu

There is a kingdom far at sea
Tonga Tapu my destiny
Winds falling,
People mourning
Spirits calling
Candle light in the distance
A mythical existence
Yet in the night to my delight
I was brought through
The gates of Pulotu

Pulotu a garden palace
A spiritual space
It's Paradise
Where women reside
Whose knowledge and wisdom
of Tongan pride
Higher learning this place for me
Six days and nights I am to be
Turn back the hands of time
Capturing reasons in rhyme
Telling stories of the past
Faiva haka māfana at last

Māfana a measure of your great treasure
Langiava, Kolofakaanga, Puatoka
Mothers, daughters, sisters, wives
Weaving fine mats of heavenly ties
And so it is tomorrow
Parting is with sweet sorrow
Until we meet again,
May the kakala be with you,
Daughters of Tu'i Pulotu in Tonga Tapu

(A *faiva ta'anga* for 'Ilaisaane Kakala Taumoefolau, 'Uheina Taumoefolau, Saane Taumoefolau-Saafi, and Melenaita Taumoefolau, by Helen Ferris-Leary 2010)

There is perhaps no more difficult field than applying Western science to the study of human beings. Whilst Western scientific theoretical and methodological approaches have met with success from the study of microbes to that of ecosystems and from basic chemistry to the structure of DNA, it is in many ways, even in this more material world, still in its adolescence so to speak.

When the rationales that underpin Western science are applied to the study of human expression however, and particularly to the study of culture, there arise many issues that may at times be insurmountable. Not the least of these occurs in the fundamentally different ways that humans conceptualize reality and the consequent variations in epistemologies and resulting ontologies. For this reason, what appears as objective observation and well-recorded “facts” in one culture, is more likely to be a highly subjective imposition on another.

Despite the attractive idea that a researcher may somehow be able to “leave their culture aside” so to speak, this is untrue, as is the idea that their personality doesn’t effect their observations or research. As a result, cross-cultural studies often tell us far more about the researcher themselves, both personally and culturally, than they do about the people being studied. When the ideas, concepts and practice from one culture are applied as factual equivalents in another, research becomes something entirely different, namely; an exercise in conjecture, supposition, reinterpretation and imposition. Whilst issues of imperialism, colonialism, racism, ethnocentrism, arrogance, personal agendas or just simple naivety may be at work in some or many of these cases, the one thing that is certain is that social science research is hardly ever objective.¹ This complex of personal, cultural and other bias has certainly been the case in many of the studies of Tongan *Faiva*. From further errors such as those from poor translation, poor or unreliable information from informants, misinterpretation, and a host of other variables, it seems certain that the best one can hope for, even in seemingly certain situations, is outcomes of research that are acknowledged as some form of speculation, and that more tangible insights are only framed so as to lead to further and ongoing discussion or research.

¹ See chapter 2.

In the case of *Faiva* then, the vast majority of research has been carried out and interpreted in Western terms. The literature abounds with imposed Western versions of a *Faiva* that obscure important generalities and aspects that indicate its Tongan reality may be conceptualized entirely differently. This sort of situation is seriously flawed from the outset, and is both misleading and confusing in the reality of a Moana holistic environment.

In my own case, where I was investigating not only *Faiva* but the Tongan language in which it was embedded, this represented a considerable challenge. Not only did it mean having to question accepted Western versions of *Faiva*, but also Western ideas about Moana language. I found it interesting that suggestions that implied anything beyond, or different from the usual Western classifications of verb, noun, adjective, prefix, suffix and so on for instance, or how Tongan “words” are themselves structured, were liable to be judged as speculative, imaginary, simply wrong, or even perhaps, as some form of “heresy.” In other words I was faced with the unenviable task of having to question the unquestionable. As these were often only suggestions on my part (many of which are included in this thesis) and were never made without some form of evidence to support them, clearly, such opposition was only because they lay outside the usual and widely accepted opinion that a Western version of language is factual.

Like many of the other issues discussed throughout this thesis, the most disturbing thing about this sort of situation is the apparent belief that a Western reality is not constructed, but is actually real and therefore is one that has universal validity.² In the case of language for instance, this is a sort of Western linguistic imperialism in turn, only serves to consolidate Western ideas, concepts and practice as if they are factual. Perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of this process is a failure to recognise the intrinsically subjective nature of the approaches that are still embodied and embedded in much of the research being carried out, not only in a Western paradigm surrounding language, but across a wide range of social sciences more generally. This sort of situation can only be described as a worst-case scenario for genuine research. Not only does it represent a situation that is entirely self-fulfilling, but apparently

² See: Smith 2005:56; also Memmi 1991; Said 2003, 2004.

therefore, self-validating, and ends in the development of a body of academic literature based on what otherwise looks like well-founded research, and a raft of well respected experts that support it. This then, not only pre-empts and misleads intending researchers, but further consolidates an alien world-view of Indigenous cultures as factual.³

As discussed in earlier chapters, a partial but practical way out of this dilemma is to be found in the adoption of culturally appropriate theoretical and methodological models in order to carry out research in the first place. In my own case, this not only entailed favoring indigenous terminology over Western “equivalents” and developing appropriate theoretical and methodological models with which to approach *Faiva*, but also appropriate training in the practice of *Faiva* (through *faiva haka* and *faiva ta’anga*), as well as being appropriate both ethically and personally, so I could be considered to be *mateuteu* (“ready”), *fa’a kātaki* (“tolerant, having endurance, loyal”), *’ofa, fakatoo ki lalo* (“possessing humility, respect for tradition”) and *poto* (“one who would use the knowledge for the benefit of the whole”).

Whilst this sort of approach develops findings that are set more fully in a Moana paradigm, it must be acknowledged that it is only a partial solution in a Tongan world that has, like many Indigenous cultures, become far less Tongan and correspondingly more Western. None-the-less such an approach has shown itself to be more revealing than previous Western approaches and particularly, was found to be far more conducive to both eliciting Tongan information from informants, and helping me to begin to identify issues and understand the real *fuoa* (“form”), *uho* (“content”) and *’aonga* (“function”) of Tongan concepts like *Faiva*, both theoretically and practically.

In order to comment on and conclude my thesis, I have divided the rest of this chapter into three parts:

Part 1: Relevance and contribution of this thesis to a Moana theoretical approach.

³ *Ibid.*

Part 2: Relevance and contribution of this thesis to a Moana methodological approach.

Part 3: The overall relevance and contribution of my thesis.

Part 1. Relevance and contribution of this thesis to a Moana theoretical approach⁴

Adopting Māhina’s Tā-Vā Theory of Reality, and developing the Hypothesis of Laumālie not only allowed me to accommodate a new and innovative Tongan theoretical perspective which was extremely helpful in conceptualizing *Faiva*, but also gave me an important understanding of a Western paradigm that so often goes unquestioned and passes as factual in a wide range of Indigenous research.

Refining Māhina’s Tā-Vā Theory of Reality with the addition of the Hypothesis of Laumālie as a fourth theoretical construct, also allowed me the great advantage of being able to theoretically address many of the less materially based conceptual constructs I found in Moana language, rather than dismissing or avoiding them. In this case I found the Hypothesis of Laumālie as a theoretical construct, was particularly useful in approaching both the generality of meaning found in many Tongan “words” and their variation of meaning in various *tā-vā* contexts. The timeless-dimensionless aspect of *laumālie* was also important in understanding many of the aspects of *Faiva* described by Tongans themselves as involving *laumālie*, such as *māfana*, *mālie*, *tau-e-langi*, and even those associated with Puluotu. The Hypothesis of Laumālie as a theoretical construct, may also be useful in approaching many of what may appear to a Westerner as less “comprehensible” aspects in Moana cultures more generally. For instance, research on the relationship that many Moana people have with their dead ancestors, may be better understood if approached theoretically on the level of *laumālie* and its living reality in everyday Moana life.

⁴ See chapter 3

Part 2. Relevance and contribution of this thesis to a Moana methodological approach⁵

As mentioned above (and throughout this thesis), Moana research has until recently, demonstrated a widespread imposition of Western ideas, concepts and practice, both through a process of pre-conceptualization using Western “look-alikes” as “equivalents” and an almost exclusive adoption of a Western paradigm in all associated aspects. This has certainly been true in the case of *Faiva*, where Western “preconception through equivalencing” has led to research questions, and theories and methodologies that have led only to fulfillment of those Western preconceptions. This has shown itself to be particularly active in an environment like Tonga which is fundamentally holistic, but already Westernized and compartmentalized, and where researchers are more likely to have informants who are able to frame things in Western ways to match a Western paradigm. This becomes especially pervasive when research questions and agendas may be expressed in a style that indicates they are from a Western perspective. Knowing that a researcher is doing research for their PhD for instance, is almost guaranteed to elicit a Western framed response from many Tongan informants, many of whom also hold higher qualifications from Western academic institutions.

In all these regards, adopting as I did an appropriate methodology and processes such as *talanoa* was extraordinarily useful, not only because it was cultural familiar to my informants, but because it helped to make my research more Tongan and less liable to elicit a Western framed response.

Preparing myself ethically and personally was also extremely helpful in practice, not to try to become “Tongan”, but to immerse myself in ‘*ulungāanga faka-Tonga*, which was appropriate for a proper understanding of my field. Learning to do forms of *Faiva* for instance, in terms of both communicating and facilitating my research, in many ways was as valuable as a literature review. It is of note in this regard, that understanding an aspect like *Faiva*, does not come from just reading about it, but in a large part from doing it. During the course of my study and research I spend

⁵ See chapter 4

considerable time learning to do forms of *Faiva*, such as *faiva haka* and *faiva ta'anga*. In fact it is because of this experience I can say with some certainty, that someone who does not “do” *Faiva* in some form, cannot really speak about it with any authority, or at least should not be taken as well informed.

In Moana cultures in particular, my experience supports the idea that a researcher must include some sort of more personal relationship with not only participants but with what one is researching. In other words, a researcher must be immersed, theoretically, methodologically and personally, both in personal qualities and in some form of appropriate skill or ability to be able to participate directly in the subject itself. In other words my methodological approach develops and refines not only an appropriate type of Moana involvement, so a person may be *mateuteu* (“ready”), *fa'a kātaki* (“tolerant, having endurance, loyal”), *ofa, fakatoo ki lalo* (“possessing humility, respect for tradition”) and who would use the knowledge for the benefit of the whole (*poto*), but also the idea of personal preparation for the task through the development of personal skill to become *poto* (skillful). In my own case this also meant I was able to more successfully immerse myself in my field through *faiva no'o'anga*.

This approach moves away from what I believe to be unrealistic Western ideas of a Moana researcher being an “uninvolved” individual who tries to be an “objective” observer, to a more appropriate Moana social participant who is capable of both reciprocating (*tauhi vā*) and participating in *talanoa*. In this regard, I have been fortunate to be able to reciprocate with the Tongan community on several occasions, both formally and personally in doing both *faiva haka* and *faiva ta'anga* and further, in the production of this thesis.

One must be further aware, that appropriate research methodology in another culture does not generate typical Western results. *Talanoa* for instance, tends only to generate certain kinds of research results, that is; *talanoa* (discussion) for further *talanoa* (discussion). In other words the “knowledge” that *talanoa* generates is in the form of more informed *talanoa*, rather than the more materialistic and defined kind of knowledge that is often seen as an ideal outcome of research in the West. This does not mean that this sort of result, or the knowledge it represents is less valid, rather,

that it is a type of knowledge that is designed for further refinement and modification, that is; Moana knowledge is expressed in a way that is open to further critical enquiry, leading to further modification and refinement through ongoing processes such as *talanoa*. In fact the inbuilt flexibility and open-endedness of this sort of knowledge is highly appropriate to both a social and personal adaptation in an ever-changing Moana environment. For these reasons, this is also the form of my own research findings about *Faiva*.⁶

Whilst it may be postulated that the specificity found in Western ideas, concepts and practice, and often mirrored as ideals in Western research outcomes, may reflect a more static “land based” materialistic heritage, I have found that such an attempt at specificity is often inappropriate or at least problematic, when it is applied to holistic Moana cultures in general.

I have also found that a Western research approach may be inappropriate because it is also quite linear. In other words a linear format of: Research question, literature review, development of theory and methodology, research in the field, analysis of collected data and finally, a conclusion phase entailing an “information-conclusive” form of “evidence-based” knowledge. One of the features of Moana cultures is their highly socialized concepts and integrated holism, where many indigenous aspects are less specific and more context dependent. Confronted with this situation, Western researchers have often resorted to definition through a Western “look-alike” and using this as a basis, proceeded theoretically and methodology to investigate it.⁷ By contrast Moana research, both in its approach and result, is more circular and less reliant on specific pre-definition, nor on a clearly defined distinction between the methodological and the theoretical, and may not end in specific “conclusions” but in outcomes that are best understood as less definitive forms of knowledge, but ones that both embody and demand an ongoing and evolving critique.

⁶ See both chapter 6 and 7 in this regard.

⁷ Cf. Kaeppler 1967, 1972, 1978, 1983, 1985, 1993, 1994, 1995; Moyle 1987, 1991, 1993, 2002; Linkels 1994, 1998; McLean 1981, 1995, 1999.

In the case of *Faiva* for instance, it became increasingly clear in the process of my literature review, and especially as I began to question informants, that *Faiva* was something far more than what had been established through the existing research based on forms of *Faiva* being the same as their Western “look-alikes” of dance music and so on. In this situation, I found that I needed to do research, even to find out what sort of research should have been done in the first place. In other words, unlike researchers like Kaeppler, Moyle, and others, who pre-emptively decided from the beginning that forms of *Faiva* were dance, music and so on, I needed to not only do culturally appropriate research on *Faiva*, but culturally appropriate research to even begin to find out how I should begin to conceptualize *Faiva* in a culturally appropriate way in the first place. This represents a somewhat typical quandary for any researcher wanting to go beyond Western framed Indigenous research.

My research in this case contributes to the idea that the adoption of culturally appropriate theory and methodology offers a way out of this quandary. In fact, I made a somewhat serendipitous discovery that both Moana theory and methodology in practice, present as a circular pattern of theory-methodology-results-theory and so on. In this type of “circular thinking” Moana research methodologies in particular offer the capacity to move “back-to-front” or “front-to-back”, and are therefore able to solve problems like an initial lack of definition for aspects like *Faiva*. In other words I was able to refine and evolve an understanding of *Faiva* as I went backwards and forwards around a research circle so to speak, without having had to pre-define it in a linear way (or any way) that would pre-empt any final analysis or understanding of my research findings. In this form of Moana research, any analysis and conclusion is in itself not an end, but only a break in an ongoing and continuous circular process of refinement and critique of theory, methodology, knowledge and so on.

In fact Moana knowledge derived in this way, does not require nor intend the same specificity in starting point, nor the sort of result that may be an ideal in a Western paradigm (nor does it therefore confer the title of expert on a researcher). That is not to say that Western science does not also promote the idea that all knowledge is open to further modification or review, but that Moana forms of research do not intend any materialistic or static form of knowledge in any way that could lend itself to any finality or scientific dogma. Rather, the usual outcome of Moana research tends to a

form of knowledge that is formulated as merely “knowledge as the beginning of further knowledge” in a kind of cycle where, as a researcher accumulates and analyses their findings, they may have to humbly admit they know less and less, albeit with the consolation they know less and less about more and more. Where this may be true in the outcomes of Western research as well, in Moana research it appears as a tangible and structural part of a Moana science that is not only socially and ecologically mediated, but deliberately constructed therefore to have flexible and modifiable outcomes.⁸

Part 3. The overall relevance and contribution of my thesis

First of all, my thesis is extremely relevant at a time where “Pacific Studies” is beginning to be thought of as an academic discipline in its own right.⁹ In other words, a time where indigenous Moana languages and knowledges are beginning to be framed as a foundation for a Moana-centred subject, dominated by Moana values, and rationales, and where both Moana theory and Moana methodologies are beginning to be more fully appreciated, explored and developed.

By bringing together various Moana scholars from the emerging field of Indigenous Moana research, my thesis also represents a genuine attempt at unification and integration of this Moana perspective, both through the use of appropriate Moana theory and methodology, and a practical example of their application in the study of Tongan *Faiva*. In doing so it demonstrates that research carried out in a Moana paradigm generates different and arguably more appropriate results. In this way it also justifies the development of an appropriate Moana paradigm by demonstrating that much of the historical research across the Moana is based in a Western paradigm, and that this is in need of extensive re-evaluation. Further it also demonstrates that millennia of unique and important Moana conceptualization of the world, could

⁸ In *faiva faifolau* (voyaging) for instance, the outcome of a voyage depends on intersection and the success of ongoing mediation of the varying conditions. Moana navigational knowledge is therefore extremely flexible and adaptable and constructed so as to be open to the sort of continual and ongoing critique and modification appropriate to the Moana environment.

⁹ Cf. Taumoevalau 2010b; Wesley-Smith 1995.

simply disappear “almost overnight” if research is continually carried out in a Western paradigm.

This thesis not only identifies the systematic and comprehensive imposition of a Western paradigm in Moana research, but poses it in ways in which it is liable to be an obstacle to the future development of an appropriate Moana paradigm.¹⁰ It does this in highlighting how Western imposition goes well beyond research methodology or theoretical issues and into the realm of some of the more fundamental aspects through which researchers approach their research in non-Western cultures. The common assumption that a Western paradigm embodies some sort of fundamental truth, and that it may be applied universally is a case in point. The relatively unexamined imposition of a Western paradigm in language for example, means that many researchers may not be aware of their need to re-examine even fundamental aspects in the traditional Western views on how language is structured in a non-Western environment. Moana language for instance, is conceptually philosophical, poetic, relational, inferential and implicative, and is simply different to Western languages. Leaving aside some local and ontological variance, unlike the many and varying epistemologies that are incorporated into Western languages, Moana languages appear to be built on a single Moana paradigmatical foundation. My thesis contributes to the idea that it is problematic to simply impose understandings from one language paradigm upon another. In this regard my thesis contributes to another important thing about language in research in general, namely, how easy it is to jump to the wrong conclusions, especially for researchers carrying out research in another culture, or even for Westernized Indigenous researchers in their own non-Western culture. In other words how seductive and attractively simple it is to do as researchers such as Kaeppler and Moyle have done, and present forms of *Faiva* as just Tongan “music” or “dance”.¹¹

This thesis also contributes to the idea that it is not just a combination of appropriate theory and methodology, but appropriateness that involves all aspects of a culture being studied, being set in a fully integrated framework. In my case for instance, this

¹⁰ This also applies to the further development of “Pacific Studies” as an academic discipline. See Taumoeofolau 2010b, Wesley-Smith 1995.

¹¹ See: Kaeppler 1967, 1972, 1978, 1983, 1985, 1993, 1994, 2005; Moyle 1987, 1991, 1993, 2002.

also involved an appropriate Moana perspective on other aspects such as “vocabulary” which make it possible for me to “capture the shark” (in other words, ideas and insights into *Faiva* through *faiva no ‘o ‘anga*) that arose from the “cultural ocean” of one of a great Moana cultures. This was only possible because things were framed and completed in *all* ways within an appropriate perspective of not only the Moana, but in my case, also *‘ulungāanga faka-Tonga* (the Tongan way). In this regard, the choice to approach *Faiva* through “vocabulary” in this manner, was not only a path to begin accessing Moana knowledge, but also as a demonstration of the potential for utilizing an holistic Moana paradigm in all aspects of my research.

It should be clear from discussion in this and previous chapters, there remain many unexplored non-Western dimensions to the Moana that are intrinsically unimaginable to many Westerners. Many of these are actually recorded in Moana language, but are in the form of inferences but lie well beyond the usual Western presentation of Moana language. In this regard I consider that whilst I have been able to go a lot deeper, and have come a lot closer to giving an understanding of *Faiva* than previous Western based research, I have felt extraordinarily restricted in my study of *Faiva* and its associated “vocabulary” by those who would continue to impose a Western paradigm on Moana language.

This thesis therefore contributes to a much more relevant Moana perspective, that is; that the proper understanding of *Faiva* is simply not possible without integrating and exploring it in *all* its non-Western dimensions and aspects. In my case, this extended well beyond the idea of “vocabulary” in Moana language, or well beyond the Western idea that vocabulary is only words. A more detailed formulation of such an approach has yet to be done and I believe, enters a vast area of unexplored Moana knowledge that our *tupuna* wove with great creativity and care into our language. Whilst hinted at in this thesis, a fuller exploration of this is well beyond its scope or intention.

This thesis also contributes theoretically and refines and develops Māhina’s General Tā-Vā Theory of Reality with the addition of an original Moana based theoretical innovation, namely the Hypothesis of Laumālie as being an appropriate theoretical construct in the analysis of Moana language. This is also particularly relevant in the following way: Utilizing and developing Māhina’s Tā-Vā Theory of Reality along

with the Hypothesis of Laumālie, and applying Indigenous Moana methodology in my research is also a way of moving Moana peoples (and myself as a Moana person) from being objects of study, to being active participants and producers of anthropological theory and practice in our own right. As part of this process I have not only discussed Moana imperatives, but also included Moana protocols in my research as a way of presenting them as both appropriate and respectful in anthropological research more generally.

By choosing an appropriate Tongan perspective, I have also not only been able to conceptualize *Faiva* in an appropriate and uniquely Tongan way, but present my research questions and concepts in a way that was appropriate and understandable to Tongan participants. Through the additional use of a Tongan methodology, I was also able to carry out my research on an appropriate and familiar (to Tongans) foundation and mutual understanding. In other words by preparing properly in this way for my *faiva no 'o 'anga* (“shark noosing”) so to speak, I was in effect adopting *'ulungāanga faka-Tonga* (the Tongan way). Further to this, by adopting the methodology of “*kakala*”, the weaving of my research was also done in *'ulungāanga faka-Tonga* (the Tongan way). This in turn has enabled me to catch a vibrant and beautiful shark and weave a wonderful *kakala* to give back to the Tongan people: A *koloa* (treasured gift) that not only celebrates the beauty of Tongan thought and creativity, but also their unique wisdom and perception of the world. It is my hope that this *kakala* will not only feed the Tongan *laumālie* with *māfana* and the Tongan culture with *lāngilangi* (“honour”), but will also be an inspiration for future researchers, that they too may find and capture their own shark....one from the depths of Moana knowledge that Moana peoples have from ancient times, gathered as they rose from the great depths of the Moana Nui.

In all these regards then, this thesis makes a significant contribution to the idea that Indigenous Moana research should be set in its own unique paradigm, which necessarily includes not only appropriate methodologies based in Indigenous concepts, ideas and practice, but also the development of appropriate Moana theoretical perspectives. My thesis has not only identified the need for a paradigm shift away from the usual Western one, but has contributed in identifying many of the issues involved in developing an Indigenous Moana one. Not only has it done this, but

this thesis has also contributed a practical example of appropriate application, both in developing and utilizing an Indigenous Tongan theoretical and carrying out an appropriate methodological approach through the example of researching Tongan *Faiva*. In other words both my research and my thesis itself represents a significant contribution to the identification of both the practical and theoretical issues involved in deprogramming, decolonizing and in articulating Indigenous Moana theories and research methodologies.¹²

In summary then, my thesis represents an original and substantial contribution to indigenous Moana research and Moana knowledge on several counts:

- Firstly my thesis represents and contributes to the idea that indigenous language contains and embodies sources of cultural knowledge that can be used to develop a deeper understanding of indigenous subject matter, from an appropriate indigenous perspective.
- It contributes an awareness of some of the issues in using language from one culture to equivalence “look-alike” aspects in another, as well as using a Western paradigm in understanding Moana language itself. In other words it promotes an awareness that has in my own case, helped to avoid pre-conceptualization of *Faiva* in Western terms or through seeking Western “equivalents”.
- In this regard it also develops and refines an appropriate Moana theoretical model (the Tā-Vā Theory of Reality) with an original innovation through the Hypothesis of Laumālie. In doing so it is able to place an appropriate emphasis on the intersectional and mediational aspects of Moana concepts across varying *tā* and *vā* and the intrinsically holistic nature of Moana language, rather than the usual Western approach to language, enabling a researcher to recognise and access important associations of concepts in words, and other expressive dimensions that are not otherwise explicit

¹² Cf. Smith 1999, 2004, 2005; Taumoevalau 2010b; Wesley-Smith 1995.

- It represents a dedicated attempt to research and develop Moana knowledge through the example of Tongan *Faiva*, through a process involving proper respect and appropriate context, and to present this knowledge as both original and substantial in its own right. Moana language for instance is not in a more primitive state of evolution compared to Western languages, but highly sophisticated, philosophical and poetic.
- By accessing associated “vocabulary”, and combining it with Moana theory and methodology, this thesis also created an appropriate platform from which to communicate with Moana research participants using appropriate and understandable (to them) terms, terminology and firmly setting these in their own cultural and intellectual framework. In other words this allowed me to tap into profound sources of cultural knowledge and develop a deeper understanding of my subject matter, from a Tongan epistemological and ontological point of view, by creating a familiar starting point for *talanoa* (a Moana form of discussion leading to consensus).
- It develops and refines appropriate involvement not only with appropriate Moana ethics, so a person may be *mateuteu* (“ready”), *fa’a kātaki* (“tolerant, having endurance, loyal”), *’ofa, fakatoo ki lalo* (“possessing humility, respect for tradition”) and who would use the knowledge for the benefit of the whole (*poto*), but also with the idea of personal preparation for the task through the development of personal skill to become *poto* (skillful). In this way a researcher may be able to more successfully immerse themselves in their field. This moves away from what I believe to be unrealistic Western ideas of a researcher being an “uninvolved” individual who tries to be an “objective” observer, to a more appropriate Moana social participant who is capable of both reciprocating (*tauhi vā*) and participating in *talanoa*.
- It presents the idea that Moana theories and methodologies in practice, present as a circular pattern of methodology-results-theory-methodology-results-theory and so on, and that this type of “circular thinking” in Moana research methodologies offer the capacity to move “back-to-front” or “front-to-back”,

and is therefore able to overcome problems like a lack of definition for aspects of many Indigenous cultures. In this way it also presents the idea that there is less distinction between methodology and theory and that research results from Indigenous cultures may often be less specific and more functional, involving ongoing critique, rather than resulting in more static forms of knowledge.

- It develops and refines both Moana theory and methodology in an appropriate way towards the development of a Moana paradigm in Moana research and in doing so, points the way and opens new possibilities for future research into the non-Western nature and structure of Moana ideas, concepts and practices, including those found in Moana language.
- It presents new insights into Tongan *Faiva* and by extension, justifies adopting an appropriate Moana paradigm in researching and understanding other unique Moana ideas, concepts and practice.
- It offers an original and substantial contribution in that it outlines a unique theoretical academic program for the de-programming of Moana research. In other words, a unique and dedicated effort to bring together the discrete, yet somewhat isolated attempts amongst other Moana scholars, as a unified movement against the imposition of Western ideas, concepts and practices, which has resulted in, and continues to result in the displacement, dispossession, and disenfranchisement of all Moana peoples.

In conclusion, this thesis also contributes to a greater ideal: By opening our minds and our hearts in our research, by having the wisdom to follow appropriate ways instead of imposing our own, by having the wisdom to follow the long established protocols from the culture we are studying, we may find something we never expected; glimpses of places that are truly sacred, places that normally exclude all uninitiated outsiders, a unique and different vision of our world, carefully crafted by generations of experience and wisdom, one that contributes to other possibilities and potentials for

humanity, and the preservation of things of great value from places that are rapidly disappearing in a modern age.

For Tongans such a place is called Pulotu, the paradisiacal home where the spirits and gods abide, not a physical place but a spirit home, a sacred place to be experienced only by those who are open and insightful enough to experience the feelings referred to in Tonga as *māfana*. For it is only through *māfana* that we can experience *laumālie* and gather the flowers of beauty from Pulotu and partake of its fruits, fruits that can truly enrich and contribute to our humanity. *Faiva* is one of these fruits.

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