REPRESENTATIONS OF PACIFIC ISLANDER IDENTITY: OURS AND THEIRS[1]

Mi meri Lavongai;	[I am a Lavongai woman;
Mi Kokomo.	I am a Hornbill.]

—*Author's acknowledgment*

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Introduction

UNSPOILT WHITE SANDY BEACHES and turquoise water, a gentle breeze blowing through the overhanging coconut palms, the song of a ukulele accompanying the gently breaking waves. Add in a fruity cocktail served in a hollowed-out pineapple and choose your waiter: a beautiful "hula girl" wearing a polished coconut bikini top or a bronzed "cabana boy" bearing a perfect white smile. This is a Pacific—and other tropical—Island "paradise" imagined and perpetuated for decades by popular media and tourism marketing in Western countries (Connell 2003, 554; Feldman 2011, 46; Nelson 2007, 1; White 2007, 25). However, a more intimate understanding of the Pacific points to the inadequacies of stereotypes like these (White 2007, 29). Pacific beaches of white powdery sand are joined by stretches of Island coastline consisting of stone; shelly, coarse grains; or black, volcanic sand. A falling coconut can cause damage to property and create severe personal injury (Barss 1984, 990; Mulford, Oberli, and Tovosia 2001, 33), so it is not advised to lie beneath a coconut tree. Coconut bras are neither readily available nor

generally desired and, unlike women, exist in a strictly limited size range. A perfect smile? Chewing betel nut (a common practice in parts of the Pacific) stains teeth red and eventually to black (Norton 1998, 81).

I argue that it is from somewhere in between these two sets of imagery (i.e., the stereotypical representations and the reality of the Islands) that Pacific Islanders[2]—especially those of us in the diaspora—draw, create, and perceive our identities.

Many diasporic peoples are present in a "third space": in the case of Islanders living in Australia, not an Island space and yet not a fully westernized space either (Amoamo 2011,1255; Bhabha 1994; Christiansen 2000: 189–90). This type of hybrid positioning enables diasporic Islanders to draw on cues both from Island reality (e.g., experiences, memories, etc.) and from imaginings of Island life (e.g., film and television, tourism marketing material, etc.) in order to shape ideas about "authentic" Islander identity (Christiansen 2000, 189). This idea may also be reinforced by diasporic groups, for example, having limited access to Island materials for "traditional" dress or not having critical mass in terms of vernacular language speakers and therefore filling these "voids" with concepts derived from other material, such as movies, media, and promotional pamphlets. Further, it is within this third space that movement between ethnic and panethnic categories becomes increasingly fluid.

With these issues in mind, throughout this article I present various representations—particularly self-representations—of Pacific Islanders and the issues surrounding these. In doing so, I describe circumstances in which Islanders utilize or respond to what are often Outsiders' stereotypes of Pasifika places and people. Such stereotypes emerge through tourism marketing material, popular media (including film and television), and other institutions, images often created, controlled, and utilized by non–Pacific Islanders (see Lipset and Pearson in this issue). To illustrate this, I use a series of anecdotal case studies, including a climate change rally, informal social gatherings positioned adjacent to more formal gatherings like community meetings, and online forums. In particular, I draw data from field research in Aotearoa New Zealand, in the New Guinea Islands, and among Pacific Islanders in Australia, specifically Queensland. Research participants were of Pacific Islander descent, some having been born in Australia and spending most of their lives here, others having migrated more recently (and not necessarily directly from their Pacific Island "home").

I turn now to a précis of my position as a person of New Guinea Island descent and a member of Queensland's Pacific Island diaspora. In doing so, I give context to the data presented in this article and highlight the theoretical frameworks I use for its later analysis.

Mi kokomo: Insider, Islander Anthropology

As per my opening acknowledgment, I am a Tungak woman and member of the Kokomo (Hornbill) clan of Lavongai in Papua New Guinea. I am also an Aotearoa New Zealand Pakeha woman. It is the way of many Pacific Islander scholars to use genealogy and positioning as part of an introduction (whether in person or in writing) and/or as part of the research process itself (Anae 2010, 222; George 2010, 241; Tengan, Ka'ili, and Fonoti 2010, 140; Uperesa 2010, 280). Other researchers, such as Pacific Islander scholar Christiansen (2000, 188) and "Black" feminist anthropologists Bolles (2001), Gilliam (2001), McClaurin (2001), and Slocum (2001), also argue the importance of doing so, asserting that exposing authors' and speakers' ethnocultural identities adds visibility to people other than westernized, "White" males who have historically dominated academia. An important implication of this for my research is that, as a woman of Pacific Islander descent practicing Insider anthropology, I draw on my own socialized cultural understanding and experiences to bring insight to "traditional" ethnographic research examples and case studies highlighted throughout this article. Indeed, as a person of Pacific Islander descent who lives in the Australian-based diaspora, I bring a unique personal/academic perspective to the shifting emphases on ethnic and panethnic identity in diasporic settings.

One way these identities are invoked is through the use of material culture, and, as I later explain, it is useful to have an understanding of the dynamics of Insider and Outsider perspectives in relation to the use of such objects (see Lutkehaus in this issue). For example, both popular media and Western academia have been historically ethnocentric, exoticizing Indigenous[3] peoples[4] through applying etic ideals to representations of these groups (McClaurin 2001; Peers and Brown 2003, 1; Smith 2012). Hakiwai (1995, 286) describes the inadequacies of applying a solely etic point of view to cultural artifacts, using museums—founded on Western academic disciplines and the exploits of colonialism—as an example: regarding objects more as souvenirs than as innately important cultural entities means that historically museums were either willingly or innately oblivious to the intangible elements of cultural identity, particularly in relation to material objects. This example is particularly apt, as it provides partial definition to the general superficiality of much tourism marketing and the stereotypical representations therein of Islands and Islanders. Images like the one described in my introductory paragraph are testament to this. Indeed, applying emic knowledge within cultural research practices is the modern (or postmodern) challenge of today's museums and academic discourses alike (Hastrup 1992; Horwood and Wilson 2008; McClaurin 2001; Merton

1972; Morris 1994; Narayan 1997; Salmond 1983, 320; Smith 2012; Trask 1993).

Interestingly, though, as the case studies in this article show, Islanders in diasporic settings sometimes invoke their panethnic identities through using material culture in a way that is typically categorized as superficial and reflective of Outsider viewpoints, effectively using stereotypical "props" to highlight ethnic belonging (see Pigliasco in this issue).

I now provide a brief description of Queensland and its diasporic Pacific Islander communities. In highlighting this backdrop to my later case studies, I elucidate the presence of an internally diverse panethnicity that lies in opposition to the homogenized Islander culture that has tended to emerge from stereotypical notions of an "authentic" Pacific.

Queensland and Pacific Islanders

Queensland, more so than any other state in Australia, has had a long affiliation with the Pacific, due in part to its geographical proximity to the region and the presence of Australia's Melanesian Indigenous peoples, Torres Strait Islanders. The state also has a long and continuing history with Australian South Sea Islanders, the Australian-born descendants of the Pacific Islanders from a range of countries (including but not limited to Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu) who were forcibly brought to Australia in the mid-nineteenth century as plantation laborers (Mackay and District Australian South Sea Islander Association Protocols Guide 2000, 2; Miller 2010; Moore 2001, 167). Queensland's Pacific Islander population is the largest in Australia, with significant communities of Papua New Guineans, Samoans, Australian South Sea Islanders, Tongans, and Aotearoa New Zealand Maoris.[5] According to the 2006[6] census[7] (which allows respondents to claim up to two ancestries), 86,671 responses (1.68 percent of a total 5,157,898 Queensland-based responses) to the question of ancestry related to Oceania. Australia is a former colonial administrator of Papua New Guinea and has a continuing trade and aid relationship with many Pacific states in the region, including the controversial "Pacific Solution," an agreement under which asylum seekers to Australia are sent to offshore detention centers in Nauru and the New Guinea Islands while their visa applications are processed (Connell 2006, 55). Finally, the Pacific region (especially countries such as Fiji and Vanuatu) is one of Australia's favorite tourist destinations (Harrison 2004, 9). Importantly, regardless of visas or statistical responses on entry cards, Islanders visit the Islands not as tourists but as part of a "homecoming" that strengthens their ethno-cultural identity.

Within the Queensland-based Pacific Island diaspora, Islanders maintain their individual ethnic identity while simultaneously expressing their panethnic Islander identity. Community groups of which I am a part (including the Pacific Islander Reference Group, the Pacific Islander Workers Network of Queensland, and the Pacific Youth Association Queensland) are testament to this, with Islanders from Aotearoa New Zealand, the Cook Islands, Fiji, Hawaii, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti, and Tuvalu unifying on the basis of shared heritage and ancestry. Indeed, at the first community forum conducted by the Pacific Youth Association of Queensland in 2008, community Elders stated that despite our linguistic and cultural diversity, it was our way of being Islanders that united us and that, united, we Islanders could make a positive difference for our youth and our communities at large.

Interestingly, this type of panethnicity,[8] formed through an ideal of "unity in diversity," is common in diasporic communities in order for them to obtain social and/or political goals (Eriksen 2002, 53). For diasporic communities, it may be beneficial to band together with other people from different Island groups/nations and pool resources in order to adequately provide for the continued cultural development and intergenerational transmission of "traditional" knowledge (Christiansen 2000: 189–90). Without this grouping together, in some cases there might be limited or no access to Elders or knowledge or a deficit of young people interested in learning "traditional" ways and customary knowledge (Christiansen 2000: 189–90). As well, the pooling together of resources may also be a reflection of "traditional" cultural practices in the "homeland" (Seraphin 2011, 32), and in adhering to this practice, communities may be asserting their links to these. The panethnic qualities of "Islander" draw on Islands and Islander stereotypes in such a way that concepts of "authenticity" (of both the Islanders and the stereotypes) are strengthened. This leads to new types of "authentic" Islander identity, constructed in the diasporic "third space" between "home" Islands and Western nations.

Indeed, the very notion of diasporic communities suggests that the "primary identity [of those peoples forming part of a diaspora] connects them to their ancestral country, even if they have lived their entire lives elsewhere," and this identity is arguably strengthened in causes of political and/or civil rights (Eriksen 2002, 152). This idea is particularly relevant, as it not only serves to partially explain the processes involved in the construction of diasporic identity but also highlights the ways in which Islanders claim and negotiate representations of ourselves. It is significant that members of diasporic communities sometimes develop a romanticized, paradisiacal view of the "homeland" that is asserted through transnationalism (Christiansen 2000, 189; Jeffery 2007, 952, 959, 964) and reinforced through media and

tourism material. Others see more reality than stereotype but may draw on idealistic stereotypes of Islands and Islanders as part of a game or song or to raise awareness of a cause (Christiansen 2000, 189; Jeffery 2007, 952; Kirsch 2001, 167). Some of these elements are evidenced in the following case studies.

Case Studies

Each of the following case studies[9] is set in Queensland, Australia, and describes circumstances under which Islanders express their identities in ways that may mirror stereotypes of Islanders. I describe events surrounding a political rally and a social gathering (which I supplement with a description of aspects of a Pacific Island community meeting and a glimpse into a separate community event). As well, I explain the issues surrounding new forms of "Nesian" identity as a reflection of the panethnicity of the Pasifika diaspora, specifically online. Throughout these case studies, it is evident that Islanders use various representations of themselves in order to reinforce political causes and to strengthen transnationalist ideals—and therefore our Islander identities within the diaspora. Significantly, the same "props" (or elements of material culture) used by Islanders in different circumstances to invoke and express Islander identities are the same types used in popular media representations of Pasifika.

Pacific Islanders and Climate Change

In December 2009, Oxfam held a rally in Queensland's capital city, Brisbane, to raise awareness about climate change and, in particular, its effects on Pacific Island nations (see Kempf in this issue). In preparation for this rally and specifically to gain promotional images for its campaign to help prevent climate change, Oxfam encouraged local Pacific Islander community groups to meet in the city square in front of the town hall to learn more about the ensuing rally and pose for photographs. It is this photograph session and its relationship to the climate change awareness rally that I focus on.

The e-mailed invitation I received (via a fellow committee member of a Pacific Island association) for the rally stated, "It is important to have representation of people from the Pasifika, to be part of the day. We could go in our Vaka Pasifika[10] T/shirts or our Island mumus and island shirt style." Likewise, the e-mailed invitation I received for the promotional shoot stated that Oxfam would be conducting the session in order to promote the Walk Against Warming rally amongst the general community. Again, from an Islander Elder, the e-mail I received read, "[Oxfam] are particularly keen to have

Pacific Islanders in the [photographs] . . . they are encouraging us to bring our guitars and sing, have flowers in our hair, so bring families and friends."

On receiving the invitation, I wondered whether I should "dress up" in a meri blaus[11], wear shell jewelry, and carry my bilum[12]; whether I would arrive at work on the day in full dress and head over to the promotional shoot already in "costume"; or whether I should work in regular clothes and change into my meri blaus when I arrived on scene at the scheduled 11 a.m. I soon decided that none of us should have to stage our "authenticity" as Islanders in that way in order to show our support for the cause in question. However, as an anthropologist, I was interested in observing the ways in which others would respond to the invitation's request.

On the day of the photograph shoot, there were present Islanders from Fiji, Kiribati, and Papua New Guinea. Oxfam had arranged for a photographer, at least one liaison person, and a supporter (or living "prop") in a polar bear costume. The weather that day was very hot, and, meeting in the middle of the city square (devoid of grass and any significant shade), the glare was tremendous. A strategically unveiled ice sculpture of Earth and several large cardboard placards completed the scene. Almost immediately on arriving, we (the Islanders) were presented with props: leis and ukuleles. Interestingly, the props were provided by one of the Pacific community leaders present. And although the ukuleles were out of tune, we were encouraged by the photographer to play the instruments and to dance.

I contend that the use of props was an attempt to establish in an immediate visual manner that climate change affects *Pacific Islanders*. Why was it not enough that we, as diasporic Islanders, appear in the photographs in our everyday Western dress? Why did we have to become parodies of ourselves in order to fully represent our ethnocultural identities? In terms of identity construction within diasporic communities, the conscious and explicit use of "props" may be perceived as being either supportive of or detracting from the intangible value of material culture. For example, using "props" is supportive of the value of material culture because, in this case, their use results from Islanders addressing the question of how our identities as Islanders can be conveyed visually. That a physical object has the ability to encourage its viewers to interpret someone's ethnocultural identity in an immediate time frame is powerful (see Lutkehaus in this issue).

However, for similar reasons, using props could be perceived as derogatory because it shows that the mere act of wearing a lei or playing a ukulele strengthens Pacific Islander identity. This mirrors the actions of some Outsiders and tourists who don leis, mumus, "Hawaiian" shirts, and "grass skirts" as fancy dress for parties or acquire these things as souvenirs of their visits to the Pacific region. As Morgado (2003, 79) attests, "The close association

of the peculiar stylistic features of the Hawaiian shirt with mass tourism and souvenir products" has led to its becoming an "archetypical caricature" that is "inexorably linked to the stereotype of the tourist as sartorial nerd." In the same way, the photographer's need for us to dance and play the ukulele in order that she could acquire "more natural shots" was also questionable, as it was clearly a staged scene, drawing on like stereotypes.

Do actions like these really strengthen our identity as Islanders, or do they instead strengthen other people's preconceived notions of us and our ethno-cultural "authenticity"? Wikitera and Bremner (2009, 53) argue that interactions involving what some may recognize as "staged authenticity" may actually serve as new avenues for the strengthening of "traditional" customary practices—although the authors' field examples were drawn not from instances like the Oxfam photo shoot, where the façade of cultural identity is paramount, but rather from Maori cultural tourism, where Maoris engage with tourists using "traditional" methods (see Pigliasco in this issue). Despite these conflicting ideas and examples, Islanders at the Oxfam photo shoot remained in active control of our images: Oxfam encouraged the use of props, but so did a community leader, and the props were supplied not by Oxfam but by a community Elder. Indeed, the props simultaneously held a variety of meanings and connotations both internal and external to Islander constructions of our identity. Shaping representations of ourselves in this way shows that Islanders are able to contribute to others' perceptions of us in ways that benefit ourselves. In this case, such imagery was used in order to raise political awareness of the climate change–related plight faced both by Islanders in the "homelands" and by us: Islanders in the diaspora who have transnational links

At the time, the topic of "climate change refugees" was particularly in vogue, and it is fitting that members of the New Guinea Islands and Kiribati were present, given that villages in both countries had recently been relocated due to rising sea levels (Brindal 2008). Like some academics, Tuvaluan community members with whom I have spoken (whose "home" country is also adversely affected by rising sea levels) dispute the validity of the term "climate change refugee." However, the events that spawn the concept are serious and have led to the type of transnationalism exemplified by Islanders' participation in the above-mentioned rally and promotional meet. This is not surprising considering that many diasporic people maintain kinship, social, and economic ties to "home" Islands (Agnew 2005; Allahar 2002).

Which Island Identity?

In 2010, I attended an aunt's fiftieth birthday at a clubhouse on Brisbane's north side. As is usual for many Islander gatherings, there was prayer, singing,

music, dancing, and the sharing of food and stories. Amongst it all were the younger members of our family performing the hula, their ensemble complete with colorful plastic leis and synthetic grass skirts whose strands grew stiff with static as the dance progressed. Later, during the speeches, an uncle provided commentary on the dance, proclaiming it to be evidence of our strong and beautiful Island heritage. The hula is often performed by diasporic Papua New Guinean communities at major events and social gatherings, such as milestone birthdays, weddings, and Independence Day, and as much as possible in uniform dress. This is despite the fact that there is no "traditional" hula from Papua New Guinea. The use of the hula in this way not only represents "appropriated" evidence to strengthen diasporic Papua New Guinean identity but also is an expression of Pacific Islander panethnicity.

Darlene[13] is an Australian South Sea Islander in her mid-thirties. When I later spoke with her about my community performing the hula as a means to express our Papua New Guinean identity, Darlene responded by saying that her community also uses the hula in the same fashion. It is especially interesting that Australian South Sea Islanders also use the hula as demonstration of their Islander identity because of their history of being a conglomerate of various Pacific Islander ancestries now seen as a single ethnic group and with centuries of lived ties anchoring them to Australia. In this way, the hula becomes a panethnic symbol of Pacific Islander identity, regardless of specific Islander heritage.

Indeed, in "borrowing" aspects of other Island cultures, diasporic Islanders affirm their own distinct culture, highlight the commonalities of Islander cultures as part of the wider Islander community, and support Islanders' connections to each other. Sara[14] is a Samoan woman in her late teens who was present at the 2008 conference "Being In-between." Although at the time I met her my aunt's birthday had not yet taken place, we discussed similar occurrences within each of our communities. Sara explained that such cases of emergent "authenticity" (as I define them) are an expected part of "being 'Nesian,'" a term predicated on the panethnic qualities of the label "Islander" and based on the root meanings of "Melanesian" ("black Islands"), "Micronesian" ("small Islands"), and "Polynesian" ("many Islands").

The "props" used throughout the hula dance at my aunt's party—and at other events like it—are further testament to the assertion that "appropriating" cultural aspects of other Island cultures is a key part of expressing diasporic Islander identity. For example, the use of grass skirts and leis, both of which were made from types of plastic rather than "traditionally" acquired materials (combined with the performance of an "appropriated" dance), reveals some of the underlying issues that may face cultural groups of the diaspora: the lack of Elders to serve as teachers of specific Papua

New Guinean dances, the lack of "authentic" materials with which to construct "traditional" dress, and the lack of time—or willingness—to impart existing knowledge of *bilas*[15]constructions to younger generations. People utilize what is available in order to express and reinforce Islander identity in the diaspora. For example, I have witnessed an increasing use of lolly leis rather than flower leis to be given to Elders and special guests at both community events and social gatherings. Lolly leis were given at Vaka Pasifika 2011, the Deception Bay Pasifika Festival 2012, and the Pacific Island Women's Forum 2013, and Malu,[16] a Samoan woman in her thirties, is just one of many examples of Islanders living in Brisbane who used lolly leis at their birthday parties.

Similarly, Alice,[17] a Tuvaluan Elder living in Aotearoa New Zealand, gave plastic flower leis to family and special guests at her eightieth birthday party in 2012 (at which I was present), while many of her guests wore floral shirts and "traditional" Tuvaluan dresses over the top of jeans or track pants, boots, and long-sleeve T-shirts. Performers at her party included i-Kiribati, Papua New Guineans, Samoans, Tongans, and Tuvaluans—with one dancer being of Tuvaluan descent and wearing Kiribati "traditional" dress while performing a "traditional" Tongan dance. I asked family members about their reasons for having such a broad cultural mix of performances. Their response indicated that the representation of various Island cultures was to acknowledge Alice's family connections to different parts of the Pacific and to highlight their identification with a broader Pacific Islander identity.

This assertion was the same as that expressed by organizing committee members of the Papua New Guinean Independence Day celebrations in Brisbane in 2005 and 2006, when I asked why we had Polynesian dancers as part of the performance lineup. Many attendees also joined the dance at the sidelines, cheered, and waved Papua New Guinean flags, as they had done for other performances on the day. The committee members explained that as Papua New Guineans, we are all Pacific Islanders and that having a selection of dancers from across the Pacific shows recognition that we are part of this larger community of Islanders.

Further to this point, diasporic Islanders utilize a shared vocabulary from across the Pacific. Indeed, throughout my research, I have observed a panethnic understanding and use of a wide variety of inter-Island terms. The terms "Aloha," "bula," and "talofa" (Hawaiian, Fijian, and Tuvaluan/Samoan terms, respectively, for "hello") were used by many Islanders as greetings, regardless of which Island groups were represented in the interaction. Mumu (usually spelt muumuu) were often used to refer to the colorful, loose, smock-style dress popular in the Islands but is also a term used in Papua New Guinea

to describe a traditional earth-oven style of cooking. In the same manner, hangi (Maori), umu (Samoa), lovo (Fiji), and mumu (Papua New Guinea) are used and understood widely as "traditional" methods of cooking using an "earth oven." Similarly, lavalava (parts of Polynesia), laplap (Papua New Guinea), and sulu (Fiji), all terms referring to a sarong-type garment, were often used interchangeably by a large number of individual Islanders with whom I spoke.

Clearly, these are examples of the ways in which Islanders use stereotypical concepts to strengthen ethnocultural identity within and across "traditional" Island group boundaries, and within the diaspora, this arguably signifies circumstances of emergent "authenticity." The commonalities throughout these examples include the use of dancing, language, "traditional" dress, and *bilas* as expressions of Islander identity. The intricacies of these, including "appropriation" and how these elements are actually executed, highlight the ways in which aspects of customary practice are adjusted to suit life and resources in diasporic settings, with different climates, differing resources, and various connections to broader communities and "homelands." Unlike the staged "authenticity" arguably present in the previous case study (see "Pacific Islanders and Climate Change"), I contend that these are cases of strong emergent "authenticity" because the intended audience of these family-based social gatherings (and community events) were not Outsiders but, rather, other Islanders. This is a key point, further demonstrated by the multivocal use of props in ways that are less "kitsch" than in the previous example and more a genuine expression of Islander identity and panethnic solidarity. Arguably, this type of self-representation is less contested and more aligned with the positive use of material culture within panethnic Islander identity construction, interpretation, and expression.

As previously noted, "Nesian" is an emerging term being used in many online fora and social networking sites to denote a person of Islander descent. Although the emergence of the term "Nesian" is concentrated in groups of younger people, it is the same sentiment as expressed by community leaders of various Island groups at Pasifika meetings, specifically that held by the Pacific Youth Association of Queensland. As mentioned previously, Elders at the meeting argued that despite the cultural and linguistic differences present in Pacific groups, our similarities as Islanders gave cause for our unification and that as Islanders we could enact positive change for our youth and communities. Indeed, the Pacific Youth Association of Queensland recognizes that within the diaspora, it may be difficult for young Islanders to maintain practical connections to "traditional" customary practices. For this reason, it is one of the Pacific Youth Association of Queensland's missions to create spaces and events that enable young

Pacific Islanders to strengthen their Islander identities through building connections with Elders from all Pasifika groups, especially in relation to "traditional" customary practices. This concept, like ideas about "Nesian" identity, justifies and constructs a panethnic Islander identity that has been the focus of my discussion.

Becoming "Nesian," Online

> "Melanesia, Polynesia, Micronesia. . . . We are all ONE people. . . . We are all NESIANS"
> —"I am Pasifika" Facebook page, posted February 7, 2013

Social researcher Dr. Liza Hopkins (pers. comm., 2008) posits that the ethnocultural identities of young people in diasporic communities are shaped by a process of deterritorialization (i.e., separating identity from specific physical places) and reterritorialization into virtual spaces (i.e., online). As a result of having undergone this process, Hopkins (pers. comm., 2008) contends that diasporic community members are able to assert multiple, concurrent identities. Further to this point, I argue, "with the use of . . . [online] technology there is a reduced need to associate a traditional ethnic identity with time spent in an actual place, as the online community can be accessed and interacted with, at any location in the world where there is access to the internet" (McGavin 2008). The increasingly popular use of social networking platforms such as Bebo, Facebook, and MySpace is testament to the notion that online communities of like people provide virtual spaces where people can support, strengthen, and negotiate their own and others' ethnocultural identities (McGavin 2008).

   This key point is exemplified in a range of forwarded e-mails, online forums, "games," and MySpace and Facebook pages that outline socially designated criteria for particular ethnic identities. For example, "you know you're Samoan when. . ." is an online forum thread and open-stimulus question on several blogs and social media pages that encourages people to engage with this topic. An excerpt of one of the most thorough responses follows:

> "Your Mother says that at 25, you're too young to have a boyfriend"; "You run into a mountain of shoes blocking the front door"; "You find a life-time supply of saimigi (instant noodles) in the kitchen cupboards"; "You have a huge gap between your first two toes (excessive slipper wear)"; "You're the only ones swimming at the public pools with t-shirts on"; "You make that funny kissing sound with your lips when you're trying to get someone's attention (Fa'amiki)"; "Your Grandmother thinks Samoan massage and Vicks Vapo-Rub is the miracle cure for everything (including broken bones . . .)"
> —Posted on "Teuialilo ou loimata's blog" (www.myspace.com/eonosailealofa/blog/385080221), 2008

Interestingly, some of the responses in other Island forums, relating to Papua New Guinea and Fiji (amongst others), include identical responses:

> "You have sat in a 4-seater car with up to 8 other people"; "You run into a mountain of Slippers blocking the front door"; "You have a huge gap between your first two toes (excessive thong wear)"; "You make that funny kissing sound with your lips when you're trying to get someone's attention"; "You can speak with your face - eg. Twitch like a rabbit to ask, Where you going?"; and "Your Grandmother thinks Vicks Vapo-Rub is the miracle cure for everything (including broken bones . . .)"
> —Posted in response to "You know you're Papua New Guinean when . . ." by user Kofi Kwin (www.pnginusa.org/forums/index.php?showtopic=206), 2005

> "Ur [*sic*] Mother says that at 25, u'r [*sic*] too young to have a boyfriend"; "U [*sic*] run into a mountain of shoes blocking the front door to the house"; "U [*sic*] go to the islands rich and come back poor"; and "U [*sic*] know the difference between all the different types of corned beefs!"
> —Posted in response to "You know you're Fijian when . . ." by user Caginitoba (http://online.myfijifriends.com/profiles/blogs/you-know-youre-a-fijian-when), 2010

The fact that some of these responses appear to be direct quotes from other lists (e.g., the use of Vicks as an all-purpose medicine) is evidence of strengthening panethnic identity, especially within virtual spaces, in both negative and positive ways. Additional responses on these and similar Web pages clearly demonstrate that these lists of Islander attributes are designed to be humorous, and this further exemplifies the Islander representation/panethnic connection: members of the worldwide Pacific Island diaspora (as well as Islanders who still live in "home" Islands) strengthen their ethnocultural and panethnic identities through the use of humorous self-representation in the virtual world. In this way, there is striking similarity between the ways panethnic identity is formed in the "third space" of the diaspora and the virtual space of the online world. In both cases, Islanders demonstrate agency (as described by Kempf and Hermann 2005) in asserting their identities. The elements used in these expressions of identity are multivocal, complex, and key aspects in simultaneously strengthening "home" Island identity and linking to a broader diasporic panethnicity.

Representing Pasifika

In March 2013, I attended the Pacific Islander Women's Forum, south of Brisbane. There were approximately 100 women present, of various

Pacific backgrounds and a wide range of ages. During the day, I spoke briefly with Narelle,[18] a "mixed" Tongan-Samoan woman in her early twenties who, in response to hearing about my interest in the ways in which Islanders self-represent and are represented by others, felt compelled to explain her point of view. She told me, "We Islanders are joyful and happy, friendly—even though the media depicts us as big and scary and violent." She seemed dejected as she spoke, but her statement ignores the nonaggressive ways in which Islanders are often represented in tourism media: as benign, extra-friendly people willing to serve; the beginning of Narelle's sentence reinforces this stereotype. (Interestingly, in a subsequent discussion I had a few days later with Jeremy,[19] a Papua New Guinean man in his mid-thirties, he asserted, "We [Islanders] *are* big, scary, and violent," although he ended his comment with a laugh.) Another woman who spoke to our group at the forum was Lucy,[20] a woman of Fijian descent in her mid-twenties. Her comments took Narelle's assertions further, contending that "we Islanders are genetically blessed: to be an Islander means that you are joyful; loving; happy; calm, cool and collected; and a team player." Further, she added that it was our "birthright" as Islanders to embody these characteristics.

My experience at the Pacific Islander Women's Forum nicely summarized the case studies in the previous section: Islanders are aware of stereotypes about us, and we highlight various versions of these in ways that suit our own purpose. These are stereotypes of dress, appearance, behavior, practice, language, terminology, and attitude. Whether to rally together in a unified way or to use humor in acknowledging self-deprecating stereotypes about Islanders, there is agency in the ways that Islanders self-represent. Each empirical example on which I have drawn includes various symbols of the expression of Islander identity.

Of particular relevance to these examples is the notion that Islander identity relies largely on the Lamarckian view that behavior or actions contribute to, lead to, or are the prerequisite for a particular identity category (Watson 1990). This is the case whether Islanders are "representing" their individual ethnocultural identity or their panethnic identity as Pacific Islanders; in effect, these characteristics, behaviors, attitudes, "props," or communities construct "who is an Islander" and "who is not." Rather than being essentialist in nature, I argue that these are constructivist interpretations and expressions of Islander identity. Significantly, although such constructions occur within diasporic communities, they may also shape expressions of identity in the "home" Island (Otis 2001). As Gold and Nawyn (2012, 245) state, "Once formed in the diaspora, panethnic identities may be extended transnationally to migrant-sending societies."

In general, stereotypes are simplified assumptions about people or places and will necessarily differ from much of the range of reality. As Watson (1990, 27) attests, although stereotypes are formed through people associating memorable traits with certain groups, "the permutations [of these representations] are nearly endless." Stereotypes often signify perceived group boundaries and points of difference and may stem from a single point of factual evidence (Feldman 2011: 44–45) but do not and cannot represent the range of reality.

Many of the stereotypical representations of the Pacific and its peoples are based on westernized concepts of an island "paradise," particularly as reinforced by tourism marketing material and through popular media. Such representations may be skewed toward Outsiders' ideas of Islanders being "close to nature" and "primitive." My previous research (McGavin 2007) offers an analysis of a New Guinea Island tourism website to this effect. At the time of analysis, the website was typical of tourism marketing material that exoticized and homogenized Indigenous peoples and showed "Islanders as an attraction, rather than as instigators of and participants in tourism practices" (McGavin 2007, 252). This latter point is particularly pertinent to critical analyses of the influence of popular media, including television shows, such as *Magnum PI* (1980–1988), *Hawaii Five-O* (1968–1980), and *Fantasy Island* (1978–1984), and movies, such as *Blue Hawaii* (1961), *Robinson Crusoe* (1997), and *South Pacific* (1958), which position Islanders more as part of the scenery than as active players (see Lipset in this issue).

Some perceptions of Islanders are quite negative, ranging from "uncivilized" and "violent" to "cannibals" (McGavin 2007, 140, 304; Sherwood 2012, 11). However, although stereotypes are often associated with negative representation (Metcalf 2005, 171), this is not always the case in relation to imagined perceptions of the Pacific. Indeed, what are often Outsiders' perceptions of "authentic" Islandscapes—which many times include "authentic" Islanders as part of their backdrop—are quite relevant to this discussion. One of the most prevalent stereotypes is that the Pacific offers visitors (but not always residents) an Earthly paradise, an idea that is reinforced through undertaking a basic Google image search for "paradise on earth," which results in a plethora of photographs reminiscent of the scene I described in this article's opening paragraph (see Flinn in this issue). The virtues of the Pacific are further evidenced through Outsiders' perceptions of Islanders as "beautiful," "friendly," and "relaxed," although the first of these characteristic relies on westernized notions of aesthetics and sometimes becomes sexualized and/or infused with expectations of servitude (Desmond 1999; Trask and Trask 1992).

The notion that for Islandscapes to be "authentic" they must be "unspoilt" suggests that Western influence somehow contaminates a place and its people (Feldman 2011, 43). In this way, ideas about exotic Islandscapes and the Islanders who inhabit these spaces are reinforced (Connell 2003). Indeed, there is a duality to the Western perception of Islands and Islanders as portrayed and reinforced through travel writing, literature, and film: at once, Islands are paradise and isolated, harsh landscapes; Islanders are both happy servants and dangerous "savages" (Connell 2003: 564–70).

The concurrent nature of these different sets of imageries hints at the complexity of the expression and representation of identity. In turn, this leads me to question the nature of a gap between emergent and staged "authenticity" and custom versus kitsch: as Wikitera and Bremner (2009:53) put it, is it staged "authenticity" or "just being ourselves"?

Conclusion

Those of us who identify as Islanders within the diaspora are influenced by the same images and stereotypical ideas about Pacific Islanders as non–Pacific Islanders. From international tourism marketing and television programming to film and advertising, stereotypical messages about the Pacific and its peoples shape ideas about what constitutes "authentic" Islander identity (see Pearson in this issue). However, many Pacific Islanders in the diaspora also have access to family and community ties, providing both solid and intangible links to the Pacific region (Butler 2003:318), thus enabling us to understand the reality of diversity of the Pacific and its peoples. We visit the islands not as tourists but as part of a "homecoming." It is this difference, I contend, that makes Islanders in the diaspora more able to grasp both the stereotype and the reality and to play each one off the other in different circumstances in an expression of our identity.

Representations of Pacific Islanders may not be a case of "ours or theirs" but more a case of "ours *and* theirs," without these categories being mutually exclusive. Representations of Pacific Islanders may come from Insider or Outsider sources. However, regardless of their source of "origin," the initial positive or negative connotations of these representations may be negotiated in various situations by Islanders demonstrating agency over their own images in order to achieve certain goals. As exemplified by the case studies, I argue that (1) the intended audience (i.e., whether this is a family-based Insider audience or a non–Pacific Islander Outsider audience) and (2) the purpose of the event (i.e., an informal social gathering or a political meet) influences whether the invocation of

a panethnic identity is perceived as a transnationalist expression of identity or a staged play on hollow stereotypes—whether or not this involves active Islander agency.

The perpetuation of stereotypical constructions of Pasifika may reinforce what may be Outsiders' skewed ideas of the "ideal" Pasifika. However, diasporic Islanders' active use and manipulation of these stereotypical ideas leads to the emergent panethnic identities that construct diasporic Islanders situated either as *between* host and guest or as *simultaneously* host and guest. The use of Insider anthropology is particularly fitting in exploring representations of Islands and Islanders, as this serves to counterbalance the inadequacies of the aforementioned stereotypes and brings insight to the ways that these stereotypes are used within Islander groups. Indeed, it is from this emic viewpoint, from within the diaspora, that panethnic identities such as "Nesian" emerge and are negotiated.

NOTES

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2. Throughout this article, I define "Pacific Islanders" as any person of Melanesian, Micronesian, or Polynesian descent. Because of the categorization of Torres Strait Islanders as Indigenous, I exclude this group from any discussion of diasporic identity in Australia.

3. I capitalize "Indigenous" in keeping with Australian academic conventions.

4. I use "peoples" to acknowledge the diversity of ethnic groups and nations within political states.

5. Henceforth throughout this article, Aotearoa New Zealand Maoris are referred to as "Maoris."

6. At the time of writing this article, 2011 census data relating to ancestry had not been published.

7. Available at www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/census?opendocument &navpos=10.

8. Also referenced as "'Nesian' identity" within this article.

9. Aspects of these or similar case studies are also discussed—with alternative emphasis and different analysis—in McGavin (2014).

10. Vaka Pasifika (meaning "voyage" or "way of the Pacific") is the name given to a (diasporic) Pacific Islander community event in which various Islander communities come together to showcase their individual cultures, highlight their similarities, and pool cultural resources for the benefit of young Islander people.

11. Emerging "authentic" missionary-style dress or long blouse from Papua New Guinea (usually constructed from bright, colorful, and/or floral fabric).

12. A bilum is a "traditional" bag from Papua New Guinea and is widely perceived as being symbolic of Papua New Guinean connection or heritage.

13. Pseudonym used.

14. Pseudonym used.

15. "Traditional" dress; what is usually referred to by Outsiders as "grass skirts."

16. Pseudonym used.

17. Pseudonym used.

18. Pseudonym used.

19. Pseudonym used.

20. Pseudonym used.

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