

**BETWEEN TOLERANCE AND TALK: IDIOMATIC KINSHIP
AND ETHNOGRAPHY IN THE MULTIETHNIC PACIFIC**

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**Introduction: Racialized Histories and Genealogies of
Selves and Others**

THIS PAPER ATTEMPTS TO TALK across the divides between identity politics of indigenous and mixed-race transnational scholars using a genealogical approach. It suggests a critical ontological role for genealogy and kinship in ethnographic efforts to continually refine sociocultural methods in anthropology. I use idiomatic kinship forged in the course of fieldwork as a platform from which to interrogate forms of solidarity and rupture in relationships between scholars of color and indigenous research communities. I highlight the analytical possibilities for historicizing and problematizing indigenous people's racial categorization of other "others" as integral to the politics of their own identities.¹ To begin to shift the historical power dynamics of interracial relationships, ethnographers of color must be willing to critically explore the political economy of their own racialization by their informants and vice versa. Building on W. E. B. Du Bois's groundbreaking work on what today we may refer to as the complexity of Black subjectivities, I argue that a dialogue about politics of identity between indigenous and nonnative scholars of color must more strongly engage their common cultural approaches to kinship as ontology and histories of shifting and multiple identity constructions to eschew the role of dominant historical categories of race and their incumbent global hierarchies.

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Sociocultural anthropology has historically striven to illuminate notions of genealogy, an important “identity hook” or “marker of identity” (McIntosh 2005, 43) for indigenous groups throughout the world. Thinking of one’s relationship to a wider community as coincident with one’s place in genealogy also is integral to sociocultural anthropological training (Kumar 1992). While pursuing my doctorate in the United States, I was taught to assume that I would be taken in as an adopted member of the particular kin group, in my particular case, among a community of Tongans, an indigenous group from the Pacific Islands (Flinn et al. 1998). As someone who is not of indigenous background and who is also of mixed ancestry—and thus familiar with at least two different sets of kinship practices—I began fieldwork by learning the expectations of Tongan kinship as a way of making a home among people who shared yet a different worldview. However, what I was not prepared for was how the Tongan families would perceive and react to my own multifaceted ethnic identity, which included the marked identity of Chinese-ness.

My Tongan informants represented themselves to me as Tongans—men, women, girls, boys, immigrants to New Zealand, or dwellers in Tonga; I represented myself to them as a transnational Caribbean woman of Chinese and west African descent. Yet, Tongans I had met and with whom I had developed relationships would describe me as *‘uli‘uli* (Black), *‘Amelika* (American), or *muli* (foreigner). Some—those who came of age in Tonga in the 1960s, for example—even refer to me as a *pisi koa* (peace corps volunteer), categorizing me by the familiar role still associated with young Americans who had home stays with families and learned Tongan. Within my “fieldwork families,” cultural and personal representations are complex, power-laden, and negotiated along with stereotypes of people of other ethnicities and so-called races. As this paper will show, I have learned that my reflexive methodology for studying ethnicity from my position “within” Tongan families must be continually under revision.

The negotiated aspects of identities forged at the boundaries of nationalities, ethnicities, and differential political economies are what I explore in this paper, and I do so within a (limited) historical context of the stereotypes of members of other groups, which often prevail in the perceptions of others’ ethnicities in local Pacific discourses of identity and belonging. As (feminist) scholars of color, Suad Joseph (1993 and 1996) and Brackette Williams (1996) suggest: in the context of research, the identities of ethnographers and interlocutors are mutually constituting and mutually challenging, but each side has its expectations of the appropriate roles that the other will play. Informants probably have different expectations of researchers who are ethnic Tongans from non-Tongan researchers residing

for long periods in Tongan communities and from those who are relatively detached overseas researchers who stay for only limited periods and who do not actively socialize with Tongans or learn their language. For both the researcher and her informant(s), such expectations may very well be in tension for a host of complicating reasons. I suspect that these are tensions that scholars of mixed ancestry experience themselves, and I hope to begin a dialogue about the overlaps and elisions between research experiences of indigenous and nonindigenous ethnographers of color.

We need to explore more critically biographies of connection and rupture between scholars and communities of color to enhance the methods and teaching of ethnography (Baker 1998). This paper constitutes one attempt to address that need. I review the challenges I perceived in being “discovered” as a (part) Chinese person “in the field.” By problematizing my Chinese “otherness” in the context of adopted kinship among my Tongan interlocutors, I open up theoretical explorations of the complex, varied, and situationally expressed nature of Pacific identities and identifications (of others), as well as the methodological approaches that multi-ethnic anthropologists may have to put into play during fieldwork. Most important, I consider the role of political economy in shaping the assumptions brought by people of differentiated identities-of-color to interactions with others outside their ethnic groups and, moreover, the nuance this adds to critiquing and improving ethnographic practice. As DiLeonardo states, “who our informants construe us to be is central to what they say in our company” (DiLeonardo 1999). I would argue that it is also central to what they do not say outright to us.

“Dissing” Foreigners and Disciplining Dislike: A Trip to the “Chink Shop”

In December 2007, I returned to my field site—a village in the capital Nuku’alofa—to attend a reunion of a transnational Tongan family who had adopted me during my fieldwork and with whom I had remained in close contact since ending my doctoral research in 2002. The reunion took place right after Christmas and overlapped with the New Year’s holiday and the mainstream Methodist “Week of Prayer” that Tongans usually celebrate the week after New Year’s Day. I renewed relationships with my “sisters” but was meeting many of their husbands and children for the first time. There were eighteen young people between the ages of three and twenty-two present, all of them the grandchildren of “Mum” and “Dad,” the elderly couple at whose house we all stayed. They spent large portions of their days practicing songs, dances, and skits (elements of *faiva* performances) so that

they could entertain their relatives at the formal family reunion events after New Year's Day. The children seemed to take to me, many of them easily following their parents' directives to call me "Auntie Pingi" and showing me the respect due me as someone their grandparents' sometimes referred to as their *pusiaki* (adopted child). One afternoon, I overheard some of the preteens and teens discussing how to entertain themselves in the oppressive summer heat of their inland village. Young "Hank"—an Australian born fifteen year old—said to his cousins, "Let's go to the shop . . . which one? The Chinese one . . . further down the road from the Tongan one. . . . Oh, the Chinese shop . . . ching chong Chinese . . . [laughing]. . . ." I heard this and remarked: "Why are you making fun of them?" I asked, intending my question to open up a longer conversation.

[H]: Because they talk funny.

[P]: Oh do they?

[H]: Yes they do.

[P]: Well, that's not very nice . . . because . . . my mum is Chinese and she does not talk that way . . . and it's not nice to make fun of people even if they talk differently, anyway.

[H]: Oh, I didn't know that your mother was Chinese . . . I thought you were Black, like, you know, a Black American and all. . . .

[P]: No, actually, I just live in America but my mum is Chinese and my father is African.

[H]: Like from Africa?

[P]: Yes. . . .

[H]: Cool!

When I asked Hank what was cool about being African he replied: "The music and that . . . they have some really cool songs. We learn some of them in school. . . ."

We chatted for a while about his school in southern Australia and about how he was learning both Indonesian and French in his middle school classes. I mused over these details, relieved to know that Hank was being conscientiously taught about others. Perhaps his poking fun at stereotyped Chinese speech intonations could be "educated" out of him. Ironically, a few minutes later when one of his New Zealand cousins reminded him about her wanting to go on an *'eva* (outing) somewhere, Hank renewed her earlier suggestion, and responded: "Hey! I thought we were going to buy something from the Chink shop down the road! Let's go!"²

This final remark from the obviously bright and interesting teenage boy shocked me and had me wondering whether I should try to engage him in further discussion about it. How could I show him that there was nothing wrong with, or even just laughable about, being Chinese, that it was unkind

to humiliate people unsuspectingly, and that being African was inherently no better or more cool than being Chinese? Moreover, how could I reconcile the historical “fact” that Tongans have long been tolerant of those who have considered them to be of a maligned ethnicity but who have repeatedly come to set up shop in their archipelago and to exploit the natural resources of their islands. This was not the first time I heard a casually delivered, yet jarring derogatory, remark about Chinese people in Tonga, and I began to muse over what Tongan cultural assumptions motivated and allowed it. Hence, why were Tongans not so “friendly” to Chinese immigrants among them? And why did I choose this moment to reveal this to Hank and to remind members of his family about my Chinese ancestry? In the past, I had chosen not to continue highlighting the Chinese part of my background, especially because my interlocutors seemed sometimes unconcerned about my ethnicity or ancestral background. No one seemed to find my Chinese-ness particularly interesting or remarkable. As a mixed-race person of color living in the United States, I had become accustomed to finding my Chinese-ness very interesting and—perhaps because I am phenotypically more Black looking than Asian looking—often incredible (see Fig. 1).

Insiders and Outsiders: Ethnic Chinese People in Tonga

Chinese people came to the Pacific at end of eighteenth century as workers—cooks and carpenters—on ships used for sourcing sandalwood (*bêche-de-mer*). Bill Willmott (2007) divides Chinese settlement in the



FIGURE 1. The author (middle) with her father (left) and mother (right) in 1996.

Pacific into three waves. During the first wave, around the 1840s, traders chartered their own course around or through the Pacific. The second wave began in the 1860s and began a period in which Chinese moved to French Polynesia, Western (then German) Samoa, New Guinea, Nauru, and Banaba as indentured laborers.³ During the interwar years, the third wave began: Chinese men moved and established families and communities who did not necessarily maintain familial ties with cities and villages in China, in many of the Pacific Island colonies of Britain, France, Australia, and New Zealand. Many of these communities were politically active, and one established a Chinese school in Fiji in 1936. During WWII, many Chinese people left the Pacific, perhaps for close-by mainlands such as the United States, South East Asia, Australia, and New Zealand. Wilmott refers to a fourth wave of ethnic Chinese who have been entering the Pacific islands from China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Taiwan in the last two decades. Today there are around 20,000 ethnic Chinese living in the Pacific Islands.⁴ The identity politics of indigenous Chinese Pacificans, that is, second-generation ethnic Chinese in the Pacific Islands, is a key political question for Pacific nations today. Other useful writings are available on the history and contemporary politics of diverse processes of Chinese settlement in the Pacific, which is long and complex.⁵

Recent Chinese immigration to Tonga began in the 1974 with the settlement of several Taiwanese businessmen, followed by students from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the People's Republic of China, the latter arriving after the 1989 Tiananmen unrest (Tokyo Foundation 2008). Many came as contract laborers on Tongan construction projects and were quickly able to obtain Tongan residency (Willmott 2007).⁶ Today, on the main Tongan island of Tongatapu, there are between six and seven hundred ethnic Chinese, most of whom run small, roadside stores that sell food and household items imported directly from China (Tokyo Foundation 2008). Many of these shops were targeted during the "16/11" riots in 2006 in Tonga (Langa'oi 2010), in acts condemned by the recently crowned King Taufa'ahau Tupou V (*People's Daily* 2006). Tonga established diplomatic relations with China about twelve years ago, ending its twenty-year history of relations with Taiwan (Langa'oi 2010). Tonga recognizes China's "One China Policy" and, thus, supports both its notions of unification with Taiwan and its continued political hold over Tibet (Xinghua News Agency 2008b). China has donated large amounts of aid to Tonga for infrastructural and military development projects (Xinghua News Agency 2008a).

In my field sites—Nuku'alofa and Auckland—prejudice of indigenous Tongans against non-Tongans is not unheard of, and it certainly has been

targeted against Chinese immigrants there (Besnier 2004). It is not uncommon to hear that a Chinese trade store has been troubled by young Tongan men, especially late at night after some youth have been drinking alcohol. They might try to pull goods down from the shelves using sticks. (In smaller shops, consisting of just a counter behind which the goods are displayed on shelves several feet way, wrought iron bars separate buyers from sellers). When I lived in Tonga in 2000–2001, I heard of two recent occurrences of this sort: once in Nuku'alofa and another time in a village several kilometers away. Although these same youth might tease the shopkeepers using racial slurs, they and their families may still frequent the Chinese-owned shops for their larger size, cheaper prices, and often greater variety of goods compared to many of the Tongan-owned shops. In diaspora, “dust ups” between members of Pacific Islanders and newer Asian immigrant groups, especially among youth interacting on the streets or in the school yard, are not unheard of.

Asian Indians have long been a local other-of-color whose status as relatively successful business people in Tonga is well-established and accepted; a few prominent Fiji Indian families have intermarried with Tongans in recent decades. “Mormonized” Tongans constitute another other, and Chinese immigrants are a third obvious minority (Addo and Besnier 2008). Chinese immigrants’ are closely watched by local Tongans because these immigrants quickly appear to become “rich.” That they are becoming rich by setting up businesses—seemingly at the expense of Tongan consumers and of Tongan retailers whose profits Chinese roadside shops tend to undercut with their cheaper prices and longer hours—suggests to Tongans that there is, again, something that they themselves are not “getting right” with respect to modernity.

In the political economy of ethnic relations in the Kingdom of Tonga, instances in which Chinese become the victims of locals’ prejudice against more economically successful non-white others are more than just indications of individual Tongans’ or even collective Tongan intolerance of others. Rather, they are results of frustrations over the elusiveness of capitalist modernity compounded with the suspicions of those who, while sharing the same local contexts, somehow manage to get there before Tongans in their own homeland. Derogation of Chinese, as one group of local others, reflects a suspicion about a settler group who attains modernity in Tonga—Tongan modernity—before Tongans do; it is not a suspicion or hatred of Chinese people themselves. Once again, a settler group has entered Tonga—first Europeans, then Asian Indians (usually by way of Fiji), now East Asians—and has pursued capitalist lifestyles more successfully than most of their Tongan counterparts.

Tongans' often antagonistic reactions to Chinese immigrants constitute a local critique of a modernity that is all too familiar to indigenous peoples throughout the world. Therefore, what constituted my uncomfortable ethnographic moments might, for my informants, be specific instances of both reflexivity and critique about this undeserved unevenness. Moreover Chinese may well harbor prejudice toward indigenous locals—a notion that warrants further research (Langa'oi 2010). Whether or not they do, their relationships with Tongans reflect none of the normal Tongan kinlike practices, such as food-sharing, that communicate insider status and that Tongans often extend to non-Chinese outsiders. *Kai* means “to eat,” and this word is encapsulated in the term for wider kin group, *kāinga*. *Kāinga* is literally translated as “those who eat,” as well as share other resources, together.⁷ Although Westerners, especially white people, are perceived as desirable as kin, Chinese—lacking the historical associations with Christianity and modernity—are not.

Tongan prejudice and xenophobia toward Chinese immigrants is not limited to the Kingdom. It is also a reality in the urban centers of larger countries of predominately white countries like Australia and New Zealand. The mocking tone and words, and racist characterizations of ethnic Chinese that Hank and his diasporic cousins shared, fell into place alongside similar “racialized” jokes about non-Tongans in Tongan cultural discourses in Tonga. Sharing these jokes—just as with any other humorous interactions—constituted an arena of informal familiarity for these young—and sometimes older—members of this dispersed family. As forms of knowledge that stereotype the others against whom an indigenous or local identity develops, these joking acts also constitute “acts of claims making” (McIntosh 2005) and are of great relevance for overseas-born Tongans to employ among their homeland-based relatives.⁸ Such a discourse is part of a project to prove their loyalties to the homeland in front of local-based relatives who are ever on the look-out for “slip ups” in allegiance to Tonga and Tongans (Lee 2007). Like other forms of belonging, indigeneity is predicated on shared practices, beliefs, and perhaps interactions and discourses that constitute knowledge used to mark an individual as an insider or an outsider to a given group.

Derogation toward ethnic Chinese is also found among Tongans in diaspora. Also, there have been instances when I have been privy to Tongans' derogatory joking about Chinese people as selfish and individualistic in Auckland, the city where I conduct Tongan diaspora research. Kilisitina is an elderly Tongan-born woman whose family became my home base when I first arrived for fieldwork in Tonga in 2001. I have stayed with her numerous times, shared stories of my family, and once gave a speech in her

church that resulted in her referring to me more often as her American daughter than as her American peace corps volunteer. On my recent visit to see her for New Year's and her Methodist congregation's week of prayer (2008), she and I had an interaction that made it appear that she missed my telling her I was Chinese or that she had forgotten that I had shown her a picture of my natal family, thinking that she would see my mother's Chinese-ness and my father's African-ness quite clearly. When it came up in conversation some time later, she remarked that she had indeed forgotten. Perhaps, I thought later, she had used "forgotten" as a euphemism for "it does not matter." Indeed, Kilisitina's construction of a relationship to me exemplified one way in which indigenous notions of kinship encapsulate relationships that often stretch temporally beyond the present and spatially beyond a village or homeland.

Anthropologists have described Pacific identities as based on notions of ethnicity and material social interdependence that are complex, varied, and situationally expressed (see Linnekin and Poyer 1990, among others). Moreover, in some pivotal contemporary examinations of identity that are taking place at the nexus of anthropology, Pacific studies, and cultural studies, indigenous scholars have rejected the idea that nativeness can be essentialized as a form of belonging that requires both spatial and temporal fixedness (Ana'e 2003; Kauanui 2007; McGrath 2002; Taumoefolau 2004; Teaiwa 2005; Tengan 2005; Tupuola 2004). If my identity was indeed relatively innocuous, why did Kilisitina remain so quiet—seemingly unwilling to engage with me any further on the topic of my Chinese-ness?

Among Tongans in diaspora in predominately white nations, there appear to be links between mainstream discrimination against immigrants of color (such as ethnic Chinese) and Tongan prejudice against Chinese in their homeland. Cowling states that, in the 1980s, Tongan migrants to Australia had tended to be less discriminated against than "groups like Indo-Chinese" (Cowling 2002, 101). Some details of Helen Lee's research among Tongans in Australia suggest that Tongan-Australians' prejudice toward non-Tongans may be influenced by the un self-reflexive and racist ways in which some Australian whites talk about a host of non-Australian others, among them ethnic Chinese people.⁹ Lee, who has done long-term fieldwork in Tonga and the Tongan diaspora, identified the source of influence on Tongan xenophobia as a lack of understanding of the more "politically correct" forms of Western-styled transcultural discourse (Lee 2003, 69).¹⁰ I interpret such prejudice to stem, in part, from the legacy of colonial racist constructions and the related hierarchies in which whites predominate in owning and controlling the means of production. I believe that this is also the reason for discrimination by Tongans toward non-white cultural outsiders.

Tongans with whom I have spoken generally believe that, if there is anywhere on earth where they deserve to thrive economically, it is in their own homeland. That outsiders do not naturally embrace a kin-based approach to sharing material wealth is acceptable to Tongans; people are raised with differing cultural values, after all. However, they are not equally predisposed to accepting that members of another non-white group might also accumulate wealth in Tonga, while not associating with the average Tongan through the normal, everyday idioms of kinship and while seemingly “beating Tongans at their own game” of competition for modern wealth. This, simply put, adds insult to injury.

Coupled with the everyday forms of prejudice learned by overseas-based members of Tongan families, stereotypes of Chinese ethnics as selfish and unconcerned about Tongan culture become part of the knowledge that Tongans share about (Asian) cultural others in the increasingly racially diverse places in which they live today. As in the case of young Hank and his cousins, such knowledge may be employed for their collective comic (or stress) relief. On a daily basis, numerous Tongans interact with Chinese merchants, store-keepers, and fellow residents in villages, because most villages feature a Chinese trade store today (Langa’oi 2010). From local Tongan points of view, although Chinese immigrants to Tonga attain relative success in capitalist aspects of modernity, it is in local kinship (relations) that Chinese do not perform well. For example, my informants tell me that their Chinese neighbors in Tonga rarely attend Tongan churches or inquire after Tongans’ families. Chinese in Tonga are being judged as much for such social transgressions as they are for being recent immigrants or more competent income earners. At this point, I must remind readers that I am working under the assumption that a formally trained ethnographer would probably perform their specific responsibilities within Tongan kinship relations relatively well—an assumption that I put out there in the hopes of encouraging dialogue from Tongan and other indigenous readers about ethnographers they have known or welcome in their families. I return now to discussing the role of kinship in the ethnographic endeavor.

Knowledge, Power, and Fieldwork

Knowledge—including that which is gathered in the form of stereotypes and prejudice—is shared and spread between members of a transnational kin group and ethnic Tongan communities. Tongans who are dispersed, for a host of reasons, throughout the ethnoscape, find security and social capital in building solidarity and developing the trusted mechanisms of family (Gershon 2007).¹¹ Like the collaborative *ako faiva* (song and dance

practices) of the Tongan- and overseas-born grandchildren, collective derogation toward Chinese culture provided an arena for solidarity, although the latter instances were less innocuous. To anthropologists, fieldwork communities constitute moral communities, but it is a fiction that all share the same assumptions about ideal social relationships between researchers and informants. About this notion of belonging to a single moral community, Clifford Geertz states: "It is this fiction—fiction, not falsehood—that lies at the heart of successful anthropological field research" (Geertz, 1968, 148; cited in Kaufmann and Rabodoarimiadana 2003, 191). For those who are included as kin, varying histories in such communities confer different types of obligations—moral, financial, and otherwise. Likewise, my kinlike connections obligated me to tolerate certain unaccustomed, imposing, or uncomfortable situations and interactions and, thus, to reflect on the reciprocity expected. Moreover, my being a familial guest in this Tongan family probably partially excused me from being made into a representation of a disliked group but perhaps also removed my right to be entirely offended by a derogatory remark about other members of her ethnic group(s). Also, my physical appearance might have played a role, because I do not look very much like a typical person of Chinese descent.

Also, Geertz notes that "fictive kinship toward their ethnographer enhance[s] [informants'] moral authority" (Kaufman and Rabodoarimiadana 2003, 186). For nonindigenous anthropologists working among indigenous people, idiomatic kinship constitutes both a way of creating a recognizable "role" for oneself in a community one has just joined. Idiomatic kinship becomes a very necessary form of currency for ethnographers working in kin-based communities, but it does not guarantee them moral authority to the anthropologist. The moral asymmetry between fieldworker and informant, as assumed members of a moral community, may also be based on informants' recognizing and redressing the existing economic asymmetry between the parties (Kaufmann and Rabodoarimiadana, 2003, 185). Therefore, when informants invoke a kinship idiom with a visiting anthropologist—declaring the ethnographer a daughter, niece, or sister—it may be also as much a reminder of expectations of reciprocity, as it is an act of familial inclusion.

In the anthropological endeavor, writing ethnography constitutes the most marked form of power precisely because it enshrines in the global knowledge base only partial truths about relationships that are themselves contingent and riddled with power. The power dynamic between ethnographer and indigenous informants may be mitigated if the ethnographer is entangled in kinlike relations with interlocutors. As I suggest above, power can easily give way to obligation when the ethnographer uses her position

and public voice to redress wrongs that have affected her informants and their community, as well as to make amends for inadvertent “wrongs” that may arise from her very act of (ethnographic) cultural representation.

For indigenous anthropologists, bonds of kinship in the native community undoubtedly form a fitting context for data-gathering and, also, is a form of symbolic currency that grounds diasporic indigenous scholars in time and space as they relate through processes of mutual recognition, reciprocity, and knowledge-sharing (Ka’ili 2005). Nevertheless, status as an “insider” does not preclude the operation of power (Narayan 1993; Tengan 2005). Among indigenous researchers, kinship with communities they research is not limited to idiomatic kinship. These researchers feel the responsibility that goes beyond the intellectual or even the personal, but that extends to the community as a whole, to ancestors, and to people (both insiders and outsiders) yet to come (Smith 1999). Likewise, anthropologists should strive to produce more than the partial truth that results from their routine, if heartfelt, condemnation of the historical role of racism against Pacific Islanders in the region and their subjugation under imperialism. Equally a part of European-led modernity and the global effects of late capitalism has been growing xenophobia by their indigenous informants toward members of other ethnic groups. Just because the Tongan academic literature, for example, usually discusses racism and prejudice as being perpetrated in mainly one direction—toward Tongans—we should not assume that such power and prejudice are not operating in other realms of Tongan interactions with ethnic others. By analyzing my most recent fieldwork experiences here, I hope to engage indigenous ethnographers in discussions about the role their own perceived “otherness” may play in examining their cultures for the multiple levels of meaning, which result from entangled histories of inequality in global histories/political economy.

As DuBois (1903) described for Black individuals, and as has been applied to the analysis of self-consciousness of members of other people of color, Tongans also engage their own subjectivities through Euro-American eyes as well as through their own experiences as indigenous people. I suggest that, in contemporary multiethnic contexts, Tongans have a self-perception that embraces further complexity. Researchers on Tongan identities in diaspora need to engage with the effects of predominant critiques of non-white others that are part of the knowledge produced and shared in popular Tongan discourse. This approach encompasses DuBois’ double consciousness and includes another way of viewing other people of color in the world—that is, through dominant white lenses. To Tongans, regardless of whether they are located in the homeland or in the diaspora, this multiple and complex way of seeing impresses on them the understanding that a newer modernity than that offered by traditional colonialism

and Christianity is passing them by. Thus, Du Bois's double consciousness is not limited to contexts in which identity struggles of people of color are embedded in predominately white social contexts. My critique does not excuse Westerners—whites or people-of-color—who also harbor stereotypes of Tongans and other indigenous peoples, but it does suggest a fine line between racism and racialization by Tongans. I believe that analyses of these complex forms of discrimination is crucial to improving the methods in which we are all entangled in our respective status as researchers, people of color, and indigenous informants.

Kinship and Anthropology: Relationships Redefined?

As discussed in the short vignette about Kilisitina's forgetting of my mixed ancestry, I recognize that contemporary ethnic Tongans identity formations may vary across gender and generation and are adapted to a range of different geographical locations, gendered and class positions, and religions and political stances. For this reason, my foregoing reflections emphasized the contrast between Kilisitina's identity as a Tongan-born female who is now elderly and resident in diaspora and Hank's identity as a teenaged male of diasporic birth and up-bringing. For members of the second generation of Tongans in diaspora, especially for those who have had opportunities to visit the homeland, a strong sense of Tongan identity can develop even if they were born, raised, and continue to live in Auckland, Sydney, or other diasporic locations (Lee 2003; Lee 2004, 2007). One teenaged girl in Kilisitina's Auckland-based kingroup offered a very nuanced reflection on her "identity journey"—a term I borrow from Samoan–New Zealand anthropologist, Melani Anae (2003)—after her first visit to Tonga, which took place in mid-2006:

When I am in Tonga, it's my home, yeah . . . but when I am here, in New Zealand, it's my home . . . when I am somewhere else, or when I am with someone who is not Tongan and we are here [in New Zealand] I tell them I am from both places. I don't want New Zealand people to think I am a "fob" [fresh off the boat] but I am so proud of being Tongan, man. I love Tonga! I've always loved it. And I did not realize that it really is a great place until I went there last year with my mum and [my great aunt]. I am proud to be a Tongan, but also proud to be [from] New Zealand. I am from both places. Yeah. . . ." (Amelia, aged 14, Mangere, Auckland)

Likewise, my identity journey now encapsulates pride about being embedded in the Caribbean, west Africa, Asia, and communities in Tonga

and among Tongans in diaspora. However, it is important for me to avoid assuming that I have “become” Tongan, because this would reek of the disingenuousness of “going native,” which ethnographers eschew.¹² Indeed, I have written this paper to begin to engage others in a fuller and more critical dialogue about how to include one’s ethnic differences in their entirety with fieldwork families. I am also aware that what I perceive to be fictive kinship/family(-like) relations may constitute some other form of relationship to my informants. Helen Lee states (pers. comm.) that, among outsider anthropologists of Tongan culture in this current generation, she hears fewer people talking about their fieldwork families. This may be a shift in the discourse of a younger generation of scholars who often still conduct fieldwork by being anchored in, or among, Tongan families. This phenomenon, if it is indeed one, bears examination. What I have tried to do here is to analyze the historical phenomenon of the notion of identity and family; these have long riddled the anthropological endeavor, epistemologically and methodologically.

My actions of caring and responsibility continue to constitute the currency I exchange in such professional-cum-personal relationships, relationships that have benefitted not only my research but also by my sense of belonging in the world. Moreover, the bond with my Tongan family in the village near Nuku’alofa does not remain static but changes organically and feels deeper over time. I was leaving the field in December 2008, and my closest Tongan sister stood up at her family’s dinner table and gave a speech about my most recent time with their family, which moved everyone to tears. Likewise, kinship was the idiom used by Kilisitina’s (Tongan) adopted daughter; the younger woman began to call me “sis”—a title she had, until then, reserved for her own sisters and sisters-in-law—during my recent visit to Auckland. I have become accustomed to being “Tonganized,” that is, to being accepted on terms defined by my interlocutors, and to meeting my obligations to them in material as well as intellectual ways. Indeed, another lesson I learned on my recent trip back “home” to the field is that relationships between ethnographers and informants are not sealed in our first long-term fieldwork trips. Like the on-the-ground kin relationships that ground, nurture, comfort, and educate us, they adjust to situations, to personality quirks, and to new challenges brought on by changes in faith, levels of education, social interests, marital, and socioeconomic status.

Conclusion: Shared Histories and Genealogies of Research

In the Pacific, where genealogy absolutely matters and where kinship—affinal, agnatic, and idiomatic—mediates virtually all important social relationships, ethnographers have many invaluable lessons to learn, and to

share, about the shifting forms of idiomatic kinship that operate in our fieldwork relations.

There is further value in a genealogical approach in fieldwork and in scholarly engagement; this is the value of the interactions of three ASAO panels that led to this “Genealogies: Articulating Indigenous Anthropology in/of Oceania” collection. The rights and obligations of kinship—sisterhood, brotherhood, and respect as someone who is an elder to others, all of which I have felt with other scholars of color who participated in the “Genealogies” panels—are forged on genuine interests in who the other is, and are maintained because of, common identification as peoples to whom imperialism, colonialism, and self-aggrandizing Euro-American discourses of race and eugenics historically and systematically sought/seek to repress. I may not be an indigenous or first-nations person—indeed, it is to me that Tengan, Ka’ili, and Fonoti refer when they mention a “nonindigenous yet ‘Native’ positionality” in the introduction to this volume. However, because I grew up in a national situation, and descend from people who endured what Diaz (2006) refers to as “the nativism of ‘local’ discourses created by settler colonialism,” I share both a history and certain experiences of imperial oppression with my coauthors who identify as indigenous anthropologists. Thus, I join them also in the fight to write and speak back to institutionalized racial oppression.

That we have to continue to do this, even two decades after the so-called self-reflexive turn in anthropology, means that the ontology of the anthropological endeavor—never mind its basic disciplinary epistemology—warrants continued critique and radical change. The ethnographic method is far from perfect(ed), and scholars of color—both indigenous and nonindigenous—have more to offer in terms of the doing of ethnography than just in the writing of it as we progress through our careers. In the spirit of idiomatic or fictive, yet genuinely forged, kinlike caring, I invite dialogue as indigenous and mixed others toward more critical methods and scholarship. As ethnographers of color and indigenous ethnographers who are differentially indebted to, and implicated in, indigenous fieldwork communities, we cannot disentangle our shared legacies as people of color in a post-colonial and global world. We must move away from a historical dependency on having been defined by others through imperialist discourses and academic processes that pervade the history of anthropology and other critical academic and activist discourses about indigenous and Third World peoples (Mohanty 1991; Smith 1999). In facing the politics of our own kinships together in productive dialogue, we are empowered to see the possibilities for a more deeply engaged, critical inquiry of modern identities in multiethnic contexts.

NOTES

1. Idiomatic kinship is a label for social relations marked by the use of kinship terms and the “moral expectations of kinship” (Joseph 1993).

2. Besnier makes it clear that, in Tonga, Chinese are given a bad rap: “Chinese immigrants operate small- and medium-sized businesses and are the target of significant popular resentment for a number of reasons, including explicit forms of racism” (Besnier 2004, 10). Likewise, in New Zealand, where over 200,000 immigrant and New Zealand-born Pacific Islanders live, indigenous islanders may indeed join mainstream and other New Zealanders in maligning Asians (Ip and Pang 2005; Chui 2004).

3. Although the subtleties of Chinese ethnic diversity may have been lost on many in the Pacific, Willmott (2007) has marked such diversity as a point of necessary interest for those studying Chinese history in the region. Many of these Chinese immigrants to the Pacific during this second wave were of the Hakka origin. Hakka is my mother’s ethnic group.

4. Willmott (1996) reported less than 20,000 Chinese in the region in the mid-1990s.

5. For readers with an interest in Asia’s role in Pacific modernity, Ron Crocombe’s book *Asia in the Pacific Islands: Replacing the West* (2007) is a recent comprehensive and comparative historical, political, and social work on this topic. See also Wesley-Smith (2007) and D’Arcy (2007). Wesley-Smith and Porter (2010) is a collection of essays on China’s role in Pacific, many of which were written by indigenous Pacific Islanders.

6. Known as the Tongan passport scandal, many Chinese nationals were able to obtain Tongan citizenship when the Tongan government began to sell Tongan residency permits to Chinese nationals in 1982 through much of the 1990s (Tokyo Foundation 2008; Willmott 2007, 42).

7. For an indigenous Tongan perspective on *kāinga* related concepts, see Māhina 1999.

8. States Mohammed Farghal: “Regardless of the approach, there is a consensus among humor researchers that joking, which typically results in laughter, is essentially an intentional act that evolves from both the joker and the joke itself, and is expected to be of interest to the listener, who usually turns into a key player once the joke has been cracked” (Farghal, 2006). See also Apte 1985.

9. For example, Lee quotes a white Australian woman whose husband is an ethnic Tongan, and who says she is equally predisposed to her children marrying Tongans as she is to their marrying (unspecified) non-Tongans: “I think there are good and bad in all societies, and it’s just whatever the individual is like; it doesn’t worry me at all. Chinese or anything, I don’t care. I mean I think the common, shared belief and the shared values and things are more important than what race you are from” (Lee 2003, 192).

10. In the literature on indigenous political movements, the most in-depth discussions of racism—not just against indigenous people, but also arguably perpetrated by indigenous people in self-defense or retaliation for past wrongs done to them—seem to be found in the literature on and by Native American scholars and their allies. Perhaps because Native Americans live in predominately white spaces in their own homelands, there is a greater degree of self-reflexivity about discrimination possibly going “both ways” and a critical

discourse to engage it. Devon Mihesuah, for example, acknowledges the continued existence of post-contact inter- and intratribal racism and sexism, and toward multiethnic Indian individuals who were known as “mixed-bloods.” Such people were derogated as “sellouts” and were considered “less Indian” because of their perceived greater acculturation to “white ways,” such as their more successful engagement in Western-styled trade (Mihesuah 1998, 39). Szakos cites a presumably non-Indian activist for indigenous issues through community organizing for ACORN and puts this realistic, although limited, spin on how fraught it can be to work across perceived racial divides: “. . . [it is] not without hurt and pain because reservation work is very hard. You have to be willing to be subjected to racism by Native Americans against you because you’re not a Native American” (Szakos 2007, 47). This woman activist seems to perceive Indian defensiveness and suspicion toward outsiders who come to “help them” as outright racism.

11. As Gershon states, family networks are what make diasporas regular features of modernity: “family networks are what give diasporas their longevity” (2007, 385).

12. Speaking primarily of the anthropology of people of color and ethnic minorities in the United States, DiLeonardo states that it would be unthinkable for ethnographers of color to employ the anthropological gambit of primitiveness and objectification of others through exoticizing discourse (2000).

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