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FROM SOCIAL NETWORKING TO ACTIVISM: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE FREE WEST PAPUA CAMPAIGN

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Romitesh Kant
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West Papua has one of the most repressive media environments in the world with a long history of media censorship and banning of foreign journalists, and only recently has this policy been somewhat relaxed. The tight media restrictions have led to the increasing use of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, by West Papuan activists who broadcast the atrocities and human rights violations committed in West Papua. Driven by developments in information and communications technologies, Pacific Islanders are increasingly "switching on" and leveraging social media as a political tool. Digital tools such as hashtags are being used to organize, share, and disseminate stories and Free West Papuan messages. This has garnered support from all over the world and created "digital villages" of Free West Papuan activists. The Free West Papuan campaign has received an unprecedented level of global attention with prominent politicians, such as Papua New Guinea's prime minister, Peter O'Neil, coming out in support of West Papua with reference to graphic images posted on social media. This article illustrates how social media are ushering in a new wave of Pacific activism and also fostering the rebirth of bottom-up regionalism in the Pacific using the case of the Free West Papua movement.

SINCE ITS INCEPTION, social media tools have exponentially grown in terms of popularity and outreach. Improvements in technology have facilitated an increase in Internet penetration levels around the world and, as a result, a dramatic increase in the number of social media users. World Bank (2015a)

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statistics for the Pacific indicate that despite the current low Internet penetration rates and social media accessibility, these rates are now continuously increasing exponentially. As a result, Internet and social media accessibility is rapidly growing around the Pacific.

West Papua refers to the western half of Papua, which is currently politically integrated with Indonesia. Since Indonesia took over West Papua, there have been numerous reported atrocities and human rights abuses committed against ethnic Papuans (Brundige et al. 2004). Also, the mainstream media have been severely censored, with foreign media being barred from entering West Papua. Only recently, on May 10, 2015, did the Indonesian president announce an ease on the restrictions placed on journalists (ABC News 2015). A result of the historical media stifling has been the advent of the Internet and social media as the means by which West Papuans are able to share the reality of what is transpiring. This has resulted in outrage from activists and concerned individuals around the globe who have organized petitions and protests as they campaign for a free West Papua (Elmslie and Webb-Gannon 2013; Tebay 2005). Over the course of these activities, social media tools have played a prominent role as the key means by which activists spread messages, garner the interest of individuals, and organize movements and protests against the human rights violations committed in West Papua (Barber and Moiwend 2011; Chesterfield 2011).

This article thus scrutinizes the situation in West Papua and the contemporary phenomenon of social media and how they have been utilized by Oceanian activists as a key means of disseminating and articulating messages of West Papuan freedom. The article examines the various tools and features offered by social media platforms and how they have been adapted for activism in the context of the Free West Papua campaign. Additionally, the potential that social media have to foster the rebirth of a bottom-up approach to Pacific regionalism is briefly examined.

Information and Communications Technologies and Social Media in the Pacific

Information and communications technologies (ICTs) and social media platforms are relatively new phenomena to the Pacific region. However, statistics from the the World Bank (2015b) show that ICT elements, such as mobile phone and Internet accessibility (see Figs. 1 and 2), have been increasing at exponential levels.

As the above statistics show, increasing numbers of Pacific Islanders are becoming consumers of ICT technologies. In many Pacific islands, the use of mobile phone technology has become ubiquitous in urban centers. At the same time, increasing penetration rates have resulted in their use

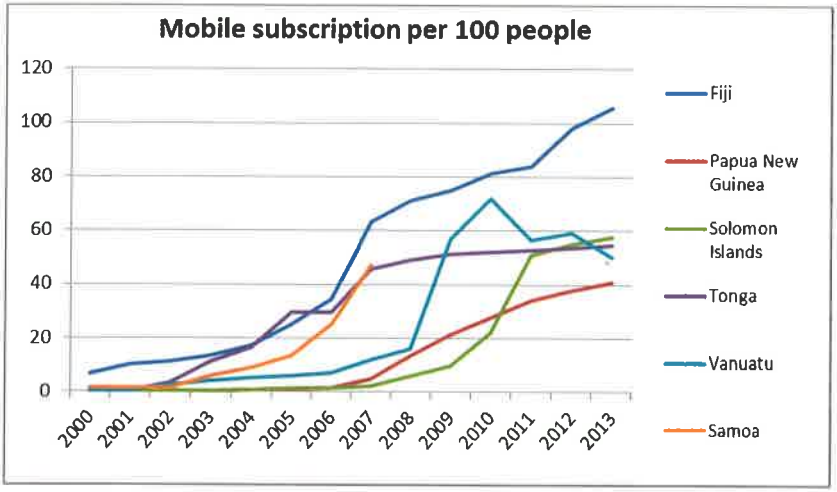

FIGURE 1. **Source: World Bank (2015b).**

exponentially increasing in rural areas. Mobile phone penetration in the Pacific has grown to the extent that it has far outstripped fixed-line usage, as can be seen in Figure 3.

The increasing levels of penetration and the ubiquity of ICT tools have given rise to increased accessibility to Internet tools. This, coupled with rising Internet speed in the region (Fig. 4), has resulted in social media

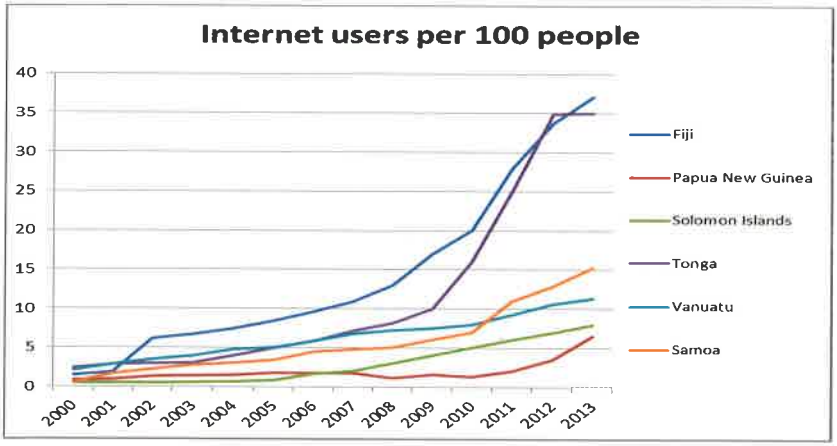

FIGURE 2. **Source: World Bank (2015a).**

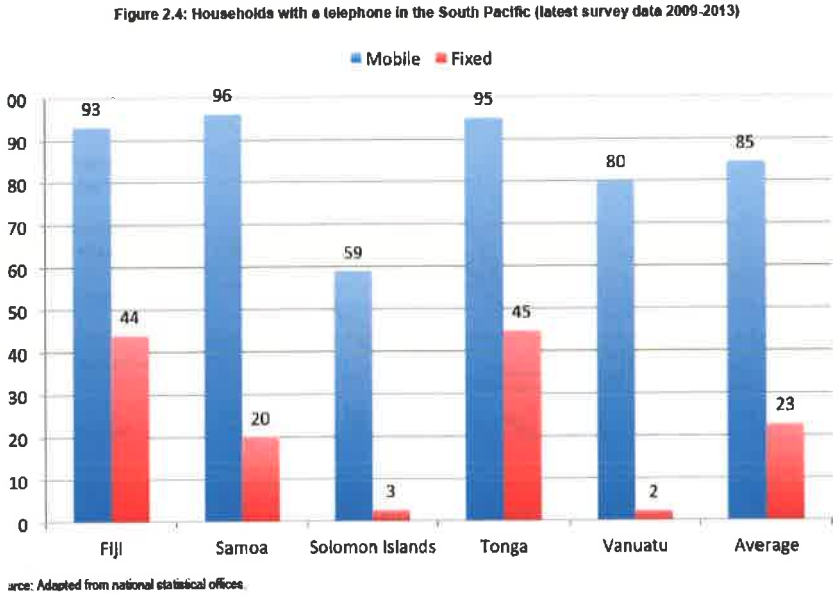

FIGURE 3. **Source: Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (2015).**

platforms such as Facebook concurrently growing in outreach and popularity (see Table 1).

Increasing accessibility to ICTs and social media, as shown above, has led to these tools being adapted for a variety of purposes. In the case of the Free West Papua movement, ICTs and social media platforms have been quickly adapted for various means. With the aforementioned media blackouts in West Papua, social media platforms have become the main sources of information and discourse on what is taking place in West Papua.

Social Media: A New Arena for Political Discourse?

Social media is defined as a group of online media that can allow individuals to create, exchange, and interact with Web-based content not only among individuals but also among larger groups and forums (Boyd and Ellison 2007). The implications of being connected with online platforms are that online content can be created, accessed, and interacted with not simply among individuals but among larger groups as well. This online aspect has meant that the extent of connectivity, participation, conversation, and community that can be created on social media is limited solely by the reach of the Internet (Mayfield 2008).

The launch of undersea fibre optic cables has had a sharp impact on international Internet bandwidth in the region. In 2007, total capacity in the region excluding Fiji was less than 100 Mbit/s. By 2014, it exceeded 1 Gbit/s. Particularly impressive is the sharp rise in capacity and access in Tonga and Vanuatu following deployment of their submarine cables. This has come about through a sharp fall in wholesale prices as operators move from previous reliance on satellite to undersea fibre optic cable.

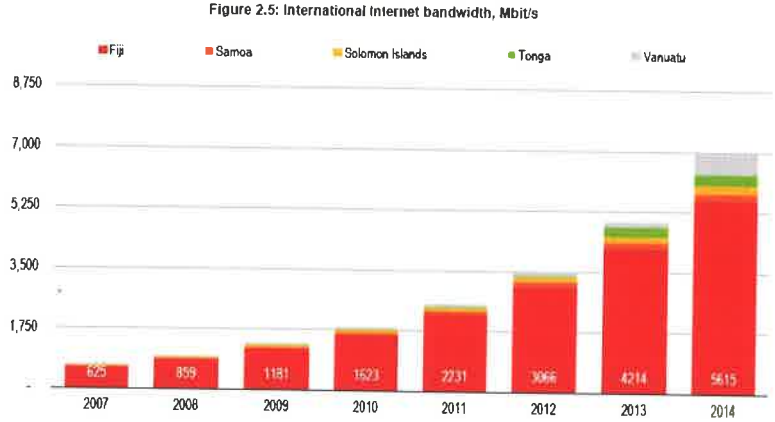

FIGURE 4. **Source: Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (2015).**

Because of their relatively recent introduction, social media studies are an emerging but rapidly growing area of interest. As the role of social media grows to encompass the realm of political activism and dissent, researchers are beginning to branch into this new area of study. The prominent role of social media in facilitating and coordinating dissent movements during the "Arab Spring" has prompted the development of extensive studies into social media and its potential in activism. This distinction has even prompted

TABLE 1. **Snapshot of Pacific Facebook Statistics.**

Country	Facebook Users	Penetration Rate
Fiji	Approx. 300,000 +	33.71%
Papua New Guinea	Approx. 300,000 +	4.75%
Solomon Islands	Approx. 30,000 +	5.13%
Vanuatu	Approx. 15,400 +	6.02%
Tonga	Approx. 30,000 +	28.30%
Samoa	Approx. 40,000 +	20.62%

Source: Social Daily Analytics (2015).

prominent organizations, such as Amnesty International (2014), to write manuals aimed at facilitating online movements.

Social media as a tool of political discourse and activism can be linked to the notions of a public sphere as articulated earlier by Habermas (1989). The public sphere as characterized by Habermas is a realm in which all citizens have access, assist in the formulation of public opinion, and are permitted conference and debate in unrestricted fashion about matters of general interest. Basically, the idea of a public sphere refers to a medium or realm in which political participation is enacted through dialogue between citizens (Şen 2012).

As technology advances, the realms in which political discourse takes place diversify and increase. From the traditional arenas of the public sphere, such as salons and coffeehouses, as articulated by Habermas (1991), political discourse has also grown into the ICT arena. The Internet in particular has provided a new arena for political discourse and encompasses new forms and formats of participation (Kellner 1997). Through the Internet and social media, citizens are able to access information and carry out political discourse (Johannessen 2013). The structure of the Internet allows for a wide range of voices to be expressed and allows for feedback and exchange. Thus, through social media, political participation and related activism would come to encompass online discourse via social media (Valtysson 2012).

The Internet offers several unique features that make it a suitable arena for public political discourse (Edgerly et al. 2009). First, the structure of the Internet allows a wide range of voices to be expressed. The "low barrier of entry" allows people to produce content in a variety of ways: from updating a personal blog or constructing a profile on a social networking website to uploading videos, photographs, and personal reports of current events to social websites (e.g., YouTube and Flickr) and professional news organizations. Second, the structure of the Internet allows for feedback and exchange. Social media, especially Facebook, have "comment" features, allowing users the opportunity to share their opinion and respond to comments made by others.

Academics provide mixed results about the potential for the Internet to act as a forum for political dialogue (Koop and Jansen 2009). Criticism exists on the efficacy of social media as a tool for activism, as there is a school of thought advocating that social media and ICTs, rather than fostering activism, serve only to encourage "clicktivism" and "slacktivism." Critics articulate that promoting ICTs and social media as solutions for activism and bringing about social change are unfounded, as the Internet tends to simply act as a distraction for people from more important issues (Morozov 2013). It is argued that social media simply promote low-level activism that lulls people into believing that "liking" or sharing activism content means that they

are doing something meaningful. Rather, they claim that real social change can be brought about only through high-risk meaningful offline activism (Gladwell 2010). Gladwell (2010) further argues that while social media do create networks, these networks are loose and leaderless and consequently incapable of effecting meaningful dissent and change. In fact, social media activism has attracted so much attention and inquiry that UNICEF Sweden (2013) launched a "Likes Don't Save Lives" campaign in an effort to combat what it saw as token support.

However, advocates of social media activism and dissent point out that the use of ICTs and social media is simply an incremental evolution of previous social activism tools, such as postcards and letters, and that online activism is a component of overall strategy aimed at informing and influencing people and decision makers (Karpf 2010). Additionally, a number of studies show that social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube serve to strengthen activism outreach efforts, create exposure and awareness outside of normal channels, and through this outreach strengthen the organizational growth of activist movements (Joseph 2012; Obar et al. 2012). In addition, research has found that apart from acting as a medium to disseminate information and raise awareness on issues, social media platforms can act as a means to coordinate and organize groups. Shirky (2011), a proponent of this argument, claims that while in the past well-funded groups were the most likely to be effective due to their ease of coordinating members, social media now compensate for this by reducing the costs of coordination. The Arab Spring has been cited as a key example of the prominence that social media have gained as an activism tool (Taki 2013). Through social media, dissenters were able to voice their protests, raise awareness on their plight, and, most important, coordinate and organize themselves (Eaton 2013; Jones 2011; Moussa 2013).

In the Pacific, there have been some studies that seek to examine social media and their impact on Pacific politics. Writers such as Walsh (2010) have provided analysis on the rise of alternative forms of information dissemination and discussions of political developments due to curtailment of media freedom in Fiji after the 2006 coup. Additionally, other writers have found that in the Pacific, social media enable the discussion and dissemination of information relating to issues censored from traditional media (Finau et al. 2014; Tarai et al. 2015). Through social media, citizens are able to criticize government policies and to some extent hold government officials accountable (Cave 2012; Logan 2012). In relation to activism, however, there is a dearth of literature that examines the role that social media play in activism and dissent movements in the Pacific. With the rapid ICT development and innovations taking place around the

world, there is enormous potential for exponential increases in the use of social media in the Pacific. Social media thus have a significant potential to play a role in developing political discourse and activism within the Pacific region.

West Papuan Context

Historical Background

West Papua refers to the western half of the island of New Guinea. The island is divided into two entities: Papua New Guinea, which is a sovereign state that gained its independence in 1975, and West Papua, which has been politically integrated into Indonesia as a province.

Indonesia gained administrative control of West Papua when in 1963, through a United Nations Temporary Executive Authority, a proposal was made that Indonesia would assume administrative responsibilities of West Papua until a plebiscite of West Papuan independence could take place (Trajano 2010). This culminated in the 1969 Act of Free Choice, whereby West Papuans were to vote on whether they wished for independence or to remain politically integrated with Indonesia. At this event, all 1,054 Indonesian-selected West Papuan elders voted in favor for integration with Indonesia. This event was met with significant criticism and remains contentious to this day due to the lack of transparency in the process as well as the coercion and threatening of voters carried out by the Indonesian government (Brundige et al. 2004). The contention surrounding the plebiscite has resulted in the event being now referred to as the "Act of No Choice" by West Papuan activists.

On attaining political control over West Papua, Indonesia has undertaken a systematic campaign of resource extraction and political suppression. Despite the vast natural resources, such as copper, gold, oil, timber, and fisheries, found in West Papua, the area remains one of the least economically developed provinces of Indonesia (Amnesty International 2013). For instance, West Papua houses the Grasberg mine, which is the world's largest gold and copper mine (British Broadcasting Corporation 2015). West Papuan miners have been paid a pittance wage of $1.50 an hour despite being employed by "the largest single taxpayer to the Indonesian government, and for which profits are such that workers' strikes cost an estimated $30m in revenue per day" (Wenda 2011). When West Papuan miners carried out strikes, protesting against the low wages they were receiving, the strikes were brutally suppressed by Indonesian security forces, who shot and killed a protestor and wounded more than a dozen others (Associated Press in Timika

2011). These deplorable events have accelerated to the extent that the state of events in West Papua is at times referred to as a genocide (Brundige et al. 2004; Elmslie and Webb-Gannon 2013).

Contemporary sources estimate that as many as 500,000 West Papuans have been killed due to activities perpetrated by the Indonesian government (Robinson 2012). Such violations are exacerbated by Indonesia's controversial Transmigrations scheme, which is making ethnic Papuans a minority within their own homeland. Under this scheme, ethnic Javanese and Sumatrans have constantly been resettled into West Papua. A result of this, latest demographic data reveal that Papuans make up less than 50 percent of the West Papuan population (Dagur 2014).

While West Papuan activists have for some time been campaigning and raising concerns over resource plundering, human rights issues, and killings in West Papua, media suppression has prevented the true extent of human rights violations from being brought to light. In essence, since Indonesia occupied the region, there has been a media blackout in West Papua and a consequent lack of freedom of expression and information on the human rights issues present (Amnesty International 2014; Kata 2015b; Reporters Without Borders 2015). Until May 2015, foreign journalists were barred from entering the province, and journalists who do enter to document events run the risk of arrest by Indonesian security forces (Mitchell 2015). This is evidenced when as recently as August 2014, two French reporters were arrested for filming a documentary in West Papua and sentenced to a period of two and a half years, though they were released early for having had served time in custody (Al Jazeera 2014; Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2014; Bachelard 2014).

In such a situation, mainstream mass media have been severely hindered in their role of reporting on the state of affairs in West Papua, and, as a result, West Papuan activists face difficulties in making their issues known and publicized to the outside world. In view of this media vacuum, activists in West Papua have turned to alternate media, such as blogs and social networking sites, in an effort to make their concerns known to the world. Social media, as stated by an interviewee, "offers an unprecedented level of connectivity that enables information to be circulated at a local as well as regional and global level." Facebook in particular has taken on a prominent role in raising awareness on issues in West Papua, articulating these issues to a wider global audience, and coordinating dissent groups not only in West Papua but around the Pacific region as well.

Methodology

A qualitative approach was employed in this study. This was carried out in several ways. First, semistructured interviews were conducted with West Papuan activists in order to ascertain the extent to which they utilized social media platforms for activism. Additionally, the interviews assisted in gauging how activists felt on the efficaciousness of social media tools for activism. The research also carried out qualitative content analysis of Facebook pages and forums related to West Papua. This was done using the NCapture tool in the NVivo qualitative analysis software package. This tool enabled the capture of data that had been uploaded to Facebook pages and forums in the form of a data set. This data set was then qualitatively analyzed to assess how social media were being utilized in the context of the Free West Papua campaign.

Social Media and the Free West Papua Campaign[1]

Background

Informing people and disseminating information have traditionally been the roles of the free and independent mainstream mass media, such as newspapers, television, and radio. Activists and dissent movements would have the use of public forums and due government consultation processes as a means to protest and articulate opinions on issues. In West Papua, the stringently imposed media blackout carried out by Indonesia has meant that West Papuans have access to none of the aforementioned options. Dissent, whether by protest or by speech, is severely suppressed by the Indonesian government. This has resulted in West Papuan activists seeking other means to articulate their dissent and pleas.

The Internet and the various communications platforms it offers have become a key instrument for disseminating information related to the West Papuan struggle. E-mails, blog sites, and social media platforms have been adopted by activists as tactical tools for their overall strategy of advocating on the issues faced in West Papua. In essence, social media have evolved to be a public sphere in which West Papuans and concerned parties can confer and debate in unrestricted fashion about matters of general interest to West Papua. Social media tools, Facebook in particular, have been employed by the campaign for the following reasons:

1. Providing information for West Papuan activists to people outside and raising awareness on events in West Papua
2. Communicating with other members of the campaign

3. Coordinating, promoting, and organizing events related to the campaign

The following sections of this article discuss these uses in more depth.

Social Media as an Information Outlet on Events within West Papua

As noted by journalists who have been able to infiltrate West Papua, Internet and social media platforms have become the sole way by which West Papuans are able to disseminate news and messages on what is occurring in West Papua (Rotheroe and Collister 2013). A multitude of social media forums now exist that focus solely on broadcasting events taking place within West Papua. Such forums either are administrated by West Papuans or rely on information sent by West Papuans. Kata (2015a) notes that "with the West Papua issue, social media and citizen journalism were creating a global groundswell." The information posted on such forums include but are not limited to images of human rights abuses perpetrated by Indonesian security forces (West Papua National Coalition for Liberation 2015[2]), images of protests and rallies taking place inside and outside West Papua (Free West Papua 2015), images of suppression of expression by Indonesian security forces, and press releases by West Papuan leaders inside and outside West Papua.

The role that social media have played in disseminating information relating to atrocities perpetrated against West Papuans has proven effective at also raising awareness on the realities of what is transpiring in West Papua. This is validated by Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Peter O'Neill being quoted saying, "Pictures of brutality of our people appear daily on the social media, and yet we take no notice" (Garrett 2015).

An analysis of the activities carried out on Facebook pages reveals that pages such as the "We Bleed Black and Red" page and the "Free West Papua Campaign" page have been utilized as a means to disseminate a wide variety of information relating to the West Papua campaign. For example, when both West Papua and Indonesia applied for membership to the Melanesian Spearhead Group in 2015, the aforementioned forums were used as a means to spread this information to the public. Based on online responses to the news, online lobbying campaigns were organized, which also translated into protests and awareness events. As stated by an interviewee,

> We used it [Facebook] and told them about what they [Indonesia] were trying to do. Get in MSG? They are not Melanesia[n]! We also spread the word round that West Papua as well was trying to get in

> [to the MSG] and people really talked about it on Facebook. Social media helped [us] raise awareness and from there? Well you were at the protests so you know how that worked out.

This clearly indicates the increasing role and efficacy that social media have in being an avenue for information on West Papua to bypass media censorship and be disseminated and raise awareness. This also encapsulates the online public sphere envisioned by academics whereby citizens are able to access information and carry out political discourse relating to the West Papua issue. Furthermore, the power of social media to overcome the media restrictions in West Papua and grasp the attention of people from all walks of life around the region is showcased (Johannessen 2013; Kellner 1997).

Social Media as a Means for Communication between Campaign Members

The capabilities and affordances of social media greatly facilitate collaboration and communication (Valtysson 2012). Social media platforms such as Facebook offer instant text messaging, group instant messaging, and video calling features. This capability of social media platforms is limited solely by the reach of the Internet (Mayfield 2008). Such features have proven valuable for members of the campaign in maintaining contact with each other and coordinating movements in a timely and effective fashion. Interviews with members of the Free West Papua movement revealed that through the use of the messaging features offered by social media, members are able to contact each other and also share breaking news on transpiring events that are related to the campaign. Through this connectivity, information is shared among members of the campaign before being disseminated to a wider audience. Activists interviewed spoke of how, before release, they often shared with each other draft press releases and/or multimedia content via social media, as they found this timelier than using e-mails. This clearly reflects the capabilities of social media noted around the world, which, as stated by Mayfield (2011), are

> Changing the way that information is passed across societies and around the world . . . events that only a few years ago could have remained state secrets indefinitely are being reported around the world in minutes . . . citizens with cell phone cameras can transmit damning images to the world, unfiltered, in the time it takes to make a phone call.

In the case of the West Papua campaign, this social media presence has proven to have the ability to reach out to a large number of people. Basic analysis of Twitter statistics revealed that activists using the slogans "free west papua," "FreeWestPapua," "papua barat," and "irian jaya" on Twitter had an impression rate of 400,747,695 people, meaning that using such slogans or catchphrases to articulate messages on West Papua had a potential audience of more than 400 million people (Twitter Tweet Archivist 2015).

Coordinating, Promoting, and Organizing Events and News Related to the Campaign

While effective at disseminating information and raising awareness on issues in West Papua, social media in the context of the campaign have not simply been limited to being a proxy news source. Tactics employed for social media usage in the campaign strategy have focused on a proactive approach whereby social media platforms are currently being used not only to inform but also to organize and mobilize activists and interested members of the public. As stated by a Hawai'i-based member of the We Bleed Black and Red movement,

> I have been keeping an eye and saying things about West Papua since I was in undergrad at USP (University of the South Pacific) many . . . many years ago, at no time in the past have discussion on West Papua matched the amount of talking that is happening online right now about the situation over there [West Papua].

In raising awareness and helping to organize advocacy on the West Papua issue, a number of social media features have a played a role in facilitating this. This section discusses three key features, their purpose, and their usefulness.

Multimedia Content

Multimedia, such as images, videos, and news articles, are a powerful means to capture the attention of social media users. Platforms such as Facebook enable images to be easily uploaded. It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words. Hence, the interactive picture capability of social media, through its multimedia content, not only captures but also has the ability to convince thousands of users. Naturally, this attribute would translate into questions, discussions, and debates around the issue of focus: on social media content.

FIGURE 5. **Collage of Images, Artwork, and Educational Content Used in Online Activism. Image sources: "We Bleed Black and Red" Facebook Page.**

Consequently, this feature is widely used by the campaign. Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook have been used by activists to disseminate news articles, images, artwork, and video footage relating to West Papua (Fig. 5). Activists have also revealed that they find Facebook's multimedia sharing attributes to be highly effective to the campaign. As stated in an interview with an activist,

> We [Pacific Islanders] like art. It [art] can be like music or painting or photographs or even poems. Our culture has art. We have oral and artistic traditions. So pic[ture]s and videos and songs will catch more attention. So we use them and post pictures and paintings and videos on West Papua. It's been so helpful, more people know now on what is happening.

This clearly highlights the utility that multimedia content has in disambiguating information related to the Free West Papua campaign. Furthermore, as

noted in relevant literature, the nature of social media and its connectivity with the Internet greatly expand on the potential outreach of social media messages. In essence, the extent of connectivity, participation, conversation, and community that can be created on social media is limited solely by the reach of the Internet (Mayfield 2008).

Hashtag Tool

Social media hashtags are one of the tools used for coordinating the West Papua campaign. Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook offer a feature called hashtags.[3] In the context of the campaign, these hashtags have been utilized to ensure cohesion, to link messages, and to provide ease of access to social media activities carried out around the Pacific region in relation to the campaign. Using hashtags has meant that those interested in West Papua are able to, at the click of a button, view all social media content related to a particular West Papuan theme or matter.

The hashtag tool has proven to be an essential social media feature in streamlining online activism. Hashtags create nodes of activism within the enormity of social media communication, acting as a kind of anchor. The hashtag also combats Facebook's and Twitter's temporality and feed systems by organizing the space differently. The curatorial function of the hashtag allows for a community, even just a temporary one, to be built around the issue.

These hashtag features have resulted in the online Free West Papua campaigns, organizing and creating various hashtags, all of which, while related to the campaign in general, are used to coordinate and articulate specific messages. Through such hashtags, West Papua–related movements and campaigns that span the Pacific region are able to use these tools to coordinate their events and campaigns. Examples can be found in the existence of movements related to West Papua that span the region and are not simply locally based movements in various countries. Movements such as the We Bleed Black and Red movement are comprised of members in multiple countries, such as Fiji, New Zealand, Hawai'i, and Papua New Guinea. Use of hashtags has enabled end users who access the hashtags to view all content related to the hashtag from the various chapters of the movement no matter where they are located.

Excellent examples of these are recent events when both West Papua and the state of Indonesia applied for membership to the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) at around the same time. Activists coined various hashtags aimed at, respectively, supporting and opposing West Papuan and Indonesian membership. Hashtags such as #WeBleedBlackandRed

FIGURE 6. **Collage of Activists with Social Media Hashtag Handles That Were Promoted on Facebook. Image sources: "We Bleed Black and Red" Facebook Page.**

#IamNesia, #IamNESIAnotINDONESIA, #INDOnotNESIA, #WP4MSG, #WestPapuaIsMelanesia, and #IStandUpMSG4ULMWP were widely utilized around the region (Fig. 6). These hashtags were aimed at unifying all social media content aimed at supporting the West Papuan application for MSG membership. As a result, end users who opened such hashtags were able to view all social media content posted by groups and individuals from around the world relating to supporting West Papua and opposing Indonesian membership to the MSG.

Overall, hashtags, while seemingly insignificant, have greatly contributed to the cohesiveness of the campaign's online activities. The use of this tool greatly demonstrates the idea posited by Shirky (2011) on the potential of social media to provide a means to coordinate and organize groups at a greatly reduced cost.

Event Invitations

Platforms such as Facebook offer a feature known as "events." This feature allows individuals and groups to create an event, provide a description of the event, and, using this in conjunction with online mapping tools, visually provide a location on where the event shall occur. Once this event is created, anyone can access information on this event and invite people in their social networks to attend and participate. This precipitates a snowball effect whereby the creators of this event invite people from their circles, and these invitees in turn invite others within their own circles. This feature has been used by activists around the region to coordinate, promote, and organize events. Online mapping features mean that it has become the simplest task for interested participants to learn the exact date, time, and venue at which an event shall take place. Using this in conjunction with the aforementioned hashtag feature ensures that other activists around the region are kept aware of events taking place in relation to the campaign. Examples include the launch of the Fiji Solidarity Movement for West Papua's Freedom on February 20, 2015, where an estimated 100 people turned up.

Another example includes the Wansolwara[4] Voices for West Papua event, which took place at the University of Hawai'i and where more than 100 academicians, students, and members of the public attended. For these events, a Facebook event was created and used to invite and mobilize activists and interested members of the public to participate in the launch of a song articulating a message of solidarity with West Papua. Interviews with participants at these events revealed that apart from traditional advertising methods, such as flyers and e-mails, Facebook events tools also played a helpful role in disseminating news of the event and encouraging attendance. Furthermore, the nature of the events tool enables interested citizens and potential participants to direct queries at organizers (Fig. 7). This encouraged discourse and debate and is in keeping with the nature of online political discourse and activism as highlighted by several scholars of social media (Johannessen 2013; Joseph 2012; Obar et al. 2012).

Bottom-Up Public Regionalism through Social Media

Regionalism is conventionally understood as a means of state-to-state relations that encompasses cooperation among states. The Pacific's history of regionalism has featured mainly states interacting and engaging around common interests. This is typically exemplified with a top-down focus in planning and action on issues, pushed mainly at the government and official state representative levels. However, there are instances where a bottom-up push and pressure on issues instigates and complements regionalism in the Pacific (George 2011).

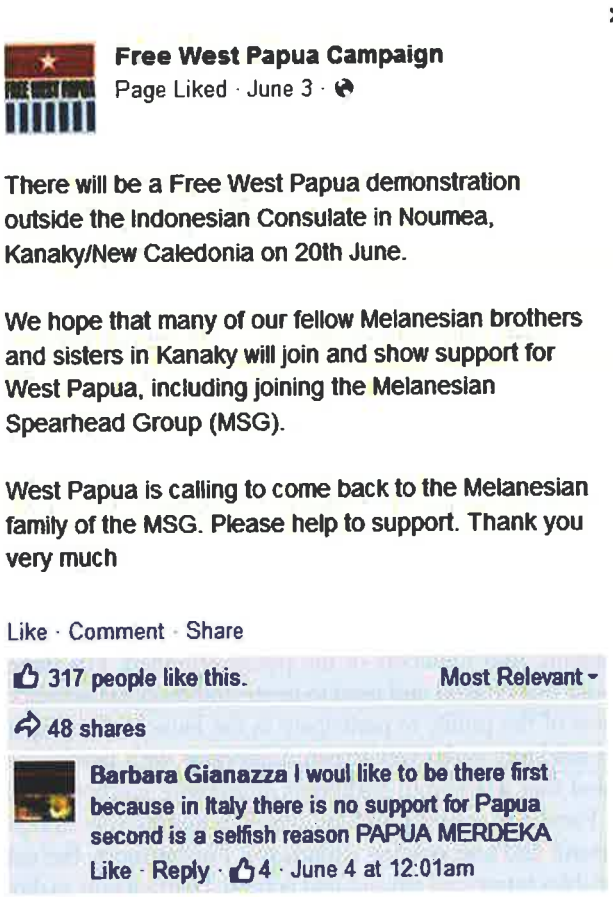

FIGURE 7. **Event Invitation in New Caledonia on "Free West Papua Campaign" Facebook Page.**

A bottom-up push was usually seen with the engagement of student activism and social movements in the Pacific, ultimately garnering state-level attention and cooperation. In the early years of nuclear testing in the Pacific by metropolitan powers, student and social movements created a bottom-up pressure that ultimately drew the attention of varying states involved. These movements included the likes of the Against Tests in Murorua Committee, which was modified into the Pacific Peoples Action Front, and the Fiji Anti-Nuclear Group (Naidu 1968). Antinuclear movements began to organize across the Pacific and expressed ardent disapproval toward nuclear powers while encouraging the Pacific states to act accordingly for its people. These

movements galvanized focus from the bottom, influencing state-to-state relations at the top. Regionalism to that extent was no longer limited to state officials; it had then begun to involve actors outside and beyond state representation. The power of these movements lay in the fact that it was able to form and propel public opinion by its moral conviction. The bottom-up momentum toward regionalism emphasized a collective threat that was sought to be addressed through cooperation and resistance to dominating interests.

From these instances, three key attributes can be derived from a bottom-up public regionalism approach. First, this approach features social movements that are organized but not limited to nonstate actors and university students. Second, it has a strong public involvement by virtue of its bottom-up focus and drive. Finally, it creates a moral sphere of consideration in what is considered mostly an amoral web of engagement, in diplomacy and state-to-state affairs, at the top.

This form and method of regionalism appeared to have waned over the years; however, it has now reemerged prominently with the use of social media. The issue of West Papua and its atrocities has now reignited a bottom-up public regionalism that again symbolizes its three key attributes. Once again, social movements, encouraging mass public involvement coupled with the moral consideration of focus, have reemerged as they were during the antinuclear days. However, now a new attribute can be observed from the current reemergence of bottom-up public regionalism. This new key feature consists of social media and their galvanizing ability to harness moral conviction while fueling public opinion.

Through social media, strong public involvement and bottom-up pressure have transcended borders and regions. This is evident with the Free West Papua movements that are widespread across the Pacific states and the world and that are communicating, organizing, and sharing information constantly. From the campaigns that have been detailed in this article, it is clear that bottom-up public regionalism has reemerged and strengthened itself through the communicative power of social media (Fig. 8).

The nature of social media fosters interconnectivity among individuals and larger groups and forums (Boyd and Ellison 2007). The amount of connectivity, participation, conversation, and community that can be created on social media is limited solely by the reach of the Internet (Mayfield 2008, 2011). The monitoring of pages related to the West Papua campaign reveals a wide cross section of online activists hailing from a broad spectrum of backgrounds and ethnicities. Events such as the Wansolwara Wave Dance,[5] which took place in Madang, were attended by more than 100 individuals representing the bulk of islands around the Pacific. Recent solidarity events, including but not limited to online protests, street marches, and festivals,

FIGURE 8. **Hashtag Campaign for the Melanesian Spearhead Group to Support West Papua.**

have been attended by significantly diverse groups hailing from a multitude of backgrounds and ethnicities.6 Social media have acted as a platform through which these varying individuals can connect based on their shared interest in West Papua. These factors are extremely worth noting given the continued increase in ICTs and social media penetration levels around the Pacific. Further studies into this phenomena and its evolution may well prove to be a rich field of research.

Conclusion

The increase in penetration levels of ICT and social media platforms is changing the way that information is spread around the Pacific. Social media are acting as an empowering way to permit West Papuans to disseminate information on what is transpiring in their homeland. Through social media, not only West Papuans but activists from all around the region are able to coordinate and organize themselves in dissent against the issues faced in West Papua. The decentralized nature of the Internet and the ability to reach large numbers of people in a short time has enabled West Papuan activists' ability to raise awareness and organize support from a growing number of people from across the globe. Facebook has further empowered activists to become active content creators, journalists, commentators, and organizers. In turn, this has widened the public sphere, making it more pluralistic in the area of news, commentary, and information.

While extant research suggests there is still no general consensus on the effectiveness of social media in activism, the findings of this article indicate that social media have proven to be a valuable tool for facilitating and organizing activism in the Free West Papua campaign. The value and significance of social media are due largely to the strict media regulations in

West Papua. With journalists being restricted from entering West Papua, social media have become the only option for West Papuans to share their plight with the rest of the world. The stories and images depicting the harsh atrocities faced by West Papuans have spurred multiple online campaigns in various countries in the Pacific. These online campaigns have also translated to offline campaigns, such as protests and marches. Some headway seems to have been made with Indonesia's new president relaxing the ban on foreign journalists into West Papua. Other prominent Pacific Island politicians have also come out in support of West Papua, such as Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Peter O'Neil, who specifically referred to images shown on social media. This article contributes to the scant literature on online activism in the Pacific using the case of West Papua. Future research in this area would greatly benefit from carrying out widespread interviews with individuals and activists who are part of the campaign. Additionally, employing social media analytics tools to carry out a systematic analysis of West Papua–related pages would provide significant insights into the online stratagems employed by the campaign and their overall effectiveness.

NOTES

1. Social Media Free West Papua campaign refers to the various interest groups and individuals who have employed social media as a tool for their activism and dissent.

2. Warning: graphic images.

3. This feature refers to prefacing a phrase or slogan with a hashtag symbol (#), such as #FreeWestPapua. This transforms the phrase or slogan into a hyperlink that, when clicked on, will show an end user a complete list of events, images, and text statements that contain the hashtag.

4. Wansolwara is a pidgin derivative of "One Salt Water." It means "One Ocean, One People."

5. Refers to a five-day activists' conference that took place in Madang, Papua New Guinea, in September 2014.

6. West Papuan events occurring around the Pacific region, such as the solidarity marches in Fiji and poetry events in Hawai'i, make up a wide demographic cross section of ethnic groups.

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THE MELANESIAN SPEARHEAD GROUP AND PACIFIC REGIONAL COOPERATION

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The Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) is a subregional organization in Oceania where friendly diplomatic relations, free trade, and cultural and technical exchanges are encouraged. One of its founding principles is to promote the aspirations of Melanesians under colonial servitude to political autonomy. At the same time, it is a forum by member states to drive their national interests under the auspices of subregional resolutions. Recent developments and decisions by MSG leaders provided profound insights into the affairs of the organization and its member states. In 2010, the prime ministers of Fiji and Vanuatu were at loggerheads over whom to transfer the MSG chairmanship to. Consequently, a political glitch that touched the heart of the organization surfaced. In 2014, Solomon Islands and Fiji had a dispute over airline routes and conditions. In June 2015, MSG member states were divided over whether to support the West Papuan application for membership or to support Indonesia's bid to be an associate member of MSG. What ensued in the said Leaders' Summit in Honiara was controversial. This article looks at the historical evolution of MSG and developments that took place since inception, highlighting the small "wars" of the 1990s and early 2000s. External interference, major issues of concern, and major shifts in the organization's outlooks between 2010 and 2015 are also investigated and discussed. This article partly argues that recent developments could result in long-term impacts on future subregional and regional initiatives. On the other hand, if properly engineered, positive advances may spring from the current efforts and decisions by the MSG.

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THE CULTURAL, POLITICAL, and geographic demarcations established by explorers, ethnographers, anthropologists, and missionaries became acceptable and useful distinguishing area names in contemporary Oceania. For example, despite the racist origins of the initial divisions of Oceania into Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia (Tcherkẽzoff 2003, 176), they are now divisions of social and political significance in the Pacific. Melanesia is notable for a number of reasons. First, there is the huge potential that Melanesia has in terms of mineral endowments and energy, agriculture, forestry, and marine resources. The marine habitat that comprised part of the "Coral Triangle" (Papua New Guinea [PNG], Solomon Islands, Indonesia and East Timor, the Philippines, and Malaysia), also called the "Amazon of the Seas," is critical to global biodiversity. Second, Melanesia has the population and the landmass, posing both an opportunity and a development challenge. Melanesian countries themselves account for 85 percent of the Pacific population and 95 percent of the landmass of the entire region (Laban 2008). Although these could be regarded as opportunities, they are currently liabilities. Population growth is uniformly high in Melanesia and has outstripped economic growth. Basic poverty indicators are also poor by any global standard, and youth unemployment is very high (Laban 2008). Third, trends in provision of social services, such as health, education, water, sanitation, and transportation, are pathetic, and impacts on children and women have been highlighted in many reports. For example, a recent report by Amnesty International (2011, 5) indicated that even in the suburban slums of Honiara, Solomon Islands, 92 percent of the houses do not have water supplies. Finally, political instability and upheavals have been notable in many Melanesian countries over the past three decades. Commentators and academics even referred to the subregion as an "arc of instability," or one that offers good case studies of "weak and failing states" (May 2003).

The above scenario of opportunities and challenges in Melanesia provided a fertile ground to nurture political and economic cooperation that addresses common challenges and exploits opportunities. Other organizations, such as the Pacific Islands Forum (the Forum or PIF), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC; formerly the South Pacific Commission), and other institutions, are present at the regional level. The Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) is a subregional body that seeks to promote political, economic, and cultural integration and a sense of identity in the Melanesian subregion. Pacific regionalism stemmed from the spirit of the "Pacific Way," while the MSG can also be said to emanate from the Melanesian and *wantok* spirit. This article looks at the historical development of the MSG as a subregional organization over the past 25 years. It briefly outlines the structure of the organization and the decision-making

process. Moreover, the relationship between member states, especially in terms of collaboration and disputes, is discussed. The interference and effects of external interests in MSG affairs are also highlighted. Analyzing the development challenges encountered by MSG since its inception, fundamental questions and issues that require attention are subsequently outlined and discussed. The article closes with an assessment of the potential impacts that current decisions made by MSG leaders may have on the future of regional cooperation in the Pacific Islands.

The MSG Organization

The MSG is a subregional organization established to serve the interests and welfare of the Melanesian Pacific. It was supposed to be a force for good to realize the aspirations and mitigate challenges experienced by Melanesian states. The conviction is that Melanesia can be a subregion that promotes cooperation and camaraderie in pursuit of specific national interests of member countries while also strengthening institutions of regional and international cooperation. The MSG membership includes PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, the Front de Liberation Nationale Kanak et Socialiste (FLNKS) of New Caledonia, and Fiji. A paramount concern of its founders was to discuss the Kanaks' road to independence, thus the inclusion of FLNKS in the original membership (MacQueen 1989, 35).

One may expect that the Forum is the appropriate body to deal with calls for independence or national autonomy since it was established in reaction to the French and British reluctance to allow political matters discussed during SPC deliberations. What then was missing that warranted the creation of MSG and other subregional bodies? Or how can a region with such cultural diversity be regarded as a "subregion" with some uniformity? Fry gave a response in the early 1980s that is more relevant for today's assessments. He argued that the context in which the "Melanesian identity" becomes relevant beyond diversity is "in South Pacific regional politics" (Fry 1982, 651). This remained true, as the MSG countries also use their subregional body to push for their own interests in regional affairs. This tendency is explained later in this article.

The MSG was established to encourage subregional diplomacy and friendly relations, maintain peace and harmony, encourage free trade economic and technical cooperation, and promote Melanesian traditions and cultures. It was established in 1986, and after subsequent meetings in 1988 and 1994, the principles of cooperation were agreed on and signed in Kiriwina, PNG, in 1996 (May 2011, 2; Pacific Institute of Public Policy [PIPP] 2008, 1). It opened its offices formally in 2008 in Port Vila, Vanuatu. From the

outset, the purpose of the organization is "to promote and strengthen intermembership trade, exchange of Melanesian cultures, traditions and values, sovereign equality, economic and technical cooperation between states and the alignment of policies in order to further MSG members' shared goals of economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security" (MSG Agreement 2007).

Apart from the political intentions of the group, trade, economic, and technical cooperation are also emphasized. In 1993, it entered into what is known as the Melanesian Spearhead Group Free Trade Agreement (MSGFTA), a trade treaty governing reciprocal trade among PNG, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Fiji, a latecomer in MSG, signed the MSGFTA only in 1998. In 2005, the trade agreement was revised with all duties being eliminated among the four members except for a small number of "negative list" products that would ultimately decline to a zero tariff around 2015. The review also resulted in the expansion of product lines covered, from three in 1993 to many more in 2005 (MSGTA 2005). The MSG also assisted the Micronesian Trade Centre to develop a treaty to establish the Micronesian Trade and Economic Community (MSG Communiqué 2015). It should be noted, however, that the MSGFTA initially did not do much to increase trade flows among the Melanesian countries. It also resulted in some intra-Melanesian disputes, discussed below.

The MSG cooperation is also founded on cultural exchange and the promotion of a Melanesian identity and culture. This assumes that there are similarities that can be identified from the diverse traditions and cultural practices throughout Melanesia. It may be attributed to a kind of "artificial *wantoks*"[1] to promote a common cause at the subregional level (Nanau 2011, 35). Promoting Melanesian cultural identity is critical, as it gives the Melanesian countries a sense of homogeneity at the regional level. Moreover, art and culture are important to promote nationalist feelings and solidarity to push for the independence of West Papua and Kanaky from Indonesia and France, respectively. As Tjibaou wrote in reference to Melanesians of New Caledonia, "The colonial system not only made the kanaks a foreign people, despised in their own country, but men who could only be identified by economic criteria, by consumer goods. It was a very primitive system! . . . we prefer an identity through traditional character" (Tjibaou 1989, 76).

The Melanesian Arts and Sports festivals are important events that showcase cultural exchanges and solidarity among Melanesian people amidst diversity. The MSG recognizes this strength and builds on it to promote a Melanesian identity. Arts festivals and similar events put traditional culture in the spotlight and help Melanesians appreciate their diverse traditions and

cultures in the contemporary context. They provide a source of pride, cultural security, and solidarity that MSG needs. Tjibaou earlier pointed out that "the Melanesian cultural identity can only attain its true dimension if the Melanesian society has the capacity to master its destiny" (Tjibaou 1989, 78). Promoting Melanesian cultural identity therefore has to be streamlined with political and economic cooperation to enable an "effective" subregion.

The Political Structure

The Leaders' Summit is the most important meeting of the MSG governing body. It is at the Leaders' Summit that general policies of the organization are discussed and approved. The summit also determines the appointment and termination of the director general. Approval for amendments to agreements and appointment of ministerial committees from time to time are taken care of in the Leaders' Summit (MSG Agreement 2007). For example, at the 2015 Leaders' Summit, the MSG Secretariat was directed "to do further work on the amendment of the criteria for admission of groups as observers as well as to undertake further work on the criteria for observer/associate membership taking note of expressions of interest by states not in Melanesia for some form of association with the MSG" (Prime Minister's Press Secretary Office 2015). The guidelines for associate membership were agreed on at the 2012 summit. These summits are held biennially on a rotational basis in MSG member countries. Indeed, special summits can be called on by the chair as and when deemed necessary. The chair retains the post for a period of two years.

Apart from the Leaders' Summit, there are also foreign ministers' meetings, senior officials' meetings, trade and economic officials' meetings, and ministerial meetings that may be held from time to time (MSG Agreement 2007). Senior officials' meetings usually precede the foreign ministers' meetings, which will recommend resolutions the MSG leaders should adopt, amend, or reject during the Leaders' Summit. MSG also provides for special missions when there is a crisis or dispute between member countries or between a member country and a third party. In times of crisis, the MSG can appoint a special mission to undertake a goodwill and solidarity mission in a member country. Interestingly, in such events, the MSG falls back to the provisions of the Biketawa Declaration 2000 Forum for such purposes. Apart from these, the MSG has a Secretariat, its administrative arm located in Port Vila, Vanuatu. The Secretariat is headed by the director general. In 2011, the second director general, Peter Forau, replaced the first, Rima Ravusiro, whose contract expired in July of that year (*Vanatu Daily Post* 2011). Both Ravusiro and Forau,[2] who were from PNG and Solomon Islands, respectively, had stints in the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, and they brought

FIGURE 1. **Chart showing MSG's decision-making structure.**

into MSG their experiences with the Forum. Figure 1 depicts the decision-making structure/body of the MSG.

Historical Undercurrents in Pacific Regionalism

Since the establishment of its headquarters in Port Vila in 2008, MSG has been seen as a permanent organization dealing with the affairs of the subregion in terms of cooperation, trade, and cultural exchanges. Nevertheless, it is important to look at the historical trends in the relationships in that subregion, as these may shed light on what we currently witness and the future likely scenarios. It should be pointed out that the first countries in the Pacific to gain independence were those in the Polynesian subregion. The Melanesian countries (except Fiji) were latecomers in the decolonization process and thus latecomers in regional politics. The Polynesian countries (plus Fiji) were instrumental in establishing the first regional organizations in

the 1960s and 1970s. PNG became involved in regional forums only in 1973 (Fry 1982, 657). The independence of PNG in 1975 as the largest country in the Pacific and linking up with Fiji and later Solomon Islands (1978) as the "Melanesian bloc" had significant impacts on what was to follow in regional politics. Vanuatu was the latest Melanesian state to gain independence (1980), and as Fry (1982) commented, the French involvement in Vanuatu and New Caledonia was instrumental in forging unity among the Melanesian bloc members in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The relationship between Fiji and PNG in regional and Melanesian politics is important in many respects. I briefly discuss this historical relationship below.

Early Fiji–PNG Relations

In the early days of regional cooperation, a source of concern by leaders of the region in general was Fiji's domination of regional activities. Fiji was dominating the region and taking on the role of a regional leader rather than a spokesperson in the UN Assembly. At that time (1970–1975), Fiji was the only Pacific Island member in the United Nations. Regional leaders tend to allege that Fiji was doing things in the name of the region that actually focused on its own national self-interest. Examples where disagreements show were in the establishment of the University of the South Pacific, the regional airline (Air Pacific), the telecommunications school, and other regional organizations. Fiji, through Ratu Mara, disagreed with these sentiments. In one of his responses, he stated that "we may have over-reached and done it [the encouragement of regional cooperation] at the expense of our own interest" (cited in Fry 1982, 660). It is important to note that despite the span of time since then, such sentiments are still present, and regional leaders are skeptical about Fiji's dominant role in regional affairs and institutions. The recent push by Fiji to remove Australia and New Zealand from the Forum[3] and its ambition to get Indonesia as an associate member of MSG reignited such skepticism (ABC News 2015; Radio New Zealand 2015a).

Another important point to note in regional disputes is the unwelcomed entry of PNG in regional politics. In the early days of Pacific regionalism, Fiji in particular and Pacific states more generally were apprehensive of PNG's participation in the Forum. Fiji saw the inclusion of PNG in regional organizations as a potential rival to its own position as a regional leader. It was reported that PNG was refused admission to the Forum in 1972. After denials and counterarguments by both Ratu Sir Kamasese Mara and Sir Michael Somare, they came up with a statement in May 1974 to dispel the claim of tension between them. They stated that "Fiji and Papua New Guinea have no desire to dominate the leadership in the Pacific region, but only to ensure

that the best interests of each Pacific country are protected and maintained and will continue to work towards maintaining close co-operation with other Pacific countries" (cited in Fry 1982, 662).

The years that followed showed the movement of Fiji into the Melanesian bloc and then out into the Polynesian bloc when the situations suited its needs. For example, Fiji, under Ratu Mara, criticized PNG's intervention in Vanuatu in the 1980s despite the fact that Fiji was the only Pacific Island country that had participated extensively in UN peacekeeping operations (MacQueen 1989, 41). Moreover, because of the historical connection and intermarriages that Eastern Fijians had with Tongans and Samoans and the prevalence of the chiefly system in Fiji, it was regarded more as a Polynesian country. At other times, as in the 1980s when Fiji challenged external influences in the region, it was regarded as a Melanesian country. The admission of PNG into the Forum showed that PNG and Fiji actually agreed on many issues at the regional level. This followed a visit by Ratu Mara to PNG in 1974 and by Michael Somare to Fiji the year after. Developments since 1978 indicated that there are two core groups within the Forum family: the Melanesian and Polynesian blocs, as described below.

The Melanesia–Polynesia Divide

As mentioned earlier, the pioneers and "builders" of regional cooperation were the leaders of the independent Polynesian states, including Fiji. With subsequent independence of PNG in 1975 and Solomon Islands in 1978, the Melanesian member states of the Forum also increased. What distinguished the two blocs were their approaches to regional issues. Credit is due to the postindependence Polynesian leaders who "rebelled" against the continued domination of metropolitan powers in Oceania through bodies such as the SPC. The establishment of the Pacific Islands Producers Association (PIPA) was an assertion by Polynesian leaders to reflect on decolonization. They were also large producers of bananas in the Pacific then, so PIPA was seen as a body through which their interests could be pursued. PIPA was an assertion of self-determination.

The then prime minister of Samoa, Tupua Tamasese Lealofi IV, remarked that PIPA "is the strength of our small body . . . this is an association of islanders, created by islanders, and successful only from the efforts of such" (Fry 1982, 655). The then premier of Cook Islands, Albert Henry, further stated that PIPA is a Polynesian assertion of self-determination (Fry 1982, 655). The creation of the Pacific Islands Forum in 1971 subsumed the activities of PIPA, but sentiments raised by Polynesian leaders were instrumental in establishing the South Pacific Forum, now the PIF.

The independence of PNG, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu gave way to the emergence of a Melanesian bloc in what was originally a Polynesian organization. It was insinuated that the Melanesian countries came in with a more radical approach to issues, and this distinguishes the two blocs in Pacific regional politics. PNG in particular moved to support liberation movements. For example, in 1982, Prime Minister Michael Somare sent PNG soldiers to quell anti-independence fighters in Santo, a move not much welcomed by Fiji and the Polynesian countries (MacQueen 1989, 34). Another recent example where Melanesian leaders' positions differed from their Polynesian, Australian, and New Zealand counterparts was in the decision to suspend Fiji from the PIF and in its delay in holding democratic elections (May 2011, 4).

Recent actions and decisions by Melanesian leaders reminded members of the PIF that the two groups existed. In the current scheme of things, Polynesian leaders seemed to cooperate more with Australia and New Zealand, while Melanesian leaders were caught between the need to stand for their national interests but also conscious of the powerful influences that Australia and New Zealand had over their development aspirations. In a lecture to mark the 40th Anniversary of PIF in Apia in 2011, the Samoan prime minister echoed the idea that the Polynesian countries will meet to formalize an organization to represent Polynesian interests in the region, a similar setup to the MSG. He stated that the Polynesian alliance "would focus attention on issues facing Polynesia. Besides the preservation of languages, cultures and traditions, sub-regionalism would also provide better platforms for the delivery of programs" (Pireport 2011a). The Polynesian Leaders Group[4] (PLG) was formally established in September 2011 "in response to resurgence in the Melanesian Spearhead Group" (Pireport 2015).

Intra-MSG Hostilities

The establishment of MSG and its trade treaty, MSGTA, was regarded a step toward subregional free trade. It formalizes the Melanesia–Polynesia divide that one finds in regional politics. The tendency by Fiji to move in and out of the Melanesia grouping is again evident in recent times. Indeed, the initial invitation for Fiji to join MSG in 1988 was turned down by Ratu Sir Kamasese Mara. Moreover, there is continued "division" between leadership in the Polynesia bloc who are receptive to external advice and opinions and the Melanesian leaders under the auspices of MSG who tend to resent external pressure. The formal establishment of MSG and its corresponding trade agreement gave way to some intra-MSG disputes over the years. Three cases, discussed below, are inter-MSG disputes under the trade agreement;

a political dispute over good governance, ethics, and rule-of-law principles; and an airline standoff.

The "Kava-Biscuit" and "Beef" Wars

The MSGFTA induced trade rivalries and conflict between MSG countries in what are now known as the kava-biscuit and the beef wars. The kava-biscuit war was a trade dispute between Fiji and Vanuatu in 2004 and 2005. Under the MSGTA, there is supposed to be free movement of goods between member countries. Consequently, the more developed Fiji biscuit industry flooded the Vanuatu local market with Fiji biscuits and at cheaper prices. Sensing the threat this had to its industry, Vanuatu sought to protect its biscuit industry by banning biscuit imports to protect their sole biscuit supplier (May 2011, 3). Fiji responded by banning import of Vanuatu kava. Fiji banned Vanuatu kava officially on health grounds, but Vanuatu's kava prices were lower (Connell 2007, 11).

A similar case, known as the beef war between Fiji and PNG, occurred in mid-2005 when a corned beef canning business in PNG sought to export to Fiji under MSG terms. Fiji, however, banned corned beef imports on the grounds that they failed to meet sanitary and quarantine requirements. PNG felt that this was unfair since Fiji was merely using an excuse to protect its beef industry. PNG responded by threatening to ban imports of canned beef, mutton, and chicken products of a Fijian company (Connell 2007, 9). Commenting on the action by Fiji, the chairman of the PNG Manufacturers' Council complained that "if we can't trade amongst ourselves, quite frankly I think that we have a major concern within the Pacific. And as far as regional integration would be concerned that would be extremely difficult" (Connell 2007, 9). Such cases of dispute point to concerns that MSGTA may encourage competition but discourage regional/subregional cooperation.

MSG Chairmanship Disagreements

Apart from the disputes under the MSG trade agreement, there were also political disagreements in recent years. A notable case was that between the prime ministers of Fiji and Vanuatu over the MSG chairman. In 2010, the then Vanuatu prime minister and outgoing MSG chair, Edward Natapei, decided not to hand over the chairmanship to Fiji's Frank Bainimarama. He argued that the MSG chair could be given only to elected leaders. Since Bainimarama took power through a coup, it was not proper to give him the chair of MSG. He stressed that it is inappropriate for a person who has violated MSG's obligations to democracy and good governance to take up its

leadership, as that would ultimately threaten the values the organization stand for (May 2011, 4). Natapei confirmed through ABC News (2010) that the decision not to transfer the chair was a common stance by MSG members: "This is a collective decision of the leaders of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, the FLNKS and Vanuatu, in light of the current impasse we have in the grouping over the chairmanship of the MSG. The potential long-term ramifications of allowing Fiji to chair the MSG this time cannot be ignored. There are basic fundamental principles and values of democracy and good governance that our organisation is built on, and we must continue to uphold them" (ABC News 2012).

Despite this declaration by Natapei, the prime ministers of PNG and Solomon Islands were not happy with the decision. There were allegations that Australia was behind the move by Edward Natapei with a $66 million aid package to Vanuatu (Davis 2010), although this was played down by other commentators (Hayward-Jones 2010).

This decision by Natapei enraged Fiji's interim government, and Fiji quickly pulled out of any deals with MSG. The alleged involvement of Australia in Natapei's decision and attempts to discourage other MSG members from attending the meeting in Fiji resulted in the expulsion of the Australian acting high commissioner to Fiji. Fiji took up the challenge and continued with the proposed MSG meeting under the name "MSG-Plus," which was later renamed the "Engaging Fiji" meeting. Things changed with the removal of Natapei as the prime minister of Vanuatu through a no-confidence vote and the election of Sato Kilman as the new prime minister. The invitation by the Solomon Islands prime minister on December 15, 2010, cleared the impasse. Fiji again returned to the MSG family following the reconciliation and transfer of MSG chairmanship to Bainimarama.

The "Sky" War

In 2014, a bitter dispute between Solomon Airlines and Fiji Airways emerged. Although airline service is not one of MSG's focus, it involved two MSG member countries and thus warrants some discussion. The dispute stemmed from an application by Fiji Airways to operate a second flight to Honiara on Saturdays, a day on which Solomon Airlines is already providing a flight between Honiara and Nadi (Pacnews 2014). Since there is already a flight scheduled by the airlines on Saturdays, Solomon Islands aviation decided to decline the application by Fiji Airways. This decision did not sit well with Fiji, so it banned all Solomon Airlines flights to Nadi. Fiji Airways went ahead and sent the first Saturday flight into Solomon Islands without the approval of the Solomon Islands Aviation Division, which was ultimately refused entry.

The Fiji Airways minister then went on air and claimed that the Solomon Islands aviation authority banned all Fiji Airways flights to Honiara.[5] Solomon Islands reacted by banning Fiji Airways flights to Honiara and blamed Fiji for initiating this standoff, calling Fiji a "bully boy." Fiji reacted by banning all Solomon Airlines flights to Fiji. It went a step further and banned all code-shared tickets with Air Niugini, which also serves the Nadi–Honiara route. As such, all tickets with Solomon Airlines (IE) labels was not accepted in Fiji. Therefore, all passengers from Solomon Islands to Fiji were required to have Air Niugini or other airline tickets that do not have code sharing with Solomon Airlines (Fiji Times Online [FTO] 2014).

The dispute went on for almost eight months, and after a few meetings, Solomon Islands Aviation and Airlines gave in to the demands of Fiji (*Island Sun* 2015). Both parties agreed to return to the old Airline Service Agreement despite the fact that Fiji Airways has many more lucrative routes and is a larger, well-functioning airline in the Pacific. As the aviation minister confirmed, "Fiji Airways is a fully commercially driven entity and we have adapted to the new situation. Fortunately for us, there is no financial downside deriving from the current suspensions" (FTO 2014). The dispute was sorted out at least for the time being with hope for a review of the Airline Service Agreement in the near future (FTO 2015). Again, this dispute showed the nature and depth of partnership and cooperation between MSG member countries.

External Interests in Melanesian Affairs

Apart from the minor MSG wars, there were also more substantive issues that the MSG was and still is up against. Among the main issues of concern are (1) negative labels, images, and representations by outsider non-Melanesians; (2) the negative relationship between Australia and Melanesia, as demonstrated by the Julian Moti affair; and (3) the position taken by other PIF members when Fiji was suspended from other regional organizations. These remain core issues for MSG leadership in its "experimentation" with subregional cooperation, as described below. It should be noted at this juncture that Indonesia's interest and membership of the MSG is also an external issue. Nevertheless, instead of discussing it here, the issue is covered in the section "Outstanding Questions" later in this article.

Negative Representations

There is a tendency for external assessors to represent Melanesia as problematic, hopeless, and a subregion reminiscent of Africa in Oceania. The thesis

"Africanisation of the Pacific" was premised on this very pessimistic view of the subregion (Reilly 2000). Even personal opinions provided by academics such as Hughes and Gaurav (2008, 2) were pessimistic assessments of the division of the Pacific into the developing Polynesian bloc and the "stagnant" MSG bloc. These sentiments were probably justified by past events that got out of control, or some were due to leadership gaps and corruption. However, these should not be used to paint a subregion in pessimistic terms. It is usually external assessors, who do not understand systems of authority and relationships in Melanesia, who tend to give skewed assessments of events in Melanesia. For example, there is a general tendency to think that MSG as an organization previously maintained a communication link with Fiji's Frank Bainimarama from the onset because it is somehow the nature of "big-man politics" in modern government. Melanesian societies were subdivided by early anthropologists as egalitarian and big-man societies, and the thinking is that people in such societies somehow accept a leader who emerges through force. The rise of Major General Sitiveni Rabuka or Commodore Frank Bainimarama in Fiji, Francis Ona in Bougainville, and Harold Keke and Jimmy Lusibaea in Solomon Islands are examples cited to support such positions (Fraenkel 2004; Davis 2010; PIPP 2009). From that standpoint, MSG's support for Fiji's Bainimarama was often regarded as corrupt Melanesian leaders supporting a big man turned prime minister.

These were the same sentiments that instigated the need to establish MSG as a subregional organization. The move to establish MSG was to show the world that Melanesia and Melanesians have a civilization and should not always be disregarded. The words of Honourable Taureka in 1972 remain as strong today as it was then: "Most people in the South Pacific regard us as people still sitting on top a hill watching the aircraft takeoff and landing. In other words, they regard us as primitive" (cited in Fry 1982, 667). The sentiments were also shared by the grand chief Sir Michael Somare at the opening of the MSG headquarters in 2008. He declared that Melanesians "proved the earlier cynics wrong. They said that we were too fragmented, too parochial in our interests and too poor to make the organisation work. We shall overcome whatever difficulties that confront our countries" (PIPP 2008, 1). This negative representation that external commentators continuously perpetuate is a huge challenge that Melanesian leaders, especially in MSG, struggle to put right.

Melanesia, RAMSI, and ANZ Subtlety

The other challenge facing MSG countries is related to external influence through aid conditionality, military intervention, or political interference. The 2006 case involving Julian Moti is a fitting example. Julian Moti, a Fiji-born

Australian citizen, was appointed to be the Solomon Islands attorney general in 2007 but was accused of a child sex offense in Vanuatu earlier in 1997. On his way to take up his Solomon Islands post, he was intercepted by police in Port Moresby after the Australian Federal Police issued a warrant for his arrest for the 1997 charges through Interpol. The Julian Moti story demonstrated the typical interest and influence by metropolitan countries on decisions made by Melanesian leaders.[6] It also demonstrated the ability of leaders in both PNG and Solomon Islands to collude and work against their own laws to oppose external interference.

After Moti's arrest and initial appearance in a Port Moresby court on September 29, 2006, Moti failed to appear in court on both September 30 and October 2 and sought refuge instead in the Solomon Islands High Commission Office (Salika, Huai, and Liosi 2007, 6–7). On October 9, 2006, he was transported by a PNG Defence Force aircraft and dropped off at Munda Airport in the Western Solomons (Nelson 2007, 4). There, Julian Moti, together with Chris Harper and Robson Tanabose, was arrested by RAMSI officers stationed in Munda. Allegations were that both prime ministers of Solomon Islands and PNG colluded to oppose the neocolonial and bullying tactics of the Australian government.

The collusion could be contextualized and understood by revisiting developments prior to Moti's recruitment. Briefly, the formation of the Sogavare-led government was not welcomed in Australian government circles. This was because of Sogavare's bold anti-RAMSI statements as a member of Parliament. He became prime minister after the 2006 Honiara riots, which destroyed large parts of the business district. The riots were done right in the face of RAMSI, which was unable to contain it. Until then, RAMSI was regarded as a great success. The two members of Parliament who were jailed for allegedly masterminding the riots, Charles Dausabea and Nelson Nee, were appointed by Sogavare as government ministers. Julian Moti's recruitment was like adding another burden to the already complex heap of trouble that Australia has to deal with in its peace and development effort. Moti is an avid critic of RAMSI, and the Australian influence in Melanesia and Australia did not want him in such a powerful position. His recruitment was a threat to Australian efforts in the RAMSI intervention and in state building.

Alexander Downer, then Australia's foreign minister, wrote a letter to Solomon Islanders, telling them that Sogavare intended to shut down RAMSI efforts. In a follow-up interview, Downer stated, "I think Mr Sogavare's view is that it would be better to get rid of RAMSI and to go back to the situation where, you know, the country was basically run by the Malaitan Eagle Force" (ABC News 2007a, 2007b). Sogavare blamed RAMSI for unduly controlling Solomon Islands affairs and accused Australia of using RAMSI to further

its own interests. He even boycotted the Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Nukualofa in October 2007 as a protest against Australian influence through RAMSI. Solomon Islands police officers and the Participatory Police Force (the RAMSI police component) raided the prime minister's office on October 20, 2006, in an attempt to retrieve a fax machine suspected of being used to arrange for Julian Moti's illegal escape to Munda. This raid of the prime minister's office received strong condemnation from MSG leaders.

PNG's dislike of Australian influence started in 2005 when its prime minister was offended by Australian immigration officers at Brisbane International Airport. On his return from the New Zealand Forum leaders' meeting, they asked him to remove his shoes and belt and to empty his pockets (*The Age* 2005). The foreign affairs minister of PNG, Rabbie Namaliu, subsequently presented a diplomatic note to the Australian high commissioner in PNG on March 28, 2005, for a formal apology from the Australian prime minister John Howard within twenty-four hours (Marshall 2005). Canberra did not want to make a formal apology with Downer, emphasizing that Australia is an egalitarian country. He stated that "it happens to me when I go to other countries. I have to take off my belt and shoes from time to time. It's just the way of the world these days. It's not a question of trying to insult anybody" (quoted from http://wsws.org, April 22, 2005). Such hostilities and unfriendly relations between Melanesian leaders and their Australian counterparts affect genuine relations. The feelings are always at the back of leaders' minds as MSG leaders interact with Australia and New Zealand in the Forum.

It may be worth noting here that MSG's relations with Australia and New Zealand were also tested when Fiji was under military rule between 2006 and 2014. The Polynesia–Melanesia divide in the Forum was once again evident in the positions taken on this issue. As in the past experiences with Vanuatu's independence, the fisheries deal with the United States, and nuclear-free issues in the Pacific, the Polynesian countries were closely allied with New Zealand and Australia. Fiji found more comfort in the MSG family, who seemed to understand the difficulties it was going through. The smaller states, such as Tokelau, Kiribati, and Tuvalu, were also sympathetic toward the Fiji interim government's cause, as they are indirectly dependent on Fiji. Before the 2011 Forum meeting in Auckland, for example, the president of Kiribati shared some wisdom by looking at the Forum as a family. He openly declared that Fiji should be allowed back into the Forum family. In his words, "If you have six children and one is a bad young boy. What do you do with him, you kick him out? You don't. You never do. Because we are a family and we must act like a family, and so Fiji is part of this family" (The Australian 2011).

Although Fiji's readmission is now possible due to the 2014 elections, a small achievement that was directly linked to MSG's efforts and the engaging Fiji dialogues was the subsequent resolution in Auckland that allowed Fiji to participate in PACER-plus trade negotiations at the officer level (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat [PIFS] 2011, 7). Fiji has now been invited to rejoin the Forum. However, Fiji indicated that it is not in a hurry to join the Forum and instead wanted Australia and New Zealand expelled from the regional organization (ABC News 2014; PIPP 2015). Interestingly, the other members of the Forum were not supportive of Fiji's call. The Samoan prime minister has always been vocal against the Fijian prime minister's position to remove Australia and New Zealand (Radio New Zealand 2015b). In addition, PNG's prime minister also argued that the structure of the PIF does not need to change since Australia and New Zealand are also part of the Pacific region (ABC News 2014). This is an ongoing debate that has yet to be resolved.

Outstanding Questions

As a young subregional grouping still experimenting after twenty-six years, there are many issues that MSG needs to address. In its June 2015 Leaders' Summit, the issue of who is eligible to be an observer or an associate member became a heated issue between citizens and their respective governments. Why, for example, did they allow Indonesia and Belgium as observers at the 2011 meeting? Why did they admit Indonesia as an associate member of MSG and give the West Papuans observer status? Going back a bit earlier, was it ethically right to allow Fiji to chair the subregional organization when Frank Bainimarama was then not an elected leader? These are some questions that need answers, as they may determine the future of "pan-Melanesianism." Let's take some of these issues and discuss them separately.

Observers and Associate Members

The practice of having guests and observers at MSG meetings has been entertained for quite a while. The 2011 MSG meeting, the first that Bainimarama chaired, raised some eyebrows, as Belgium, Indonesia, and East Timor were all invited or accepted as observers. It is the prerogative of the senior officers' meeting and the foreign ministers' meeting to decide on what guests, countries, or development partners are allowed to attend the meetings. The criteria for assessing the applicants are as follows:

(1) Whether the applicant is situated in the Pacific region

(2) Whether the applicant has any political, economic, or security interest to the MSG
(3) Whether that applicant is committed to working in partnership with the MSG
(4) The ability of the applicant to implement or abide by the decisions of the MSG (MSG, 2011a)

Looking at the above criteria, one wonders why countries such as like Luxemburg, Indonesia, and East Timor were given observer status in that meeting over applications from, say, the West Papuans. Perhaps East Timor's interest is understandable given the common colonial experience that it had with Melanesian countries and the current West Papuan ordeal. Indeed, it seemed that the privacy of debates and what can be included in the agenda for leaders' summits may be restrictive because of the presence of contradictory observers. This became even more contradictory at the 2015 leaders' summit, as discussed below. As such, the 2015 MSG communiqué directed the Secretariat to do further work on the criteria and procedures for those countries interested in becoming observers and associate members in the organization (MSG 2015, 3).

Others, such as Luxemburg, used the event to try to secure votes for its bid to be on the UN Security Council. That in itself is an important international relations and security exercise. Belgium—as the current fifty-fourth ranked contributor to the United Nations in general terms and twenty-first to UNDP, sixteenth to UNFPA, eighteenth to UNICEF, eleventh to UNIFEM, eleventh to WHO, sixteenth to UNEP, and twentieth to the UN High Commission for Human Rights (Permanent Mission of Luxemburg to UN 2010, 7)—can probably be excused for using the event to lobby for support. In 2011, one may even be tempted to see the MSG chair's invitation as a protest for its stance in Fiji's unelected government. Australia was then also vying for the position in the UN Security Council for the 2013–2014 term and New Zealand for the 2015–2016 term. The PIF communiqué of September 2011confirmed that Forum countries will be supporting Australia's and New Zealand's candidatures in the said periods (PIFS 2011, 10). That in itself is a sign that Pacific Island states as sovereignties are important and that there is high concentration of Pacific state votes in the UN General Assembly. This is a strength and regional status that ought to be respected and supported in a diplomatic, nonexploitative manner.

The West Papuans and Kanaks

The decision to have Indonesia as an observer at the 2011 MSG meeting and then further elevated to an associate member in 2015 was even more

controversial, at least for keen observers and MSG citizens (MSG 2015). The West Papua Melanesians struggled to secure observer status at MSG meetings for years but were denied. Human rights abuses against indigenous people and their properties were highlighted by UN agencies and other independent bodies in recent years. For example, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported a number of abuses in the Merauke area of West Papua from 2007 to 2009. The physical abuses endured by young Melanesian males at the hands of the Indonesian Special Forces were horrific, with personal stories of beating, and many other atrocities (HRW 2009, 6–12). Similar reports with specific cases, such as the ill treatment of political prisoners and endemic abuses, were also recorded in the West Papuan Highlands in 2007 (HRW 2007a, 2007b). The MSG turned a deaf ear and blind eye on what was going on in West Papua by denying membership to the West Papuan people since their 2011 application. Of all MSG members, only Vanuatu openly supported the West Papuan cause. On June 19, 2010, the Vanuatu Parliament passed a bill on the status of Indonesian-administered territories of New Guinea that was then submitted at the sixty-fifth session of the UN General Assembly in support of West Papua's struggles for independence (*Vanuatu Daily Post* 2010). The Solomon Islands position traditionally seemed to be treading a cautious line. The Fiji government since 2006 had been very much interested in linking up with Jakarta, making its position on West Papua clear. PNG, while appreciating the human rights abuses in West Papua, is also conscious of the sovereignty that Indonesia has over the "territory." Because of that—and the fact that it shares the border with Indonesia—PNG has always been cautious with statements on West Papua.

In 2015, a contentious decision was made by MSG leaders on the states of Indonesia and West Papua following both of their submissions after the 2011 Leaders' Summit. Civil society organizations, citizen groups, and nongovernmental organizations throughout the Pacific and beyond showed solidarity in their call for MSG to recognize the West Papuan application for membership (*Pacific Scoop* 2015). This overwhelming show of support for the application for membership by the United Liberation Movement for West Papua[7] (ULMWP) was because of human rights abuses in West Papua uncovered by social media over the past few years. There is also more awareness among Pacific Islanders on the controversial international deals that led to the subjugation of the West Papuans. Despite extensive regional and international support, the decision made by MSG leaders was based on international but contentious notions of sovereignty and representation. Since West Papua is recognized by the United Nations as a province of Indonesia, it follows logically that those in formal authority representing Melanesians in West Papua should be representing their

interests.[8] The MSG leaders therefore resolved that Indonesia be given associate membership with representatives of five Melanesian provinces in West Papua represented in the MSG. Based on this same logic, the ULMWP, which is seen as an activist group representing the interests of West Papuans who are pushing for independence, was given observer status in MSG[9] (MSG 2015, 5). Many commentators and groups throughout the Pacific criticized the decision and likened it to MSG leaders neglecting the request of their own Melanesian *wantoks* in favor of Indonesia, an Asian colonial power.

It is worth reiterating the obvious double standards shown by MSG members in the above issue and others. Perhaps it showed the sovereign independence of the MSG members and their right to make their own decisions. On the other hand, it may be seen as a sign of diverse opinions and self-interest that overrides the seemingly united principles of MSG as a subregional grouping. As mentioned earlier, only Vanuatu[10] was supportive of the West Papuan call for independence, while Fiji embraces Indonesia as an important diplomatic partner with military and economic interests. PNG maintains a neutral stance on West Papua but obviously supports the Kanaky movement to independence. In the 2015 Leaders' Summit, Solomon Islands as usual treaded a cautious line, but its prime minister and chair tried his best to support the ULMWP application at the eleventh hour (*Solomon Star* 2015). These contradictory responses and compromises by MSG members ought to be addressed, or they will have implications for the organization in the future.

The Kanaks of New Caledonia, through the FLNKS as another group of Melanesians still under colonial rule, was fortunate to be around when the MSG was formed. In the 2011 communiqué, there was a further request by MSG for the FLNKS to provide additional information on preparation for independence. The communiqué stated that "UN-based MSG Ambassadors would be requested to be involved in consultations with the Decolonization Committee (C24) on the issue of New Caledonia" (MSG 2011b, 3). It is therefore a case in progress, acknowledged also in the 2015 communiqué, with an uncertain future (MSG 2015, 6). Until the political status of Kanaky is changed from the current status as a dependent territory, it will continue to be a central feature of MSG meetings. Alternatively, an independent Kanaky can change the profile of MSG as a regional group of the future given the size and location of New Caledonia in the Pacific. On the other hand, what if the decision after the 2018 referendum is not independence? What will MSG do as an alternative strategy to emancipate the Kanaks from French control? This—and the many other questions highlighted throughout this article—lingers on for MSG leaders.

Potential Impacts of MSG Decisions on Regional Cooperation

The question that comes to mind after the above discussion is, What would be the possible impacts of the current MSG decisions on Pacific regionalism? Moreover, what could be the contributions of MSG in regional cooperation and development in Oceania? Certain observations can be made in response to these general questions. First and foremost is the reality that recent decisions and activities within MSG have invigorated interest in the Polynesian bloc to meet and formalize its own subgrouping. The prime minister of Samoa, Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, endorsed this position in a speech to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the existence of the PIFs and reiterated it after the Auckland Forum meeting of September 2011 (Pacnews 2012). There is little doubt that the resurgence of the Polynesian leaders to form a formal subregional organization of their own (i.e., PLG) was a reaction to recent decisions made by MSG leaders. For example, in the 2011 MSG communiqué, a resolution reads, "Leaders agreed to nominate a candidate from Melanesia for the position of Secretary General to the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Secretariat at the PIF Leaders Meeting in New Zealand later this year" (MSG 2011b, 9). The message from such a statement indicated that since the then secretary-general was from the Polynesian subregion, he was closely pushing for the interests of New Zealand and Australia in the Forum. Such allegations were especially related to Fiji's suspension from the regional organization. What the MSG leadership may have not contemplated then was the negative reading that such a resolution would have from both the Polynesian and the Micronesian subregional groupings. Ultimately, the early response from Polynesian leaders after the 2011 Forum in Auckland was a call to unite and look after the interest of Polynesian countries in the Forum, which in itself can actually be a positive thing. Leaders from Cook Islands, Tuvalu, Niue, Tonga, and Samoa met in November 2011 to formalize the group's aims and objectives and formally established an office in Apia, Samoa (Pacnews 2012; Pireport 2011b).

As noted in this article, these subgroups in the Forum have distinct characteristics when it comes to decision making. Past experiences recorded by Fry (1982), May (2011), and MacQueen (1989) indicated that Polynesian leaders were often cautious when deciding on controversial issues compared to the more radical Melanesians. Two examples given by MacQueen that highlighted this difference were when decisions were made on the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and the fisheries agreement to curtail US activities in the 200 Exclusive Economic Zones. According to MacQueen (1989, 34), Melanesians took radical positions in both cases, while the Polynesian

leaders (including Fiji) took a softer stance. Nevertheless, the formalization of the PLG could be a positive development. In that way, the Polynesian bloc could make a combined stance as a subregion on issues of importance to that subregion. It may also be the beginning of a new chapter in Pacific regionalism where decisions that are based on the interests of individual subregions. This is increasingly obvious in recent statements released by MSG leaders, as exemplified in the one by MSG leaders to nominate a Melanesian candidate for the secretary-general's post. If that is the trend, then MSG would have already paved the way for divisive politics at the regional level.

Melanesia as a subregion could use its land and population size to improve trade arrangements and take a leading role in facilitating other undertakings in the region. This has the potential to improve if independence efforts by the Kanaks and West Papuans from France and Indonesia, respectively, are successful. Recent indications by Timor Leste of its intention to join MSG can also be a positive development in that regard if properly nurtured (Fiji Sun Online 2010). These are not simple undertakings but ones that will involve both "subjects" and "metropolitan powers" discussing openly and frankly. The MSG could be instrumental in bringing together "colonized" Melanesians and controlling powers to discuss and understand each other's position and find ways forward.[11] The sooner the MSG leaders realize this critical role, the better it is for all those Pacific territories that are still colonies.

In light of recent criticisms from the pioneers[12] of the subregional organization, the future focus of MSG should go back to the drawing board. It started off as a voice for the voiceless and the oppressed, especially to support proindependence movements. There is still scope to return to the original mission of MSG and support the independence for those still under colonial rule while also pursuing the interests of people in the independent MSG states. One way of doing this is to get back to the people of the subregion and get their views on a favored future for the organization. Figures from a survey carried out by PIPP on MSG in 2011 provided useful indications. For example, an overwhelming number of respondents from the MSG countries support independence for West Papua. The actual figures were 56.2 percent (Fiji), 89.3 percent (PNG), 70.2 percent (Solomon Islands), and 88.2 percent (Vanuatu) in support of independence for West Papua (PIPP 2011, vi). With such huge support from ordinary MSG citizens for the independence of West Papua, it is troubling to think why the MSG leaders' decision in 2015 was actually the opposite, giving associate membership to Indonesia and only observer status to the ULMWP. It is important for MSG members to rethink and frankly talk about what people consider to be important and essential for the organization to focus on. After two and half decades

of experimenting as a subregional organization, it is time to reevaluate and refocus its fundamentals.

It is also fitting to recognize new MSG initiatives to further its development efforts. Such initiatives are a result of recent problems encountered by MSG members since the late 1980s. Over recent years, there have been talks by MSG members to develop a police academy and a police response group within for the subregion. Such realizations were contemplated after terrible experiences with uprisings in places such as Santo, Bougainville, and Solomon Islands and inter-*wantok* tensions. The MSG member countries could pull resources to bring about order when there is lawlessness in member countries. The 2011 MSG communiqué confirmed this intention, and the 2015 communiqué endorsed the draft agreement establishing the Regional Police Academy[13] and the draft legislative framework for the Formed Police Unit (MSG 2015, 4). Apart from that desire to cooperate in policing work, there has also been cooperation in the civil aviation area. For example, in 2011, Fiji, with its aviation experience, entered into an understanding with Solomon Islands to manage its airspace. This would allow Solomon Islands aviation personnel to be trained, up-skill, and gain experience in Fiji. Also in 2011, PNG announced its intention to open up its labor market to MSG member countries. The 2015 communiqué also endorsed the outcome of the trade ministers' meeting on the MSG Travel Card to ease travel between member countries (MSG 2015, 2). These are initiatives by MSG countries that are slowly taking shape with promises for a bright future for the subregion and for Oceania more generally.

It is also worth noting that Fiji's conduct in both regional and subregional politics will be interesting to monitor in the coming years. The cultural, historical, and economic setting of Fiji makes it one of the most influential Pacific states in shaping the future of regional politics in Oceania. Historically, Fiji had been in either camps of the Polynesia–Melanesia divide in the Forum. Fiji was instrumental in the establishment of earlier regional organizations, such as PIPA, discussed earlier. Ratu Mara in particular was able to articulate what he considered best for the region by aligning with the leaders of Cook Islands and Samoa. Since the emergence of PNG in the Forum, Fiji has been skeptical about the role of PNG in regional politics. The historical relationship it has with MSG countries and positions taken on issues that required cooperation have not been consistent. Since 2006, the MSG camp seemed to work well in favor of Fiji, although the political hiccup over the MSG chairs was almost enough to halt that relationship. Recent developments and decisions in the MSG camp encouraged the formal establishment of the PLG and the strengthening of the Micronesian Trade and Economic Community. Because of the position that Fiji plays in the region, it will have

much influence on the strength of regional cooperation in the future. It is thus important that key players in the region take note of the direction that Fiji takes in terms of regional politics to appreciate the likely future trends in Pacific relations and cooperation.

Concluding Remarks

The future of MSG as an organization and the livelihood of its citizens are important, but efforts must be exerted to "weed out" negative misconceptions about Melanesia and Melanesians. The negative images, labels, and preconceived ideas that outsiders have about MSG member states should be seriously pursued and corrected. Education and information sharing could be utilized in this regard. A strengthened, optimistic, and positively proud people are always destined to persevere and succeed. This may require fundamental efforts to develop a united Melanesian identity. Given the diversity existing in Melanesian states, this can be a daunting task—to unite and develop common ideas and identities as those representing Melanesia. An important starting point could be founded on the common Melanesian language. At the moment, MSG encourages the use of French and English as official languages of the organization and members. Perhaps it is an opportune time to include the Melanesian Pidgin (PNG *Tok pisin*, Solomon Islands *Pijin*, and Vanuatu *Bislama*) as the third official language of the organization and the grandeur of modern Melanesian identity.

NOTES

1. I dealt with the concept of the *wantok* system in my other article cited in the list of references. What is important to note is that the *wantok* system expresses patterns of relationships and networks that function as a social capital at the micro and family levels and an identity concept at greater aggregates. As such, the concept of *wantok* is an "artificial" (but important) structural societal reference to Melanesia as a subregion of Oceania.

2. Peter Forau resigned from the post of MSG director general in mid-November 2015 citing circumstances beyond his control intervening (Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation [SIBC] 2015). At the time this article goes to press, MSG has just appointed a new director general. He is Amena Yauvoli, a diplomat and former interim secretary general of the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) (Radio New Zealand 2016).

3. Bainimarama recently stated, "As head of government, I will not participate in any forum leader's meeting until the issue of the undue influence of Australia and New Zealand and our divergence of views is addressed" (ABC News 2015).

4. The establishment of subregional organizations—MSG, PLG, and the Micronesian Chief Executives—could be indicative of the future trend in Pacific regional cooperation.

5. Fiji's aviation minister ignored in his statement that Solomon Islands disallow that particular flight because its application to fly on Saturdays was not approved and thus not authorized.

6. It should be noted that the Moti case was a 1999 case pending in Vanuatu awaiting the accused to be within its jurisdiction. The Australian police became involved in 2006 after an Interpol request was made after the announcement of Moti as the attorney general of Solomon Islands.

7. Prior to the 2015 MSG Leaders' Summit, Melanesians in West Papua were represented by a number of different groups. As such, the MSG resolutions in 2011 requested that they be consolidated into a single representative body, thus the establishment of the ULMWP to represent West Papuans in their application for MSG membership.

8. This is logical under normal circumstances, but in this case it is strange to have the aggressor represent the interests of the "oppressed."

9. As controversial as it may sound and given the skewed definition of representation in this context, the fact is that 150,000 West Papuans signed to endorse ULMWP as their legitimate representative, and the decision was a difficult compromise.

10. This usual support was not clear in 2015 because neither the prime minister nor a senior minister of the Vanuatu government attended the Leaders' Summit. Vanuatu's prime minister nevertheless confirmed his support for the MSG decision several weeks later (see http://pacific.scoop.co.nz/2015/07/vanuatus-pm-breaks-silence-over-west-papua-and-msg-move-on-jakarta).

11. The decision taken by MSG leaders in 2015 suggests that they also wished to get the Indonesians and West Papuans to have some space for dialogue.

12. A former Solomon Islands prime minister, Ezekiel Alebua, lamented that the "current MSG leaders have diverted the group's founding values by inviting non-Melanesians to have an influence in Melanesian politics." He was making reference to the MSG leaders' position on Indonesia's application for associate membership (Radio New Zealand, 2015a).

13. Paradoxically, Indonesia already offered half a million US dollars toward the establishment of this Regional Police Academy (FTO 2015).

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NEW RITUALS FOR OLD: CHANGE AND COMPETITION IN SAMOA

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In precontact Samoa, extended families, *āiga*, and villages, *nu'u*, demonstrated their social and political cohesion in periodic, competitive displays of conspicuous consumption, hospitality, and in warfare. Demonstrations of economic capacity and military superiority increased their sociopolitical capital and established, or maintained, their claims to social and political power. These competitive rituals were central features of precontact social organization: the *fa'asamoa*.

EARLY CHRISTIAN MISSIONS[1] SOUGHT to contain these "wasteful displays" and to divert Samoans' energies into "more productive" religious and industrial activities. Missionaries encouraged Samoans to divert their energies into the construction of churches, pastors' homes, and ancillary buildings to provide the physical infrastructure for the advance of Christian religion in Samoa. Missions then encouraged the villages to "call", and then support pastors, and to maintain church property to demonstrate continued commitment to their new faith.

Samoans, in turn, appropriated these new religious sites for displays of social and political cohesion. Individuals, families, and villages demonstrated social and political cohesion and claimed sociopolitical and moral capital in periodic, competitive, public demonstrations of commitment to the church. These new competitive rituals have replaced the older ones and have

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become, in turn, central features of the contemporary Samoan worldview and lifestyle: the *fa'asamoa*.

Early forms of competition were constrained by factor endowments and the resources that could be generated locally. Samoan emigration to labor markets on the Pacific Rim, and the increasing volume of remittances from migrants, has increased the amount of wealth available to those who wish to engage in these competitive displays. The increasing scale, and social consequences, of these displays has begun to concern some Samoans.

This paper explores the ways in which these customary practices became embodied in religious rituals and embedded in a single discourse within the oldest, and largest, church in Samoa. It also examines difficulties of separating the two in contemporary discourses and the ways in which this entrenchment presents difficulties to those who would question the practices. It also considers the consequences of this competition for economic development.

Competition in Precontact Samoa

Although comprehensive, definitive Samoan accounts of precontact Samoan culture and society are not available, visitors from various backgrounds have written about Samoan society and culture since continuous contact commenced in the early nineteenth century. A number of missionary accounts (Stair 1983; Moyle 1984), lay accounts (Pritchard 1863–64, 1866), and scientific accounts (Wilkes 1845) produced in the period immediately after contact commenced, and embodying varying types and degrees of bias, are readily available.

These, predominantly European, accounts are supplemented by those of Cook Island and Tahitian teachers and missionaries who worked in the Samoan mission field (Buzacott 1866) and provided much underused accounts of the society in which they labored, which reflected their cultural perspectives. The result is a continuous, comprehensive, if uneven, record of Samoan society from immediately after contact to the present (see, for instance, Taylor's Pacific Bibliography [Taylor 1965]). These postcontact accounts of Samoa have permitted historians and ethnographers to reconstruct a well-documented account of precontact Samoan culture and society.

At the center of Samoan culture are two principles that shape the organization of Samoan society: achieved status and gerontocracy. The first establishes that all valued positions in Samoan society are, technically, open to those who are able to demonstrate appropriate personal, social, and political skills.[2] Because all in Samoan society are potential leaders, competition for these valued positions is wider than is the case in other societies in which status is ascribed at birth and where valued positions are open only to a few

who are related in particular ways to the incumbents. The second of these principles is gerontocracy, which establishes that age is the basis of seniority in Samoan society. Where all other things are equal, those who are older will have greater authority and more power than those who are younger.

The principle that status was achieved, rather than ascribed, meant that all individuals in an extended family (*āiga*),[3] families in a village (*nu'u*), and villages in a district (*itu mālō*) could, technically at least, aspire to lead.[4] Because in most cases, more than one individual or entity aspired to lead, competition between contenders was both inevitable and endemic. The conversion of aspiration into acknowledged leadership involved periodic, public demonstration of the attributes sought in leaders. Individuals sought to display competence in both practical skills and esoteric knowledges and to prove their fitness to lead by showing a willingness to put their skills and wealth at the disposal of their extended family. When, for instance, the family's titular head, or *matai*, called on members of the family for contributions of labor and goods for use on their behalf in ceremonial exchanges, those who aspired to lead the family competed to provide evidence of their commitment. They did this by providing more labor and more goods than were asked of them. In the ceremonies in which these were presented, they sought, in oratory, to demonstrate greater political and social competence than their rivals. Both the matai and members of the extended family observed the performances of those who aspired to lead the āiga. Toward the end of life, the matai, in consultation with other senior members of the family, in a ceremony known as a *māvaega*, appointed a successor to the family's chiefly title and the power vested in it.

Similarly, extended families that aspired to lead within a village polity sought to demonstrate their fitness to lead in public demonstrations of their ability to generate wealth of various types and their willingness to put their resources at the disposal of the village. The village council, or *fono a matai*, comprised of the matai of all of the extended families that resided in the village, periodically called on families to provide labor and production for use in exchanges with other villages, in the creation of physical capital, in the development of village facilities and even in war. When the council called for resources, families that aspired to leadership competed with one another to demonstrate their commitment to the larger polity by committing more than might have been expected of them. In the ceremonies at which these contributions were pooled, they sought to demonstrate more political and social skill than did their rivals. Over time, and as a consequence of the continuing competition between families, the political authority and influence of the families within a village fluctuated.

Similarly, the councils of villages that aspired to lead within a district polity, itu mālō, were able to demonstrate their fitness to lead in periodic, competitive rituals in which they demonstrated their village's social and political cohesion and the quality of its leadership. They did this indirectly by showing their capacity to generate, mobilize, and distribute wealth of various kinds, their leaders' political knowledge and skill and their willingness to commit these to the district. Over time, the influence of various villages within districts rose and fell as a consequence of these "periodic competitions". Finally, the largest political entities, districts, competed with one another for dominance within the Samoan polity. The influence of districts within the Samoan polity rose and fell over time. The districts' desire to be "stronger or of more importance than the rest" were, according to the missionary George Turner, frequent causes of wars that early missionaries reported in Samoa (Turner 1983, 189).

This highly competitive element in Samoan culture produced a dynamic form of social and economic organization. The economic production of individuals, extended families, and ultimately villages was necessarily planned to meet the requirements of subsistence and then to support claims of fitness to lead. Thus, individuals, families, and villages routinely planted more than was necessary to meet the demands of subsistence. The effect of this practice was the creation of an economic surplus reserved for competitive displays in which the surpluses could be converted into sociopolitical capital. Individuals, families, and villages that were able to increase their sociopolitical capital increased their prestige and their social and political influence. Individuals, families, and villages, which became powerful by these means won the support of individuals who were free to attach themselves to entities from which they believed they would gain power and prestige by association. Individuals, families, and villages, which increased their support by these means, also increased the size of their productive base, within limits imposed by factor endowments, by increasing the numbers of people "serving" them and on whom they could call for "contributions" in labor and in kind. Over time, this allowed them to increase their wealth and allowed them to consolidate their position, at least temporarily. But the same dynamic also meant that even powerful individuals and entities were vulnerable to attempts by others to supplant them and to claim their power and authority. Thus, although the system was inherently dynamic, it was also potentially unstable.

The Missionary Presence

From 1828 on, Christian missionaries began to spread the gospel in the Samoan archipelago. A permanent missionary presence commenced when on a visit in 1830, the Reverends John Williams and Charles Barff persuaded

the leader of the dominant force, the *mālō,* of the time, Malietoa Vaiinupo, to provide a home for Tahitian and Cook Island missionary teachers and to hear their missionary message. Religious conversion followed quickly because matai who heard the missionary message, and saw potential political and commercial benefits, arranged for the mass conversion of their extended families (for instance, see Moyle 1984,170). Although there were enclaves within which the so-called heathen chiefs resisted the mission message, the conversion of the bulk of the Samoans proceeded with such speed and was so complete that the missionaries themselves, accustomed to slower progress in mission fields elsewhere, were surprised and delighted.

The depth of the resulting religious commitment has been questioned by some who argue that the chiefs converted not only, or even primarily, for religious reasons but because of anticipated political and commercial possibilities that followed from association with missions and missionary education. This would not have been surprising because Faueā had used this argument to persuade Malietoa to consider accepting the first missionary visitors and since missionary training and practice acknowledged the significance of political and economic interests in the success of the mission. In a discussion of the four-year training course of missionary teachers, Buzacott (1866, 135) noted that,

> This period allows time for the peculiar training required, which includes instruction in general knowledge, in the working of Day and Sunday Schools, in divinity, in preaching, and also in house-building, in the manufacture of chairs, beds, etc., so that the students may be able to raise the heathen in social life while they preach unto them the word of eternal life. *It is certain also that this additional knowledge pre-disposes idolaters to listen to new doctrines, taught by men so much their superiors in arts whose usefulness is at once patent to the dullest savage comprehension* (emphasis added).

The Reverend John Williams, an astute observer of Samoa society, noted with characteristic frankness after his 1832 visit, that

> All appeared to wish to embrace the *lotu*. It is not to be supposed that the motive by which they are actuated in their desire is a conviction for the excellence of the Gospel (Moyle 1984, 280).

and went on to document a number of motives for possible Samoan interest in the mission including increased opportunities for trade with Europeans, increased status, protection from their own gods, longevity, an

end to war, life after death, and the economic benefits of the attenuation of war (Moyle 1984:280–81). Because, from early on, missionaries also sought to bring an end to war, without alienating their chiefly hosts, whose authority depended in part on proof of their military superiority, the missionaries simply endorsed the Samoans' own expressed desire for an end to war (Moyle 1984, 124, 155, 171).Although Williams' assessment may explain the speed of conversion, experienced missionaries such as long-time London Missionary Society (LMS) missionary in Eastern Polynesia, Aaron Buzacott, on a visit to Samoa in 1848, continued to be concerned that the speed of conversion might indicate shallow religious commitment,

> We have been very much gratified by our visit to Samoa. A great work is being carried out there. Much, very much, has already been effected. To us who have seen the mission in its infancy, the improvement seemed truly wonderful, and we are frequently led to exclaim, "What hath God Wrought!" The churches appeared to us to have sprung up like Jonah's gourd. God forbid that, like it, a worm should be found at the root to wither and to destroy (Buzacott 1866, 163).

The Consequences of Success

The missions found themselves confronted with an unanticipated demand for teachers and pastors and without the means to meet this. As a means of rationing these relatively "scarce resources", until such time as more could be provided, the missionaries called on villages to demonstrate their willingness to submit to the religion to be assigned a teacher and or pastor.

Villages were effectively locked in a competition with other villages for these scarce resources: missionaries, teachers, and the attendant benefits of their residence. The stakes were high because, as Williams noted, Samoans appreciated the additional political and economic possibilities of missionary presence. Although the "contest" was ostensibly about the demonstration of commitment to the new religion, it was also site for villages to establish their fitness to lead other villages within the district polity. The mobilization process provided an opportunity for villages to compete to demonstrate a higher level of commitment to the new religion and to obtain the services of a pastor or teacher before others, while simultaneously establishing their secular fitness to lead.

The councils of villages determined what was required to secure the services of a missionary or teacher.[5] This was typically a large, multipurpose building that could be used as a church, a school, a guest house; another

building for the pastor and his family and young women attached to the household; a small Samoan *fale o'o* for young men attached to the household; and a cooking house. These first buildings were constructed in local building materials and in traditional style. The *fono* then set about mobilizing their village's resources to provide these in much the same ways as they had always provided public buildings. The matai, who comprised the village councils, established the amount of land, labor, and material needed to construct the buildings and then divided this among contributing village families.

The matai of each of the village families then set about mobilizing their family's resources to meet their contributions within the assigned time. This phase locked village families into a competition with other families to demonstrate their commitment to the new faith. Although the contest was ostensibly about their desire to obtain the means of enlightenment, it provided another public opportunity, for those families who aspired to leadership within the village, to establish their fitness to lead. Thus, aspiring families competed with one another to provide sites for the church buildings, labor and building materials for construction, cash to acquire materials that were not available locally, and later, plantations to support the pastor's family.

The resource mobilization process also locked some individuals into competition with others within āiga. The mobilization, although ostensibly about demonstrating individual commitment to the new faith, provided an opportunity for those who aspired to leadership within the family to demonstrate their fitness to lead by showing their capacity to and willingness to meet and exceed their required level of contribution. Individuals, and the entities that supported them, sought to demonstrate their willingness to serve the family in this religious arena while at the same time surreptitiously serving their own longer-term political interests within the family.

Once villages acquired their ministers, the form and venue of the competition shifted from securing the pastor to supporting the pastor and his family. Again, although the formal rationale was couched in terms of supporting the servant, which God in his infinite wisdom had provided for them, the requirement of ongoing support provided another opportunity for legitimate and competitive displays of individuals', families', and villages' capacity to lead. The energy formerly devoted to other forms of competition, which were being progressively discouraged, and in a few cases banned, by missionaries, found an outlet in these new sites of competition.

Thus, villages sought to provide larger, more elaborate church buildings, pastors' accommodation, larger plantations, more food, and more generous offertories, *alofa*, for their pastors and their families. They placed more children with the pastor and his wife for instruction in religion, basic literacy, and numeracy and to provide for their domestic needs. The boys provided labor

for the pastor's plantation and the girls provided domestic assistance for the pastor's wife. There is no doubt that villages' well-documented generosity was, in significant part, a reflection of their growing devotion to the new faith, but the public nature of this giving also provided an opportunity for villages that aspired to leadership to demonstrate their fitness to do so. Their demonstrations were fuelled in part by the belief that their omniscient God would observe their efforts and reward them for their generosity to his servant and, in part, by the belief that other villages would also observe its generosity and compare its performances with their own.

Families within villages also competed with one another to provide better service, more generous food offerings, and more in the way of alofa or "free-will offerings". Families that aspired to leadership sought to provide more labor for the pastor's plantation, more food for the pastor's table, and more money for the regular offertory. Their escalating display of generosity was undoubtedly driven in large part by religious commitment. It was validated, and indeed mandated, by passages in the Old Testament that dealt with the fate of those towns whose inhabitants had heard the word of God but who had not obeyed God and his prophets. Passages of New Testament scripture were also invoked in support of the practice.[6] It was also motivated, in part, by the belief that their generosity was witnessed by God, from whom nothing can be hidden.[7] Those who were generous to his servant would be rewarded and those who were not would be punished.

It was also, in part, motivated by the fact that their generosity was witnessed by other families from whom nothing was hidden. The families' contributions of labor and cash were announced and discussed periodically within the deacons' meetings, and their offerings were reported in detail in a roll call, during church services, by the deacons' representative. This provided extended families, whose offerings were reported collectively,[8] with an opportunity to demonstrate the level of their commitment to their faith and their fitness for leadership within the village, in a single act, and in a very public forum.

Finally, individuals who aspired to leadership within the family competed with one another to contribute to the family's regular offerings of service and offerings to the pastor and his family. The contributions of each of the households, *fuaifale*, which constitute the extended family, were noted as they were pooled. The generosity of the various households reflected, in part, on those who led them and were responsible for encouraging members to contribute. Thus again, within the context of displays of religious commitment, individuals could advance claims to consideration for secular leadership within the āiga.

Missionaries and Competition

Early on, missionaries were, of necessity, willing to allow Samoans to determine how the needs of the fledgling mission would be met. Faueā, the chief who escorted the Reverends Williams Barff and their party to Samoa, and introduced them to Malietoa, had warned Williams to avoid wholesale condemnation of Samoan custom and practice and against attempts to ban it (Gilson 1970). Williams later thanked God for this advice and clearly heeded it (Moyle 1984). Indeed, he had little option because the mission force was small, had very limited resources, and was almost completely dependent for their protection and support on the chiefs who controlled Samoan society (Macpherson 1997a). Gilson argues that early on Williams had little option but to tread carefully and to accept Samoan practices that were not clearly contrary to fundamental tenets of Christian teaching (Gilson 1970).

Even later, as their influence grew, their continuing dependence on the goodwill of chiefs for access to their people and for the maintenance of the mission discouraged them from interfering with chiefs' decisions about how to create and maintain support for the mission, as long as the means were not inconsistent with Christian doctrine (Gilson 1970; Macpherson 1997a). It could be argued, on this basis, that the missionaries were compelled by circumstance to accept many practices about which they had reservations. Although this may have been true in the early stages of the mission, it was less true later as the influence of the mission within Samoan society broadened and deepened. Where, later, they chose not to discourage a practice, it is reasonable to assume that it was either because the practice was not contrary to fundamental tenets of the faith or because it suited the interests of the mission or both.

This may well have been the case with competition. Missionaries were well aware of the competitive dynamic that existed within the Samoan culture. In this case, it was not competition per se, but the ends it served that missionaries considered problematical. Indeed, it could be used to channel Samoan energy into productive religious activity, which they found highly acceptable, and out of other activities, which they found much less acceptable but which they were disinclined to ban outright. It seems likely that, as the energy devoted to competition in such traditional pursuits as warfare and conspicuous consumption was channeled into more productive activity such as displays of individual and collective religious commitment, missionaries saw little reason to attempt to contain it. Indeed, the chiefs' use of competition provided not only self-financing congregations, but later the funds to provide a theological training institute,[9] an administrative center, a theological training institution to provide education for those identified as

appropriate missionary leaders, a translation facility, and a printing press to publish written instructional material for adherents. This use of competition in the mobilization of resources meant that the LMS mission was free to contemplate a westward expansion of the mission's work.

In fact, it was their concern with the funding of continued expansion of the mission into western Polynesia and Melanesia that led them to harness the Samoan tendency to competition in a novel and unique way. Every year, in May, the London Missionary Society sponsored a competition to generate funds for missionary expansion into the western Pacific, which became known as the *Mē*. The Christians in the villages were encouraged to see themselves as carrying out Christ's injunction to take the Gospel of Light abroad as St. Paul and other disciples had done before them. It was, at one level, an opportunity to make a selfless gesture to ensure that those who had not yet heard the "good news" could hear it and, like the Samoans themselves, enjoy God's grace and the prospect of eternal life. At another level, the annual missionary offering had a somewhat different consequence.

The missionary offering or Mē, was assembled within the village by regular giving through the year and finally presented by a series of steps. Families' offerings were announced within the village and consolidated. Villages' offerings were then announced within the district and consolidated. The districts' offerings were finally presented at a national meeting held in May. The Mē also pitted individuals against one another within families, families against one another within villages, villages against one another within districts, and eventually districts against one another within the nation.[10] At each level, the most generous givers were publicly acknowledged in the presence of both God and their peers.

The Samoans' determination to be as generous as circumstances, and factor endowments, permitted was motivated in part by their commitment to the idea of mission and desire to see the gospel taken among the "heathen nations". This was evident in the numbers of Samoans who offered themselves for theological training and in the number of graduates of the Malua Theological College who went abroad as missionaries from 1846 onward in newly opened mission fields as far west as Papua New Guinea (Gunson 1976). Their generosity was also, in part at least, motivated by a desire to win the approval of both God and their counterparts to whom their commitment was publicly announced and to establish, or consolidate, their fitness to lead within various spheres of Samoan society.

The same competitive urge was harnessed in another annual ritual known as the *Fa'amati*. Every year, senior deacons (*tiakono toeaina)* visited all of the ministers and congregations in a given district (*pulega*) to inspect and report on their accommodation and work; and European ministers and the Samoan

ministry trainees visited villages to test the general and religious knowledge of the children in the pastor's schools, which at that time were the sole vehicles for both religious and secular formal education. In conjunction with these visits, a special offering was made in March of each year by the congregation to refurbish the pastor's house and to ensure that the pastor had the appropriate furnishings[11] for entertaining these guests from the church hierarchy. Although the village deacons set a suggested minimum gift, they set no maximum, on these occasions. This effectively allowed those who sought leadership an opportunity to exceed the suggested level of contribution and to display their wealth in a socially approved context. Those who succeeded in these contexts accumulated sociopolitical capital in the form of prestige that came with their appointment as deacons and the extension of their influence into the religious arena.

Every year too, the pastors and representatives of all the LMS church congregations met at the church's center at Malua on Upolu for their annual conference which lasted as long as seven days.[12] Villages were represented at these conferences by their minister and his wife and, often, several deacons and their wives. Because all of the parties from a particular church district (pulega) shared accommodation at Malua, the levels of support that they enjoyed within their congregations were, thus, highly visible. On these occasions, families from within a congregation took turns to cook lunch and dinner on given days and to deliver these to their representatives at the conference. This event, too, became a site in which families within a congregation, and congregations within a district, could compete with one another to provide more and more varied food for their representatives.

This, in turn, became elaborated as village congregations sought to impress the representatives of other villages in the pulega with their collective generosity by making additional gifts (*asiga*) to the pulega as a whole. They would present gifts of food for all of the representatives of the pulega to share. This practice became an opportunity for villages to compete to demonstrate religious commitment, economic capacity, and generosity. People speak with pride of,

> the year when we took three barrels of home made ice cream of different flavours as an *asiga* for the representatives of the *pulega*. When the food was taken into the house which they shared and presented, the eyes of the people of the other villages from the *pulega* almost popped out. It was the first time they had seen ice cream machine and the first time they had tasted such cold food. The other representatives of the other villages in the *pulega* always waited for the day of our village's *asiga* because, although our village

was small, it was rich and our congregation always surprised them with its generosity.

Constraints on Competition

Throughout the nineteenth century, competition was vigorous but was kept in check by several factors. First, factor endowments limited the amount of wealth that villages could produce. Missions and traders provided markets for copra and coconut oil, but distances to and from plantations, the technologies available, and the frequency of shipping limited the amount that could be harvested for the market. Villages with larger areas of flat land near major centers were able to raise significant amounts of cash from the sale of copra, but other more remote villages with smaller populations and landholdings were constrained by these factors. Larger families, with more resources, were better able to press claims and to do so more decisively than those families with more limited resources, which, over time, reduced competition as hierarchies became established.

Second, throughout the nineteenth century, Samoans were engaged in a series of interfamily wars, which were waged to establish political dominance over all Samoa (Gilson 1970). These wars were prolonged by the misguided attempts of European consuls in Samoa to back various competing factions, which they hoped would be more sympathetic to their interests if, and when, they were installed in power (Meleiseā and Schoeffel 1987: ch. 5 and 6). These wars also disrupted village production as Samoans prepared for wars, destroyed the plantations of vanquished villages, and invested in arms and equipment with which to wage wars. These were some of the few times when Samoans would work for wages in the commercial plantations of the Europeans settlers to earn cash to fund wars. This commitment of labor to commercial plantations also limited the volume and value of village production that could be invested in religious competition.

By the end of the nineteenth century, religious teachings and a disillusion with the escalating capital and human costs of the wars led Samoans to accept and embrace the advantages of peace (Meleiseā and Schoeffel 1987:89–105). This desire coincided with a determination on the part of the European powers in Samoa to replace tense and competitive relationships between the consuls of three aspiring colonial powers and to establish a single political authority and civil administration. This was achieved by the Treaty of Berlin of 1899 that recognized the authority of the German government in the western islands of the Samoas, the United States in the eastern islands, and the English in Tonga (Cyclopedia of Samoa 1907:21–22). After the Germans

were installed as the colonial power in the western islands of the group and the US naval administration was installed in the eastern islands of the archipelago at the turn of the twentieth century, war largely ended. A new period of prosperity commenced as Samoan agricultural production increased and as markets developed. Samoan production of copra and coconut oil increased steadily and found ready markets. The missions encouraged the introduction of new technologies and crops and effectively broadened the productive base of Samoan agriculture and the cash returns available from plantation agriculture.

The political stability and new wealth started a round of church rebuilding using new materials and technologies. Villages started using reef corral, burned in huge pits, to produce a form of lime cement with which much larger, permanent structures could be built. Available cash from trade was used to buy the permanent roofing materials and fastening, ceilings, windows, doors, furnishings, and occasionally pews. The same technology, and increasing cash income from trade, later led to another round of pastor's house rebuilding. The rationale for this round of construction was to provide more appropriate buildings in which to house pastors, receive religious and secular instruction, and in which the steadily growing populations could worship. These more permanent structures also saved congregations the cost of regular reroofing and refurbishing of traditional buildings. Although this produced another round of competition within Samoan society, which was driven by the same cultural dynamics and resembled the earlier rounds, it was still constrained by the prices for the limited range of products that villages could grow and trade and the relatively high costs of imported building materials for permanent construction.

Pastors presided over the church government, prepared lay people for roles in the church, and ran and oversaw the pastor's school that provided basic instruction in literacy, numeracy, history, biology, geography, music, and of course the Bible for both adults and children in their congregations who would otherwise have had no formal education. Pastors' wives provided instruction in such things as handwork, embroidery, and health and hygiene for the women in their congregations. Between them, they maintained a vigorous round of pastoral visiting and visited and ministered to the sick. People speak with great respect and fondness of those pastors and their wives,

> P.... was a remarkable man. He worked hard in his plantation and worked hard for his congregation. He walked with boys all the way up the hill and inland to his plantation, worked with them and then turned around and carried his share of the load back to the village. He went fishing for all of the years he was here and shared his fish,

> and food with families that didn't have any without any fuss. He taught several generations of kids, and their parents, to read, write and count and opened up a world beyond the village to them. His wife, was a good woman, quiet and effective with a good sense of humour who did a lot for women around the village in a quiet way.
>
> You might say they were truly shepherds of their flock and they guided the village, calmed things down by helping people to see the right path. They looked after the village very well and the village looked after them, and their family, very well in return. People respected them and did what they did out of respect for him. That was in the end why he was appointed as a senior minister in the L.M.S church and went on to become well-known and respected in the L.M.S church.

Competition also found continuous expression in daily provision of labor for the pastor's plantation and food for his household, regularly fortnightly freewill offerings, annual meetings of the church at Malua, and the yearly missionary offerings. Competition between those who aspired to lead was intense but was capped by factor endowments, technology, and the market for primary production. Thus, although pastors' families may have enjoyed a higher standard of living than those who made up their congregations, the gap was limited by these factors, and they were seen to work and contribute in important ways in the villages in which they served.

The outbreak of World War I saw New Zealand depose the German administration and assume responsibility for the administration of Western Samoa. This transition of control was formalized when the League of Nations assigned New Zealand a mandate. Throughout the early part of the mandate, New Zealand did not change very much in Samoan society. Personal and institutional racism[13] (Va'ai 1999), some singularly inept, and ultimately tragic,[14] decisions on the part of the New Zealand administrators resulted in a widespread Samoan disillusion with New Zealand administrators and administration (Boyd 1969a). Samoan distanced themselves from a range of New Zealand initiatives and reformed a political movement, *Mau a Pule*, which actively opposed others (Field 1984).

Competition Unchained

World War II was a watershed in Samoan economic history. First, in the later part of the war, there were, at any one time, between 25,000 and 30,000

US troops living close to Samoans around the coastline of Western Samoa (Stanner 1953). The US forces employed some 2,600 Samoans and bought goods and services from others (Shankman 2001). The deployment of US Marines in Samoa exposed the Samoans to a level of wealth, new technologies, and a culture not previously seen. Some argue that WWII awakened an appreciation of the possibilities of new technologies, a desire to become more actively engaged in commerce, and an interest in travel. Second, in the postwar period, a range of public health campaigns resulted in a rapid increase in the Western Samoan birthrate, and reductions in neonatal death rates resulted in a rapidly expanding and relatively younger population (McArthur 1967). The population began to expand at unprecedented rates and caused some consternation about the sustainability of the growth rates of over 4 percent. Third, New Zealand and Australia chose to transform their economies from primarily agricultural to increasingly industrial ones. As they exhausted supplies of local labor for this transformation they began to look to nontraditional sources for new labor. In New Zealand's case, this included Western Samoa for which New Zealand was still responsible under a United Nations Trusteeship assigned after WWll (Boyd 1969b).

When opportunities for out-migration presented themselves after WWII, young Samoans went abroad with the encouragement of their parents and without opposition from the government of the day. Emigrants went in search of adventure, educational opportunities for themselves and their children, new types of work, higher wages, and, in some cases, to escape the constraints of Samoan society (Pitt and Macpherson 1974). Many Samoans who went abroad continued to see themselves as expatriate members of the family, church, and village. The acknowledgment of their indebtedness to "home" committed them to continue to serve, *tautua*, and to repay their debt to those whose "sweat they had eaten".[15] This resulted in a steady and growing flow of remittances in cash and kind (Shankman 1976) to their families, churches, and villages (Macpherson 1974; Pitt and Macpherson 1974).

This flow of remittances was effectively assured by the nature of migrant selection process that ensured that those selected to go abroad by their families were those who were committed to the continuing support of their families (Macpherson 1974, 1997b) and by the character and organization of the expatriate community that developed abroad (Macpherson 1974, 1997b). The steady growth in both the volume and value of remittances from expatriate communities was, in turn, assured by the steady demand for unskilled and semiskilled labor in New Zealand, Australia, and the United States throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s (Ahlburg 1991).

This flow of remittances effectively severed the linkage between local factor endowments and disposable wealth, which had formerly limited the

resources available to families and villages. Individuals, families, and villages whose aspirations to lead had, in the past, been limited by factor endowments were now able to compete with established leaders using their newly expanded resource base. This new source of funds fuelled a new round of competition within Samoan society.

Individuals with migrant relatives abroad found themselves with access to relatively large new sources of funds. Furthermore, as Shankman noted, these funds did not, as in the past, necessarily flow to the matai who then used them on behalf of the family or distributed them to members of the family at their pleasure. Individual migrants sent remittances directly to their parents and families, which meant that more individuals and families now had direct access to funds. They were no longer solely dependent on their matai for access to land for their subsistence and cash needs and were in a position to compete with their former "patrons". Traditional rank-wealth relationships, whereas flexible earlier, were seriously destabilized by this new wealth in the hands of people who might not traditionally have had access to it. The consequences of this redistribution of village wealth became quickly evident, for instance, in two areas: house building, and political representation.

Before large-scale migration commenced, the homes of villages' most prominent families were obvious from their size, their condition, and by the height of their stone foundations. Those entering a village could determine relatively easily where the high chiefs of the village resided. Lesser families could not compete openly with the established families in this area even when they had the resources to do so. However, once remittances started to flow back into villages, a round of house building commenced as families with relatives abroad began to build new European-style homes, *fale papālagi*, in permanent materials.

Although there were good pragmatic, economic reasons for using these materials to build homes, which needed less maintenance than traditional ones, the building allowed families that aspired to leadership to demonstrate their economic capability.

Until then, large homes had belonged to chiefs and part-Samoan traders, and European style homes had belonged mainly to pastors. Although the size and placement of traditional houses that were governed by traditions that effectively prevented competition, no such conventions existed to outlaw competition in this new type of house building. Now, any family with resources could demonstrate that they, too, could build houses that were as large as those of their political leaders and as European as those of their religious leaders and representatives of the *afakasi* or part-Samoan commercial élite. The consequences of this new force for competition were apparent,

and problematical, throughout Samoa as the historian Meleiseā has shown (Meleiseā 2000).

Furthermore, the buildings themselves were only signs of individuals' and families' growing capacity to mobilize wealth offshore. The political significance of this new reality did not escape the traditional leadership. They too sought to demonstrate their continued fitness to lead by rebuilding their own homes in the European style, but they were now competing on a more level playing field. They sought to harness the energies and to tie up the capital of others in a round of church building renewal and the building of such ancillary buildings as schools and women's committee houses, which consumed significant amounts of private capital in the service of the village. But, after these projects were complete, there was little to stop people who aspired to leadership from building homes that could establish their financial capacity both publicly and permanently. Some villages, as Meleiseā has shown, did attempt to limit this, but this was difficult to do (Meleiseā 2000) and produced mixed feelings. One section within the leadership, for instance, argued that many new European-style homes in a village reflected favorably on the village as a whole and could materially assist its claims to a more prominent role in local leadership.

The qualitative change in the character and cost of electoral campaigns, as more people gained access to funds with which to wage election campaigns, signaled another challenge to traditional rank-wealth correlations. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, the matai in a district had quietly chosen a single candidate who enjoyed the respect of the majority to represent the electorate. This arrangement allowed them to compare the genealogies, wealth, political skills, and records of service of various contenders and to pick a single candidate who had the political skills to represent them and who had proven willing in the past to put his personal and family resources at the service of the electorate. This, people reasoned, was evidence that such a person would, in power, continue to use his new offices to attend to the needs of his constituents. These electoral "contests" were replaced by increasingly vigorous campaigns between many candidates for public office (So'o 1998). In some respects, the prospect of success was now significantly influenced by a candidate's access to wealth.

Within the religious sphere, this new wealth sparked a round of intense competition as more players, with more wealth at their disposal, sought to demonstrate their commitment to the faith while simultaneously laying claim to fitness to lead in other spheres. The church organization remained, as before, another sphere in which individuals, families, and villages could demonstrate economic and political capacity. Although the channels were the same, the volumes of resource that flowed within them increased at a

remarkable rate. Families, which had until that time been unable to lay effective claim to leadership because of their size and the size of their plantations, could, with willing migrants abroad, now do so. Villages with limited endowments could now pursue claims to district leadership more forcefully with the new inflow of resources from abroad.

Pastors' homes, churches, and pulpits were rebuilt or refurbished, and louvered windows, pews, organs, wall-hangings, and clocks were added to churches. The alofa or regular offerings increased in value. The periodic offerings such as the Mē, Fa'amati, and Christmas offering began to increase significantly. Individuals, families, villages continue to compete with one another but without the constraints formerly imposed by factor endowments and the realities of subsistence and the size of the village economy (Pitt 1970; Lockwood 1971). New costs, such as electricity, water, and in some cases vehicles and vehicles' running expenses were shouldered by the congregation. Congregations have begun to take responsibility for weddings for their pastor's[16] and their pastor's children particularly where they have grown up in the village and sabbaticals for their spiritual leaders.

The LMS pastor was becoming very attractive as people have channelled more of their capital into competition within the church sphere and the once humble alofa, or cash offering, became tax-free annual salaries that range between SAT28,000 and SAT208,000[17] at a time when the average government servant's salary is SAT8000, a factory worker's is around SAT3500, and a casual plantation worker's around SAT3000. The pastors typically live rent-free in some of the largest homes in the village and with all of their families' expenses met by the congregation. Some are provided with private vehicles and even running expenses for them. They are still provided with plantation lands and labor to work them and in some cases sell the food produced in them in the market for cash. Pastors continue to receive generous gifts, usually in food and cash, whenever a family within the village celebrates a life crisis.

Every year, the Fa'amati provides new home appliances and pieces of furniture that pastors are free to take when they leave the service of the village. In 2001, for instance, congregations were invited to provide bedroom furniture for their pastors' houses, and in what followed, many congregations went offshore to purchase more elaborate furnishings than were available in Samoa. One older woman told us with considerable pride that,

> This year, the village bought the pastor a bedroom suite which cost, after transport costs, $US4500, that's about SAT13,000. It has mirror tiles on the head and foot. In the headboard there is a radio, an alarm clock and a tape player and there are reading lights and

> bookshelves on each side. The set includes a matching blanket box, two chests of drawers and two chairs. It is very nice but I don't know if they ever use it. The children who stay with the pastor just polish it apparently. Maybe they're keeping it in case they have important guests.

The Emerging Private Debates

Where, earlier, gaps between the standard of living of the pastor and members of the congregation were either small or nonexistent, they are now increasingly significant. These gaps have become a matter of considerable private debate, and more than a little criticism, as congregations see these gaps grow and start to question the theological and practical issues that surround this growing inequality. The discussions focus on the causes and consequences of the growing gap and the theological issues that its existence raises.

Explanations of the causes of the growing gap are divided between those who attribute it to the growing greed of a new generation of pastors, those who attribute it to the escalating competition within fa'asamoa, and those who believe these have combined. They are best summarized in composites of the arguments of their respective proponents. Some focus on the focus of new pastors' interest in their material comfort.

> These young pastors are not like the older men who preceded them in the Lord's service. They won't go to a village unless that they know it is wealthy. Then, they want new paint, new furniture, new furnishings, and now "studies", and more children to work in their plantations. They are not like the old men who came with a Bible and a glory box which contained all of their possessions and went and worked in their own plantations and went fishing. These new young men live like lords in the village.

Some focus on their use of the pulpit to criticize congregations for a lack of generosity.

> Many pastors now use the pulpit to complain to their congregations when the level of the *alofa* falls. They may wrap up the message in theological argument but their intention is always clear to Samoans who know their Bible so well. Some of these pastors don't even bother to wrap it up in soft words. Our last pastor said told us there

> was no shame in poverty and that in the gospels the poor are promised the earth as are those who are poor because they serve God and his servants on earth. That was, to say the least, a fairly transparent, message. In truth, I think he was embarrassed publicly because his *alofa* was falling because members of the congregation were getting tired of his poorly prepared sermons and his failure to provide new ideas.

Some focus on some pastors' willingness to engage in commerce while in the service of the Lord and the village.

> There was a pastor in a nearby village, A, who built up a business. At one time he had a store, and three buses in the village where his family lived. He even had plantations from which he sold food, in addition to the plantations he had in the village in which he was a pastor. The congregation worked very hard to provide for him and he was using their *alofa* to build his business. Much of his time and his wife's time was spent running the business instead of running the congregation. He really ate their sweat. ....Two of the buses crashed and one broke down and I think that was what brought the rest of the business down. I suppose there's a lesson in that, eh?

Many have stories about the excesses of this sort of conduct that get traded at sessions where these matters are discussed. One, for instance, recalled when,

> The pastor at my wife's village was called to another village. The relationship had not always been entirely happy and so people were not unhappy to see him go. When he went, he took every stick of furniture and every fitting and all of the crockery and all of the soft furnishings. Mate, you wouldn't believe what we found when we went inside. The plugs and taps were taken from the kitchen sink and bathroom basins. The toilet seats were gone. Even the light wall sockets had been taken and all there were wires hanging out of the roof and walls. His brothers were about to remove the gutterings from the house when the *matai* realised what was happening and moved in.

Those who have become increasingly disappointed with the quality of theological discussion and spiritual leadership over time attribute it to the new pastors' preoccupation with material comfort.

> I don't think that all of these new pastors go to theological college because they are "called" like the old pastors. Some go because their family have been pastors before them and they have enjoyed the lifestyle. Others go because they see it is the best-paid job in Samoa and even a chance to go overseas where, incidentally, the rewards are even higher. Some only go so they can serve a congregation for a few years, maybe five maybe ten, save some money, and then start a business. They don't have a true sense of vocation and don't provide effective spiritual leadership because they are not truly serving the Lord and are not filled with the desire to guide their people. They watch television instead of studying the Bible, and go to the movies instead of visiting their congregation. They are nothing like my grandfather who went to the plantation to get his food, then went around the village visiting, then taught in the pastor's school and then studied his bible and prepared his service by the light of the old kerosene lantern.

The situation that these people see is one in which,

> The Bible says in numerous places that the pastors are, like God, to be the shepherds of the flock. Their role is to lead the sheep to food and to rivers where they can find water and protect them from harm. Look, for instance, at Isaiah 40:11, where shepherds are supposed "to feed the flock, gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom and shall gently lead those who are with young". These new pastors leave their flocks to find their own food and then starve the flock and eat the sheep. Well, that is not, in my thinking, the correct conduct.

Some, however, accept a degree of personal responsibility for the situation they see developing. They point to the fact that the pastors are used by their congregations and that they may not have as much power over their flock as is commonly supposed.

> People use the church setting to establish their position within a village and sometimes in a family. They do this by giving more than other people so that the rest of the congregation can hear their names and their offerings called every Sunday. If the church has a special offering, they give more again so that people can hear their name and hopefully, remember it. Then they become deacons in the church which is a recognition of leadership which opens other

> doors. You can't really blame the pastors who come to a form of organisation which was set up a very long ago and find themselves caught in it.

Others note that if the villages sought to change the situation they could because,

> The pastor and his wife serve at the pleasure of the church and the village. If the village is unhappy with their pastor's performance, there are procedures which can be invoked to dismiss the pastor and call another. Villages do this periodically, but when they do it is usually because of something like inappropriate personal behaviour rather than because of the organisation of the church itself which is largely in the hands of the *fono a tiakono* anyhow. So you hear of pastor's being dismissed because of adultery, or the pastor's wife's conduct, or for poor preaching but not because of the organisation of the church.

This is possibly true because young pastors may have limited influence over the session that actually controls the organization of the parish.

> Remember that when a young pastor goes to a village, he has to work with a group of deacons who have been there for most of their lives and know exactly how they want the church to run. The pastor can try and persuade them to do something differently but unless they want to do it too, then it's dead. People think the pastors have all the power but I think the relationship is more like the horse and rider. The riders sits on top with the reins in his hand, but if the horse doesn't want to move, there's not a lot the rider can do. The horse is bigger and stronger. The rider can kick the horse, or whip it, but if the horse gets sick of the treatment, it can just rear up and throw the rider on the ground.

Another pointed out that how this might work.

> In our village the pastor tried to prevent all of the children whose parents did not come to church regularly from taking part in the festivities on White Sunday. This meant that children were denied a right that their parents had because they were born in the village. Well the pastor persisted with this "ban" to try and get the people who lived outside the village to come to church. The people resisted

> by deliberately reducing their *alofa* offerings. The first offering fell by a significant figure because the people who lived outside the village had good jobs in town and were big givers. The pastor held his ground and the next offering really delivered the message more forcefully. Eventually, the pastor relented and allowed the kids to take part. After all, it was becoming a matter of discussion within and beyond the village and it must have been embarrassing because nobody was actually 'resisting' but they were protesting in a very public way. But it was a lesson to the pastor about where the power lies.

Others are less partisan and see the situation as one that suits both the pastor and the deacons and, indirectly, a significant part of the village. The existing arrangements allow the church setting to be used by the people of the village as a site in which families can lay claims to both secular and religious leadership. Their collective generosity in turn allows the village to advance its status and claims to leadership within the district. This competition, which is ostensibly about commitment to the faith, is by definition a morally defensible one and provides a site for the use of the village. The pastor also benefits directly from the situation. The competition draws people to the church regularly, which appears to reflect his gift as a teacher and augments both the offerings and the resources the village places at his disposal. As one woman noted,

> The arrangement was put in place by the *Pāpalagi* missionaries to help the mission, but Samoans embraced and refined the arrangement because it suited us because it was part of our culture, *fa'asamoa*. Once the missionaries took away the wars and the competitive visiting, *malaga*, the church was an obvious place in which these contests could be continued. The situation continues and the pastors' and the villages' interests are bound together in this symbiotic relationship. It has become tradition and no one has much interest in changing it.

This may overstate the case. In fact, there is significant private discussion of this arrangement, and much of it is critical. Much is fuelled by the observation of and increasing awareness of other denominations' forms of organization and may, in fact, be reflected in the growth of other denominations in Samoa. There is for instance considerable interest in the organization of the Mormon Church, which has been in Samoa since 1884 but which has recently begun to grow more rapidly. People noted, for instance, differences in the nature of leadership and the organization of the church.

> You know that in the LDS church, the young people pay to take part in the mission work. They pay their fares, clothes, shoes, bicycles, and in some places even their food. They go wherever the church sends them. Some of those young kids go to the poorest countries on earth to spread the word. That seems more like what Jesus meant when he said, "leave everything and follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Their approach to discipleship seems more like the model that Jesus offered us in the New Testament.

The Mormon system of giving attracted favorable attention and not simply from those within the faith.

> The church has a system of offerings which are based on scriptural texts and is what was done in the old times. They ask only that people provide a tithe which is one tenth of their earnings. This is based directly on Holy Scripture and is clearly set out in the Old Testament in Leviticus and Numbers. That way, the amount of the offering is between the person who is giving and God. That is the way it should be. Their system depends on a person's honesty and personal honour. It does not depend on pressure from other people to give. It is not because you want to be someone in the eyes of the other people in the congregation.

Another noted a fundamental difference in the relationship between the church and its people.

> You know the Mormons support the people. After Valelia (a 1991 hurricane), Mormons went and gave out food to everybody: Mormons and non-Mormons all got the same. They store food for these sorts of occasions and their bishops directed the people to share their food with everyone in the village who needed food. Our church (LMS) was busy trying to get food for the families, and for our pastor, when the people from the Mormon Church in our village came with food for us all. It made a lot of people think and at the time a lot of people joined the Mormon Church. Some have begun to trickle back to the Methodist and LMS, but in some villages, after Valelia, a lot of people who went away stayed away.

Finally, people compared the difference between Mormon and LMS means of expansion.

> The Mormons can call on the support of Mormons all over the world. The Mormons in the rich countries help their brothers and sisters in poor countries. That is why they can build so many and such large buildings all over the place. The people in the villages don't become impoverished raising money to build and furnish new churches like us. They make a contribution, of course, but building companies do the actual work and the people are free to concentrate on their learning and teaching. I don't know if they feel so proud of their churches because they didn't make extreme sacrifices to build them like we do in our church, but they are not always complaining about their church's demands. I have Mormon relations and their life is a lot smoother in some ways than ours because of their church.

The Muted Public Debate

Only occasionally, however, do these discussions spread into the public arena. Some have exposed aspects of the issue to scrutiny in public venues. The most visible of these are the comedy sketches, *faleaitu*, performed at the annual Teuila Festival, which has become a major attraction for local and overseas Samoans and increasing numbers of tourists. For several years, two of Samoa's favorite exponents of faleaitu, Siaki and Petelo, caricatured traditional pastors and satirized their conduct in a series of skits to large, appreciative audiences at Teuila Festival. These highly irreverent performances were recorded are rebroadcast regularly on Televise Samoa and on the Radio 2AP, both of which are owned by the government, and still get many laughs. The form of the criticism, however, may have been too strong for some who complained at their irreverence. The Organizing Committee, which screens performances for the festival, in 2001, for the first time, warned would-be performers that such performances will not be considered for the public stages and competitions. Can the public discussion of these issues be headed off this easily?

The connection between a tradition of competitive giving and the organization of some mainstream denominations makes it difficult to raise questions about the former issue without being seen to be questioning the legitimacy of the latter. The situation is made more difficult by the principle of gerontocracy, which ensures that most of the church's leaders are appointed when they are in middle-age, are well accustomed to the church's organization, and are chosen as leaders for their unstinting commitment to its work over time. Many have a vested interest in its maintenance and are highly unlikely to accept the need to make more than cosmetic changes. Even people who have

become uncomfortable with the consequences of competition, but remain committed to the faith, may choose to avoid discussion of the issue in church forums to avoid exposing themselves to the accusation of failing religious commitment, which may have higher personal social costs than accommodation. Although elements of tradition and religion organization have become so closely intertwined that overt criticism is difficult, change may occur as a consequence of internal and external actions taken by members.

Some influential people who reach leadership positions within the church may start to bring a halt to the competition from within. One well-educated, influential, high chief, with a record of exemplary service to the church, became concerned about the impact of constantly escalating expectations of giving on his village his village's welfare. He "capped" the alofa contributions, which he made under two of his chiefly titles, and effectively ended the annual inflation of expectation. He explained that, as long as he maintained his contributions at a given level, no one in the village could, except in exceptional circumstances, give more without showing disrespect and disturbing historical relativities between the families and titles within the village. This move, he explained, effectively ended the upward trend, which he would have been expected to lead as the holder of two of the village's highest titles and which others would then have had to match to maintain relativities. Such moves from within depend, however, on the presence of leaders who can take a broader view of the process and may not occur fast enough for some people.

Congregations may take advantage of their pastors' sabbatical absences to discuss the pastors' performance and expectations. In cases where pastors' conduct has been found wanting, the congregations have been able to take the opportunity to indicate that they will not accept their pastor's return. Among reasons given for taking this action were pastor's greed and for unremitting or unreasonable demands on congregations.[18] One elder, whose congregation had taken such action, pointed out that their former pastor's greed had been his undoing because he now served a small, poor congregation where his fortnightly offering was about one-tenth of that which he had received when he had served them. Furthermore, the elder noted, his prospects of being called to another larger, more generous congregation was now irreparably damaged by widespread knowledge of the background to his departure from their service. The congregation has since called another pastor to whom they continued to give at the same level. This case suggests that it is not competition as such that is considered problematic so much as who manages it.

There are also external forces that are challenging the legitimacy of the demands made in mainstream churches. People are becoming increasingly

dependent on cash to purchase goods and services they once produced and were effectively free or inexpensive. As people find that demands generated by competition within mainstream churches prevent them from obtaining basic goods and services, they may feel increasing inclined to transfer their membership to denominations that make fewer or lesser financial demands. People who find themselves in this situation can change denominations without exposing themselves to accusation of declining commitment to faith. People can, and do, vote with their feet, removing themselves from churches whose demands they consider excessive or theologically unjustifiable. This is a simple solution to the dilemma and one taken by increasing numbers of people as the relative shares of the population worshiping in "new faiths" show. This is not always easy for several reasons. First, a number of mainly rural villages actively resist[19] the establishment of new denominations within their boundaries and force members who wish to worship in those churches to travel further to do so. Second, long histories of family association with, support for and leadership in particular denominations, can mean that decisions to leave raise questions about family loyalty. These may expose individuals to accusations of declining commitment to one's family, which is another uncomfortable burden to bear[20] and may have significant social consequences in a society in which kinship is a fundamental element of personal and social identity.

Conclusion

If these reactions to the escalating demands imposed by competition seem less intense than might be expected, it may be for one of two reasons: one sociological and one theological. First, as people grow up and become familiar with a particular set of practices, and in the absence of feasible and visible alternatives, these become norms and are not routinely subject to questioning. In fact, as we have suggested above, denominations such as the Mormon, Seventh Day Adventist, Baha'i, and now some Pentecostal denominations are increasingly providing bases for comparison. Mormon and Seventh Day Adventist congregations, which effectively cap competition by tithing, are becoming established in villages, but Pentecostal denominations that are implicitly and, in some cases explicitly, critical of practices of the mainstream denominations are confined principally to the urban areas. Their practices and critiques are not readily visible to many people living in the rural villages. Second, when people travel overseas, as they routinely do, they often visit churches in overseas Samoan communities, which are organized in very much the same way as their own village churches and in which competition on an even larger scale has become endemic (Macpherson and

Macpherson 2001). They do not always see the significant numbers of people who have moved away from the offshoots of mainstream churches to either new denominations or away from organized religion altogether.

The second reason why criticism of the consequence of the competitive practices remains muted derives from the scriptures themselves. Samoans who are concerned, routinely refer to a number of passages in scripture that enjoin followers to refrain from judgement of others and in particular their pastors and leaders. The task of judgement is to be left to the Lord who will, in the last days, judge their leaders. People know from Old Testament scripture, that He will punish errant leaders as he has in the past and far more severely than they could. Indeed, some even speculate about the sort of punishment that might be visited upon their pastors. Furthermore, because current interpretation favors imminent end to the world, this judgement is not far away and will be public. In the meantime, their situation is made no worse by giving and remaining poor as a consequence. Scripture assures them that the poor will enter Heaven and find God, whereas the rich, including their pastors, will have more trouble entering Heaven than a camel will have passing through the eye of a needle.

NOTES

1. The earliest missionaries in Samoa were from the Methodist or Wesleyan Church and the London Missionary Society (LMS), which were known early as the Lotu Tōga and Lotu Ta'iti, respectively, after their origins in Tonga and Tahiti, and these have, along with the Roman Catholic Church or Lotu Pope, become the largest and most influential denominations in Samoa. This paper focuses on the organization of current form of the LMS denomination, the Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano o Samoa (EFKS).

2. In practice, the competition for valued positions involved primarily men. Although women did exercise significant amounts of influence through their relationships with their brothers and through their linkages to other families, they tended not to hold the titles in which power was formally vested. In contemporary Samoa, the competition is typically more open, and the valued positions are increasingly sought and held by women on the basis of their demonstrated skill and educational attainments.

3. Sometimes also referred to as *āiga potopoto* meaning the family in convocation that typically occurred when family gathered to appoint leaders and take decisions.

4. Technically because, over time, individuals, families, and villages that won leadership could, with the right set of political skills, consolidate their positions, which made it more difficult, but not impossible, for others to displace them.

5. Early missionaries' accounts of their travels contain many reports of inquiries by Samoan chiefs as to how they could prove their commitment to the new faith and secure the permanent services of a missionary or teacher.

6. Mark 9:35–37; Mark 12:1–11; and Matthew 25:31–45 popularly invoked texts used to justify generosity to God's servants on earth.

7. Chronicles 28:9; Psalms 44:21; and Proverbs 15:3 are some of the most frequently quoted scriptural justifications of this belief.

8. Extended families pooled their contribution and presented them as a single entity (*matāfale*), but the contributions of each of its constituent households was known and in some cases documented.

9. Malua Theological College, Upolu.

10. The term "nation" is used with some reservations here because there was at the time no formally designated nation in existence when the practice commenced.

11. These typically comprised woven sleeping mats (*fala lili'i*), floor mats (*papa laufala*), bamboo pillows (*aluga*), and domestic furnishings such as sheets, pillowcases, mosquito nets, and kerosene lights.

12. In practice, it was often longer because the general meetings were preceded by meetings of the senior ministers (*faife'au toeaina*) that lasted another two or three days.

13. Racism was clearly evident in their relations with the Samoans and their expressed attitudes to Samoan self-government. Samoan–European and Samoan–Chinese relations are readily evident in their reports, their application of legislation, and indeed their personal conduct.

14. The decision to allow the *SS Talune* to land in Apia in 1918, after it had been refused permission to land in American Samoa, resulted in the introduction of the influenza strain that had caused a pandemic in Europe. The "Spanish flu" resulted in the death of between 22 percent and 24 percent of the Samoan population.

15. A metaphor reflecting the idea that individual success was built on the collective efforts of those around them.

16. This is unusual because LMS pastors are typically married when they are called to a village to serve. In some cases, however, the costs of widowers' weddings are paid for by villages as was the case of the Lalomanu village pastor in 2001.

17. The actual income of a given pastor depends on the factor endowment of the village, the number of churches in a village, the number of expatriate members of a congregation, and even relationships between the pastor and the congregation.

18. Others included misconduct of various sorts, inappropriate conduct of pastor's spouses, deterioration of relations with the congregation, incompetence as a preacher and teacher, and disorganization.

19. In 1997, in Samalaeulu Savai'i, a man who established an LDS study group was warned by the village council to desist. When he invoked his constitutional right to religious freedom and continued, he was taken by other villagers, and at the direction of the

fono, to be burned. Village pastors and the rain intervened, but after the event, the police advised him that they could not enforce his right and warned him to take his family to another village where he could worship in safety.

20. When a family, whose forebears were responsible for the establishment of the LMS church in the village in Faleata, became members of the SDA church, they were accused of turning their back on their history and were for a time ostracized from family and village affairs.

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R. L. STEVENSON'S SAMOAN GOTHIC: REPRESENTING LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY PLANTATIONS

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Sāmoa's plantation landscape haunts Robert Louis Stevenson's 1892 text, *A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa*. Stevenson represents the German-run plantations as sites of gothic terror, which are haunted by the ghosts of indentured laborers. In this essay, I examine Stevenson's accounts of German plantation culture alongside corollary narratives from Sāmoa's three commercial newspapers: the *Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette* (1877–81) the *Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser* (1888–96), and the *Samoa Weekly Herald* (1892–1900). By juxtaposing some of Stevenson's primary texts and local newspaper coverage, I not only identify the divergent discourses that shaped the perceptions of laborers but also reveal how the novelist constructed a form of gothic to participate in debates regarding the ethics of plantation labor in Sāmoa.

> You ride in a German plantation and see no bush, no soul stirring.... We must add the yet more lively allurement of a haunted house, for over these empty and silent miles there broods the fear of the negrito cannibal. (Stevenson, 1892)

SĀMOA'S PLANTATION LANDSCAPE haunts Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa* (1892).[1] After guiding his reader across Mulinu'u, "the proper residence of the Samoan kings" (1996, 11), and into the port town of Apia, home to an eclectic group of European merchants, planters, and beachcombers, the narrator reaches

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the "centre of trouble, the head of the boil of which Samoa languishes" (1996, 14): the "German firm" or, the Deutsche Handels-und Plantagen-Gesellschaft (DHPG). Sāmoa's landscape bears the corporation's imprint in the shape of "zones of cultivation" that stand out against "the dark vest of forest" (1996, 15). Next, the reader is invited to "walk for hours in parks of palm trees alleys" and to admire the "carpet of clean sward, [where] troops of horses and herds of handsome cattle may be seen to browse"; in fact, "to one accustomed to the rough luxuriance of the tropics, the appearance is of fairy-land" (1996, 15). Despite the pastoral charms of these emerald plantations, the description that unfolds in my epigraph discloses their sinister aspects: empty, endless miles of "cocoanut alleys" over which "broods the fear of the negrito cannibal" (1996, 20).[2]

Stevenson's evocation of the Pacific plantation as a gothic site haunted by the "negrito cannibal" invites us to consider how settler colonials represented the German plantation system and its relation to Melanesian laborers.[3] In this essay, I examine Stevenson's accounts of German plantation culture alongside corollary narratives from Sāmoa's three commercial newspapers: the *Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette* (1877–81) the *Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser* (1888–96), and the *Samoa Weekly Herald* (1892–1900).[4] By juxtaposing some of Stevenson's primary texts and local newspaper coverage, I not only identify the divergent discourses that shaped the European perception of laborers but also reveal how the novelist constructed a vision of Samoan gothicism and thus participated in debates regarding the ethics of plantation labor.[5] These debates, diverse visions, and gothic perceptions bring us closer to understanding how Sāmoa's colonial settlers understood plantations, the nameless thousands bound to them, and the Samoans that resisted them.

The abolition of slavery across the British Empire in 1833 and the spread of western capitalism abroad commodified the labor of Pacific Islanders. From the 1860s until the early twentieth century, Islanders were contracted, acquired through deceptive means, or kidnapped outright to work on foreign-owned plantations in Queensland, Fiji, New Caledonia, Tahiti, and Sāmoa.[6] In the trade's early years, kidnapping, or "blackbirding," was widespread throughout the southwestern and central Pacific (Moore et al. 1990, xxxi).[7] The British government responded to cases of illegal recruiting by instituting regulations such as the Pacific Islanders Protection Act in 1872 and 1875, which effectively established Queen Victoria's "jurisdiction over her subjects within any islands and places in the Pacific Ocean not being within Her Majesty's dominions, nor within the jurisdiction of any civilized power" (*The Pacific Islanders Protection Act*, clause 6). While the act covered the labor-trading activities of Victoria's subjects, it also provided a legal definition for kidnapping and supplied naval officers with instructions on what measures

to take when they encountered a slaving vessel (Docker 1970: 92–93). The appointment of the first Pacific High Commissioner for the Western Pacific in 1877 was a further attempt to control trade in areas of British commercial interests. His responsibility, among others, was to "supervise labour recruiters and traders in Melanesia and Micronesia" (Scarr 1968, xvi).[8]

When Stevenson and his wife Fanny sailed into Pacific waters in 1888, island communities were still struggling with the aftermath of recruiting. Although there was a marked drop in the incidence of blackbirding in the 1870s, social degradation, or "cultural kidnapping," prevailed (Moore 1985: 47–48). In 1890, during the cruise of the *Janet Nicoll*, Stevenson and Fanny observed the effects of cultural kidnapping in the islands and atolls of Micronesia. In her diary, Fanny recounts an incident when two American vessels landed at Funafuti in 1886 and lured two-thirds of the population aboard their ship by promising them an education. "It is needless to add," remarks Fanny, "that the vessels were slavers, and the entrapped islanders were never seen again" (2004: 120–21). Their next stop was Natau, and again, the Stevensons learned that Natau had been "a favourite recruiting place for slavers and worse still, a haunt of the loathsome 'Bully Hayes'" (2004, 126). The terrible effects of recruiting practices that Stevenson observed during the cruise of the *Janet Nicoll* led to his recognizing the urgent need to reduce the harmful impact of indentured labor.[9]

In February 1892—now settled at his Vailima plantation in Sāmoa—Stevenson announced that *Sophia Scarlet*, his new novel, was "entirely planned." Although the fledgling literary project never made it past an outline (1994, 7:231),[10] its initial fifteen pages contain the themes of illegal recruiting and plantation violence. *Sophia Scarlet*'s fictional Tahitian plantation was inspired by William Stewart's plantation at Atimaona in Tahiti (Balfour 1922, 358).[11] In a letter to his mentor Sidney Colvin, Stevenson explained that Stewart's historical plantation would give *Sophia Scarlet* an "Uncle Tom flavour" (1994, 7:231). From the novel's early stages, Stevenson was adapting Harriet Beecher Stowe's popular abolition novel (1851–52) for a Pacific setting.[12]

Sophia Scarlet's outline opens with a description of Dan Scarlet, an English planter, and his "cargo" of laborers, who have been obtained by an ex-officer who "makes no secret of the nature of his employment [recruiting]" (Stevenson 2008, 129).[13] When Dan Scarlet reaches his vanilla and coconut plantation, he is greeted by his three daughters. Sophia, the youngest, is intelligent, passionate, and unafraid to decry the injustices that she observes on her family's plantation. One day, she informs her father that his German overseer, Strelitz, has been "cowhiding a labour boy" (2008, 131); on another occasion, the young woman witnesses her sister "beating" a Gilbertese

servant "with a switch" (2008, 131). Sophia's compassion only increases when a laborer appeals to her, "saying he has been whipped and robbed by one of the white misis [*sic*] on the plantation" (2008, 132). The politics of plantation violence are addressed when a visitor asks Sophia whether she "like[s] the labour business," to which she insists that the "business" is akin to "slavery" (2008, 138). Later, a dispute breaks out when Sophia is accused by her sister of being a "political woman." Casting aside her role of dutiful daughter, Sophia cries out that she cannot bear to live at the expense of others' dignity and "eat[s]" her "bread with tears of shame" (2008, 140). Once more Sophia asserts her independence when she goes against her father's explicit order not to go into the bush because of the "black boys" that linger there (2008, 131). As she treks through the jungle, Sophia encounters a "black boy," a "huge old islander" who stands "feeding a fire ... crooning and muttering to himself." When he turns suddenly around, Sophia notices his "red eyes," which are a result of the "devil-work" he has been practicing. As he begins to lead Sophia "to his house, a wretched shed roofed with stolen sheet iron," a "labour woman" arrives and swears her "to secrecy as to the old man and his house" (2008, 133).

When Stevenson succumbed to a brain hemorrhage in 1894, *Sophia Scarlet* remained incomplete.[14] In a letter from May 1892, Stevenson explained to Colvin that he was putting the plantation novel on hold in order to finish *Weir of Hermiston*, the final novel in the Scottish trilogy that began with *David Balfour*: "*Sophia* is a book I am much taken with; and mean to get to" but "*David Balfour* and *The Young Chevalier* must be finished first" (1994, 7:282). He went on to remark that since "*The Young Chevalier* is a story of sentiment and passion," it will "prepare me for *Sophia* which is to contain three ladies, and a kind of love affair between the heroine and a dying planter who is a poet!" (1994, 7:282). Stevenson's off-handed description of *Sophia Scarlet*'s plot echoes an earlier dismissal of his novel as merely "regular," with its "heroine and hero, and false accusation, and love and marriage, and all the rest of it" (1994, 7:231). The author's nonchalance about his use of the popular Victorian literary trappings—heroines, intrigue, romance, marriage, and "all the rest of it"—are not to be taken at face value. *Sophia Scarlet*'s dysfunctional plantation and bush-dwelling "black boy" are distinctly un-Victorian, and the novel's outline is thoroughly imbued with references to European colonialism in the nineteenth-century Pacific.[15]

The novel's themes belong to the context of Stevenson's contemporaneous *A Footnote to History*. The depiction of the cruel and callous treatment of the laborers at the hands of the German overseer Strelitz echoes Stevenson's poignant critique of the DHPG's Samoan plantations. In *A Footnote to History*, Stevenson insists that Germans' impressive plantations are built on

the sweat of "seven or eight hundred men and women" who "toil for the German firm on contracts of three or five years." The duration of the contract, however, is not always honored by the Germans, because as a form of "punitive extra labour," the "thrall's term of service is extended" so that "even where that term is out, much irregularity occurs in the repatriation of the discharged" and abuses "flourish" (1996: 15–16). While both *Sophia Scarlet* and *A Footnote to History* feature German overseers and unscrupulous plantation owners, they also highlight the figure of the "black boy," the indentured Melanesian laborer. The old islander whom Sophia encounters parallels the Sāmoa-wide phenomenon of plantation fugitives who, according to Thomas M. Dawson's consular report, are "treated more like slaves than anywhere else" and thus feel compelled to "fle[e] into the bush" (1882, 19). Despite opposing the practices of the DHPG, Stevenson was integrated into a colonial plantation culture and benefited directly from being a DHPG neighbor.

In 1890, the novelist found himself "a landholder and a farmer with paths to hew in tropical bush, weeds to deracinate, weeders and diggers to supervise" (Stevenson 1994, 7:18). Happily, he assumed the role of a small tropical farmer and confided to Colvin that, perhaps in "five or six years," Vailima might "support us and pay wages" (1994, 7:202). Years later, when the American businessman Harry J. Moors commented on his relationship with the celebrity, he recalled the latter's particular interest in cacao: "As Mr Stevenson cleared off his acreage, to make room for his new house, he began to think that he should also plant cacao, and he increased his force of boys" (1986: 96–97). Moors helped to clear Stevenson's 300 acres of land and oversaw a force of laborers. Stevenson was not the only ambitious British settler: in all, Sāmoa's British plantations employed 210 Gilbert Islanders between 1877 and 1886 (Macdonald 2001, 56; Munro 1989, 174). In the late 1870s, the majority of these workers were sent to the former London Missionary Society missionary Frank Cornwall, who with the help of Moors, ran the Magia and Lata plantations.

Cornwall's plantations were notorious, and Moors was at the heart of the controversy. In 1877, Cornwall had recruited 135 Gilbert Islanders, half of whom were sent to the Lata plantation, where they were denied adequate amounts of food and water.[16] At the time, Moors was Lata's overseer, and he had a nasty reputation for being "driving and callous" and frequently using "corporal punishment" (Munro and Firth 1993, 111).[17] The conditions at Cornwall's plantations were so notorious that nearly twenty years later, in 1899, the *Samoa Weekly Herald* reminded readers that 130 "colored laborers" had been kept at Lata "for five months ... upon miserably bad and insufficient food ... [and] that men and women were alike cruelly flogged at the caprice of the manager [Moors]" (2 September 1899).

Although Magia's and Lata's deplorable living and working conditions led to an official inquiry and eventually to Moors's consequent dismissal, the latter's participation in the labor trade was by no means over. By 1879–80, Moors was working as a recruiting agent for the Jaluit-based firm of Hernsheim in the Marshalls (Bennett 1976, 15). During the same period, he also worked for the Hawaiian government as a recruiting agent, for which the Hawaiian Evangelical Association recognized "his conscientious efforts in fairly engaging his recruiters" (*Cyclopedia of Samoa* 1907, 88). Based on his experiences as a labor recruiter in Micronesia, Moors wrote two novels in the 1880s, both unpublished, titled *The Tokanoa: A plain tale of some strange adventures in the Gilberts* and *Tapu: A tale of adventure in the South Seas*. Both texts purport to be compilations from the diary of the fictional "John T. Bradley, labor agent" and belong to the popular genre of "South Seas" adventure fiction featuring labor recruiters confronted by hostile and violent islanders. While his fiction leaves much to be desired, Moors is best remembered by literary historians as the author of *With Stevenson in Samoa* (1910), a biography of Stevenson's final years in Sāmoa. Stevenson was all too familiar with Moors's unsavory associations with "'blackbirded' labour" (McLynn 1994, 368), and in a March 1890 letter he acknowledges that Moors is "not of the best character" because he "has been in the labour trade as supercargo; [and] has been partner with Grevsmuhl, the most infamous trader in these waters" (1994, 6:381). Grevsmuhl spent four years recruiting laborers for J. C. Godeffroy und Sohn, and Moors was his junior partner for three years (*Cyclopedia of Samoa* 1907, 100). Despite his discomfort with Moors's connections to the labor trade, the latter was certainly up to the task of helping Stevenson settle his plantation. Moors explains that while Stevenson was undertaking the cruise of the *Janet Nicoll*, he hired laborers to clear the overgrown property (1910, 22). When Stevenson returned to Sāmoa, he found that the road leading to his new estate "had been widened and improved" and that "a crew of Melanesian laborers, who were employed by Harry Moors, were hard at work cutting and burning trees and bush" (Holmes 2001, 204). Land clearing, however, was only the first step toward establishing a working plantation. In time, Stevenson turned to his German neighbors from the Vailele plantation to purchase trees and other species of vegetation, such as coconut seeds. With such support, banana, breadfruit, mango, orange, guava, and coconut trees flourished at Vailima. In addition, "several acres" were set aside for pineapple and kava (Balfour 1922: 334–35). The success of the plantation, however, depended on reliable manpower; "black boys" were indispensable to Stevenson's ambitions as a small planter in Sāmoa.[18] While the exact number of workers that were employed at Vailima has not been established, for Sāmoa's German plantations, the figures are as follows. Between 1867

and 1894, more than 2,000 workers were engaged from the Carolines, the Gilberts, and the Marshalls (Firth 1973, 309). Roughly the same number were recruited from the New Hebrides, the Solomon Islands, and the Bismarck Archipelago between 1878 and 1885 (Munro and Firth 1987, 27). Between 1887 and 1912, another 5,000 workers were recruited from the Bismarck Archipelago and German Solomons (Firth 1982, 179). Between 1883 and 1886, thirty laborers were recruited from the Cook Islands (Firth 1973, 12), and during the same time period, another twenty workers were engaged from Tuvalu (Munro 1982: 276–77).[19]

The German labor trade was aligned with Germany's political interests in the Pacific; in 1884, when Germany annexed northeastern New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago, the Samoan branch of the DHPG gained exclusive access to recruitment in these areas.[20] German plantations were managed by notoriously strict overseers who made liberal use of corporal punishment (Munro and Firth 1990, 20). Since the German consul in Sāmoa backed the interests of the DHPG, abusive methods for instilling discipline went unchecked, a state of affairs that the British and American consults found deplorable.[21] J. C. Williams, for example, reported that German overseers were "beat[ing] and flog[ing]" their workers—including women and children—and getting away with it, because the abuses occurred "in the presence of the German consul, who was also the firm's manager" (quoted in Firth 1973, 19). Williams, like everyone else in Sāmoa, knew that "German rule ... meant Godeffroy rule" (Kennedy 1974, 7); however, in contrast to Williams's complaint about the German consul overlooking transgressions, an 1877 *Samoa Times* editorial argued for the superiority of the German system in Sāmoa in comparison to that of the British in Fiji. The columnist explains that, upon arrival in Sāmoa, indentured laborers are inspected by the "solicitous" German consulate:

> A register is kept of the name, sex, date of recruiting, and name of employer of each emigrant, together with the term of service and amount to be paid per month to each.... It is also arranged that families are never separated.... The person employing these people are held responsible for them, and have to report deaths and other casualties to the Consulate, and be prepared to send them home at the end of their term. (3 November 1877)

Despite the columnist's insistence that Sāmoa's laborers were confident about the "probability of being returned home when their term of service has expired," William B. Churchward maintained that the DHPG often resorted to retaining workers beyond the expiration of their contracts to

produce docile laboring bodies (1887: 62–63).[22] In 1883, 540 of 1,250 laborers were being retained (Munro and Firth 1990: 20–21). Like his British colleague, the American consul expressed dismay over the German practice of extending a laborers' period of indenture without consent and, in his consular report, referred to the case of a worker who was forced to spend an extra five years on a DHPG plantation (Dawson 1882, 18). An anonymous letter to the editor of the *Samoa Times*—signed "Sceptic"—reflects the public interest in the issue of repatriation. In response to an earlier article about a detained plantation worker, the writer argues that "the boy's assertion ... cannot be implicitly relied on.... [Because] little reliance can be placed upon a black boy's estimate of time, and I would not be surprised if the boy had worked, according to his own statement, 25 years" (March 1, 1890).

The *Samoa Times*'s response to "Sceptic" suggested that "all imported labour under contract can tell almost to a day the expiration of their engagement" (March 1, 1890). The debate over appropriate repatriation and a worker's ability to gauge the duration of his work reflected the way in which plantations distorted workers' time: within the boundaries of the DHPG plantation, the period of indenture was subordinated to the "rhythm"[23] of economic production. The assumption that islanders were incapable of telling time was based in the ideology that they were rooted in a timeless and unchanging past, the antithesis of progress and modernity.

A series of natural disasters in the 1860s and the civil war of 1869–73 induced Samoans to part with large tracts of land in exchange for food supplies, guns, and ammunition (Hempenstall 1984, 21; Munro and Firth 1987, 26). Many Samoans, displaced by this "mad rush" (Hempenstall 1984, 21) or "land grab" (Meleiseā 1987a, 35), did not hesitate to express their displeasure, including the "three Samoans who were charged with having been guilty of riotous conduct on the plantation of Mr. von Gertz, Vaitele, and also with using threatening language towards that gentleman" (*Samoa Times*, 24 July 1880). Each man was forced to pay a fine and spent eighteen days in prison. Others organized themselves into raiding parties, a striking phenomenon that prompted Churchward to accuse Samoans of being "addicted to thieving [food] from the plantations," which they justified by claiming that the crops originate from "stolen" land (1887, 391).[24] Additional supplies were not, however, all that Samoans encountered on the plantations. Relations between Samoans and foreign workers were rarely cordial and often resulted in the injury or death of either party (Gilson 1970, 287; Munro and Firth 1993, 107).[25] Conflicts were sparked when Samoans threatened to steal from the laborers' food crops or when laborers attempted to stop Samoans from trespassing on the plantation; for example, on October 20, 1877, the *Samoa Times* reported that "some plantation labourers got roughly handled by some

Samoans. It appears, from what we can learn, that some of the hands of the plantation, in taking a ramble over the grounds, came upon Samoans stealing vegetables." In more extreme cases, Samoans targeted laborers to divert attention from raiding missions (Firth 1973: 78–79). As the *Samoa Times* observes, indentured workers were the plantations' sentries, because it was necessary "to keep a watch on Samoans, to prevent them from stealing the produce" (2 May 1891). According to local newspaper coverage, most violent conflicts were instigated by Samoans that trespassed upon the plantations. For example, Oba and Kauai were severely beaten by Samoans wielding cricket bats (*Samoa Weekly Herald,* 11 March 1893); the face of an anonymous "black boy" was sliced open by Samoans on the Vaivase plantation when he tried to prevent them from stealing breadfruit (*Samoa Weekly Herald,* 16 September 1899); the Samoans Vagai and Levi assaulted Tomu, a worker, with an axe while they stole from the plantation (*Samoa Weekly Herald,* 19 March 1895)[26]; and a "black boy" was murdered by Samoans while they stole coconuts (*Samoa Times,* 1891). On 4 October 1890, an article described "one of the most disgraceful riots" that had taken place between Samoans and workers from the Matafele plantation. After a laborer had been jailed for being inebriated, his friends, "who were also under the influence of liquor," assembled twenty more laborers and marched on the jail. One hundred Samoans arrived on the scene, "armed with clubs and stones," and began to fight with the laborers. The article claims that "one of the most inhuman acts we have ever witnessed" ensued: roughly twenty Samoans began "clubbing and dragging [an] unfortunate wretch in the most inhuman manner." When a group of European bystanders asked the Samoans to stop, the latter responded that it "was none of their business" (*Samoa Times,* 4 October 1890).

Such news reports not only offer us a rare glimpse into the daily violence of plantation culture but also reveal the warped expectations of some colonial settlers concerning the behaviors of the different ethnic communities. While crimes committed by Samoans were recognized as expressions of resentment and restlessness, Melanesian violence was posited as a fundamental, biological "savage" trait. In her discussion of Queensland plantation violence in the 1880s, Tracey Banivanua-Mar observes that "Melanesian violence ... was seen to be located deep within Islanders' racial programming, and in inquiries into the most serious of violent incidents, motive was frequently subsumed by reference to innate characteristics" (2007, 151). Samoan newspapers relied on the same essentializing discourse by implying that Melanesians were indiscriminate in their choice of victims and would become "desperate through jealousy or ill-treatment, and ... under their temporary fit of madness, slaughter any person they meet, black or

white" (12 July 1890). The Melanesian regression to bloodthirsty "madness" is reiterated in an article describing opposing factions of workers: "one party attacked another and killed three of them in the most brutal manner, cutting their throat, cutting off their limbs and disemboweling them" (*Samoa Weekly Herald*, 8 December 1894). The scene of the workers' hyperbolic violence contrasts the, ostensibly, rational setting of the colonial plantation.[27] A particularly shocking case is recounted in an article from April 26, 1890. According to the report, the remains of an old plantation worker named Taro were found near the Vailele plantation: "the bones of the body were almost bare with the exception of the left arm which was considerably shrunk up, and the head lying several yards away."[28] Upon examining Taro's remains, Apia's German doctors Dr. Stuebel and Dr. Funk speculated that Taro had been decapitated "by some sharp instrument"; however, they could not understand how his "flesh disappeared from the bones within the short period of four or five days." If the colonial doctors were befuddled by Taro's remains, the locals were not. A report remarks that the nearby community insists either Taro was "eaten by some of the escaped black fellows from the German plantations" or Taro's companions were the "murderers and cannibals" (*Samoa Times*, April 26, 1890). Despite Stuebel and Funk's reticence, Taro's death suggests a perversion of plantation labor: the skinning of Taro's flesh evokes the husking of a coconut in the production of copra, and the "sharp instrument" that decapitated him is, in all likelihood, a farming instrument; thus, bodily desecration and cannibalism are savage drives that point to the dehumanizing effects of the plantation system. According to colonial logic, the violence of plantation overseers was a necessary requirement for the disciplining of primitive bodies, while the violence that resulted from such excesses was dehumanized and perceived as the laborers' regression to animalism. By attending to these newspaper accounts, we see the intersections between corporal brutality and discursive violence, as well as the pervasive manner in which the dialectic relationship between plantation violence and Melanesian "counter-violence" was obscured and denied.[29]

Like Sāmoa's colonial newspapers, Stevenson's writings identify the ever-lurking threat of plantation violence; however, he also offers an alternative depiction of Melanesian laborers. According to Kenneth McKenzie, Stevenson not only "befriended" laborers but also helped them "whenever their paths crossed" (1978: 162–63). Regardless of Stevenson's true feelings about them, he recognized their literary potential; the system of organized labor gave him privileged access to a race of supposed cannibals who, he claimed in a January 1892 letter, "cook and eat men's flesh" and who are "ugly as sin" and "shabby and small ... like sick monkeys" (1994, 7:227). Stevenson's degrading portrayal of laborers echoes a leitmotif in eighteenth- to

nineteenth-century writing that depicted Melanesians as bestial.[30] In Sāmoa, therefore, Stevenson encountered the embodiment of a literary trope.

In a letter to Austin Strong from November 1892, Stevenson offered his step-grandson a full report on the renovations at Vailima and the work being undertaken by the "four gangs" of laborers: some "hundred black boys" carry lumber on their shoulders as they trudge up a deep and muddy road under the supervision of two drunken German overseers. Stevenson delights in the extravagance of his building project and represents the construction site as an exhibit of Pacific exotica. Dwelling on their distinctive appearance, he observes that "many of the boys had a very queer substitute for a pocket. This was nothing more than a string which some of them tied about their upper arms and some about their necks, and in which they stuck their clay pipes ... some had feathers stuck in their hair, and some long stalks of grass stuck through the holes in their noses" (1994, 7:427–28).

As he walks up and down the side of the road, Stevenson narrates the visual spectacle of the exotic and strangely attired "black boys" by identifying an array of curios. The passage highlights the way in which organized labor functions as a framing device: the laborers are spatially organized in rows and "squads of two" and become accessible to the planter's gaze. Among Sāmoa's "black boys," however, some were more interesting than others: the "thralls, many of them wild negritos from the West, have taken to the bush, harbour there in a state partly bestial.... Further in the bush, huts, small patches of cultivation and smoking ovens have been found by hunters" (1996, 16).

Stevenson's interest in plantation fugitives was topical. When he moved to Sāmoa in 1890, mass desertions had just occurred as a result of the Samoan war of 1888–89 (Firth 1973, 70). In the early 1890s, hundreds of laborers were fleeing the beatings and long hours of toil. In 1888–89, 17 percent of laborers of Sāmoa's laborers became runaways; from 1891 to 1894, the number of runaways fluctuated from roughly 11 to 13 percent before falling to about 4 percent annually between 1895 and 1898 (Munro and Firth 1993, 117). The deserters lived in the bush or among Samoans who did not deliver them back to the Germans for a cash reward (Firth 1973: 77–78). In the early 1890s, some fugitives found "refuge" at Vailima (McKenzie 1978, 163), and in some cases, Stevenson rehired them as his own workers, admitting that "much of my land was cleared by [runaways'] hands; a round a dozen were arrested on my property" (Beinecke 1891).[31] In a letter to Adelaide Boodle from September 4, 1892, Stevenson offers a portrait of the "bestial" and "wild negritos": "Black boys sometimes run away from the plantations, and live behind alone in the forest, building little sheds to protect them from the rain, and sometimes planting little gardens of food, but for the most part

living the best they can upon the nuts of the trees and yams that they dig with their hands out of the earth" (1994, 7:370).

The fugitives were both "wild" and capable of domestication: they establish a makeshift civilization by growing "small patches of cultivation," constructing "little shed[s]," and planting "little gardens." Not only is their means of existence "small" and "little," but their vegetarian diet contrasts the tired trope of cannibalism. In addition to their diminished existence, the runaway "black boys" live in isolation. "I do not think," laments Stevenson in a melodramatic tone, that "there can be anywhere in the world people more wretched than these runaways. They cannot return, for they would only return to be punished. They can never hope to see again their own land or their own people" (1994, 7:370). Although the runaways adapt to their new circumstances by mimicking the markers of settlement—they build homes and cultivate the land—their status is that of unwanted and unclaimed refugees.

The pathetic portrait of "black boy" refugee veers again toward melodrama in an 1892 letter in which Stevenson recounts the sudden and tragic appearance of two young runaways who arrive on his doorstep seeking shelter. The first "poor rogue" shows him the "marks on his back," and a second boy pleads for compassion. Although he cannot bear to turn the boys back "into the drenching forest," he is unable to "reason with them, for they had not enough English, and not one of our boys spoke their tongue." Instead, he offers them food and shelter for the night and concludes that "tomorrow I must do what the Lord shall bid me" (1994, 7:241–42). Here, the reader assumes that Stevenson will turn the boys in to the authorities. The scene's heightened pathos, compounded by the sheer onslaught of human violence (the whip "marks") and elemental forces (the "drenching" rain), culminates in the insurmountable barrage of language: Stevenson's compassion remains unspoken, and the boys, in turn, cannot articulate their grievances. Stevenson's melodramatic depiction of runaways as the uprooted and marginalized victims of the system of indenture effectively subverts colonial discourse: he stresses a fundamental humanity—shelter and protection, the longing for one's homeland and people—rather than absolute difference. Stevenson's humanitarian rhetoric, however, undergoes a radical shift when he depicts the fugitives from the Samoan perspective.

As Tarcisius Kabutaulaka stresses, the myth of "the ignoble Melanesian savage" is present not only in the European imagination but also in "Pacific Islander minds" and is "reflected in the languages, perceptions, and relationships among Pacific Islanders" (2015, 122). Kabutaulaka gives the example of *mea uli*, the Samoan phrase to describe darker-skinned Melanesians: "*Uli* is the word for 'black,' and one of the most common meanings of mea is 'thing.' Hence, one could argue that the use of the term *mea uli* ... reduces him or

her to a 'thing'" (2015, 122). While Kabutaulaka focuses on Pacific Islanders' current perception of Melanesians, his observations belong to the history of nineteenth-century representations of the "true savage" (Brawley and Dixon 2015, 59). Nineteenth-century Samoan prejudices against Melanesians, however, had nothing to do with any indigenous Samoan cultural trope; rather, they were part of the European missionary inheritance. The "literal scriptural interpretation of human history" (Samson 2001, 112) included the biblical parable of Noah's curse upon Ham's descendants, the Canaanites, as a teleological explanation for black skin and slavery. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, European missionaries identified the consequences of Noah's curse among the populations of Melanesia. For example, the Scottish missionary John Inglis wrote that in the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), "we see this curse lying in all its crushing weight. The Papuans, the poor descendants of Ham, are lying in the lowest state of degradation" (1890, 10). Samoans, as lighter-skinned Polynesians, were spared such intense racialized condemnation and generally embraced the teachings of the Old Testament.[32] Based on the history of encounters between Samoan missionaries and Melanesians, Sione Latukefu argues that Samoans "had no doubt whatsoever of their physical, mental, and cultural superiority to the Melanesians" and adds that Samoans "tended to look down on others, particularly the Papua New Guineans and Solomon Islanders" (1996, 28).[33] Meleiseā agrees that Samoans "had been taught to despise them as inferiors by the colonial authorities and by Samoans missionaries" (Meleiseā 1987a, 111).[34] Thus, in the plantation context, the Samoan discourse of "cultural superiority" (Meleiseā 1987a, 111) was reinforced "by the menial work performed by Melanesians on the plantations" (Steinmetz 2008, 306).[35]

Certainly, Stevenson registers the animosity between Samoans and "black boys" when he narrates an incident concerning five plantation runaways from 'Upolu "who had grown weary" and "under cloud of night" had "fashioned a raft" and sailed to Tutuila:

> At the time of their landing, the refugees had a leader, a man from the Gilberts of great stature and courage; as long as he lived, they maintained a fierce front and raided the inhabited lowlands; but so soon as he was shot down, in the act of carrying off the maid of a village, the survivors shrank into the forest. There, in the rains, in the rude thickets, they await age and death. Stress of hunger occasionally goads them from their woods to steal bananas; in all else, since the death of the Gilbert Islander, they are quite harmless; but the fear of them is not the least abated. (Beinecke manuscript, "Tutuila: the American Harbour")

Stevenson's rhetorical flourishes lend this case of desertion an air of romance: for the novelist, the laborers are more than runaways; they are

"melancholy warriors" who defend their freedom to the death and rise above the miserable conditions of the plantations (Beinecke 1891). The romantic slave heroes and the alleged kidnapping of a Samoan virgin reappear in *A Footnote to History*, where Stevenson observes that it is one numerous "tales that run the country" and make "the natives shudder about the evening fire" (1996, 16). His reference to gossip concerning runaways returns in a letter to Boodle: "The people of this island hate and fear them because they are cannibals, sit and tell tales of them about their lamps at night in their own comfortable houses, and are sometimes afraid to lie down to sleep if they think there is a lurking "black boy" in the neighbourhood" (1994, 7:371).

In both passages, Sāmoa's word of mouth is akin to the stuff of ghost stories: rumors about the "occasional disappearances and the occasional discovery of bones" generate "in the minds of the [Samoan], a profound terror of these black skinned and cannibal alien refugees." The wild and irrepressible rumors about runaways who raid villages to kidnap and eat men, children, and virgins are so pervasive that they penetrate Samoan folktales and prevent people from sleeping at night lest they be taken and eaten (1994, 7:227, 370–71).[36] The fear in some Samoans' minds of these runaways may have stemmed from a combination of missionary teachings, as mentioned previously, and Samoan beliefs that forests were places inhabited by *aitu* (spirits or ghosts). As the proverb *e a'oloa le vao* (be careful the forest is haunted) suggests, forests were to be avoided, and Melanesians' apparent ability to coexist with aitu highlighted their perceived otherness.

Stevenson's fascination with local gossip resonates with a column from the *Samoa Weekly Herald*, which reports that "a peculiar story has been going the rounds of the local gossip to the effect that the body of a "black boy," wrapped in a blanket, had been found near the swamp of Matautu" (December 15, 1894). Here, local, oral culture, in the form of "gossip," supersedes the textual authority of the colonial archives: with no discernible source of origin, rumor and personal narratives spread and become indistinguishable from folktales.

Stevenson's knowledge of "black boys" bleeds into his reception of Samoan folklore: the spectral figure of the runaway is collapsed into that of the *aitu fafine*, or the "female devil of the woods," that is said to haunt the jungle that surrounds Vailima (1994, 7:215, 356). Aitu, explains Stevenson in one of his letters, are dangerous spirits who adopt different shapes: "some are like pigs, and some are like flying things, but others [aitu fafine] ... come in the shape of beautiful young women and men" (1994, 7:227). In a letter from January 4, 1892, Stevenson turns himself into the character of personal gothic fiction where paranoia and fear abound:

> All these noises [of nature] make him feel lonely and scared, and he doesn't quite know what he is scared of. Once when he was just about to cross a river, a blow struck him on the top of his head and knocked him head-foremost down the bank and splash into the water. It was a nut, I fancy, that had fallen from a tree ... but at the time he thought it was a black boy. (1994, 7:226–27)

Stevenson's parallel narrative of aitu and runaway laborers reoccurs when the author, mistaking the sounds of "birds" for those of "runaway blacks," imagines the presence of a "black boy." The mistaken nut and birdsong force the author to confess his fear of "black boys," and he launches into a lengthy exposé about the phenomenon of foreign labor, which brings him back to the supernatural tales of "women-devils" who are said to inhabit the forest (1994, 7:227–8). Like the aitu that lie in wait for vulnerable victims, Stevenson remarks in "Tutuila: the American Harbour" that during his walks in the bush, predatory "blacks" are forever watching him with their "bright eyes" (Beinecke 1891). Here, the terror of being cannibalized is reimagined as a fear of the supernatural. Sometimes, reports Stevenson to Boodle, the runaways become "bad and wild and come down on the villages and steal and kill; and people whisper to each other that some of them have gone back to their horrid old habits, and catch men and women in order to eat them;" likewise, the aitu "go down out of the woods into the villages" to seduce the young "out of their wits ... and go mad and die" (1994, 7:227–28). Despite their tangential nature, Stevenson's gothic narratives of aitu and runaway "black boys" are analogous. The juxtaposition of recent and ongoing cases of plantation fugitives with supernatural accounts of ghosts highlights Stevenson's gothic vision of Samoan plantation workers: both are imagined as "Polynesian stories," which are "generally pretty grim" (1994, 7:228).[37] The spectral threat that permeates Sāmoa's jungle echoes Stevenson's remark from *A Footnote to History*—my epigraph—that the German plantations possess the "allurement of a haunted house, for over these empty and silent miles there broods the fear of the negrito cannibal" (1996, 20). Stevenson's gothic rendering of the plantation, with its accompanying ghostly "negrito cannibal," effectively blurs the boundary between the pastoral plantation and the nightmarish jungle: the vulnerability of Germany's all-powerful colonial machine is exposed by the negrito cannibal penetrating the plantation.

The threat of fugitive laborers was echoed by Apia's newspapers, which suggested that they not only were armed but also were a unified collective. In 1880, the *Samoa Times* warned its readership that "some fifty labourers ... [have] escaped from the Vaiusu plantation" and now live in the bush, and "armed with large knives supplied to them for clearing purposes, it is feared

that considerable difficulty will be experienced in effecting their capture" (November 20, 1880). In 1890, the *Samoa Times* ran another story highlighting the threat of fugitives: another "80 runaway labourers or, I might say, cannibals, in the bush. They are supplied with knives and axes from their friends on the plantations. Some of these days they may all combine to make a raid on the town" (July 12, 1890). The latter column exemplifies the ideology of evolutionary regression when the author corrects his use of the term "labourers" and instead describes the runaways as "cannibals." Thus, laborers who have broken colonial rule have also rejected civilization and regressed back into a state of savagery. Through association, the Samoan bush is incorporated into the discourse of savagery, because it is the macabre site of human feasts; for instance, when one reporter for the *Samoa Times* claims that "for many years there have been from 40 to 90 escaped laborers from German plantations living as they can in the bush, and as these people in their own country look upon human flesh as their ordinary food, it is not surprising that when they get an opportunity to kill a man and eat him, they would take it." The reporter adds that "in case of no such chance coming in their way, they would kill and eat the weakest of their number" (January 24, 1891).

The representation of laborers in Apia's local newspaper articles confirmed, or at least gave voice to, the suspicions and widespread convictions that plantation laborers were unalterably alien, savage, and dangerous. Their complete otherness, in turn, supported the pervasive rhetoric of the plantation as a site to civilize, and thus modernize, a supposedly savage and primitive people. Runaway laborers represented both an ideological and a physical threat to colonial settlers: by absconding from the plantations, fugitives undermined the civilizing mission and regressed into savagery and cannibalism. Such racial ideologies, however, were not fixed but rather were capable of shifting in form and meaning. Stevenson engaged in a complex rethinking of the prevailing representations of Melanesian otherness. He understood the figure of the plantation "black boy" in various terms: as the victim of German brutality, as the boogeyman of Samoan nightmares, and as a savage. Nowhere was his indeterminacy about the identity of the laborer more evident than in his account of Arrick, a "black boy" who came to live temporarily at Vailima in 1892.

In a letter, Stevenson remarked that upon his arrival, Arrick was malnourished and sickly but, regardless, had a mesmerizing smile, "the sort that makes you half wish to smile yourself, and half wish to cry" (1994, 7:369). Once Arrick had regained some strength, he became a playmate to young Austin, Stevenson's step-grandson. Together, the boys built forts and played music on an instrument that Arrick made. Arrick's gentleness prompted Stevenson

to remark sarcastically that "of all the dangerous savages in this island Arrick is one of the most dangerous" (1994, 7:369). However, instead of debunking the myth of the savage, Arrick's presence demanded a refined understanding. For example, while Arrick played his instrument for Austin, Stevenson hypothesized that his foreign songs were most "likely all about fighting with his enemies ... and killing them, and I am sorry to say cooking them in a ground oven and eating them for supper when the fight is over." According to him, Arrick could not help being a savage, because his defining childhood experience of being wounded by a poisoned spear had ushered him into savagery (1994, 7:370). He clarified that although "Arrick is really what you call a savage," a "savage is a very different sort of person in reality, and a very much nicer, from what he is made to appear in little books." Thus, for Stevenson, popular literature—the "little books"—had distorted the "reality" of what a savage was, and Arrick, "for all his good nature," remained a "very savage person" (1994, 7:370).[38]

The fact of Arrick being a "very savage person" raises the question, for the modern reader, of how the author defines "savagery." How could a person (an individual subject) also be a savage (a stereotype)? Stevenson's contradiction and ambivalence reminds us that although hard scientific racism emerged during the nineteenth century, racial identities could be subject to manipulation. While Stevenson may have descried the abuses of the labor trade in the Pacific and, more specifically, German brutality in Sāmoa, his personal interests relied on some ideological flexibility that would legitimatize his participation in a colonial system of exploitation. Thus, his writings evoke the potential of Melanesian laborers to become a civilized people if they are treated benignly. Repeatedly, he depicts laborers as existing in an early, primitive stage of progress: runaways can survive in the bush, but they are always at risk of killing one another, and Arrick may possess the ability to construct and play an instrument, but he can only sing of cannibalism. Unlike the colonial plantations "in Queensland, Fiji, New Caledonia and Hawaii," where the "labour traffic" has "been either suppressed or placed under close public supervision" (1996, 15), German plantations not only failed to promote their laborers' moral development but also exacerbated their savage tendencies by driving them into the literal and moral darkness of Sāmoa's bush.

NOTES

1. This essay does not cover the history of European colonialism in Sāmoa during the second half of the nineteenth century. For histories of Sāmoa, see Gilson (1970), Kennedy (1974), Hempenstall (1984), and Meleiseā (1987a, 1987b). Consistent with contemporary

orthographical conventions of the Samoan language, an apostrophe represents a glottal stop *(komma liliu)*, while the macron *(kahako)* indicates an elongated vowel. The macron is not included in the word "Samoan" because the adjective is an English word, as opposed to Sāmoa. I have, however, retained original spellings in direct quotations.

2. Nineteenth-century anthropological discourse defined the "Negrito" as a small, dark-skinned individual who resided in the islands south of Asia. The late-Victorian ethnologist Augustus H. Keane, for instance, constructed a model of evolution in which the branch of the "Generalised Negro" was subdivided into the African Negro and two Negrito branches: the Indo-Oceanic and the African. According to Keane, the Negritos were the earliest humans: "the Negrito appears to represent the primitive stock, from which the Negro diverged later" (1896, 243). He later theorized that "in Oceania the Negrito ... survives only in four widely separated enclaves—the Andaman Islands, the Malay Peninsula, the Philippines, and parts of New Guinea" (1900, 158). For more on nineteenth-century racial science concerning the Pacific Island region, see Douglas and Ballard (2008). In popular Victorian literature, the most famous Negrito appeared in Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign of the Four* (1890), in which the man is an Andaman Islander.

3. Although the category of Melanesia is a colonial construct based on perceived racial difference, I use the term as a shorthand reference to the islanders from New Guinea, Bougainville, Malaita, and the Bismarck Archipelago who were indentured on Sāmoa. In the Pacific plantation context, indentured laborers were frequently referred to as "black boys." I use this racialist term in accordance with its appearance in the texts under discussion. For a history of the lives of Melanesian laborers in Sāmoa, see Meleiseā (1980).

4. All newspaper articles cited in this essay are publicly available in New Zealand's digital National Newspaper Collection (www.paperspast.natlib.govt.nz). By 1889, the *Samoa Weekly Herald* was the last remaining Apia-based newspaper. At the end of 1900 the newspaper was sold to the German colonial government and by April 1901, the first issue of *Samoanische Zeitung* appeared. After the New Zealand takeover of German Sāmoa in 1914, the *Samoanische Zeitung* was renamed the *Samoa Times*. For an extensive bibliographical analysis of Sāmoa's nineteenth-century newspapers, see Spennemann (2003). For an analysis of the contents of the *Samoanische Zeitung*, see Riese (2012).

5. In developing my notion of Stevenson's Samoan gothicism, I have found the literary criticism dealing with nineteenth-century American plantation fiction particularly helpful; see Flora, MacKethan, and Taylor (2002).

6. For a history of indentured labor around the world, see Northrup (1995) and Lal et al. (1994).

7. There is a substantial scholarly debate concerning the issue of Pacific Islander agency and resistance during labor migration. Islander-oriented approaches have highlighted the considerable amount of voluntary recruitment that occurred; for notable examples, see Scarr (1973), Corris (1973), and Moore (1985). For a concise overview of scholarship on the Pacific labor trade, see Munro (1995).

8. For more on the role of the High Commission, see Scarr (1968). For some key differences between British legislation and German labor policy, see Munro and Firth (1990: 18–19).

9. In a March 1890 letter to his mother, Stevenson mentions his desire to compose a ballad about Walter Oates, a "beachcomber [and] slaver captain" (1994, 6:379). Oates recruited labor in the Gilbert Islands during the 1860s and was killed when the islanders revolted and blew up the *Moroa.* One month later, Stevenson writes: "'The Ballad of the Barque *Moroa*' is begun" (1994, 6:383); however, it was never finished and no manuscript survives. For more on Stevenson's use of the Pacific labor trade in his fiction, see Jolly (2007). Stevenson was by no means the only author who represented the Pacific labor trade in his fiction. Louis Becke and Jack London both dealt with the theme; see Castille (2012) and Phillips (2012). I am also grateful to Michelle Elleray for alerting me to the subgenre of Victorian boys' adventure texts that focused on blackbirding; see Elleray (2014).

10. The earliest reference to *Sophia Scarlet* appears in a letter to Colvin from September 1891, in which Stevenson describes three stories he intends to collect into a volume called *Beach de Mar* (1994, 7:154). The last title to be included in this volume is "The Labour Slave," but as Stevenson remarked later, the latter was eventually "sucked into" *Sophia Scarlet* (1994, 7:282).

11. For a discussion of Stewart's plantation in Tahiti, see Willmott (2004).

12. The author was not alone in using Stowe as a touchstone for the treatment of laborers on Pacific plantations; Dawson compared the brutality of the German overseers to that of "Simon Legree in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*" (1882, 18).

13. Dan Scarlet's acquisition of laborers recalls the character of Attwater in Stevenson's novella *The Ebb-Tide.* In this text, Attwater illegally acquires island labor for his pearl fishery. During a conversation, Attwater evokes the tentacle-like intrusion of the labor trade across the Pacific Island region. When he is asked from where he gets his labor, he responds: "Ah, where not?... we had to go far and wide and do the best we could. We have gone as far west as the Kingsmills and as far south as Rapa-iti" (2008, 215). Stevenson's outline does not specify whether Dan Scarlet is a former naval or army officer.

14. From 1888 to his death in 1894, Stevenson produced a large body of work focused on contemporary Pacific issues: a novel *(The Wrecker),* a novella *(The Ebb-Tide),* two works of nonfiction *(In the South Seas* and *A Footnote to History),* and a volume of short stories *(Island Nights' Entertainment),* as well as pamphlets, public letters to the *London Times,* poems, and ballads.

15. Many Victorian novelists portrayed colonial plantations in the tropics (i.e., Charlotte Bronte and Anthony Trollope), but to the best of my knowledge, Stevenson is among the rare authors to represent a Pacific plantation.

16. For a discussion of Cornwall's activities, see Munro (1989).

17. On 2 September 1899, the *Samoa Weekly Herald* printed a letter to the editor in which the writer reminded readers of the investigation led by Deputy Commissioner

Maudeslay into the "alleged cruelties perpetrated on Native Laborers" on the Lata plantation in 1878. At the time, Moors was Cornwall's overseer: the laborers were "brutally treated ... one sick woman was as a punishment [for running away] and for example, carried on a pole to which she was hanging by the hands and feet like a dead pig, and the same night she was publicly flogged so cruelly that the wounds in her back required to be dressed." The deputy's report included the following statements about Moors: "he is not a proper person to be left in entire charge of a large number of laborers and their families. I very much regret that the 'Pacific Islanders Protection Act' ... gives no power to Consuls or Commissioners to enforce regulations for their proper treatment when employed on the estate of British subjects."

18. Stevenson also employed Samoans to work as household staff at Vailima. According to McKenzie, Stevenson boasted that "he alone of all foreign overseers in Samoa was able to obtain hard work and loyalty from his Samoans. He credited this neither 'to high wages nor to indulgent treatment,' but to the discipline and 'scrupulous justice' with which he handled them" (1978, 159).

19. For a useful introduction to labor recruiting in the Pacific Island region, see Moore et al. (1990: xxvii–xxxvi).

20. Munro and Firth explain that "there were two ways in which the German consul could assist in procuring labour. The first was to place no restrictions in the way the firm obtained labourers. For the first eighteen years the German labour trade to Samoa was untouched by legislation.... The second way to ensure the DHPG's recruiting right was by annexation of 'appropriate island groups'" (1990, 16).

21. Munro claims that the Germans, unlike the British, did not face "humanitarian concerns of philanthropic pressure groups" (2000, 216). For a broader history of British imperial and humanitarian interventions in the Pacific Islands, see Samson (1998).

22. British planters did not evade criticism; for instance, Churchward describes the following case that was "brought on behalf of a mob of island labourers on a plantation owned by a British subject, who on receiving an adverse decision in a case of debt, had bolted and left the poor fellows without wages or means of subsistence" (1887, 152).

23. I borrow the term "rhythm" from Mary Gallagher's discussion of temporality on French Caribbean plantations and her glossing of Edouard Glissant. Glissant observes that in plantations in the Caribbean, Brazil, and the islands of the Indian Ocean, "the same organization would create a rhythm of economic production and form the basis of a style of life" (quoted in Gallagher 2002, 146). Banivanua-Mar discusses the spatial organization of plantations in Queensland (2007: 60–62).

24. In 1893, under the auspices of the 1889 Berlin Act, Britain, Germany, and the United States created a commission to investigate foreign land claims.

25. Samoans were unwilling to work regularly on foreign plantations and only did so at high wages (Gilson 1970: 181–82; Munro and Firth 1987, 26). For more on labor recruiting in the Gilbert Islands, see Macdonald (2001: 54–74).

26. Less violent incidents included the cases of the Samoans Malafou, Tuauli, and Vili and Alu. Malafou and Tuauli were charged with stealing from and assaulting "Tagu a black boy." Both Samoans confessed that they had "knocked Tagu down with a stick for no other reason than they wanted the duck for themselves" (*Samoa Weekly Herald*, 19 March 1895). Vili and Alu were also charged with stealing and threatening a black boy with a knife (*Samoa Weekly Herald*, 23 November 1895).

27. Banivanua-Mar also identifies the tendency to depict Islander violence as an "ahistorical act of spontaneity that was abstracted from its material and social context" (2007: 151–52).

28. The headline reads "Murder of a Black Boy Near Vailili," but I assume the writer is referring to Vailele.

29. I borrow the phrase "counter-violence" from Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) and his theorizing of colonial violence.

30. For more on the literary depictions of Melanesians, see Brawley and Dixon (2015: 59–75).

31. "Tutuila: The American Harbour" (1891) is unpublished and is based on Stevenson's three-week visit of Tutuila with Harold Sewall, the American consul to Sāmoa.

32. European perceptions of Samoans crystallized around the trope of the "noble savage." Jean-François de Galaup de la Pérouse was the first European to land on Samoan soil and propagated the notion that Samoans were treacherous barbarians. In 1824, the Russian navigator Otto von Kotzebue confirmed La Pérouse's account of the inhabitants of Tutuila but found the inhabitants of the western islands to be friendly and hospitable. The London Missionary Society's John Williams (1984) was responsible for reaffirming Samoans' "noble savagery."

33. For a detailed discussion of the behavior of evangelical Samoan missionaries in eastern Papua New Guinea during the second half of the nineteenth century, see Wetherell (1974: 67–100).

34. For a concise history of missionary work in Sāmoa, see Meleiseā (1987a: 52–70).

35. By the German colonial period, this highly charged racialist rhetoric was exacerbated by the policies on physical segregation imposed by the Germans. Workers were kept in "barracks on DHPG plantations around the edges of Apia and, because they were deliberately segregated from local populations, found it difficult to form relationships with Samoans" (Macpherson and Macpherson 2009, 42).

36. The Samoan fear of Melanesian cannibalism may be traced back to what Sinclair observes in her discussion of early Samoan missionaries who died in New Guinea: "Part of the legend in Samoa is that the cannibals of Papua ate some Samoans in the early days. I have been unable to find any written evidence to support this. Perhaps it derives from stories of the Cook Islanders who were massacred at Kalo in 1881" (1982, 17).

37. Jolly also discusses Stevenson's conception of the Samoan bush and suggests that "at a supernatural level, the physical properties of the forest combined with the local legends about it to produce emotions of irrational fear and 'horror,' which Stevenson also explored in his letters about clearing the bush" (2010, 128).

38. Later, Arrick was wounded in a fight with plantation laborers from Malaita and eventually returned to work for the German firm. He died on the plantation (1994, 7:369, 416).

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REVIEW

A Kumulipo of Hawai'i. John Charlot, Sankt Augustin, Germany: Academia Verlag, 2014. Pp. 173. ISBN 9783896656452.

Reviewed by George Williams, California State University, Chico

IN THIS MAJOR PUBLICATION FROM AN ESTEEMED PRESS, John Charlot begins his self-described "notes" on the *Kumulipo* (KL) with: "The Kumulipo is a supreme work of world literature and a testament to the genius of the Hawaiian people: their combination of learning, poetry, and cosmic thinking." From the author of *Classical Hawaiian Education* (2005) and a classically trained scholar of religious literature, this is carefully considered appreciation.

Charlot thinks that the *Kumulipo* is worthy not only of literary but also of "scriptural" analysis. He takes the notion of scripture seriously, and the *Kumulipo* is treated as if it were scripture by many of those who know it. His breadth of scholarship reveals that he has dealt with two types of scriptural traditions: one that privileges its scripture as *true* and *complete*, as *inspired words by the only God;* and traditions with wisdom literature that serve as a different type of scripture, human, constructed, even ambiguous. This second type has less problems accepting scientific study of its composition and generally welcomes critical analysis.

Charlot was trained in Germany to use many scientific methods to study literature (historical, form and redaction analysis, motif analysis, symbolism studies, comparative folklore, linguistic analysis of original languages, etc.) for any scripture despite theological claims.[1] Wisdom literatures (when a text is singled out as "scripture") such as the *Kumulipo* were appreciated by their

educated audiences as honoring the traditional materials that were embedded within the creative material of the composer. Charlot identifies the poet who assembles the *Kumulipo* as the "redactor" (using a classical term for its poet/author/chanter/literary weaver). Form criticism discloses ancient or originally independent literary units that the redactor builds into a complex that might be compared to a leaf mat (see below). Just as the first hearers were able to be *silent* and to identify the various pieces that the redactor skillfully wove together, Charlot parses the *text* to make these insights available to us.

First, he identifies how an oral chant has come to us as this particular text, *He Kumulipo*. This *Kumulipo* was saved for posterity by King David Kalākaua. The king showed the only extant manuscript, *He Pule Heiau* (A Temple Prayer), of this chant (*He Kumulipo*) to the Polynesian specialist, Adolf Bastian (1826–1905). Bastian copied much of it and was the first to publish a partial text, translation, and interpretation in 1881. King Kalākaua published his arrangement and transcription of *He Pule Hoolaa Alii* ... in 1889. Charlot carefully explains his reasons for starting with Martha Beckwith's later version of the text (1951). However, we are reminded that there has been no academically established text that would reveal so much more. Parsing, modern orthography, versification, arrangement of sections, scribal errors, dating by language and ink, etc., must be established before there is stable interpretation of any text.

Many have published their findings on the *Kumulipo,* and Charlot is in dialogue with them (Kalākaua, Bastian, Beckwith, Kukahi, Malo, Elbert, Pukui, *et al.*). He not only benefits from their work but also is unafraid to correct them in precise and articulate argumentation that will help establish Hawaiian literary studies as a mature discipline.

This study is not a commentary on this "origin chant," *He Kumulipo* (*A Kumulipo*). It is a prolegomena to its study, Charlot maintains. Because the original was composed and recited orally, the first problem was the transcription: creating an accurate text without modern orthography for Hawaiian. Then came the double problem of retaining the differences of an oral literature and how it is parsed into written Hawaiian. Charlot is a master in presenting and illustrating these difficulties using problematic verses and sections of the received text. There is almost commentarial depth in the way that Charlot uses examples for each problem, idea, and word studied.

A Kumulipo is the single extant Hawaiian example of this oral genre: an *origin chant* that was composed around 1700 CE, in 2,102 lines by an unknown poet–redactor. Thus, it is a pre-Western contact work. As mentioned before, Charlot has chosen the term redactor to emphasize how this genre of origin chants (mentioned as a body of chants by Malo) has survived

as what has come to be seen as the crowning achievement of Hawaiian oral literature. This genre's very nature combines traditional materials (histories, genealogies, stories, riddles, lists, myths, etc.) with the poet–redactor's own contributions. Thus, it is an anthology as well as a history of Hawaiian oral literature. That is so, if its complexity and its purposeful ambiguities can be unpacked.

Charlot's "notes" represent a lifetime study of the *Kumulipo* that has led to this wealth of understanding about its depth and richness (values, language, literary forms, education, etc.). It has persuaded Charlot and others who have carefully studied the *Kumulipo* to conclude that it is the finest example of precontact Hawaiian traditional and creative literary efforts. Charlot affirms that it is perhaps for this reason that it receives near scriptural status. Or stated differently, wisdom literature at this level of literary perfection is a different type of scripture: composed by masters of the tradition without the claim of a scribe receiving their God's words. Thus, there should be no fear of the use of scientific investigation of wisdom literature to unpack its multilayered meanings.

Quite early in the study, Charlot refutes the notion that the *Kumulipo* is a creation chant, with the rest of the study substantiating this conclusion. Of the three known Hawaiian and Polynesian philosophical notions for origin chants (mentioning David Malo's memory of other examples)—birth (*hānau*), creation (*hana lima*) and growth (*ulu wale*)—the poet–redactor of the *Kumulipo* is shown to leave out only the creation model.

The chant combines a "plaited *lauhala* or pandanum leaf mat" structure with traditional lists of vocabulary and concepts, quoted cultural pieces, genealogies, fill-in-the blank segments, and other known Hawaiian chant devices to implement this model. Charlot demonstrates the level of mastery of the *Kumulipo* redactor, the complexity of the chant's composition, and the difficulty of vocabulary with wordplay and linguistic inventions. And the births proceed as if they were a mat with four (or possible five) horizontal levels woven together with sixteen vertical divisions (*wā*) that are also divided roughly in half (*pō/ao*, night/day). They move from night to day in awe inspiring complexity. In fact, the complexity is greater in the first wā (with its 122 lines) and declines by the eighth wā to twenty lines. This leads Charlot to wonder whether the poet's complexity was just too great to continue in all its horizontal and vertical dimensions.

Charlot's goal is to demonstrate this structure by focusing on the redactor's identifiable imprint. By understanding how the author–redactor has woven together the horizontal levels (cosmic, genealogical, human development, cultural history, year, and possibly day—and with hints of hula and martial arts that might suggest that the redactor even alluded to other horizontal

levels that are now impossible to reconstruct) with the vertical structure of sixteen developmental periods, the birth of the universe is revealed as interrelated genealogically and cosmologically right down to the birth of the newest member of the *'Ī 'ohana*.

Charlot has previously shown (in *Classical Hawaiian Education*) that completeness of one's education (vocabulary, history, tradition, genealogy, stories, proverbs, lists, etc.), level of memory, mastery of literary forms, and the art of chanting are loved and appreciated by all levels of Hawaiian society. The poet–redactors depend on their knowledge of this literary tradition. But they also offer their audience some surprises in the arrangements of the literary elements and their ambiguities. These ambiguities have been criticized as contradictions, such as, Charlot illustrates, the false problem of Kāne being mentioned in an earlier wā before his birth in a later one. Charlot points to the Hawaiian love of completeness and ambiguity, multiple accounts of varying traditions, not as error but as richness and depth.

Once Charlot has demonstrated the complex structure and its logic, he argues for a return to the vertical structure of the original, placing Kalākaua's lines 273–377 before lines 123–272, the 3rd wā before the second, and a new (and tentative) translation of the first eight wā. However, the translation is in an appendix calling for others to continue this project until a "professional academic edition" is achieved.

Charlot's work contains a richness that honors his subject. It includes comparison with other chant forms (Pele, name, sacrifice, death, trickster, combat, hero, origins, etc.); demonstrates the physicality and explicitly sexual character of the birth model of cosmic origin; identifies words used in the *Kumulipo* that are not found in modern dictionaries with some solutions for their translation; reminds us of the orality of chants (their sounds, beauty, rhyming, and original "reduplicatives"); parses the sounds of the chant into the poet's intended words and meanings; and suggests solutions to syntactical elements that have been intractable (see especially the section of syntax, pp. 15–19). This is an accomplishment worthy of a "supreme work of world literature."

Charlot's *A Kumulipo of Hawai'i* should be required reading for everyone interested in Hawaiian and Polynesian studies. It is an example of mature scholarship in a field of study that is coming of age.

NOTES

1. Charlot asks the reader to refer to his publications that detail analysis of texts, available at http://www.johncharlot.me/John_Charlot_SITE/Books_and_Journals.html. Lost in his humble references to these studies is the fact that Charlot has a prestigious record of

scriptural and literary publications that, indeed, invites the reader to use his entire corpus, because he maintains a focus that tolerates little repetition of his previously published findings.

LIST OF A FEW SUPPLEMENTAL STUDIES

John Charlot has made most of his publications available at http://www.johncharlot.me/John_Charlot_SITE/Books and Journals.html. Most are available without cost on his website.

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1977 The application of form and redaction criticism to Hawaiian literature. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 86 (4): 479–501.

1983 *Chanting the universe: Hawaiian religious culture*. Hong Kong: Emphasis International.

1983 A pattern in three Hawaiian chants. *Notes, Journal of American Folklore* 96 (379): 64–8.

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BOOK REVIEW FORUM

Glenn Wharton. *The Painted King: Art, Activism, and Authenticity in Hawai'i.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012. Pp. 216. ISBN 978-0-8248-3612-2. US$19.00 paperback.

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Beyond Conservation: Modeling Meaningful Community Collaboration in Hawai'i

Glenn Wharton's *The Painted King: Art, Activism, and Authenticity in Hawai'i* (2012) provides illuminating insight into decolonizing conservation practices. Focused on the restoration of the *Kamehameha* statue in North Kohala on Hawai'i island, the book's careful attention to the process of sharing decision making with diverse communities provides a striking example, relevant to many beyond conservationists, of how to ethically bridge divides between institutions, experts, and laypeople. The book demonstrates how, despite challenges that must be patiently worked through, heritage conservation projects founded in participation and dialogue can effectively address complex social, cultural, and political identities in Hawai'i as well as generate civic dialogue and social change. This essay highlights several rich connections between this conservation project and other art, preservation, and state-directed projects that resonate with or could benefit from the lessons shared in *The Painted King*.

Challenges to Heritage Preservation in Hawai'i

Heritage scholars and professionals have directed increasing attention to the colonial roots and assumptions of their fields, particularly in the context of managing cultural objects and sites related to indigenous communities. Colonial relationships endure in Western systems and institutions of knowledge, in which Euro-American cultural values, research methods, and understandings of history inhere and disempower "other" people (Tuhiwai Smith 1999). Within heritage conservation, the primary goal of restoring the authenticity (typically defined as the artist's original intent) and physical integrity of an object through "objective" scientific means marginalizes indigenous epistemologies and the ongoing historical relationships between source communities and things (Clavir 1998: 1–4; Sully 2007: 27–38). Moreover, the centering of Western knowledge systems tends to a stewardship model that promotes unilateral decision making on the part of state and private institutions about how to identify and preserve forms of heritage, without serious and sustained consultation with descendant communities (Hollowell and Nicholas 2009, 142). In a global context, international organizations such as the International Council on Monuments and Sites and UNESCO World Heritage Centre, in an effort to develop culturally sensitive policies and systems of administration, nevertheless rely on Western assumptions about object-value and governance structures that extend the reach of centralized and homogenized control over preservation practices through universal definitions and criteria (Barkan 2002: 24–28).[1]

Responding to these recent considerations, conservation professionals have encouraged a shift away from object-based practice centered on physical preservation to a peoples-based approach that respects cultural concerns about the meaning, use, and care of objects (Clavir 1996: 100–03; Clavir 2009; Sully 2013). As Wharton's project to conserve the *Kamehameha* statue in North Kohala demonstrates, collaborating with local communities underscores how preserving an object's cultural integrity, as a living, historical process, redirects traditional conservation practice to facilitate community-based self-representations and validate local knowledge and culturally appropriate ways to preserve objects. Yet, the *Kamehameha* sculpture conservation project appears exceptional. Despite strides in theorizing cross-cultural approaches to cultural preservation and revising practice guidelines, there remains a gap between theory and actual practice that gives source communities real decision-making power (Wharton 2005: 200–202; cf. Hollowell and Nicholas 2009, 143).

In Hawai'i, archaeologists Peter Mills and Kathleen Kawelu (2013) detail the historical relationship between cultural resource management

professionals (particularly archaeologists) and indigenous communities. In 1976, the State of Hawai'i enacted Chapter 6E of Hawai'i Revised Statutes, declaring the state's responsibility to develop "a comprehensive program of historic preservation" and "to ensure the administration of such historical and cultural property in a spirit of stewardship and trusteeship for future generations."[2] The passage of this statute coincided with Native Hawaiian cultural revitalization movements that sought to protect cultural sites (e.g., halting the use of the island of Kaho'olawe as a US military training ground and bombing site) and protest development projects that damaged culturally sensitive sites (e.g., the 1986 excavation of hundreds of burial sites at Honokahua, Maui, to construct a tourist resort). Skepticism about archaeological work in Native Hawaiian communities, coupled with the state's added requirement in 2002 that primary investigators of archaeological and heritage preservation projects possess graduate degrees, discouraged Native Hawaiians from meaningful participation in cultural management work. By the twenty-first century, the authors describe a crisis in Hawaiian heritage management; Senate Bill 2906, presented in 2008, characterized Hawaiian historic preservation to be "in a condition of unprecedented confusion and disarray" and, in 2012, the State Historic Preservation Division faced the loss of federal funding (nearly half of its budget) (Mills and Kawelu 2013: 129–30).

The state's refusal to support the North Kohala *Kamehameha* sculpture conservation effort illustrates the lack of clear objectives and rationales guiding heritage policy. Wharton reports that the state discontinued maintenance of the sculpture in 1988, and after several unsuccessful attempts to contact the State Foundation for Culture and the Arts in 1997, he finally received a response that the foundation would not support the project because the sculpture was not under the agency's jurisdiction. Wharton (2012: 9–13, cf. 98–101) had to turn to a local organization, the Hawai'i Arts Alliance, for administrative and planning support; together they secured funding from national and nongovernmental sources and identified local and indigenous community groups to develop and execute the project.[3] And yet, as Wharton points out, the state continues to maintain the replica cast of the sculpture that is located in Honolulu. State support for the Honolulu sculpture betrays its commercial interests, because the sculpture draws visitors year-round and also forms the center of the King Kamehameha Day annual celebration. Preferring to support the Honolulu sculpture in its 1883 brass and gilt form, and not the painted version in North Kohala, privileges a conservation for tourism rather than for living communities (cf. Brown 2009: 154–55) and fixes Native Hawaiian history in the past, pushing out of sight the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893, annexation by the United States in

1898, statehood in 1959, and the social, economic, and political issues facing Native Hawaiian communities today. The suggestion that the Honolulu sculpture reflects the state's vision of Hawai'i does not negate or qualify in any way the meaning this artwork holds for indigenous groups who celebrate the famed chief Kamehameha and Kalākaua, the monarch who commissioned the statue, as representing the independent monarchy, Hawaiian history, and indigenous values. The point is that the state opts to promote a profitable vision of Hawai'i's history and culture and exerts its authority over what constitutes heritage and how it should, or should not, be cared for.[4]

The local decision to keep painting the North Kohala sculpture rather than restoring its 1883 brass and gilt form presents a retort to the touristic commodification of Hawaiian culture. Wharton discusses residents' growing concerns about land rights, tourism, and development in North Kohala (2012: 92–97). As former plantation properties are subdivided and sold, bringing new waves of *haole* (white) settlers and diminishing access to ocean and mountain areas, and luxury hotels and golf courses are established in neighboring regions, North Kohalans express anxiety about the impact of "the wrong kind of development" and the growing rift between long-term residents and EuroAmerican newcomers (Wharton 2012: 60–66).

Decolonizing Community and Institutional Divides in Preservation and Beyond

A major strength of the North Kohala community project was its thoughtful attention to the wide distance between the directives of the state government located in Honolulu and the desires and traditions of the so-called outer-island North Kohala communities. Wharton and his collaborators structured the project in such a way that the local communities were empowered to make significant decisions about what was to be done with the statue. This required Wharton to go against both the conventional wisdom of the conservation field and the original mandate he received from the state to simply "research the original appearance and recommend methods for removing the paint" (Wharton 2012, 3). The project offers a compelling model for meaningful community-based cultural preservation practices.[5] A vital step in decolonizing practice is restructuring and balancing power relationships—moving away from the authority of (typically Euro-American) "experts" and Western knowledge systems—to engage source communities as true partners in decision making and to acknowledge their ultimate control over their own representation and ownership of their heritage.[6]

Wharton is open about how unprepared he felt, given his background as a researcher and technical restorer, to "share research and decision making

outside of professional circles" (2012, 11). He also notes that, despite ample encouragement, some of his colleagues warned him against community collaboration in North Kohala because of expected difficulties in bridging the divide between conservation experts and laypeople. Yet, the project persevered because of the patient commitment to building strong ties with local residents. Wharton collaborated with local communities and organizations in the various development and implementation stages of the project. He shared his scientific expertise and historical research, and the people of North Kohala shared their opinions about their history and future, the significance of the statue, and their understanding of their community. Wharton reserved his own views on how the sculpture should be conserved; the community had the authority to determine who would make the final decision and how the decision would be made.[7]

Emphasis on collaboration and community engagement in heritage management leads to questions of what qualifies as real power sharing—moving beyond mere consultation or disengaged forms of obtaining community input. Because of wide variation in collaborative practice and because lack of meaningful engagement can result in heightened cynicism on the part of descendant communities toward heritage organizations and professionals, David Guilfoyle and Erin Hogg (2015) urge careful comparative analysis of project design to determine what types of collaboration meet legal, ethical, and professional standards. They aim to "develop a structured theoretical and methodological framework for collaborative projects so that the notion of collaboration becomes something more concrete than just a general philosophy shared by community-oriented practitioners" (Guilfoyle and Hogg 2015: 107–08). Some heritage professionals see ethnography as an essential component of community-based heritage management. Archaeologists Julie Hollowell and George Nicholas (2009) suggest that ethnographic methods not only provide nuanced cross-cultural understanding but can also help communities articulate their own conceptions of heritage and define their roles in its protection.[8] Ethnographic research was a key component of the North Kohala project (Wharton 2012: 59, 128ff., 172). In addition to loosening professional authority and facilitating collaboration, Wharton's ethnographic research led to insights about communication practices specific to the region. Organizers came to understand the limited efficacy of formal town hall meetings that would draw primarily haole newcomers or relying on open balloting in a post-plantation community that bears the effects of the settler colonial hierarchy in which laborers were not socialized to publicly express their views or participate in democratic processes (Wharton 2012, 75). Instead, organizers recognized the value of initiating school and community arts projects, engaging the local media, addressing smaller gatherings

of local organizations, and conducting one-on-one conversations, in addition to holding public meetings (Wharton 2012: 103–08).

The Painted King is instructive in its detailed reflection upon Wharton's process of building trust, hearing the opinions of multiple stakeholders in North Kohala, and cultivating approaches to gain wide interest and engagement from local communities. Indeed, the project's fairly successful negotiation between state-funded agencies based in Honolulu and Native Hawaiian and other communities in North Kohala offers a potential model for other projects and processes that must straddle this divide. There is often a serious lack of sustained dialogue and collaboration between state or federal agencies and Native Hawaiian communities, which results in policies and laws that are widely contested and unsatisfactory to the very people they intend to benefit and protect. Lack of community engagement was especially clear in June 2014 when the US Department of Interior (DOI) announced with only a week's notice that they would hold public hearings about a proposed rule change to "re-establish a government-to-government relationship with the Native Hawaiian community."[9] Many have long criticized policies that would confer federal recognition upon Native Hawaiians in a manner roughly analogous to federally recognized Native American tribes largely because the federal government appears unwilling to grant significant land rights in Hawai'i.[10]

Yet DOI officials appeared surprised, even shocked, to hear the majority of people who came to testify at the hearings soundly rejecting the proposed rule change. Public testimonies were limited to two minutes per person, resulting in many passionate speakers being cut off and widespread audience frustration. The DOI was not prepared to truly engage the breadth of questions and arguments Native Hawaiians and allies presented, spanning issues of international treaty law and the impact of federal recognition on preexisting programs and policies, such as the Hawaiian Homesteads governed by the 1921 Hawaiian Homes Commission Act (Sai 2011; Kauanui 2008). More fundamentally, the DOI was not open to relinquishing the conventions of an American-styled public hearing, which was ill-fitting in the Hawaiian context, nor were they open to deviating from their agenda about federal recognition to truly engage the diverse issues Native Hawaiian communities testified were important to them.[11] By contrast, Wharton and his collaborators spent much time and thought on ethically engaging local communities about the *Kamehameha* statue. Reflecting on the various opinions they received from the community, project leaders solicited the advice of a respected Native Hawaiian elder, Marie Solomon, and took a democratic vote of all North Kohala residents (Wharton 2012, 134). Even after the local decision was made to keep the statue painted and approved by the

committee in Honolulu, the project continued to work with the community, involving residents in the actual restoration and continuing to interface with local schools about the restoration work.

The sustained community engagement reflects many of the issues and processes that should ideally occur around other decisions for Hawai'i communities, including decisions to pursue either federal recognition or Hawaiian independence. Although extending similar processes across the state holds many challenges, it is inspiring to imagine communities across Hawai'i being able to engage in sincere, patient, and ongoing dialogue about Hawai'i's political status as simultaneously a US state and occupied Hawaiian Kingdom. North Kohala's example suggests that communities at the periphery of state and federal power may be able to lead the way in modeling successful forms of open engagement, and other public projects would do well to more consciously include or even center communities outside the usual focus on urban O'ahu. In fact, in some ways, the distance of North Kohala from the urban center and seat of state government in Honolulu seems to have allowed the multiple local communities to have a say over the statue. In part, precisely because the Honolulu agencies seemed to dismiss North Kohala's statue as unimportant and distant, the state did not try to manage every aspect of the statue, in contrast to the *Kamehameha* statue in Honolulu. Rather the project embodied the community's deep feeling that "the king is not state property, but part of North Kohala's local history and 'ohana'" (Wharton 2012, 85). This example potentially suggests that significant change for Native Hawaiians and other residents of Hawai'i will likely never originate from the state or federal governments but in local community organizing.

Public Art and Civic Engagement in Oceania

Wharton's study does not forego the object in its community-based conservation practice. It illustrates how careful analysis of the material properties of the statue (e.g., determining damage in the brass cast, its original gilding, the alteration of the eyes, and the layers of paint accumulated over the decades), in combination with historical and ethnographic research and community collaboration, led to a meaningful reflection on local histories, identities, and understandings of the sculpture as a conservation object. As conservator Dean Sully notes, "Investigative conservation can expose traces of past practice within the object itself, which has the potential to reveal social relationships around the manufacture and use of conserved objects" (Sully 2013, 302). He warns of placing sole emphasis on context to the extent that it neglects materiality and stresses how objects, contexts, and communities are mutually constituted (Sully 2007: 40–41).[12]

The *Kamehameha* sculpture as a "hybrid" object—commissioned by a Native Hawaiian monarch in collaboration with his haole advisor, Walter Murray Gibson, to commemorate the arrival of James Cook as well as the reign of Kamehameha I in a Euro-American neo-classical style featuring indigenous cultural symbols—stimulated reflection on the various significances the sculpture held for the North Kohala community (Wharton 2008, 160). The range of residents' identifications with the syncretic statue speaks to the complexities of relationships between Native Hawaiians, plantation-era immigrants and their descendants, newcomer haole, tourists, and government agencies. Although some postcolonial analysts might celebrate hybrid cultural forms as articulating "postnational" subjectivities, scholars such as Michael Brown (2009, 160), following Kwame Anthony Appiah (2006), recognize the crucial place of "local loyalties" in global citizenship. In Hawai'i, cultural studies scholars Cynthia Franklin and Laura Lyons analyze culturally mixed forms of music and poetry and argue that indigeneity does not have to be situated in opposition to hybridity nor replaced by it. They suggest that contemporary Hawaiian performances that engage a variety of local and global genres "instead of articulating global citizenry or stateless identities, can, in fact, be used for specific struggles of national self-determination" (2004, 70).[13] This continues the tradition of the nineteenth-century Hawaiian monarch, David Kalākaua, who commissioned the *Kamehameha* statue by Thomas R. Gould, an American sculptor working in Italy, to make visible Hawai'i's distinguished tradition of Native leadership in an international context.[14]

Although Franklin and Lyons explore the ways hybrid cultural forms express indigenous Hawaiian values, they sidestep, to some degree, the issue of migrant cultures in Hawai'i, which the North Kohala conservation project more directly addresses.[15] Similarly, much of the literature on decolonizing cultural resource management focuses on the relationships between indigenous groups and heritage institutions. Nondominant migrant communities are largely neglected. Social justice scholar John Pugliese (2002), writing on Australian heritage policies, notes that migrant cultural sites have only recently been incorporated into the predominantly Anglocentric national landscape. He warns, however, that without consulting with Aboriginal communities to understand the indigenous significance of sites being identified as migrant heritage sites, migrant groups risk reproducing colonial national narratives and marginalizing indigenous histories. The *Kamehameha* conservation project achieved a breadth of participation in North Kohala through which residents arrived at a decision-making process about how to conserve the sculpture that privileged Native Hawaiian perspectives but also included the broader community.

Although Franklin, Lyons, and Pugliese complicate hybridity and the relationships between indigenous, migrant, and settler groups, they favor coherent and distinct ethnic/racial categories and do not address the intricacies of cultural and ethnic fusions. The transcultural nature of the *Kamehameha* sculpture and the layers of paint that have enveloped it and transformed it for more than a century are comparable to the layered history of cultural and ethnic blending in Hawai'i. Together, the sculpture's cross-cultural references and the inclusivity of the conservation process seem to have encouraged dialogue and reflection on the complex history of cultural and ethnic mixtures in Hawai'i. The initial organizing team and the conservation advisory group were primarily comprised of multiethnic descendants of Native Hawaiians, Asian immigrants, and haole, in addition to Sharon Hayden, a haole from New York who had lived in the area for thirty years, and Wharton, who gradually earned the trust of the community (Wharton 2012: 67–75). It is noteworthy that Wharton gently uses the term "local," an identity marker in Hawai'i that emerged among Native Hawaiian and migrant laborers in response to class- and race-based exclusion by politically, socially, and economically dominant haole in the early twentieth century. However, toward the end of the century, the local has become "highly contested terrain, the site on which cultures clash over the terms of inclusion" (Chang 1996, 10). There have been various challenges to local belonging by descendants of indigenous and nonwhite plantation-era groups who object to haole appropriation of "localness"; by those who recognize ethnic stratification within the local; and by Native Hawaiians who see local identity as a colonial settler identity (see Chang 1996; Trask 2000; Reed 2001; Edles 2004; Fujikane and Okamura 2008). As Wharton notes, North Kohala shares these potentially conflicting identity constructions as reflected in the diversity of opinions voiced regarding what the *Kamehameha* statue meant and how it should be conserved: "The religious and cultural strands of the Hawaiian past persist and reveal themselves, but their presence scatters across different elements of the community, sometimes intermixing within individuals who are ambivalent about how elements of their very own identity can be honored through the presence of the sculpture" (2012: 122–23).

In addition to consideration of ethnic identities, planners were equally concerned with consulting elders (most of whom were not Native Hawaiians) and engaging community youth. Ultimately, project leaders wanted to promote a democratic culture (Wharton 2012, 133). In pursuing a multifaceted education, consultation, and decision-making approach, the planning committee encouraged the expression and exchange of diverse perspectives stemming from ethnic and class differences, historical and generational experiences, divergent levels of national allegiance (e.g., valuing war veterans

compared with distrust of the state), and religious beliefs (e.g., Native spiritual traditions, Buddhism, and Christianity). The fundamentally collaborative nature of the project was effectively formative; it generated conversation and activated a public space, creating a conscious community that considered its own composition as a public and its role in history making and shaping the future (see Deutsch 1996, 259; Baca 2009; Hamlin 2012). Dissolving the hierarchical boundaries separating heritage professional, artwork, and audience, the North Kohala case illustrates what art historian Grant Kester, writing on artworks that foster social engagement, describes as projects that "typically involve extended interactions that unfold in ways that lie, quite deliberately, outside the artist's [or conservator's] original control or intention and that evolve in concert with the particular intelligence of participants or collaborators" (2013, 116). The *Kamehameha* conservation process demonstrates the core principles of the Animating Democracy Initiative (supported by Americans for the Arts and the Ford Foundation): art is vital to society; civic dialogue is vital to democracy; and both create unique opportunities for mutual understanding. The initiative highlights the role of art and the humanities in addressing civic issues through their capacity to create a physical, psychological, and intellectual space for civic dialogue; engage people who might not otherwise participate; and invite participants to reflect in new ways (Korza et al. 2002: 1–7; see also Romney n.d.; McCoy 1997; Lee 2013). Open collaboration, therefore, facilitated shared understandings and transformed consciousness for all participants (cf. Kester 2013: 119, 122–23). Residents became aware of other community members' views; Wharton arrived at a new awareness of his responsibility and capacities as an art conservator; and partner agencies, such as Animating Democracy, learned about culturally specific forms of generating public dialogue and engagement (Korza n.d.).

Similar efforts have taken place elsewhere in communities comprised of indigenous, migrant, and settler populations in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. Drawing on the transformative capacity of art, Shigeyuki Kihara, an artist of Samoan and Japanese descent, produced a series of collaborative performances titled *Talanoa: Walk the talk* (2009–10). Each partnership brought together culturally diverse groups to engage in the Samoan concept of *talanoa*, a process of finding common ground through the exchange of ideas (akin to Hawaiian concepts of *'ae like* [coming to an agreement], *kūkā*, [consultation], and *ho'oponopono* [putting things right through mutual understanding and forgiveness] that were considered for decision-making models in North Kohala; Wharton 2012: 131–32). Kihara organized collaborations between Hindu and Samoan Christian singers (Sydney 2009), Japanese *taiko* drummers and a Maori cultural performance group (Auckland 2010), Chinese dragon dancers and Cook Island drummers (Sydney 2010;

FIGURE 1. **Shigeyuki Kihara, *Talanoa: Walk the Talk V*. Documentation of Public Performance by the Australian Yau Kung Mun Association and Sydney Cook Islands Dance Group. Held on January 14, 2010. Staged at Dixon St. Mall, Chinatown, Sydney Australia. Commissioned by 4A Center for Contemporary Asian Art and Campbelltown Arts Center for Sydney Festival 2010. Photograph by Susannah Wimberley. Courtesy of the Artist, 4A Center for Contemporary Asian Art and Campbelltown Arts Center for Sydney Festival 2010.**

Fig. 1), and others. Each project involved consultation between the artist, community leaders, and elders; extended gatherings between participant groups; a performance; and video documentation.[16] The process was rather open-ended, allowing for moments of uncertainty, awkwardness, resolution, and creative engagement. The artist, participants, and audience (which formed a key component of the work) witnessing an unlikely alliance were transformed through the project as they arrived at new understandings of themselves, each other, and their relationships within the larger community (Kihara and Teaiwa 2011: 9–11; De Almeida 2012).

The North Kohala and Kihara projects demonstrate the vital link between culture and civic life and the capacity of communities to address other pressing issues. But the forming of publics and shaping of public spaces can also be contentious. Public art creates a site of struggle to define, in a given place

FIGURE 2. **Carl F. K. Pao, West-facing bas-reliefs at Disney's Aulani Resort and Spa, O'ahu. Photograph by Marata Tamaira, 2012. Courtesy of the Artist and the Photographer.**

and time, what a community is and, more generally, what democracy is. As art historian Rosalind Deutsche writes, "a democratic public space must be understood as a realm not of unity but of divisions, conflicts, and differences resistant to regulatory power" (1996, 267). Marata Tamaira's (2015) analysis of Native Hawaiian involvement in the design of Disney's Aulani family resort on O'ahu highlights the fraught negotiation of place and identity in a context of disparate power. After receiving strong opposition to developing a theme-resort in Virginia in the 1990s, Disney selected to proceed more sensitively in creating its Hawaiian tourist venue in 2008, consulting with indigenous cultural representatives who, in the end, felt they were genuinely included in the conversation (Tamaira 2015: 167–69, 182). Over sixty Native Hawaiian artists contributed to Aulani's public art, music, interior design, and landscape design (Figs. 2, 3). Despite Disney's editing process and the unreality of the resort environment, artists aimed to affirm indigenous history and presence, educate tourists about indigenous viewpoints, and enact claims to place, not only to the Aulani site, but to the larger *'āina* (land)

FIGURE 3. **Carl F. K. Pao, Phallus/Cloak Panel from the *Kū* Mural at Disney's Aulani Report and Spa, O'ahu. Photograph by Marata Tamaira, 2012. Courtesy of the Artist and Photographer.**

(Tamaira 2015: 174–78). Countering a history of displacement, Tamaira suggests Native Hawaiian participation functioned as "strategic *em*placement" of indigenous culture (Tamaira 2015: 168–69).

The Disney collaboration is compelling because it is situated on contested ground. Deutsche explains that "site specific works become part of their sites precisely by restructuring them, fostering . . . the viewer's ability to apprehend the conflicts and indeterminacy represented in the supposedly coherent spatial totalities" (1996, 262). Tamaira richly describes the culturally meaningful forms of material culture, integration of social and religious concepts,

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BOOK REVIEW FORUM

Glenn Wharton. *The Painted King: Art, Activism, and Authenticity in Hawai'i.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012. Pp. 216. ISBN 978-0-8248-3612-2. US$19.00 paperback.

Review: Aaron Glass
Bard Graduate Center

On the evening of September 4, 2013, a controversy over public artwork in Honolulu erupted as a long-established mural at the Hawai'i Convention Center was quietly draped with a black cloth. The 10 × 25 foot mixed-media panel was created in 1997 by artist Hans Ladislaus, a non-Native Hawaiian resident, after winning the commission in a state-sponsored competition. Entitled "Forgotten Inheritance," the largely abstract composition was intended by Ladislaus as "a reminder to all inhabitance [sic] of the Islands to respect and care for the fragile ecosystem and traditions which have been placed in our hands."[1] Its removal from public view was ordered by the president of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority following complaints by a number of activists then gathered at the Convention Center for the annual Native Hawaiian Conference. They took offence at the mural's generalized depiction of *iwi* (bones) visible in the sand, especially given the current efforts by many of the conference's attendants to battle land development schemes that threaten to unearth ancestral human remains, which are held to embody *mana* (spiritual power). Even though the artist and his critics basically agreed on the need to preserve Hawaiian territories and Native culture, and despite the fact that the mural had been both sanctioned by Native competition judges and traditionally blessed upon installation sixteen years ago, demands

to remove it from view revealed old and new divisions in the larger community surrounding the role of art within heritage preservation efforts. Although quickly resolved to all parties' satisfaction (the mural was unshrouded on September 19), the controversy spurred public discussion in the media about the rights of artists versus the sovereignty of Native Hawaiians (and the role of the state in defending both), about the clash of intentionalities involved in determining the meaning of an artwork, and about the changing historical and political contexts in which such debates are embroiled.[2]

The mural controversy was unfolding just as I arrived in Hawai'i for a three-month sabbatical and took up reading Glenn Wharton's highly engrossing and insightful book *The Painted King*, a personal account of his participation in a community-based project to decide the fate of a century-old public artwork. Wharton, a professional art conservator and university professor of museum studies, was hired by the Hawaiian state agency that oversees public art to perform long-needed conservation treatment on a statue of *Kamehameha I* standing in a North Kohala community on the Island of Hawai'i, near the historic king's birthplace. Implicit in his assignment, and consistent with the standard practice and ethos of Western conservation, was an assumption that he should try to return, as closely as possible, the sculpture to its "original" condition and state of appearance—that is, to determine historically and then realize in the present Thomas Ridgeway Gould's vision for his artwork at the time of its creation in 1879.

However, upon visiting the North Kohala community and speaking with its various and variegated denizens, Wharton realized that his task was not so straightforward. The community has a very long tradition of painting the sculpture, and members were hesitant to allow a *malihini* (outsider; nonresident) representing the state bureaucracy—much less a haole from the Mainland—to radically alter its appearance by uncovering the original bronze surface. What began as a simple commission for technical work blossomed into a complex, multiyear, community-based art project. While recounting the compelling story of the sculpture's history and recent restoration in great detail, Wharton's book on the larger project raises important questions about the interpretation of artwork and the politics of heritage management within and well beyond Hawai'i. As with the Honolulu mural drama, themes of covering and uncovering—obscuring and revealing—thread through his story.

Although trained as a conservation scientist, Wharton takes a decidedly humanistic and interdisciplinary approach to both his project's methodology and his narrative about it. Chapter Two in particular presents a fascinating art historical reconstruction of the monument's inception, visual prototypes, and construction methods as well as the social conditions of its production and initial reception at the time.[3] But Wharton quickly points out the limitations

of archival research for understanding the social history of the statue (8) and, accordingly, the basis for making decisions about its current conservation treatment. The majority of his research process and the book's narrative style rely instead on classic models of first-person ethnography, although the tale is told in a more diaristic than anthropological register. He begins with an "arrival story" (1), highlights his key moments of "initiation" (55), and ends with a "home coming" (164), arguing convincingly that "[t]here was another world of knowledge I would have to open myself to in order to understand the sculpture and its community" (10). As a result, Wharton provides a rich sense of place, cultural insights into local, Native Hawaiian-inflected spiritual beliefs in the mana inherent in or accumulated by the sculpture, and accounts of how traditional protocols for conflict management *(ho'oponopono)* were integrated into the project's decision-making scheme. Along the way, the reader is exposed to important Hawaiian vocabulary (there is a limited but helpful glossary in the back of the book), social categories, and cultural concepts used by project participants to structure their understanding of the statue, their relationship to Kamehameha himself, and their feelings about state intervention in local affairs.

Unlike a typical ethnographer, however, Wharton's training and appointed task encourage a marvelous attention to the materiality of the sculpture itself, which provides a compelling means for interrogating the object and for telling his own story. From detailed examination of the statue's surface, its traces of residue (some from the ritual offering of *lei* and other organic items), and its spots of degradation (in part attributable to "bronze disease"), Wharton gains unique access into its natural and social "biography" (Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986): its mode of manufacture in Italy; its damage during a now legendary shipwreck en route to Hawai'i; its exhumation and repair a century ago; its long history of repainting and care by the community (4–6, 109–12, 149). Repeatedly, his focus on the specific material identity of the sculpture provides a basis for exploring potential semiotic interpretations. For instance, its status as the first of multiple casts or replicas bears on people's notions of its relative authenticity, and revealed layers of pigment come to embody as well as symbolize changing representations of race via skin color. The stratiographic levels visible in beautiful photomicrographs of paint chips in cross-section (113) neatly encapsulate the means by which Wharton and his collaborators came to "read" the object for evidence of perpetual mutability and past intentionalities, and as a guide to present attitudes and decisions. (I wish that the press's art director had been imaginative enough to use these mysterious but concrete images on the cover rather than a straightforward photo of the restored sculpture, which spoils the gripping mystery at the heart of the narrative—will the project team decide to continue the

local tradition of painting the figure or will they revert to an "original" gilded bronze treatment, like its companion cast in Honolulu?) One of Wharton's most original analytical contributions to the burgeoning literature on materiality and object meaning (e.g., Thomas 1991; Myers 2001; Miller 2005; Henare et al. 2007) is his application of the conservation term "inherent vice"—which refers to the innate tendency of some objects and materials toward deterioration—to a larger temporal amenability of certain objects for cultural resignification (121).

Of course, one of the reasons the *Kamehameha* statue proves such a rewarding case study of such processes and approaches is its resistance to essentialization as a multivalent work of art. Early in his book, Wharton forcefully demonstrates that the motivation for, as well as the iconography and ceremonial treatment of, the statue drew deeply from both Native Hawaiian and European traditions, and as such it proves impossible to assimilate it to one cultural regime over the other. Conceived in Hawai'i by a non-Native politician to commemorate Captain Cook's "Discovery" of the islands and to bolster economic and political relationships with the embattled Hawaiian monarchy, the statue was designed by a Bostonian and constructed in Europe based in large part on Classical prototypes and then subsequently appropriated by King Kalākaua to mark his coronation and to celebrate the ascent to "civilization" of Native Hawaiians since Kamehameha's reign. Wharton occasionally describes elements of the sculpture as "hybrid" or "cross-cultural," but I prefer to think of such objects as intrinsically "intercultural," because it is only through the dynamic imbrication of players and their cultural values that such objects are even conceivable much less materialized (Jonaitis and Glass 2010). Heated contests over the monument's appearance, appropriate location, and symbolic meaning began even before it was cast and continue to this day, and Wharton gives the reader privileged insight into these ever-shifting social debates through archival excavation of century-old media reports as well as lengthy interview quotations from oral histories he conducted. Considering the original political conditions of the statue's inception as well as his professional attention to physical composition and transformation, Wharton's case study exemplifies Chris Gosden and Chantall Knowles' (2001) notion of the "colonial reaction" as the production of a wholly new substance through (often violent) chemical means, which they contrast to simple "mixtures" that retain functions and characteristics of their component parts. Wharton mines the multiplex nature of the statue itself as both a semiotic motif and a motivating factor for the current multicultural community charged with deciding its material fate.

The Painted King might have remained a fascinating but limited account of the sculpture and its conservation had not Wharton been perceptive

regarding the status of the object as a focal point for a century of political struggle. Especially because its very ownership is in dispute (6, 12, 98), the statue has been claimed as a symbol and logo of various, often competing political orders (82–86). Although there is certainly a legacy of racial tension dating back to the sugar plantations (which incrementally co-opted Native Hawaiian land and replaced indigenous labor with that of Asian immigrants) and to the American overthrow of the monarchy, the battles for power profiled here seem to play out more in the contest between local populations in North Kohala and the state, federal, and international business and political interests that have long controlled the capital flow in the area and, thus, people's quotidian lives. From the original context for commissioning the statue at a time of expanding American interests amid a crisis of the modern Hawaiian monarchy (16–18), to recent legal disputes over land development and financial compensation that went all the way to the Supreme Court (60, 129), the fate of the Kamehameha sculpture has been repeatedly embroiled in heated debates about what it means to be Hawaiian in the first place. Although depicting the most globally famous Native Hawaiian chief, non-Native members of the North Kohala community have their own strong associations with the statue. In fact, Wharton's book is not so much the story of the "indigenization" of something Euro-American but the localization of an object conceived of and managed from elsewhere (and not just any elsewhere but Honolulu, the seat of historic American annexation and current state bureaucracy).[4] Although there have been periodic efforts to enhance the statue's ethnographic authenticity (120, 154), the book provides insight into the peculiar power of the category of the "local" in Hawaii (one whole chapter is devoted to it), which is not reducible to ethnic identity and which in the end provides much of the basis for the project's decisions regarding conservation (suffice it to say, the community chooses to continue contrasting their cast aesthetically with the similar one in the state capitol). In some places, I would have appreciated more historical, political, and cultural context for many of these complex positions and tensions, but I recognize that this might have compromised Wharton's topical focus in a book that did not set out to be a regional history any more than an in-depth ethnography.[5] His narrative economy, while enhancing the book's appeal and accessibility, may also limit its potential—and highly relevant—application to a broader set of literatures and readerships.

Along similar lines, Wharton occasionally nods to but rarely fully engages with a rich theoretical inheritance that might have been more productively mobilized. As I read, I found myself thinking that a book with the same subject matter but a different sensibility might have been subtitled not "Art, Activism, and Authenticity" but "Mediation, Agency, & Performance."

Without invoking the polysemous notion directly, Wharton repeatedly discusses the ways in which the statue has been mediated—that is to say, represented in various other media—as well as its obvious role in mediating social relations between people with different kinds of investment in it. For example, there are wonderful passages about the sculpture's amenability to appropriation through material transformation (see Parezo 1983; Phillips and Steiner 1999; Thomas 1999), not only by the government and a voracious tourism industry (82–84, 92–96) but also by local shopkeepers and school children, who did a series of multimedia art projects inserting an image of the *Kamehameha* monument into famous works of global art (105–07). Along with the ubiquitous tourist imagery, brief mention of the statue's frequent presence in local family photographs (90) resonates with current work on photography and the creation of cultural icons—as well as consuming publics—through mechanical reproduction and wide circulation (Hariman and Lucaites 2007; Glass 2009; Tomaselli and Scott 2009; Kemp 2012).[6]

From both a material and social perspective, the question of mediation hinges on demonstrations of agency—on the relative power that people have had to control the meaning and disposition of the statue within larger fields of cultural production and struggle (Bourdieu 1993; Gell 1998; Chua and Elliott 2013). A more thorough engagement with the analytical concept would have allowed Wharton to bring together his numerous insights regarding local debates about the agency of the original artist (and his intentions for the work); the changing state governments that commissioned it and now manage it; the community (many members of which have enjoyed little political agency since the time of the plantations); the statue itself as a "conservation object" that might make its own demands; and even of Kamehameha himself, who is thought by some to act and speak through his painted bronze manifestation.[7]

This brings me to performance as a mode of acting on the world, another recurring theme in the book. Although he only briefly cites a couple of key academic influences (92), Wharton identifies a wealth of instances in which Hawaiians performatively constitute not only the object in question but also their various subjectivities. Drawing more openly on the theoretical literature might have provided the basis for explicitly linking theatrical modes of performance (ranging from ritual offering of traditional objects, chants, and music, to the creation of new hula dances and puppet shows dramatizing Kamehameha's legacy) with the enacting of discursive routines (from rumor to public debate) that help mobilize personal identities and social configurations within the community. Attention to such activities and modes of expression add nuance and life to Wharton's account of his project, and they deserve to come to the attention of scholars working in related fields.

These reflections lead me to my final point, which is about the nature of Wharton's collaborative method and his intended audience. Although as an outsider to Pacific Studies I might have liked to see a more explicit engagement with theory and a deeper unpacking of broad historical and cultural contexts, the book that Wharton produced—relatively (some might say blessedly) light on jargon and slim of endnotes for an academic volume—is in narrative alignment with the project and its participants. Though he did not state this outright, I imagine he composed the book with the North Kohala community in mind as a significant target for its readership, a decision entirely commensurate with the spirit of the collaboration it recounts. In its detailed and reflexive attention to the methodology, structure, challenges and realization of the project, *The Painted King* provides an exemplary roadmap for how to engage in responsible, ethical, long-term, community-oriented work with indigenous and other kinds of "local" populations, especially given the necessary patience and willingness to listen upon which such relationships hinge. Here, the book contributes to efforts within museum studies to decolonize the methods of museology—a field, like conservation, which has to produce practical solutions and not only academic theory—in large part by working collaboratively with "source communities" (Peers and Brown 2003; McMullen 2008; Phillips 2012). One of the most gratifying and interesting aspects of the project's success was the way in which the community came to "own" it through their often-fraught and divisive but extensive participation. As in the recent Honolulu mural controversy, an artwork became the embodiment of much larger issues having to do with identity and political control (or lack thereof) and a focal point for public conversations and confrontations. Local attitudes and identifications are not only rehearsed but are emergent in such moments of social and material engagement (see Kramer 2006). Wharton has given us much more than a personal account of his labor to conserve a public sculpture; he has given us a rare and privileged insight into the material means by which one community has long striven to preserve its unique multicultural existence.

NOTES

1. Statement from a blog responding to the recent controversy on the artist's website: http://www.hansladislaus.com/page/blog/info (accessed September 25, 2013).

2. For instance, see Susan Essoyen, "Rights clash amid dispute over mural." *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, September 16, 2013.

3. Although the book is well illustrated with historical and contemporary photographs, I found it odd and at times frustrating that images lacked figure numbers and corresponding

explicit reference in the text. I suppose this may have been an editorial decision to distance the book from standard art historical conventions.

4. Although Wharton does not frame it as such, one of my favorite materializations of this move toward "localization" is the 2001 tile mural produced by a North Kohala Middle School art class that depicts the sunken sculpture after its historic shipwreck off the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic—entirely surrounded by Hawaiian fish, sea turtles, and coral reefs (104).

5. To be fair, Wharton himself repeatedly expresses frustration with the lack of archival material that might have allowed him to provide more context for past decisions and debates (e.g., 42–44).

6. Although he mentions it in passing toward the beginning and end of the book (13, 143, 147), Wharton never really discusses the documentary film (Baker 2002) that was being made throughout the project's long duration and how its particular form of visual and social mediation both captured and may have affected the community's engagement and the conservation work itself. For instance, the film focuses more (relatively speaking) than Wharton does on the community art projects that accompanied the restoration work, and the presence of film cameras throughout the whole project may have invested community decisions with an additional weight. The book and the film actually make excellent companion materials for classroom discussion, each complementing and complicating the other in productive ways.

7. Whether or not one attributes Kamehameha's own spiritual energy and will to the object, Wharton approaches but does not quite articulate the question as to the statue's own agency in terms that might have productively paraphrased W.J.T. Mitchell's (2006) question regarding the agency of visual images: "What do pictures want?" Of course, within the anthropological literature on Oceania, there is a robust tradition of attention to the way in which objects carry the agency of their makers or users through both space and time (e.g., Malinowski 1922, Mauss 1950, Munn 1986, Weiner 1992, Tapsell 1997).

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BOOK REVIEW FORUM

Glenn Wharton. *The Painted King: Art, Activism, and Authenticity in Hawai'i.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012. Pp. 216. ISBN 978-0-8248-3612-2. US$19.00 paperback.

Review: KAREN STEVENSON
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

To Paint or Not to Paint, a Community's Question!

THE PAINTED KING: ART, ACTIVISM, AND AUTHENTICITY IN HAWAI'I is an interesting book that offers many things to many people. To the general reader, it provides an overview of Hawaiian history as well as a sense of the complexity of the current cultural/ethnic identities found there. For those in the conservation, area it provides a unique case study and also suggests a new way of working. For the Pacific scholar, the various and nuanced problems associated with community involvement is played out in a fascinating story. It is an excellent and easy read that should both inspire and teach its audience not only about Hawai'i, or conservation or community, but also of how these entities can interact to attain their mutual goals. It is the story of a statue and a community and the relationship between the two.

> This sculpture was startling in appearance. Far from the influence of professional art circles, local residents had painted the figure in bright colors. Kamehameha's skin was brown, his hair black, and his cloak yellow. He had white toenails and penetrating black eyes with small white brush strokes for highlights. I had never seen a sculpture like this. It looked more like a piece of folk art than a nineteenth-century heroic monument . . . (6–7).

These words describe Glenn Wharton's first impressions of the *King Kamehameha I* statue in Kohala, Hawai'i. He had been sent to assess the condition of the statue and had been told that there was some "paint on the work (3). He questioned:

> Why would anyone completely paint a bronze sculpture like this? . . . I wanted to remove the paint and return it to its nineteenth century appearance. After all, my directive from Honolulu was to do just that: to "research the original appearance and recommend methods for removing the paint. My report would list steps for 'restoring' the artists [sic] initial coatings . . ." (3).

These first thoughts/impressions provide the beginnings of a compelling story/process, of a conservator creating a community project that, in essence, was contrary to both his "brief" and all that he "knew" about conservation. This was the beginning of a project/relationship that would not only lead Wharton to question his process of working, but also bring into question numerous issues, such as heritage management, identity, indigenous ways of knowing, representation, authenticity, creating histories, and perhaps most important being "local".

Shortly after his first encounter with *King Kamehameha I*, Wharton crossed the street and entered a café where another baffling encounter took place:

> "What were you doing across the street on the ladder?"
>
> "I'm a sculpture conservator, and I've been contracted to assess the condition of the sculpture."
>
> "Who contracted you?"
>
> "The city of Honolulu."
>
> "What for?"
>
> "Well, the state may want to restore it."
>
> "Whatever you do, don't remove the paint!"
>
> "Why?"
>
> "Because here in town we like him painted...the paint helps us relate to him as a human being..."
>
> "Do most people in the community feel this way?"
>
> "Everyone". (6).

Wharton was now facing a unique and confusing statue complicated by the assertion that "everyone" liked it painted. How would he proceed? This book not only tells us this story but also teases out the nuances and complexities of the process—one that took five years to complete. What became apparent to Wharton immediately was that this would have to be a community project. For those of us who "work in the Pacific" the importance of community—of seeking both permission and guidance from the elders—is now a "given," but this was not always the case. Frequently the insider/outsider dichotomy would surface with the outsider/scholar's knowledge taking precedent. Often the community was ignored. Clearly for Wharton, this would be a first, and as such, this is a story of accomplishment because the community was actively involved. Wharton comments:

> The sculpture of King Kamehameha is arguably the strongest reminder of North Kohala's fused and layered identity. With some knowledge of the community and who counts in North Kohala, I had a better understanding of the diverse voices and concerns as they emerged in the public process of deciding how the sculpture should look (75).

The relationship between Wharton and the Kohala community, with its myriad nuances and complications, is the foundation of this book (and project). What is fascinating is how Wharton interweaves a complexity of knowledges as the project itself brings the community together. He comments:

> Agendas from inside and outside the community combined with other spiritual, economic, political, and social forces. There isn't just one way to know or use the sculpture, there are many, and they change over time (168).

These changes are detailed as we move between knowledge gathered through archival research, reading the works of Hawaiian scholars and learning from the local community. We are provided with the social history of the statue, why it was commissioned and the surprising aspect that it was both lost at sea, then found. We are also given a brief overview of the Kalakaua period and his attempts to position Hawai'i as a global power by combining traditional and Western ideologies. It also demonstrates how Kalakaua desired to associate himself with Kamehameha and assert his position a King of Hawai'i. We also learn of the differing factions of Kalakaua's government and the impending changes that his opposition would eventually enforce. The fact that this statue was created during this

turbulent time gives it historical importance. In addition to this, we also learn how the North Kohala community has reinterpreted this history and made it theirs; painting the statue reinforces this history. The community has embraced the statue in a very different time and place. It is the relationship between these two histories, as well as the different knowledge bases that various community members assert, that makes this story remarkable.

Building relationships is never easy, especially when people are leery of "outsiders". Wharton was "warned", yet what did that mean? What did being Hawaiian mean in this context? Did the descendants of Kamehameha have the "right" to assert their position in an ever-changing social hierarchy? For some, identity was associated with genealogy, for others the statue itself. These realities reflect how people interpret the past as well as the present. In addition to issues of identity, cultural politics also plays a role in this evolving story. Time (history) changes attitudes. We learn that some Hawaiian activists dismissed this statue, because the arm gesture was offensive and the sandals inauthentic. Even with the knowledge that Kalakaua was assimilating Hawaiian and Western forms of political representation, this did not give the statue historic credence. Others used that same knowledge to reiterate that the West had a tradition of painting sculpture, thereby justifying the current "tradition" of painting the statue. These arguments become fluid: no right or wrong; no black or white. Yet what does come through is the importance of this statue to the community of North Kohala.

This is evidenced by Wharton's first encounter with Kealoha Sugiyama who had repainted the sculpture in 1996 (after Wharton's first visit). Sugiyama explains:

> I stood in front of the Kamehameha statue and dialogued with it that I was going to paint it, and lo and behold I was across the street at the Bond Library. I borrowed a few books about Kamehameha and the next day I stood in front of Kamehameha again. I looked at one book about cloaks and feathers, and I saw a picture of the Liloa Sash and to my astonishment, it was red with gold trimming. I showed Kamehameha this regal sash and I said is this what you wanted me to know? And I wasn't sent back to the library so I knew that if I was going to paint the statue, Kamehameha wanted me to paint the Liloa Sash in the right color. I took the picture to a group of kahuna [priests, spiritual leaders] at the Pu'ukoholoa Heiau and I shared my story, and they agreed that It would be pono [proper procedure, righteous] to paint it red (9).

What became apparent to Wharton was that the issue was not getting history right or articulating the sculptor's original intent but "finding value in an active process of exploring versions of the past and analysing the power dynamics in deciding what the past should look like" (174).

To Paint or Not to Paint

Unlike a detective story, we know how this one ended. The statue was both conserved and painted. Yet, in this process, a community came together. Pro-paint arguments repeatedly stressed preserving local ways. "Growing up in Kohala, I always remember it being painted. We have so many changes in Kohala. The statue should remain the same!" "The local art and tradition of painting the statue is part of our pride" (117).

A final decision was made symbolically; by Kupuna Marie Solomon and voted on by the community. Solomon stated:

> I think he (the sculpture) should be painted yellow and red, the symbols of the royalty. Why be like the Honolulu and Hilo statues? Kohala is special. We should paint him, not use gold, that's a haole thing. The statue will be as a teacher. It will have information, and anyone walking up there will know (135).

To get to this point however, archives were searched, conversations were held, and debates raged. For instance, they discovered that the sculpture was originally gilded. This fit perfectly with Kalakaua's efforts "to celebrate a Hawaiian conversion to European values, while retaining sanitized versions of both cultural traditions" (31). Wharton noted; "If I made it attractive to outsiders, it would enhance its value as a tourist commodity. Gilding it would further its royal European associations" (10). Yet this was contrary to the community's desires; they instead embraced the fact that there is a Western tradition of painting sculpture (even *Augustus Caesar of Prima Porta*, the work *Kamehameha* was "modeled" after, was painted). Clearly authenticity was not the issue. The history of heroic sculpture is political—it asserts dominance and power. The fact that the statue had been painted, although that was not the intent of the artist or those who commissioned it, reinforced the community's decision.

Authenticity though is a questionable construct; we learn that it was not an issue at the time of the works creation either. Wharton tells us of the process used to create the work—the compilation of body types.

As various forms of knowledge came to the table, they served to reinforce, complement, and question each other. The result was a dynamic process of

investigation and intervention, with each modality looping back upon the other. Both cultural and material knowledge affected the direction of the research and the material outcome of how the sculpture ended up being treated (176).

"This information, buried in the state archives, could have critical implications for how local residents understand their sculpture" (128).

One of the issues that this book highlighted to me was how different kinds of knowledge are given credence. As a master's student at the University of Hawai'i I learned information that was contradictory to the oral traditions that my father had passed to me. It took quite some time for me to realize that there are different truths, each holding credence to the one believing in them. What becomes interesting is whose truth "we" prioritize, and why? Here, the descendants of Kamehameha were frequently afforded a particular status based on genealogy, not facts, not conservation knowledge and skills, but because they were related to the man that was being honored. As such, issues of identity also come into play and question what it means to self-identify as Hawaiian, the intricacies of mixed heritages and which identity one asserts and when. Kohala exemplifies the importance of being local and in response this project provided an opportunity to explore public and private memory about the sculpture and Kamehameha. It helped enrich readings of the collective past, not just by getting the past "right" for aesthetic purposes, but also by revealing opposing versions of the past and deciding what to communicate to future generations (166–67).

The community's voices, in their entirety, were given the chance to be heard, and all of its different cultural heritages took precedent over the practice of conservation, scientific knowledge, and research.

> Despite the combination of scientific and cultural research, we haven't developed ways to embrace communities around these objects—especially people who bring new meanings to them . . . (10–11).

The result is a book that addresses many ideas and beliefs concerning what traditions communities put into place and what it is to be "local". It also addressed how one learns history, customary practices and ideals, and respect for elders as well as the importance of community—being local—and assertions of identity even when these identities have changed. The book integrates years of conversations, archival research, scientific knowledge, cultural knowledge, and Wharton's ability to develop relationships and inspire a community. There is not one methodology employed but a diversity of

human interactions that are revealed. In this process, Hawaiian history is painted with a broad brush, whereas conservation issues are detailed with scientific accuracy, and certain events/interactions are recounted repeatedly. To use these fact to be critical of a project and book that accomplished so much would be petty and contrary to the pride gained by and throughout this process. The GoHawaii website exclaims:

> In front of the North Kohala Civic Center stands the original King Kamehameha I Statue, erected not far from where Hawai'i's greatest king was born . . . .

Today, iconic statues honor King Kamehameha's memory, the most famous King Kamehameha Statue stands across the street from Iolani Palace on Oahu. However, the story of the Kapaau statue has a history that is far more intriguing (see http://www.gohawaii.com/big-island/regions-neighborhoods/north-kohala/kamehameha-statue-kapaau).

Clearly the "restored" sculpture of *Kamehameha I* honors not only Kamehameha and Hawaiian history but also the community of North Kohala.

BOOK REVIEW FORUM

Response: GLENN WHARTON
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

I AM AN ART CONSERVATOR whose practice was radically altered by an object, the *Kamehameha I* sculpture in North Kohala, Hawai'i, and the people who currently interact with it. As expressed in *The Painted King: Art, Activism, and Authenticity in Hawai'i*, I had never encountered an historical object whose physical appearance was so dramatically altered by people who live with it. They not only paint it in life like colors, but residents honor it with gifts, chanting, *hula*, and other local forms of cultural respect. My decision to employ participatory and ethnographic research methods in the conservation project was a response to the strong relationships that I witnessed between people in North Kohala and their sculpture.

Designing the project required considerable time, because it was clear to me that I needed to incorporate qualitative research into my standard archival and material procedures. I also decided to investigate the potential for working with community members in more ambitious ways than I had before. I aimed to produce new knowledge through community interaction that would loop back to inform conservation decision-making and practice. In taking this on, I was advised by many in Hawai'i to slow down, listen, and allow community members to take over some aspects of decision making. Karen Stevenson clearly knows what this means in Hawai'i. I needed to seek permission and receive guidance from elders who at first were not available to me. I received advice to work with Native Hawaiian partners in project-related activities for children. This became the vehicle for stimulating

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conversations among families about the project, giving elders access to project concerns. It took time, but elder voices eventually became central to conservation decision making.

Being the guy who was going to conserve the sculpture, people wanted to speak with me whether I was at the site or elsewhere in the district. This increased as people came to confront the paint versus gold dilemma. I had entrée that can otherwise be hard to gain in fieldwork. In my interviews, I typically began by asking whether the sculpture should be gold leafed, as the artist originally intended it, or painted, as it had been since its 1883 installation. It did not take long for people to get to larger issues of spiritual investment in the sculpture, tensions that exist in the community, and how to represent the Native Hawaiian past.

In some instances, learning came during our physical interventions on the scaffolding. In what turned out to have more significance than I anticipated, we removed the king's bronze eyes at an early stage of treatment (Fig. 1). It was not generally known that a maintenance worker had added the eyes to the sculpture in the 1970s. The epoxy that held them in place would have failed under intense steam blasting during paint removal, hence our decision to remove them for safekeeping on the first day of the project. I asked a Kamehameha descendant working with me on the scaffolding to perform the task, thinking that this would be an honor for him. I learned later that he quietly apologized to Kamehameha for standing above him and for taking his eyes out. Removing the eyes was distressing for an elder advisor on the project because of their significance that stems from the function of eyes in *ki'i* (traditional Hawaiian sculpture) in burial practices. She came close to dropping her advisory role because of the evident disrespect I had shown toward the king. Fortunately a gentle negotiation saved the day. The event led to considerable discussion about Kamehameha's eyes among the community project advisors, involving some measured levity and revealing information that no one had mentioned in my forty semi-structured interviews.

Clearly there are methodological hazards associated with physically intervening in the life of an object when one is studying its community. Yet such interventions in the context of cultural research can encourage reflection on issues such as the role of eyes in traditional Hawaiian sculpture that may otherwise not surface. It also revealed patterns of difference and mutual consideration among local residents. I also came to see space for forgiveness, for accommodation with an outsider's expertise, and in the end for deploying a sense of humor in regard to an artifact considered to have accumulated *mana*.

Another instance of knowledge produced through practice was in the choice of brown paint for the skin. In my research, I learned that a prior

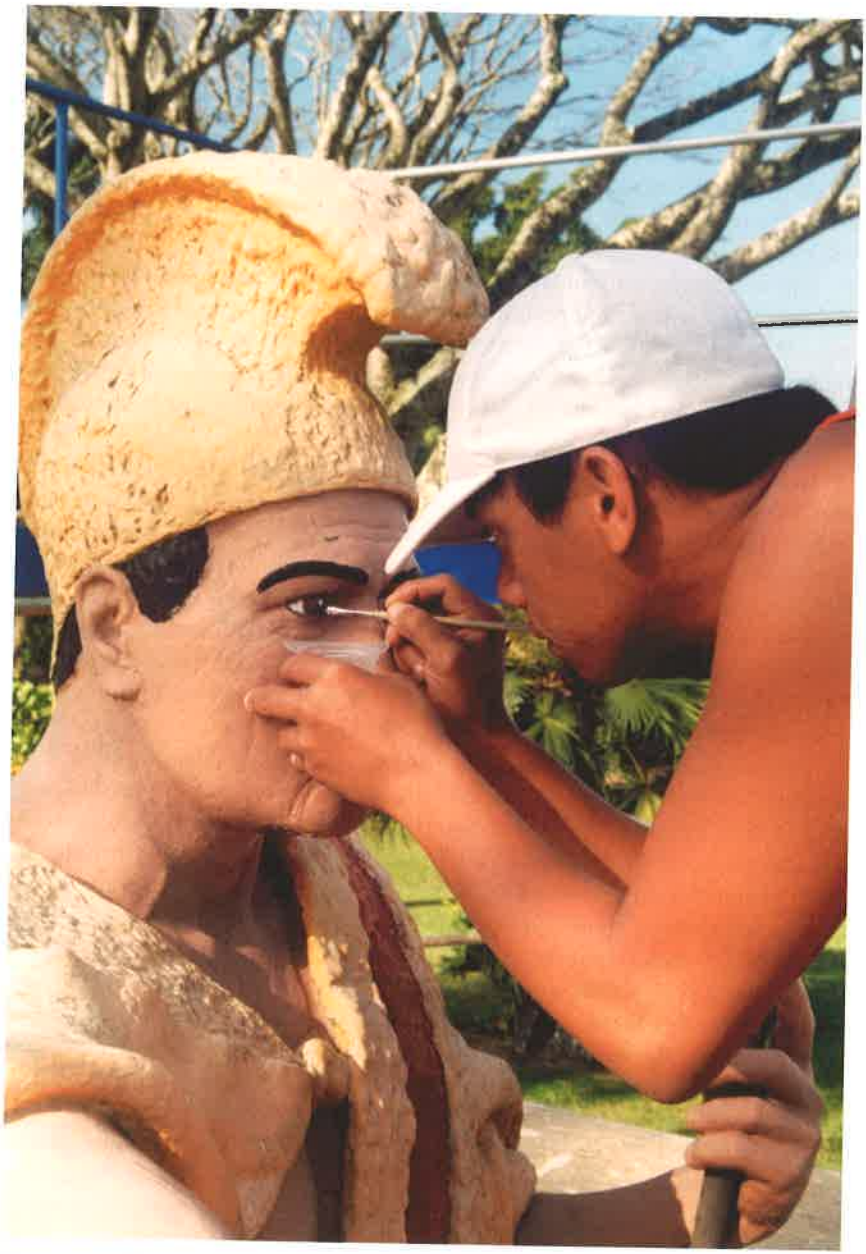

FIGURE 1. **Kamehameha Descendant Removing Eyeballs From the *Kamehameha I* Sculpture During the Conservation Project.**

maintenance worker had matched the brown skin of a female student whose ancestors had emigrated from the Philippines. My color wheel of brown paint samples led to conversations about Kamehameha's two possible fathers with different skin tones, skin color in today's multicultural Kohala, and racism that exists among various cultural groups. All questions that I, as an outsider, could not have easily asked without my color wheel and a job to do. Through these discussions, I also learned about contestation over who is Hawaiian and who is local.

The conservation moment in an object's life can be an ideal moment for doing cultural research. It pulls in different factions, groups, and understandings. It reveals politics of different sorts, including along dimensions of ethnicity, race, religion, gender, and age. Social scientists cannot easily intervene as conservators do, despite efforts at reflexive practice that moves their location beyond a "fly on the wall."

In reading the three reviews, so well crafted and appreciated, I was reminded of my struggle to find voice and organize my thoughts in writing the book. My prior conservation writing was "factual," third person, and almost always in passive voice. It was a writing coach who convinced me to tell the story from my own point of view—beginning with my nervous journey to visit the sculpture for the first time. Organizing the writing from my own perspective in the end allowed me to critique my field of heritage conservation and relate my response to what I learned through various modes of research and through working with the community.

I faced other dilemmas in writing the book, including what to call it, what images to use, and how to select and organize the content. Aaron Glass suggests a different title, a different cover image, and an entirely different structure for the book. I could have coauthored the volume with an anthropologist and produced a very different book for a different target audience. As it is, I envisioned an intelligent reader who is distant from conservation, social sciences, and contemporary Hawaiian culture. My real aim in writing the book was to promote a participatory model for community engagement in heritage conservation that integrates community into research, decision making, and physical interventions. A conservator/anthropologist partnership would no doubt lead to different outcomes.

Throughout the sculpture's history and certainly in its contemporary social context, people have used it for various spiritual, political, economic, educational, and other purposes. In addition to these functions, it became a conservation object in the eyes of those who engaged in the project. Further unpacking this with the use of additional knowledge from material culture studies, cultural anthropology, sociology, and performance studies, implicit

in Glass' comments, would no doubt provide a richer understanding of active relationships between people and cultural objects.

I agree with Stacy L. Kamehiro and Maile Arvin's observation that there are few examples of conservation projects that redirect aims to facilitate community self-representation and develop culturally appropriate preservation methods. There are entrenched power relations that do not easily accommodate multiple values associated with cultural materials from the past. The dominance of positivist approaches to analyzing physical condition and identifying their unique cultural value in conservation research are difficult to counter. Although multi-perspectivism is well accepted in fields like material culture studies, conservation still carries the motif/burden/vision of itself as a "science," with an old-fashioned sense of objectivity.

I address concerns of multiple perspectives in the book, in part by writing about a spectrum of relevance that historical objects have for people who surround them today. At one end, there are many objects in museums, archives, and public collections that few people know or care about. At the other end are powerfully symbolic and contested objects that trigger protest, terrorist acts, and war. There is also a range of objects in between that would be ripe for civil community discussion. The goal is to find the right object of significance whose multiple meanings are not so intense as to create violent conflict. After that, the process of participatory conservation involves identifying key community members and engaging as many others as possible in research and decision making, using conservation dilemmas as a means to draw them in.

During my research and work with the Kohala community I was aware of the multiple roles I played as project instigator, principal participant, and ethnographer. At times residents challenged me. Several people I spoke with asked why, as a nonlocal, I should manage the conservation project. Others asked why I wanted to involve the community at all, because I was the "expert" brought in from the mainland.

My strategy in writing the book was to reveal community voices in real time as the project unfolded through a narrative format. I used descriptions of participant concerns derived from my field notes and extensive quotes from my interviews. I also quoted texts generated by community members in opinion pieces in local media, and reported on community projects such as a high school debate and classroom art projects that stimulated dialog about local social issues.

Keamehir and Arvin mention the only other example of participatory, community-based conservation of which I am aware. It is the work of Dean Sully and his colleagues on the conservation of *Hinemihi*, a Māori *marae*, or meetinghouse in Clandon Park in West Clandon, England (Sully, 2008).

Sully involved Māori conservators, scholars, and community representatives in writing about the project. Unlike *The Painted King*, which I authored on my own, he invited Māori participants and scholars to author their own chapters in the completed volume. The book includes writings on other *marae* outside of New Zealand to convey a broad understanding through multiple case studies. Together, the various authors offer diverse criticism of Western conservation. They expand its aims from maintaining the physical fabric of these buildings to impacting peoples' lives and producing new knowledge about historic and contemporary Māori culture.

Although not broadly participatory, The National Museums of Scotland conducted another project involving a Māori artifact that produced new knowledge through conservation intervention (Stable 2012). During curatorial research, staff discovered that a Māori war canoe, or *Waka Taua* in the collection was actually a complex composite of a small river canoe, a full-sized war canoe, and various repairs and replacement parts added over time since its arrival in Scotland. Rather than disassemble all of these elements and exhibit them separately, the curator and conservator decided to contract George Nuku, a Māori artist, to replace missing elements in carved plastic. Nuku's clear plastic carvings are in stark contrast to the wood elements on the canoes. Whereas Western conservators strive to make their hand more or less invisible in their restorations, Nuku forces the viewer to focus on his additions. They attract the viewer's eye and lead to questions about relationships between older elements of the two canoe fragments and new elements added by a contemporary Māori carver. In effect, they initiate a conversation about de-contextualized historic material culture and contemporary Māori response that begins within the object itself.

In this innovation, the museum opens public dialog about cultural issues through an artist's intervention. In comparison, I took a different path with the Kamehameha sculpture. As I report in the book, a number of residents in Kohala suggested radical alterations to the sculpture that I was not prepared to support. One suggestion was to chisel off Kamehameha's Roman style sandals. Another was to turn his beckoning hand around to represent a more traditional Hawaiian gesture. A third was to throw the sculpture back in the sea where it spent time after a dramatic shipwreck on its way from Germany to Hawai'i. I analyze these suggestions along with others in my writing, but in practice we took what now looks like a more conservative course. The paint layer we applied continues a local tradition and is reversible. Another conservator working with future community members may arrive at very different decisions, and nothing we did will interfere with their doing so.

Through the *Kamehameha* sculpture conservation project and the subsequent writing of the book, I learned that conservation has tremendous

potential to do cultural work in reconstructing public memory and questioning authority in heritage management. I also learned that conservation is not necessarily about getting the past "right," but finding value in the process of exploring versions of the past and assessing power dynamics in deciding what the past should look like. I learned that the patina is political.

I believe that the time is ripe for more participatory conservation projects that effectively communicate findings and engage public discussion on cultural issues associated with heritage objects. I would love to hear from readers of *Pacific Studies* about other cases of community-based conservation, along with potential for new projects in the future.

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