HOW THE *TĀ-VĀ* THEORY OF REALITY CONSTRUCTS A SPATIAL EXPOSITION OF SAMOAN ARCHITECTURE

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This essay deals with a spatial exposition of Hufanga ʻOkusitino Māhina theory of *tā-vā* in which I argue that traditional Pacific concepts are recharged and extended by Māhina to create a new branch in Pacific Thought. I show that there is a consistency in the tā-vā theory of reality if one were to diagram its main tenets and, by doing so, enables the exposition of parts that sketch-out an overall form of theory. I also argue that doing theory is important to Pacific Thought because it allows for traditions and customs to be coiled-up into concepts allowing them to be carried in a "tool box" as theory, then unpack, operate, and perform with them when required. In this way, Pacific concepts and ideas are important as tools to be used in new places and situations allowing our lived traditions to produce new ideas and concepts.

This paper sets out to provide a number of things: first is a summary of the main tenets of the *tā-vā* theory of reality that deals with the creative arts (*faiva*) to show that certain notions of technicity'[1] are at work in Hūfanga ʻOkusitino Māhina's concept of the *tufunga*; second, to isolate elements of the tā-vā theory of reality that connect with Samoan thought linking tā-vā with Samoan concepts of vā and *teu* as exposition of affects and effects in the system of actions and behaviors that produces subjects and objects in a Samoan social-cultural schema; third, a spatial exposition of Samoan architecture that shows the material manifestation of the tā-vā theory in action, with the work of the *tufuga faufale* and Samoan architecture.

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The approach taken here is a *bricolage*[2] of borrowed concepts and ideas from diverse disciplines and philosophical traditions to highlight the productive and synthetic nature of the tā-vā theory of reality. Although barely ten years old, the tā-vā theory of reality has been vital to the work of producing concepts in Pacific Thought. Therefore rather than honing down the theory to a doctrine, this paper aims to broaden and highlight the manifold nature of the theory.

The final aim of the paper is to come to terms with Pacific concepts in their spatial topological structuring by returning to Claude Lévi-Strauss formalism in an attempt to construct a machinery to understand how Samoan social-cultural concepts can revolve again as exchange of flows of power and value through the lens of the tā-vā theory of reality. Somewhere in here is buried the *tufuga* who like Lévi-Strauss's *bricoleur* is trying to operate a machinery with "elements collected and retained on the principle that 'they may always come in handy'" (Lévi-Strauss 1966, 18).

Tā -Vā: Becoming One

What is *that which always* is and has no becoming, and what is *that which becomes* but never is?

Plato Timaeus

Hūfanga 'Okusitino Māhina proposes that the tā-vā theory of reality is a productive concept unifying three things: nature, mind, and reality, a process of becoming in which "all things . . . stand in a process of eternal exchange relations and cycle" (Māhina 2010).[3] Central to this process of eternal exchange is the role time and space plays in the mutual attraction and repulsion in enabling a continual dance of change where "all things, in nature, mind and society, stand in an eternal process of relations of cycle and exchange, giving rise to conflict or order (Māhina, 2010)." Māhina's work on the tā-vā theory of reality has given us perhaps the first real attempt at creating a new and comprehensive branch of Pacific Thought derived from Tongan and Polynesian concepts. Pacific Thought has become a loose umbrella to categorize the thinking and writings of Tui Atua, Aiono Fanaafi, and Albert Wendt in Samoa; Futa Helu, Epeli Hau'ofa, Konai Thaman-Helu, and Māhina in Tonga; Mason Durie, Witi Ihimaea, Ngahuia Te Awakotuku, and Charles Royal in Aotearoa New Zealand; John Pule in Niue; and Vilisoni Hereniko in Rotuma (Refiti 2010, 371).[4] Māhina more than most has instigated and advanced a more coherent theory that aspires to become a school of philosophy with the tā-vā theory of reality, which has been in circulation since the late 1990s, and has been refined and added to by others in the last ten years.[5]

Māhina arrived at the main tenets of the theory to explain Tongan arts as *faiva* (performance art or "doing-time-in-space"), *tufunga* (material arts or "beating-the-surface"), and *nimamea'a* (fine arts or "fine hands"). He advances the idea that the active characteristics of the arts, especially performance art, produces tā-vā—transformative action created by "beating" (tā) or predetermined gestures plus the "silence" or absence of actions and gestures in their intervals (vā). Tā and vā are the active and inactive forces combined, which equals "volcanic power" coiled up within objects. A tufunga via the skill of performance becomes the agent of transformation by releasing volcanic power in things by effecting tā-vā:

> [The] beating of *vā*, defining art as a form of social activity, in itself a kind of transformation. . . . a *tā-vā* conversion from a situation of chaos to a state of order. As a unified state of being, order is closely associated here with beauty. . . . In this aesthetic context, art can be generally defined as the rhythmic intensification of *tā* that is, in strict terms, connected with the symmetrical configuration of *vā,* thereby transforming *tā-vā* from a *state* of flux to a *situation* (emphasis added) of harmony and beauty (Māhina 2004: 88–89).

The crux of the theory suggests that the material world is perpetually under transformation by tā (time and action) and vā (space and content), like diametric structures (Lévi-Strauss 1963) that strives for stability and order, which when achieved, becomes transformed again toward chaos and disorder and vice versa—an eternal exchange of forces. The key for tā-vā, though, is the transformation "from a state of flux to a situation of harmony and beauty" (Māhina 2010).

There is more than a hint of a Heraclitian view of the world in the theory.[6] For Heraclitus, being is continuous change, in a state of perpetual flux where "One cannot step in the same river twice nor can one grasp any mortal substance in a stable condition, but it scatters and again gathers; it forms and dissolves, and approaches and departs" (Kavanaugh 2007, 71). Flux and chaos when aligned come together to form wholes and then return to chaos: "Couples are things whole and things not whole, what is drawn together and what is drawn asunder, the harmonious and the discordant. The one is made up of things, and all things issue from the one" (Kavanaugh 2007, 71). Plato later installed a divine artisan craftsman, the Demiurge at the center of this transformative world of change. Thus, the Demiurge's role mirrors that of the tufunga as transformer and creator of the visible world from the chaotic "disorderly motions" prior to the artisan's intervention.[7] Māhina imagines the same forces being transformed and molded by the artisan–actor who inputs

skill and timing to ground the primordial forces in a material, cultural, and technological context. The tufunga in this sense is a mediator at the interface between thought and action.

The theory presupposes that the tufunga as agent must "will and pull together" an orderly crafting of parts to form and shape cohesive wholes in the fabric of the world.8 Like Plato's Demiurge, the tufunga is of primordial origin. Māhina, for instance, places Tangaloa Tufunga in the Tongan cosmogony as the grandchild of the Tongan progenitors Vahanoa and Pulotu (Māhina 1992, fig 2.1). Similarly for Samoa, the tufuga[9] were kin of the progenitor Tagaloa-a-lagi who gave them the divine tool bag the tufugaga (Krämer 1994: 543–44).

Māhina lays out the theory of tā-vā with all its constituent parts—*fuo/uho* (form/content), order/chaos, *kula/ʻuli* (red/black), male/female, intrinsic/extrinsic—as *kohi* or points and lines. They are pre-given coordinates that stand in "eternal opposition" to one another (Māhina 2004, 2010). The structure of the primordial world (vā) is, therefore, made up of kohi lines that are continually in tension within a structure allows them to swirl and coil up to produce forces that are ready to explode from generation to generation. Vā is the potentiality of space–content coiled up within the chaotic swirls of these primordial forces.

The tufunga puts into motion all the constituents parts by tā—the beating/manipulating and folding/unfolding of vā and kohi lines. A *tufunga lalava*, for instance, activates and puts the parts into motion by performing *faiva* (literally "to make va") where the parts are apprehended in the forms of kohi, lines or traces (predicates), which the tufunga puts into play by unfolding complex sets of *kupesi* in the patterned motion in dance or repetition in design and sculpture. *Kupesi* is the underlying structure of a complex process of affects and effects and orderliness that is expressed or impressed into the material of the world. The tufunga does this by skillfully guiding, repeating, and manipulating forces in time and space, or the outlay of patterns stemming from a dance, or the traces on a pattern board of a *tapa* cloth (Māhina and Potauaine, 2010, 6). The end product produces a type of equilibrium that is felt by the viewer as *mālie* (beauty), *māfana* (pleasure), *tatau* (symmetry), or *faka ʻofo ʻofa* (beautiful). In discussing the performing of *heliaki* poetry, Māhina suggested that the "transformative effects the state of *mālie* has equally on performers and audience alike, are ones of *māfana,* warmth, *vela,* burning and *tauelangi,* reaching the sky . . . an orgasmic effect. While *mālie* is internal to good works of art, *māfana, vela,* and *tauelagi* are extrinsic to them" (Māhina, 2005, 172).

In summary, the tā-vā theory of reality requires an eternal exchange of relations between tā and vā, which is molded by a tufunga to produce mālie or the internal desired effect of equilibrium felt by the receiver. One way to

reformulate this is that tā-vā operates on a virtual plane producing affects toward a condition of *mālie*.

Figure 1 is a diagram of forces and actions in the tā-vā theory of reality, in which I have adopted Henri Bergson's (1991, 152) diagrammatic analysis of the work of memory and matter to describe Māhina's concept. In Bergson's schema, the cone represents the realm of predicates in which virtual thought and memory move up and down the cone to be eventually funneled to a point K where it meets the plane of the actual and materiality N. In this adaptation, the virtual realm in the form of an inverted cone contains

(1) kohi lines and traces (k1, k2, k3) of coiled up primordial energy,
(2) vā or planes of potentiality (V1, V2, V3) that continually fold and unfold kohi lines and traces
(3) tā the downward spiral movement forcing kohi and vā toward actualization (K)

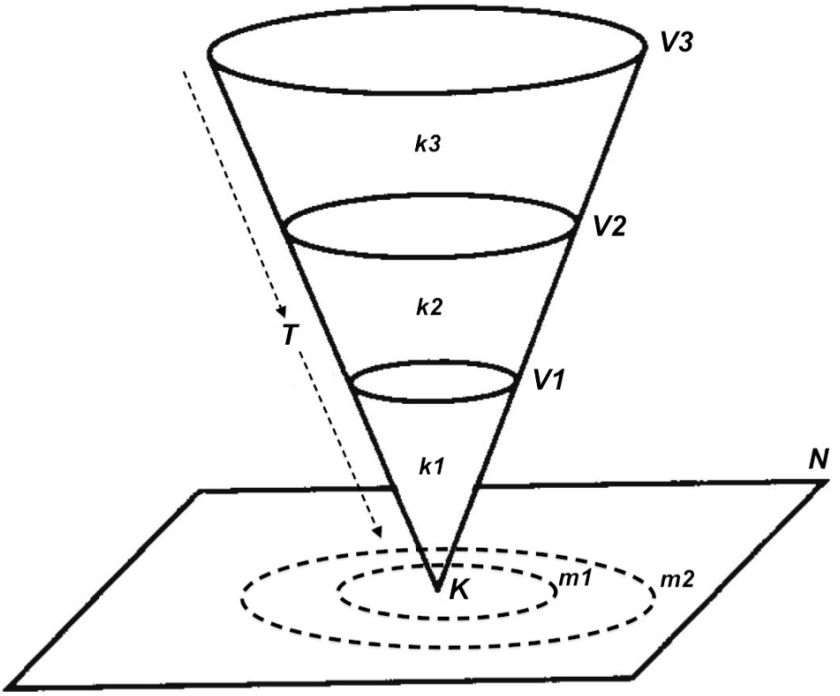

FIGURE 1. **Diagram of the relations of forces operating in the tā-vā theory of reality.**

The diagram provides a picture of the machinery of thought–action (virtual) and matter–order (actual), the motto being causality works laterally or horizontally (m1, m2), from object to object, whereas the virtual works vertically (V1, V2, V3, k1, k2, k3) from folding (interior) to unfolding (exterior).[10] For the tā-vā theory of reality, tā (T) is always spiraling down forcing vā (V1, V2, V3 on separate planes), to exit as *kupesi* (point K). Tā (T) and vā (V) are forced to produce mālie and māfana effects (m1, m2) that radiate outward to *noa* (free-moving) world at large (N). Predestined lines and geometry of energy or kohi (k1, k2, k3), exist between the vā planes.

The diagram is a thought machinery that describes how tā forces vā and kohi to be folded together into substances, which are then forced through the kupesi scribing point (K), which the *tufunga* possesses in the form of *ata* (repetitions or doublings) that capture and picture the world of shadow and light in the prose-work that is impressed onto the world. The kupesi is a result of an orderly process where errant forces are moulded to produce a thing of beauty or mālie resulting in māfana or comfort to be consumed or make noa—freed up. In philosophy, Māhina's tā-vā theory of reality is an ontological monism that proposes there is a single unified substance called tā-vā that is broken down into discrete entities via the process of actualization. The attractive aspect of the theory that makes it appealing to Pacific art is that it requires a mediator in the form of the tufunga to make this happen.

Tā-Vā in Samoan Thought

Samoan Thought and Tongan Thought are two spheres that orbit each other around a monadic home Pulotu ruled by Saveasi'uleo (Samoa) or Havea Hikule'o (Tonga),[11] revolving dyads of unruly bodies of thought of actual/virtual, solid/liquid, man/woman, stasis/motion (like Saveasi'uleo himself who is thought to be half man and half eel). Like Tongan Thought, Samoan Thought insists on a moment of equilibrium as the aim of all relations as vā, what Māhina calls mālie. For Samoa, it is teu, the refining and ordering of all relations and the ethical commitment between a community and its members, that must be upheld at all times. Teu is the refinement and orderliness at the heart of Samoan space where a "rift" violently inhabits the center.[12]

Vā is not harmony, or mālie, or" 'negotiated space" that recent scholarship has suggested (Anae 2010; Wendt 1996; Ka'ili 2005, 2008). Vā is an equation of things bifurcating, forces moving and pulling apart toward asymmetrical transformations, chaotic opposing forces within tā-vā (Māhina 2010). It "dwells" outside the desires of the community but, at the same time, is located at the center of attention. This is the paradox regarding vā relations in Samoan Thought—the undesirable and "what threatens to pull relations

apart" are kept at the central focal point of the community, where *mata* or the communal gaze fixes it "in-place," stabilizing it with *tapu* (sacred and immovable). *Ia teu le vā* means to order, stabilize, ogle and cajole the vā, which is how Samoans behave toward a sacred and bifurcating vital force.[13] The Samoan world is oriented toward it. For the politics of living, *vā* is an encounter, a space-event enacted in the circle of *fa'amatai*—the gathering of family chiefs in the circle of the fono council.[14] The ring around the circle is *alofi sā,* "sacred ring" or *sanctum*. Inside is the dangerous play of forces in which the *pa'ia* or divine power consecrated by the *ali'i* paramount chief, and the *mamalu* or will and influence prescribed to the *tulafale* who become the instrument of power of this divine gathering—the fono of *matai*. Within the sanctum is the ancestral power and prestige (*mana*) molded by demiurges (matai) via oratory (craft) and made productive by laws and rules (*pule*). Emanating from within this circle and radiating outward to the periphery of the village are the rules, protocols, and code of ideal behavior to which every family member, every sector of the community, must conform—a "panoptic habitus" no less (Refiti 2009b, 10).

The proper description of the vā is "co-openness," rather than what Albert Wendt portrayed as "betweeness."[15] The reason being that when Samoan chiefs encounter each other in the fono council they don't think strategically about their vā as a something "in-between." When you are "in" the circle of fa'amatai, there is no in-between, your knees touch your neighbors to form an unbroken ring; all participants are seized and immersed in something more than simple relations between things. In the ring, you are opened toward something beyond the momentary concerns of everyday life; therefore, a being-Samoan is already opened to it. There is no gap. Those who take a place in the circle become something more than a single person can hold. This "something" is the ancestor via the name, like the infamous names that have stood for generations over Samoa as "Name-of-the-Father"[16] Tui Atua, Tui A'ana, Malietoa, etc. They take up residence within Samoan identity like an overbearing swell in what the psychoanalytic philosopher Jacques Lacan described as the objects of affection and "symptom" of things that are "in you more than you" (Lacan 1981, 263). This is what is meant by co-openness.[17] When you take a place in the ring that forms the circle of fa'amatai, you are opened up to encompass the time and space of the ancestors; you belong to the time of others. The time of the world ceases to be in the ring. This conforms to the Polynesia concept of time, which suggests that we move toward a future by orienting our being to a collective opening that continues with us. Some call it the past, but I suggest that for Polynesians the past is not static or remote location of something that was but is an ever-moving duration, always already woven within us, and it endures in our becoming. This constellation

is commonly explained by the metaphor of walking with our backs to the future as we face the past (Whiteford and Barns 2002, 214; Salmond 1978, 10; Metge 1976, 70).

This conception of time places time in the service of ancestral-becoming. We mark (kohi), fold (vā) and make (tā) time, causing life to revolve as duration. Duration opens and contracts relative to our engagement with the ancestors via law and order of vā relations. This is shown by the relations described in Figure 2 with the relationship between the cone of duration (tā/vā/kohi) and plane of the present moment (N). Duration can be described by the workings of the Polynesian notion of time—tau, the contraction of events within duration drawing together tā, kohi, and vā to produce moments—*tatau*—in the cycle of life and becoming. Outside the cone (or ring), time becomes tā as action and mechanical movements made by the body and tools; inside the cone is anchored moment—tau.

There is a reason why the Polynesian word for settlement is signaled by the image of an anchor or *taula* because of the necessity for an open and

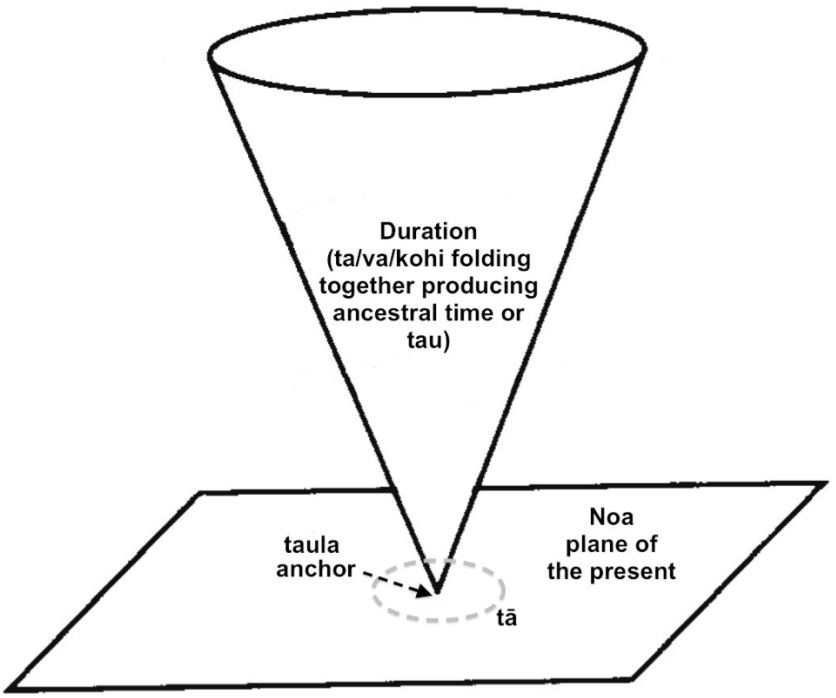

FIGURE 2. **Duration and time schema.**

cleared space that is anchored to a point connected to the founding ancestor, and extending to encompass a ring of co-belonging and co-openness as taulaga. Therefore, in every village or *nu'u* is a circle of ancestral-becoming, every circle is a ring of co-belonging. Every community is made up of landowners, strangers, and kin alike, gathered in a shared space establishing a neighborhood of ancestral-becoming within greeting distance of each other. Together they make a duration by weaving time together in a co-openness—this is the meaning of tau, to be together in "being-there" and counting the moments as time revolves (presencing). This is the customary character of a Samoan order of the world (Māhina would say *mālie*) in an ideal schema, which obliterates the notion of an individual and promotes co-openness to each other. Every gathering, every sociality in Samoa is structured to reflect this configuration. Every village has its own circle of co-openness; each district in Samoa has conformed to the same arrangement for the last 500 or more years (Meleisea 1987: 28–32).[18]

Bradd Shore showed that a Samoan cultural-topographic space operates in a concentric dualism that gradually intensifies in power and mana as you move from the bush or sea at the periphery of toward the *malae* at the center of the village. The malae, Shore suggested, contains "a radiant source of dignity and power" (1996, 270), which can transform people and objects into a veritable "museum exhibit" (168). The surrounding area is drawn into a vortex of increasing formality inhabiting the center. An attempt will be made here to create a spatial exposition by expanding Shore's schema to incorporate a more complex set of forces and values that are in play to form a cultural-topographic space that includes architecture and prestige objects .

The diagram in Figure 3 is an attempt to present the vā ideal schema by utilizing two overlapping systems in operation spatially in the Samoan. First, I have adopted Claude Lévi-Strauss's concentric dualism structure[19] to denote the move from a center to a periphery, from the zone of elites to those of the workers, and retaining Lévi-Strauss's dualism in the system regarding the unequal distribution of power at work at every level (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 152). The second is a stepping conical clan structure borrowed from Friedman (Freidman 1998, 131) to describe the upward-stepping character of prestige, the higher the individual or goods go up the ladder the more saturated and embodied they are with a becoming-ancestor or mana where they are less able to move about. The inner ring is occupied by the ali'i elites with their "circle of fa'amatai," a sacred "prayer circle" (*vā tapua'i*) that issue commands, but they remained immobile signaling their sacred stature—more mana equals less mobility. When goods and material productions reach completion, they are brought into the circle to be displayed and begin their function as adorned or teu objects, which

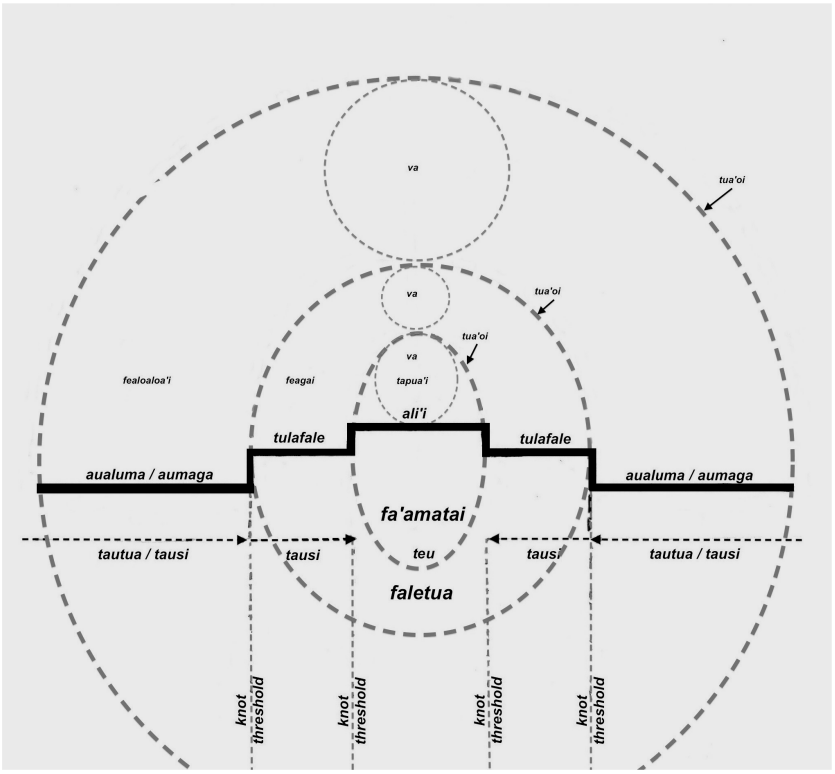

FIGURE 3. **Schema showing spatial diagram of *vā* neighborhood and configuration of Samoan world.**

are made sacred by the praises and songs of the chiefs and community who witness their transformation from mere objects to become prestige goods and gifts to be exchanged and redistributed in an endless circulation of prestige.

A secondary ring envelops the first and occupied by the *tulafale* the orator, the instructor who orders, delegates, and makes possible the commands issued in the elite circle. The tulafale practices a vā feagai ethic that allows them to be *feagai* (facing together) or companions of the chiefs; their function is to assist and serve (*tausi*) the elites of the first circle. They are invested with a villagewide policing function (a state arm) allowing them to issue law and punishment and also with the task to reallocate wealth. The ring around them delimits a zone where prestige goods can also be captured and

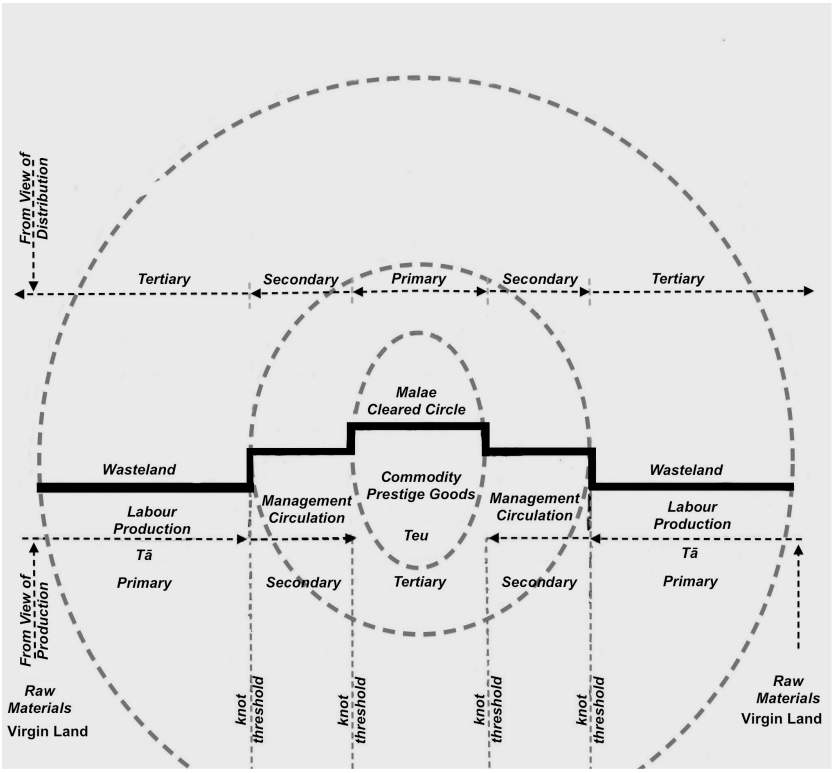

FIGURE 4. **Schema describing Samoan zones of production and distribution.**

rediverted giving the tulafale a privilege and powerful position in the Samoan political system.

The third and final ring encloses the other two and contains the *aumaga/aualuma* young able-bodied population who provide the labor force, and where the raw materials are prepared, cooked, reworked, and refined. The occupants of this zone are the most mobile, the young men go deep into the forest to plant, gather, and farm, whereas young women clean, cook, and transform domestic goods into fineries. This zone is the engine room that serve (*tautua*) every settlement. They operate from the edge (tua) in a "wasteland" (Lévi-Strauss 1963, 152) as opposed to the cleared center of the first circle because it is the location where raw materials are transformed or, as I propose, tā. This is a production zone where tools operate, the axe, adze,

and machete rule here, and body gestures become more active and physical. This third ring carries out the function of tā in Samoan thinking, in which materials are transformed by action—motive power. The reciprocal action to the motive power of tā is teu.

Production and circulation of goods requires the movement from tā to teu, from periphery to center. In summary, the Samoan schema illustrate that "things" (goods, wives, husbands, strangers, building a house)[20] are produced within the wasteland where the brutal machinery of physical action is in operation. Once transformed, things are presented before the cleared circle, where they are aired or teu, opened out and paraded in front of the elites to acquire their value as prestige. Things, therefore, move from a production zone where tā operates to teu, from periphery to center where value is determined. Once its value as prestige goods has been established, the thing passes back in a return flow to the periphery as possible goods in kinship exchanges (*fa'alavelave*) or goods carried in *malaga* trading missions.

The separation between each ringed zone is marked "knot threshold" to denote the points where debts are accumulated when goods and service passes from one zone to another. Debts are accumulated at these points as *tausi* or service rendered, and over time they become a considerable amount, which allows one to scale up to the next level until finally one is able to sit and participate in the central ring of power.

Tā-Vā and Technical Life

A spatial exposition of Samoan technical life in light of the production and distribution schema above will show how tā and vā is integral to the study of cultural technology. Technologies are the material expression of cultural activity (Lemonnier 1992, 2) and can be observed in the techniques that the body and tools uses to transform the material world. It echoes Māhina's notion of *faiva*, the gestural operation carried out by a tufunga specialist that fuses his body to the practice at hand in transforming the world. The tufunga does this by imparting kupesi or bodily knowledge embedded with techniques that his practice uses to transform raw material into shaped and refined prestige objects. The Samoan *faletele* ancestor house[21] is a good example of how this was carried out.

A typical Samoan settlement contains a malae, ceremonial cleared ground located at the heart of the *nu'u* where founding families maintain their *paepae* foundations on which a faletele (great house) or *faletalimalo* (guesthouse) are sited. The *faletele* is a prestige object in Samoan material culture, whose primary function is to mark and embellish (in the manner of teu) a family's foundation within the nu'u. Families incur considerable amount of expense

and debt when building one. It takes years in planning in which a family would have to accumulate fine mats and the planting of breadfruit trees used as the main materials for the house. The *fono a matai* (council of chiefs) is held under its roof, and it is from here where ali'i chief and tulafale orator preside over teu activities—receiving, exchanging, and distributing prestige goods. A faletele is, therefore, a visible and concrete platform housing the most important social/ritual machinery in Samoan society. Within its boundaries the elites receive, evaluate, distribute, and circulate prestige goods. The *tufuga faufale* are the architects and builders of the faletele ever since the first house; the *Fale'ula*, was built for Tagaloalagi (Refiti 2009b).[22]

A close study of the operation sequences of the tufuga work on the faletele (Fig. 5) reveals how the complex sets and subsets of action when mapped out unfolds a schema showing how raw materials are transformed as it flows from the bush to the center of the village, a transformation from rough to smooth, a movement from periphery to center from tā to teu. In their work, the tufuga actions and gestures are welded to techniques that transform materials. Adzes, axes, scrappers, sennit binding, and the human body become tools in

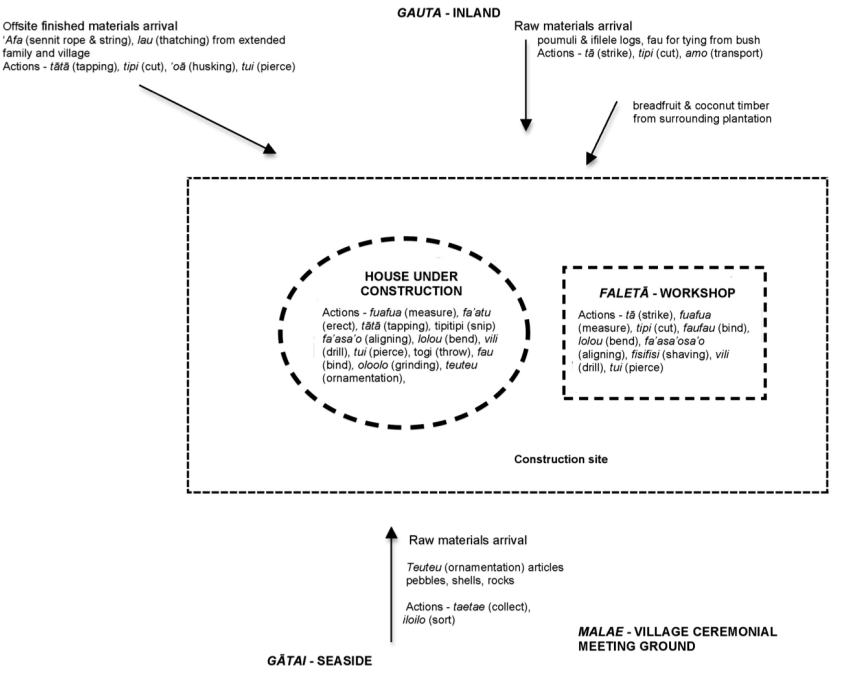

FIGURE 5. **Materials actions and construction schema.**

this operation. Mapping the actions required in this transformation (Fig. 6) against the villages' topography shows a leveling out of gestures from intense physical action to more refined movements that tends toward teu or orderliness. Tā or "hard action" takes place inland (*gauta*); teu "refined action" is carried out within and around the malae.

Timber are felled with *to'i* axes inland by membres of the family and villagers and transported to the construction site next to the malae where the tufuga with their tools and scrappers craft the requisite parts in their workshop (*faleta*). Materials are broken down to smaller bits and pieces and then passed to the tufuga on the *fatamanu* scaffold to be fitted and bound together in the forming and shaping of the house. The flow of action from rough to smooth run in parallel with the transformation of materials, from whole and raw, to being broken down and turned into refined and exact components of the finished product. The faletele is an exact object of processed and assembled parts.

Figure 6 shows the topological sequence of gestures[23] produced by the tufuga in making the faletele. Gestures from less formal-to-formal are mapped against the construction sequences. Labor is divided into the head tufuga (H), tufuga assistances (T), and family (F).

STAGES			*tā* - chop	*tipi* - cut	*togi* - throw	*amo* - transport	*eli* - dig	*fua* - measure	*fatau* - to draw	*fa'atu* - to stand	*'ae* - climb	*fa'alava* - lay across	*lolou* - bend	*fa'asa'o* - straightened	*tatā* - hammer	*fisi* - peel	*vili* - drilling	*tui* - pierce	*fafau* - temporary lash	*olo* - rasping	*fisifisi* - to plane	*tipiliqi* - trimming	*ololo* - smoothing	*fau* - to bind	
	5	Installing *paepae* platform			F	F	F	T				F		F									T		
	4	Trimming thatch											T									H			Final feast & payment *umusaga*
		Installing *talitali*		T		T		T				T	T		T	T		T	T	T	T		T	H	Installing *talitali* feast
		Thatching		F	F	F		T			F	F	F	F	F			F						T	
	3	Installing *tala* outer posts		T		T	FT	T		T			T	T	T	T			T		T		T	T	Finishing *tala* feast
		Making & installing *fau*		T	T	T		T	T	T	T		T			T				T	T	T	T	T	
		Drawing *fātuga* line		T		T		H	T	T	T		T	T		T	T	T	T		T	T			
		Erecting scaffold for *tala* sections		T	F	FT	F	T		T		T			T	T			T						
	2	Installing *itu* section posts		T		T	FT	T		T				T	T	T			T		T		T	T	Finishing *itu* feast
		Making and installing *so'a*		T	T	T		T	T	T	T	T		T	T	T			T	T	T	T	T	T	
		Constructing *itu* section		T	T	T		T	T		T		T	T		T			T	T	T	T	T	T	
		Drawing *fātuga* line		T		T		H	T	T	T		T	T		T	T	T	T		T	T		T	
	1	Installing *'au'au*		T	T	T		T	T		T	H	T	T		T			T		T	T	T	H	Installing *'au'au* feast
		Erecting central posts		T		FT	FT	H	T	T	T			T	T	T			T		T		T		
		Erecting scaffolding		T	F	FT	F	T		T	T			T	T				T						
		Preparing site			F	F	F	H	T																	
	Offsite gathering materials	Sennit & finishing materials	F	F	F	F									F								F	F	Tufuga arrival feast
		Raw materials	FT	F	F	F		T			F					F									

T = Tufuga
H = Head Tufuga
F = Family

ACTIONS - Increasing Refinement and Formality →→→

Cultural Sequence of main feasts and contract payment events

FIGURE 6. **Operational sequence of a *Faletele*.**

The operational sequence tracking the stages of the work against the gestures and actions required for each process is shown above (Fig. 5). The head tufuga (*Matua faiva*) work rate is less frequent but involves the two most important aspects of the construction; he marks the formal termination of each stage of process (installing the *'au 'au*, lashing the *talitali*, and trimming the thatch) and key moments when the building needs to be measured (*fua*) by sight or by string (*tatau*). The Matua faiva gives verbal commands throughout the building process and measures the building shape by sight (Buck 1930, 33) and would rarely physically carry out any of the work. His labor epitomizes the gestures considered dignified and refined. In the village fono, he is Matua faiva (expert), also Matai tufuga (chief architect), which affords him the status of the highest ranked tufuga, and as Shore observed, those who have the most *mana* are "prisoners of status" always bound and confined to stillness (Shore 1996, 272).

The tufuga assistants can number as few as four, and as many as ten carry out the rest of the work. Family members and villagers are involved in gathering raw and binding materials (sennit and fau—strips used for temporary ties). They carry out most of the digging and transporting materials to and from the site, erecting the *fatamanu* scaffold, and constructing the *paepae* platform after the house is built. The Tufuga's role in the activities recorded above shows that the builders' actions and gestures are closely tied to the tools required for construction.

Conclusion: A *Su'ifefiloi*

I propose here to bring together the pieces of the bricolage above to stitch them together in a *su'ifefiloi*[24] to provide a multifaceted fabric by overlaying the diagram of the tā-vā theory of reality (Fig. 1) and the schema describing Samoan zones of production and distribution (Fig. 4) to produce a new diagram of relations (Fig. 7) and a spatial exposition of Samoan architecture as prestige object. It shows that it is possible to diagram the forces at work in the tā-vā theory of reality, which will allow it to produce concepts that could then be applied to other situations and systems. What I have shown here is that it could be applied to Samoan architecture to create a spatial exposition of forces to reveal how a site of production and distribution becomes centralized, making all materials, actions, skills, and affects flow in a lateral direction toward a central space. It shows that tā is a causal force that works laterally or horizontally from object to object in a flow toward a point where tā is transformed into teu. Vā is the realm of imagination and predestination, acting vertically to bestow value and prestige at work in symbolic identification and valuation.

The schema in Figure 7 illustrate that the Matua faiva or the head tufuga—point MT—controls the production process by means of minimal gestures commanding a well-orchestrated workforce or tufuga assistants. From his position he conducts the form and shape of the house on the malae with a "wave of a stick" or the folding of strings indicating their measured parts (Buck 1930, 32). The tufuga epitomizes the position of those in high rank, the more mana the more refined the gestures, the less actions required. Workers rent their bodies to hard actions or tā movements chopping and tearing raw materials apart and breaking them down into smaller components. They are carried out within the confines of the village periphery, the wasteland separating the virgin bush (*gauta*) and settlement land. The tufuga assistants convert the broken components into fitted units, starting the process of teu, which refine the parts by *fisifisi* (to plane), *tipitipi* (trimming) and *'oloolo*

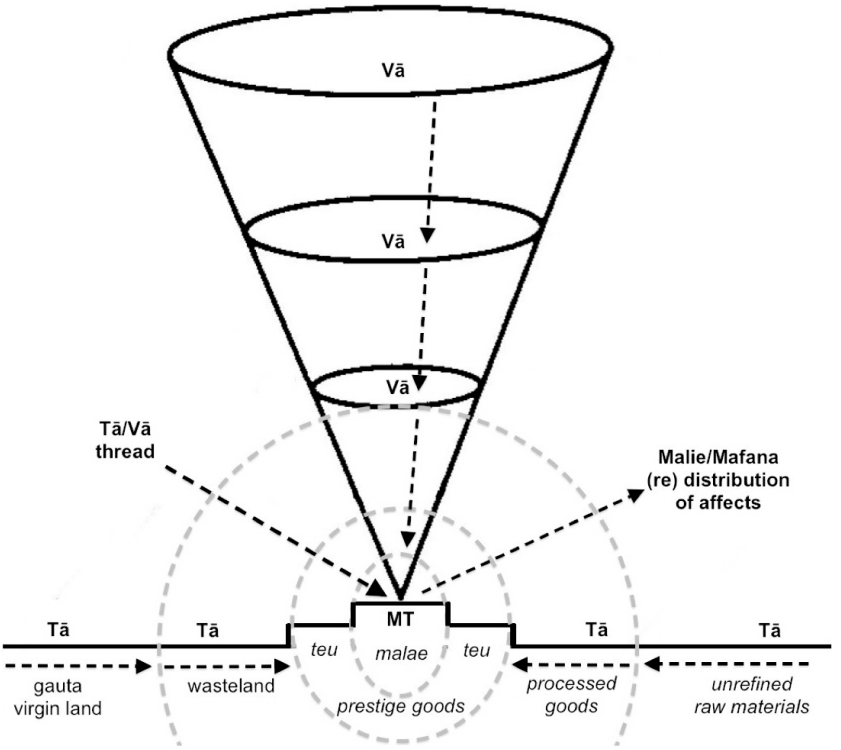

FIGURE 7. **Schema showing the spatial exposition of Samoan architecture as prestige object.**

(sanding and smoothing). The final act is the drawing together of the parts, fitting, and lashing to form a whole. *Fafau* (to lash, *lalava* in Tongan) like *lalaga* (weaving) are the most refined of manual gestures that requires the fine motor skills of nimble and trained fingers. It is this link with fine motor skills of the body in performing, weaving, and dancing, etc., that mark out the usefulness of the tā-vā theory of reality in conceptualizing meaningful and unique activities achieved by Samoan and Tongan material culture.

I hope to have shown with this spatial exposition that a particular type of thought is being developed in the Pacific by Hufanga ʻOkusitino Māhina and others[25] in which traditional concepts can be recharged, extended, and multiply to give it an afterlife. If we can no longer practice our traditions in our homelands, then surely we are able to make them mobile by coiling them into concepts, carrying them in a tool box of theory, then unpacking, operating, and performing with them when required. Pacific concepts and ideas are important here because they are the tools to be used in new places and situations allowing our lived traditions to produce new ideas and concepts. Thus, my task here has been to try to cut a new tributary from Māhina's branch of thought and join it to the reservoir of Samoan concepts and customs by using Western philosophical tools to archive this.

NOTES

1. I use Leroi-Gourhan's notion that all human actions and gestures produces graphism, which consists of lines of action centered on the body and are, therefore, technicity or gestures that we make hand-in-hand with our capacity to produce language, spoken, drawn, and written (1993: 210–12).

2. I refer here to Claude Lévi-Strauss's (1966) concept of reusing remains and debris of other events by fitting, stitching, and cobbling together "fossilized evidence of history" to form a set. I would go further and suggest that such a process creates a thinking machine that creates change like the Polynesian notion of *sui* or *fuli*—to transform—in this way, bricolage is to sew and construct with many things/materials/ideas.

3. Unless otherwise stated, I will refer to Hūfanga ʻOkusitino Māhina's 2010 paper.

4. All these writers and thinkers are first speakers of a Pacific language who use customary and traditional Pacific ideas to write for an English-speaking audience.

5. See the papers in this publication, etc.

6. Māhina was a student of Futa Helu who had introduced the work of Heraclitus and other classical Greek philosophers to his students in Atenisi University, Tonga (Campbell and Coxon 2005: 7).

7. See Plato's *Timaeus*: "The god wanted everything to be good and nothing to be bad so far as that was possible, and so he took over all that was visible—not at rest but in discord-

ant and disorderly motion—and brought it from a state of disorder to one of order, because he believed that order was in every way better than disorder" (Plato 1977, 1236).

8. See Māhina and Potauaine discussion of *Tufunga Lalava* as being concerned with "fela-lavai (intersection), of kohi (lines), and vā (spaces), where kohi are an expression of tā (time), so that the word lalava is itself a form of tā-vā (time-space)" (Māhina and Poutauine 2010, 6).

9. I use the Samoan spelling of tufuga without the *n* before the *g* when I am referring to the Samoan case.

10. This is the case in Giles Deleuze's adaptation of Bergson concept of actual/virtual (Bryant 2011, 102).

11. The Samoan Saveasi'uleo had a body of a man from the waist up and a lower piscatorial half that stretched away to sea. He tended his fono assembly house "supported by the erect bodies of chiefs who had been of high rank on earth, and who, before they died, anticipated with pride the high pre-eminence of being pillars in the temple of the king of Pulotu" (Turner 1884: 259–60). The Tongan Havea Hikule'o was a blind woman who ruled Pulotu and who had a royal house that the Tu'i Tonga desired to possess (Gifford 1924, 19).

12. I use Lemi Ponifasio's explanation of vā as "a conscious and responsible state of being" and "the most dangerous part of the ocean" (Ponifasio 2010).

13. Allesandro Duranti reported that he first heard teu being spoken in a *fono* council meeting where an argument took place and chiefs were imploring each other to put the vā back in order (Duranti 1981: 29–30). Teu here means to "put-in-store" and control a vital and violent force that threatens to destroy relations.

14. For writings on the vā, see Wendt (1996), Mageo (1998, 81), and Tuagalu (2008, 107–26).

15. "Va is the space between, the betweenness" (Wendt 1996).

16. The laws and restrictions that control both ones desire and the rules of communication, according to Jacques Lacan in which he proposes that The Name-of-the-Father is bound up with the superego, the Phallus, the symbolic order and the Oedipus complex (Lacan 2001, 165; for a further explanation of this link between Samoan Thought and psychoanalysis, see also Refiti 2009a).

17. I align this with Thomas Sheehan rehabilitation of Martin Heidegger's notions of *Dasein* and finitude as "co-openness," or that which is "co-extensive with finitude," the "first gift which makes it possible and necessary to take—as and to understand 'is' . . . the basis for all forms of interpersonal togetherness, the eyeball-to-eyeball of political struggle, the face-to-face of moral obligation . . . what lets us live a co-history . . . living and working together and making communal decisions" (Sheehan 2001, 200).

18. See, for instance, the honorific for all Samoa since the time of Salamasina in Meleisea (1987).

19. Bradd Shore adapted the same schema to describe Samoan social space (1996 and 1982).

20. Sacred *taupou* women are included in this rationale as prestige objects.

21. It is generally understood that the faletele is indigenous to Samoa. The faleafolau the other type used was thought to have originated in Tonga and only appeared in Samoa with the missionaries (Green and Barnes 2008). But like Micah van der Ryn (2012), I believe the faleafolau was in Samoa well before the missionaries arrived and gained prominence because it was easily adapted for use as a chapel. The *Fale'ula* ancestor house, which Tagaloa-a-lagi brought from Lagi was in the shape of the faletele (Krämer (1994, 528).

22. The Samoan origin of the name tufuga came from Tagaloalagi the Samoan progenitor who gifted the *tufugaga* sacred tool bag to the architects who built his Fale'ula house in Lagi. They came to be known by the name of this tool bag shortened to tufuga.

23. I am using paleoanthropologist Andé Leroi-Gourhan's notion of *chaînes opératoires* (1993, 233) to record and map a series of operations, which brings a primary material from its natural state to a fabricated state; the term "operational sequence" is used from here on to refer to the procedure.

24. A Samoan technique of stringing together heterogenous materials to form a richly textured outcome particularly in the composing of songs for performances or making garland decorations (Ellis 1998; Refiti 2015).

25. I include here the work of Tēvita Ka'ili, Nuhisifa Neve-Williams, Karlo Mila, Semisi Potauaine, and Bruce Moa.

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