Pacific Studies

Vol. 43, No. 1—Jun. 2020

PACIFIC STUDIES

A multidisciplinary journal devoted to the study of the peoples of the Pacific Islands

JUNE 2020

Anthropology
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Art History
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PUBLISHED BY
THE JONATHAN NAPELA CENTER FOR HAWAIIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDS STUDIES
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY HAWAIʻI
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE POLYNESIAN CULTURAL CENTER

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COVER DESIGN:
Jared Pere, Maori/Hawai'i – *Indigenous Pacific Art Designs*
Anthony Perez, Samoa – *Graphic Design*

PACIFIC STUDIES

Editorial Policy: *Pacific Studies* is published three times a year by The Jonathan Napela Center for Hawaiian and Pacific Islands Studies, Brigham Young University Hawai'i #1979, 55–220 Kulanui Street, Lā'ie, Hawai'i 96762, but responsibility for opinions expressed in the articles rests with the authors alone. Subscription rate is US$40.00 yearly, payable to The Jonathan Napela Center for Hawaiian and Pacific Islands Studies. The Jonathan Napela Center for Hawaiian and Pacific Islands Studies (formerly The Pacific Institute) is an organization funded by Brigham Young University Hawai'i. The Center assists the University in meeting its cultural and educational goals by undertaking a program of teaching, research, and publication. The Center cooperates with other scholarly and research institutions in achieving their objectives. It publishes monographs, produces films, underwrites research, and sponsors conferences on the Pacific Islands.

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This publication is printed on acid-free paper and meets the guidelines for permanence and durability of the Council on Library Resources.

ISSN 0275-3596
ISBN 0-939154-77-3

Volume 43 June 2020 Number 1

PUBLISHED 9/2020

PACIFIC STUDIES

Vol. 43, No. 1 June 2020

INTRODUCTION

WOMEN, POWER, AND PLACE IN POLYNESIA: ARTICULATIONS FROM SAMOA AND AOTEAROA, NEW ZEALAND

Guest Editors
Melani Anae
Penelope Schoeffel

Introduction

I want my legs as sharp as dogs' teeth—
wild dogs,
wild Samoan dogs,
the mangy kind that bite strangers (1)

The potent forces of Tagaloa gave formation to the void, through lands and oceans, skies and underworlds. Through the womb of a mortal woman, Tagaloa transferred his divine mana into the human race. Sending his daughter Tuli down in the form of a bird, who turned maggots that had appeared from a rotting vine into living men and women.

Sinataeolelagi, another daughter of Tagaloa, bore the sun as her child, named La, to her mortal husband Tafa'i. Every day La returned east to his mother's home in the heavens before moving west again in the evening to rest.

> When the concentration of mana is so significant, aitu, supernatural beings born as blood clots, originate. Saveasi'uleo was an aitu who ruled Pulotu, the spirit underworld. He had the upper body of a man and the lower body of an eel. His wife was Tilafaiga, another aitu. She and her twin sister Taema had swum from Samoa to Fiji and returned with the instruments for tattooing, a practice they introduced to Samoa. The child of Tilafaiga and Saveasi'uleo was born as a blood clot and buried, later emerging as an adult woman. Her name was Nafanua.
>
> At a time of war on the island of Savaii, Nafanua led the people of the west against the people of the east and defeated them. Following her victory she apportioned political authority over the various districts of Samoa among the chiefs who came to pay homage to her. On the island of Upolu, rivalries were also breaking out and the support of Nafanua was sought once more. Nafanua won again, and in so doing conquered all of Samoa.
>
> The ancient archetype of the Samoan woman, as portrayed by Tuli, Sinataeolelagi, Tilafaiga and Nafanua, is one of immense strength and mana yet also grace, sensitivity and vulnerability. She is a complex woman with many sides and layers, but her defining quality is one of power: not only the power to give birth to mankind but also a procreative power; the power to form ancient customs as well as the features of the universe. This power of the Samoan woman, in its unwieldy, complex and contemporary form, takes centre stage... (Lopesi 2019)

This special issue endeavors to create a new intellectual space where we can celebrate Polynesian womanism, to propel us to an empowering space, and to celebrate the power of women who are mothers, sisters, chiefs, and leaders of families. These gender scripts reveal resilient role models of indigenous agency that have come down to us from time immemorial through the stories and experiences of our matriarchs—our mothers and grandmothers, great ancestresses and goddesses. They are presented as a star path for the complex social dynamic encompassing notions of Samoan and Maori womanism, gender, leadership, and familial relationships as a cultural reference. The term "womanism" is a relatively new thread in feminism. It was first coined by the black poet and activist Alice Walker in 1983. Frustrated by the lack of diversity in the feminist movement, she defined womanists as black women who were "committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female" (Phillips 2019).

Womanism manifests five overarching characteristics: it is antioppressionist, it is vernacular, it is nonideological, it is communitarian, and it is spiritualized (2). Philosophical debates on womanism for women of color cross various and sometimes contesting paradigms and have a long and complex history.

Five papers and a poem in this special issue present a set of Samoan and Māori insights, so this issue is not representative of all Polynesian women or Polynesian womanism as a whole. However, Schoeffel's paper reaches back in time to a pan-Polynesian question of whether there were differences in the status of women in Eastern and Western Polynesia (p 47). We examine the discourses of Samoan and Māori notions of Polynesian womanism and explicate some strategies through which these discourses perform an entitled female identity. Subverting the general identity assigned to women by western society, the discourses of our ancient Polynesian cultural references open a space in which young Polynesian women are empowered and enacted as the sacred carriers of life—the life force of our families from time immemorial, entitled to support, respect and self-respect, a voice in our society, and leadership positions. In offering a call for renewed understanding of the contexts of practice and the possibilities of subversion, it is hoped that this understanding may attract intervention support and resources for Polynesian women who feel disempowered and who are victims of the overpowering western androcentric forces of colonization, Christianity, and capitalism. Schoeffel's article (p 47) revisits a puzzle in Polynesian culture history that despite cultural similarities, there are apparent differences between Western and Eastern Polynesia: in the latter, there are ethnohistorical accounts of women as antithetical and polluting to all sacred things, beliefs that appear to be only faintly articulated in Western Polynesia. Her paper reminds us of the work of Alan Hanson and Neil Gunson in contesting and refuting interpretations of ethnohistorical accounts that women were contaminating and socially marginalized. Given the evidence that Polynesian women were, in the past, goddesses, great chiefs, and mediators between heaven and Earth, life and death (Schoeffel 1987), there is a need for a critical analysis of Christian teaching and representations on the role of women. Why, for example, do the major Protestant churches in Samoa remain stubbornly behind their mother churches in other countries by refusing to ordain women or to allow them other leadership roles in the churches?

For Māori women, Polynesian womanism is embodied in the moko kauae and in te kopu o te wahine (the body of the woman) who "will always walk this land, which carries the bones of our forebears, and enfolds the placenta of our newborns. He mana a whenua: he mana wahine—this is who we are. This is our power; the assertion of influence and identity, the claiming of time and space. The assurance of continuity," writes Te Awakotuku (p 7). The theme of resilience and continuity in Māori kuia is carried through in Ore's article (p 27),

in which she applies the recent development in the theory of nostalgia to empirical studies on Māori women, Māori women in tertiary education, and Māori well-being. She aptly demonstrates that these women negotiate kinship relations of up to four generations as they take on tertiary education, which is articulated by their metaphor of "filling up the other kete" (the basket of knowledge) and argues that this metaphor epitomizes how these women embed their memories in Māori practices, including learning Te Reo Māori (the language) to overcome their ambivalence toward tertiary education and ameliorate well-being. Following Weedon (1987), we seek to integrate individual experience and social power in a theory of subjectivity. In this paradigm, subjectivity is defined as "the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself, and her ways of understanding her relation to the world" Weedon (1987: 32). Thus, the performativity of gender offers an important contribution to the conceptual processes of subversion that occurs through the enactment of an identity that is repeated in directions that go back and forth, which then results in the displacement of the original goals of dominant forms of power.

Among the contributions that focus on Samoa, Anae's study (p 83) describes how the power of matai tamaitai (mistress of the family) weakened in postcolonial Samoa is active in the transnational space. In the context of her study, transnational women matai have been liberated from the shackles of male-dominated church and local and national political governance in Samoa, which as a place, and as homeland, is suffering from the effects of colonialism, neocolonialism, Victorian-era versions of Christianity, and the neoliberal rollercoaster world we live in.

Lilomaiava-Doktor's research (p 61) clearly shows how, on the one hand, Samoan women have adapted and transplanted their power or power-sharing roles into new social and political structures imposed by colonialism and the church. On the other hand, colonialism and Christianity have imported a brand of patriarchy that has distorted and limited women's participation in decision making. While Lilomaiava-Doktor's research points to improvements in the status of women, these tend to benefit those with higher education status and salaried employment in government and the private sector, those in urban areas, and those overseas.

Karlo Mila's poem *Papatuanuku* (p 114), a paean to Papatuanuku as "Goddess that is all maunga, all muscle, all soft slopes, fertile flat surfaces" and "the mothership of all female elements," describes the tensions between male and female—"And as much as 'the man' tries to bind you, bend you to his will. You will resist. That is one of your many legacies." She describes a womanism in which "'Dominion over' [by men] doesn't feature in any of our epistemologies."

These papers are the product of three consecutive meetings (2017–19) from Hilo, Hawai'i, and New Orleans to Aotearoa, New Zealand, of the Association

for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO). There we engaged in talanoa (Halapua 2000; Vaioleti 2011) to debate and enact Polynesian womanist power. One of our contributors is Ngahuia Te Awakotuku, who wore the mantle of keynote speaker at the ASAO meeting held at the University of Auckland in New Zealand in 2019. Not all contributors to these sessions completed final papers, but the sessions were remarkable events attended by many Pacific scholars. There was overall consensus about the overlooked agency of Polynesian women, the need for further exploration of womanist paradigm, an investigation of the meaning of "women's equality" and of globalist definitions of social justice and human rights from indigenous perspectives, and findings from current research on Polynesian women in modern and transnational contexts.

In this special issue, we have signaled the importance of considering discourse analysis and issues of identity formation for current scholarship and struggles around how disempowered Polynesian women may perceive themselves and how society perceives them (Anae 2017). Global discourses currently focus on women's exclusion and victimhood, and it is true that Polynesian women rightly feature in these conversations. However, our papers suggest that cultural and historical contextualization should inform such discussions. There is also need for a wider space for the consideration of an alternative, more empowering and entitled identity than the widespread stereotype of women as powerless and subservient to men that restages Polynesian women not only as the carriers of life and the life forces of genealogies but also as chiefs and political leaders in their own right, especially in transnational spaces.

NOTES

1. From Lopesi (2019: 1). The title refers to the malu, the Samoan female leg tatau (tattoo) that encompasses the upper thighs down to just below the knees. The malu symbolizes the unlimited power that exists across the spectrum of womanhood.

2. Phillips (2006: xxiv–vi). Of special note is the inclusion of spirituality in black womanism, which is largely absent from western feminist discourse.

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MAI TE KOPU O TE WAHINE: CONSIDERING MAORI WOMEN AND POWER

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Moko kauae: female Maori facial tattoo. This is the subtle power of maintaining a femininity that offends, that endures, that persists in the face of the settlers' and invaders' descendants; threatens sensibility and comfort levels; and continues to fascinate and challenge, charm and repel. Whether or not they were aware doing this, the elderly women who continued to inscribe their faces into the final decades of the past century and wear their identity and heritage with pride, were effectively confronting the colonizer and saying, we are here, and we will never ever go away. My face may make you uncomfortable, but it is my face, made by my pain. It is my pride, confronting your fear and your infatuation. And we will never go away. Maori women will not disappear. We will always walk this land, which carries the bones of our forebears and enfolds the placenta of our newborns. He mana a whenua: he mana wahine—this is who we are. This is our power; the assertion of influence and identity, the claiming of time and space. The assurance of continuity.

I WRITE THIS ARTICLE AWARE OF A PLETHORA OF BOOKS published over the past twenty-five years or so by Maori women, about Maori women. Many were prompted and supported by the 1993 centennial of women's suffrage; my favorite titles include *Mana Wahine: Women Who Show the Way*,[1] *Te Timatanga Tatou Tatou*,[2] and the mixed-authorship collectives of *Standing in the Sunshine*[3] and *Women Together*.[4] These are still pivotal reference texts. Others have also lamented a perceived corrosion of mana wahine by colonization, or they have lucidly celebrated the resilience of what remains.[5]

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Before 1993, a few dazzling arts-related publications by Maori women on their own arts heritage appeared, including *Wahine Toa* and *Karanga Karanga*[6] and small pieces in the popular and feminist press.[7] Two powerful coauthored biographies, *Guide Rangi of Rotorua* (1962) and *Amiria* (1976), are still important voices.[8] Overlooked for many decades by the academy, one significant scholarly volume was *The Old Time Maori*,[9] an authentic reflection of early Maori life through the autobiographic and ethnographic lens of Makereti Papakura, a Te Arawa woman born in the early 1870s. A further text is my compilation of Maori and feminist essays (1971–1991).[10]

Currently, the Waitangi Tribunal Claims Process is developing a rich resource of narratives that record the significance of female lines and leadership in the defense, stewardship, and development of ancestral land.[11] Since 1993, student writings by Maori women at various levels, from undergraduate essays to doctoral dissertations,[12] have discussed Maori women and Maori women's issues, forcefully challenging the misconceptions proffered by the only reference that ever came up in my student years: Heuer's execrable thesis, *Maori Women*,[13] which accompanied the maudlin pictorial works of Zambucka, Sangl, and various others,[14] constructed as weeping in dignity for another time and place. These images reinforced the mana and visuality of moko kauae, as the locus for the perception of fading female power. Such colonial predictions anticipated the extinction of an indigenous people,[15] but the moko kauae, Maori women, are still here, as Ahumai Te Paerata proclaimed to the colonial troops on the Orakau battlefield in 1864: "Ka whawhai tonu matou, ake ake ake! We will fight, and endure forever!"[16]

Such voices continue to resonate through the generations—the power of the female most noticeable, in modern times, during rituals of encounter. This power is in the first voice and first message that echoes across ceremonial space, the chant of karanga, for welcome and mourning, for greetings and remembrance.

The ritual is described by a young girl watching visitors arrive in her village:

> Then suddenly, quite suddenly, everything started to happen at once. And the ghosts began to move. While the softest, gentlest rain fell on their faces, the women's chant of karanga, of welcome, of mourning, of celebration, passed back and forth, then merged together, and the living and the dying and the dead were all as one. She sensed the weaving in the air around the tree, in the warmth rising from the ground, in the moving of the visitors, and the receiving of her own people, like they were all fitting together, fusing and fitting into each other.[17]

Known as reo karanga, or kai karanga, many women practitioners of this chant form liken the experience to a weaving of souls, a braiding together of

FIGURE 1. **Ngati Whakaue, Te Arawa reception for Harry and Meghan, 2018. The kuia and the assembled tribe await the arrival of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex at Te Papaiouru Marae, Ohinemutu, Rotorua. The front line comprises elderly women, with reo karanga (formal chanters) before them on their right. Private collection.**

spirits in preparation for the event itself, whether it is of mourning or political discussion or celebration.

Another village woman recalls a childhood memory:

> On the marae, outside in the public area things happened which always fascinated me. I was intrigued and exalted by what I saw and heard even as a young girl. What got me going was the sound of karanga, this searing intense pain-laden echo of grief and of welcome. It would resonate across the marae, across the lake, across the steaming hot pools. . . . I'd watch the old women doing it, their long black skirts billowing, their eyes moist with tears, and then the ones coming in would answer them, and their voices would volley back and forth, telling stories. Raising ghosts, sending them on. Crying for them. Healing the bereaved. And I would find myself in another world, until they had finished and there was the movement of the visitors into the house as the host reo karanga held the door; or into the embrace of

> my people, the home people. Until this exchange was over, nothing else would happen. The men were silent. When everyone was settled, and the guests were sitting down, the men got up to talk, to perform their oratory, to showcase their expertise. Again, it was an exchange of information, between host and visitor. With strident eloquence, the men took control. What was interesting is that the men are perceived as the power on the marae; yet it was and still is a power enhanced and complimented in a truly meaningful and deeply spiritual way by the opening of the ceremony by the female voice, by the women's exchange of chant that usually occurs beneath the sky, upon the wind; through sunshine or rainfall. Out in the open. I believe we don't talk about that enough.

What does it mean when a "reo karanga holds the door?" This is another pithy demonstration of female power. No visitor—male or female, young or old—can get past her until she is ready. She stands her ground; she holds the door before the visitors. Their ghosts and their intentions must wait until she determines them safe. If there is doubt, she may intone gentle phrases of love and goodwill; if the visitors push her and challenge her authority, then the reo karanga instantly reacts. With a fierce voice, she begins a ngeri (war chant) or sometimes a haka to assert the mana whenua, the primacy of the host tribe on their ground. All the male orators and the female manu tioriori of the formal singing group and the local people immediately rise to support her and to remind the visitors that they are visitors and must behave accordingly. The power, the mana, comes from the people, comes from the house, from the marae, from the land itself, but comes through the invocation of a woman, the reo karanga.

As I write this article, I am also acutely aware of another factor that has presented itself on the marae of Aotearoa in our Maori world of the twenty-first century. Is karanga only for those who are born female and Maori? Can it be done by a non-Maori woman or a trans woman? There is no generic rule that answers this question, although it is an issue that has been raised on many occasions—some are relatively modest events like at government office or school functions where a "trained" pakeha staff member will "step up" to the occasion; others are much grander and privileging the person with the best reo or language acuity and the strongest, most penetrating voice. She may be a trans woman; I recently witnessed this at a major national event.

When I was much younger, I asked about this at home, where the roles of female and male on the marae have always been rigorously observed and vehemently gendered. Men speechify, and women chant. Te Arawa is regarded as the most uncompromising tribe in such matters, but, as already discussed, there is a balance of power in the meaning of what females and what males do. The older

women replied that the karanga itself emerges from te kopu o te wahine, from deep within, from the womb itself as the site of new generations, from the primal cries of remembered childbirth, so one needs a womb to do this, but ideally a reo karanga should be past menopause. I tried to probe further, asking about childless or posthysterectomy women and trans women, as my critical Western feminism kicked into the conversation with my mother and aunties. They shut me down. Decades later, I wonder what they would think and say about what is happening now. There are no trans women chanting as reo karanga on our Te Arawa marae, but some do karanga in other tribal regions. And they wear moko kauae, potent symbol of the Maori feminine. For my people, the issue is regarded as the private hapu business of each marae, as they choose according to what they believe and who is available and qualified to undertake the task and to carry that responsibility for their people.

One important aspect of karanga, in its most sophisticated form, is the process of composition. While many reo karanga chant in a formulaic manner, with learned phrasing and appropriate references amended to suit the occasion, some engage in creative and erudite improvisation.[18] Women design small, exquisite jewels of word imagery and vital information that encompass genealogy, landscape, and specific personal stories, especially if the event is a tangihanga, or death ritual. They cast these lines of verbal beauty into the wind, sometimes to be retrieved and then applied by an astute orator in his whai korero. In this way, the complementary nature of gender relations on the marae is witnessed and appreciated.

Such lines may also become the content of original moteatea, or chant songs, the traditional vocal music of the Maori people, or phrases of karanga may be taken from these sources. In his comprehensive three-volume compilation[19] of traditional Maori songs, Ngata asserts there are four categories: (1) Popo, ara, oriori: lullabies; (2) Nga waiata tangi: laments; (3) Nga Patere, nga Kaioraora: abusive songs and songs of defiance; and (4) Nga Waiata Whaiaipo: love songs. A cursory examination reveals that more than half the composers were female, their work ranging from the muscular strength and ferocity of patere and kaioraora to the poignant lamentation of tangi and the lyrical content of lullabies, often for their daughters, and love songs. Other women, as rivals in love or as malevolent gossips, were often the focus or the content of the composition's narrative, best illustrated in the Patere, or songs of defiance. Through moteatea, the power, the delivery of information from one generation to the next, the geographic specificity of location, and the physiological details of those honored or remembered, as lovers, as enemies, as infants, as warriors, as leaders, all of this knowledge is transmitted through this influential and enduring medium. And it was a medium in which creative women excelled and asserted their enduring authority by the weaving of words, the provision of a cloak of knowledge

for those generations yet to come. This cloak is not only about information; it may also be about joy, about remembrance, about triumph and disaster, about survival, as the feathers and fiber of stories entwine with new texture and experience. Since the mid-twentieth century, the Maori world has been gifted with the resonant genius of composers like Tuini Ngawai, Ngoi Pewhairangi, Kohine Ponika, and Pimia Wehi and, in more recent years, the work of Mahinarangi Tocker, Moana Maniapoto, and Whirimako Black.[20] And many more are rising.

Creativity flows like ocean currents through the worlds of Maori and Pasifika women. Weaving, from mundane everyday objects to sublime treasures, remains a source of honor and income in many Maori and Pasifika communities. Primarily the work of women, at a basic level in ancient times, it provided clothing, household goods, and furnishings, like wall panels, mats, and basketry, but on a more exalted level, weaving also developed as a prestige art form in the design and manufacture of fine mats and exquisite garments. Artists of such creativity and skill were admired; even in recent years, the mana accrued also ensured a steady income for their families.[21] While there is some gendered practice in the domains of art making and production, for Maori women the most significant and frustrating is toi whakairo, the art of carving. This convention is discussed more thoroughly elsewhere[22] and deserves intensive rigorous inquiry. In my community, a few women carvers still work, usually at home and in privacy and often on commission, producing walking staffs, taiaha, and small containers. They do not work on houses or canoes, but they wield mallet and chisel with confidence and grace, and they are trained by their fathers, brothers, grandfathers, and husbands. Others inscribe decorative gourds, and a growing number have begun to apply their skills in ta moko, the ornamentation of skin,[23] with machines and also with chisels.

Like the art of composition, carving in wood, stone, and bone recorded the vision, sensibility, and values of the people; carving was a means by which identities and histories could be visualized, then touched and revered. Accessible. Growing up in a community rich with heritage arts, primarily for and about us but also as an income source from tourists, I considered the depiction of tupuna kuia, of female ancestors. I sought them on the walls of our carved houses, where most of the heavily embellished panels show no gender at all but pulse with an interesting energy. Some women are clearly presented with a signifier; Hinemoa, famous for her defiant midnight swim, carries gourds like floating waterwings; Te Whakaotirangi, a renowned gardener who brought kumara from Hawaiki, clutches a little kete of tiny tubers; Kurungaituku, a bird/human shape-shifter, folds her vast wings. Some men are also vividly depicted: the athletic brothers Tamatekapua and Whakaturia upright on their stilts, the explorer Ihenga with his intrepid little dog, the musician Tutanekai playing an elegant flute. It is usually assumed that the other neutral figures, many of whom

FIGURE 2. **Pou Whakarae Wahine. A female guardian sentinel figure on the palisade at Rotowhio Pa, Whakarewarewa, Rotorua, carved ca. 1970. This image is based on a much older female whakairo form. Photo by author.**

clutch various forms of weaponry, are male. It is similarly assumed that hei tiki, the small talismanic humanoid figure, is male. I questioned this and asked the same group of patient elderly women why all the neutral panels were supposed to be men, and I was directed to ask the uncles who were carvers. Again, the conversation was shut down. But I kept probing. And as I began my doctoral journey, I found them.

Women of power were remembered in wood, in pounamu jade, in stone. If they are sexed at all, many ancient hei tiki in the care of Maori families or held by local and overseas museum collections have clearly defined female genitalia. The majority of precontact hei tiki are neutral. I have yet to find a phallic hei tiki that predates the twentieth century, and I've reached the conclusion they may not exist at all, as the talismanic power of the figure itself concerns female fertility and embryonic growth. Apart from the actual event that led to her being hapu, what does an ure (penis) have to contribute to an already gestating mother? During my time at the Waikato Museum, two extraordinary carved female figures came into the collection; I set out to find more and located countless examples in institutions throughout the world. Most were acquired during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Their graphically detailed genitalia leave no doubt, many reflecting the early practice of tara whakairo, or tattooing the labia and mons veneris[24] to prepare and beautify the passage for a new human being, usually of chiefly lineage, into the human world. The carved forms include tekoteko (gable figures), poutokomanawa (sculptures at the base of center poles), house panels, feather boxes, weapons like kotaha slings, and pare, the rich horizontal panel that sits above the doorway of an ancestral house. Each tribal region developed its own style, but every carving tradition on these islands, in pre-European times, proclaimed the mana of women, the power of the female. The evidence is out there, and we, their granddaughters, need to be made aware of this reality and celebrate it. Representation of the female in the early Maori world was robust, each image reinforcing a narrative of achievement, memory, leadership, entertainment, and respect. Images of power. These narratives are at the core of whakapapa, or genealogy, as Maori society is ambilineal. For inheritance of property and power, both the mother's and the father's lines of descent hold equal value. Primogeniture I suspect arrived with the Book of Genesis; patriarchy and patrilineage were introduced after 1814 and are well considered elsewhere.[25] It certainly affected the pakeha perception of tribal power. Despite this, the colonizers could not change what was attested in wood and stone, though they did attempt to obliterate the carved record in some parts of the country. That story should be told by the descendants, as their taonga are celebrated, or resurrected and reclaimed.[26]

Women were depicted in the visual arts as a source of power and inspiration in the ancient Maori world. What happened after 1769? How were Maori

FIGURE 3. **Hei Tiki. This traditional amulet is carved in pounamu or nephrite jade. She invokes female grace and fertility, revealed by her pronounced vulval area (private collection). Photo by author.**

women seen then, if they were seen at all? In what ways did the nineteenth-century invasion of traders and whalers, speculators and missionaries, militia and immigrants impact the representation of Maori women and women of power? While conscious of the encounter experiences in other regions, especially the seaside trading centers of the far north, the east coast, and the remote south and those regions that survived the horror of raupatu, I will confine my discussion to my own people, Te Arawa, and my primary iwi, Ngati Whakaue. In our village, Ohinemutu, we enjoy a deeply textured repertoire of ancient songs composed by women, and distinctive galleries of whakairo remind us of our female forebears. By the mid-nineteenth century, more and more travelers, moneyed invalids, and tourists were visiting the region's unique volcanic landscape seeking better health or distraction. Below is an account of Ohinemutu written in 1864 by a minor English aristocrat:

> This settlement has always been famed throughout Maoriland for the beauty of the women, from the days of Hinemoa down to the present time, and during our stay we saw a few young girls with complexions like southern gypsies, just fair enough to let the warm colour show through clear olive skin, and large dark lustrous eyes, with great ever changing expression, and beautiful, snow white, regular teeth.[27]

As the new colony developed, the healing waters, silica terraces, cascading geysers, and exotic tribal culture of Rotorua attracted a burgeoning traffic of intrepid sightseers and wealthy folk with assorted medical afflictions. Entrepreneurial Maori offered modest lodgings and guiding services to the mineral springs. In Ohinemutu in 1871–1872, the first hostelry was opened by a Maori woman and her pakeha husband; within five years, hotels were established.[28] The Pink and White Terraces farther inland near Te Wairoa offered the most spectacular natural healing spa in the colonial world, and by the mid-1880s that community enjoyed a bustling commerce that involved two renowned and heroic local women, the guides Sophia and Kate.[29] All this was tragically and completely destroyed by the catastrophic eruption of the volcano Tarawera in 1886. Despite this setback, tourists still came to the region, and guiding them through the thermal landscape, sharing the natural wonders, became women's work. The survivors of Te Wairoa were offered refuge in the Whakarewarewa valley, another utterly singular realm of mineral springs, active geysers, and boiling pools; women resumed guiding.[30] By the first decade of the twentieth century, the government had acquired administrative control of the valley, but the woman guides led by Guide Sophia and her stellar protégé, the charismatic Makereti, Maggie Papakura,[31] continued to receive and guide visitors through the thermal park and around the steaming village where even the

most everyday tasks—bathing children, washing clothes, and cooking food—delighted the visitors. They were equally fascinated by cultural performance; they wanted to listen to melodious Maori songs and watch Maori dances. The old people I grew up with, many of whom were born in the 1870s and 1880s, were adamant that we, as Te Arawa, retain control. This assertion was the basis of my doctoral thesis. We showed tourists only what we wanted them to see.

As the new century dawned, all of this—the landscape, the people, their homes, their dance, and their art forms—was captured by the promotional mechanism of the carte visite, the ubiquitous pictorial postcard.[32] This is an experience we share with our Pacific kin, the display of our grandmothers, great-aunts, mothers, sisters, and aunts as a commodity to attract the attention of the visitor or as a small visual souvenir to post or take home. Many of the women, like those painted by Goldie and Lindauer,[33] wore their moko kauae with pride. Who had the power in these encounters? Who asserted agency? The photographer or the photographed? The painter or the painted? Or their descendants? Who, in the long term, gained the most benefit? Was it always and only about the Western male gaze? Were those photographed always powerless and exposed?

Does one Pacific activist researcher's damning commentary that pictorial models are complicit in their own commodification relate to Maori women? And that those women who consent must be complicit and that all the others must be victims? How valid is this assertion by a feminist outsider, that "represented on postcards, Maori women, their land and their culture are reduced by patriarchal mechanisms to the level of commercial prostitution"?[34] Both of these assumptions deny the photographed women any agency or control of their own power and contend that they were coerced or somehow manipulated. It is acknowledged that some images are awkward, offensive, and contrived, but not all of them are and certainly not most of them. Women, choosing to work in the modern industry and pictured in those images, are judged and condemned: "It is a measure of the depth of our mental oppression; we can't understand cultural degradation, because we are living it."[35] This is a deficit analysis; it is as uninformed, self-righteous, and condescending as any words from the mouth of a moralizing colonial missionary because they have the arrogance to assume the right to speak on our behalf, theorize on our experience, and deny our voice.

At this point in this article, my perspective becomes personal. Rather than unravel the tangled weave of attempted objectivity, economic survival, activist shaming and outrage, and tribal and whanau pride, I acknowledge that many of the women in my family and my village were employed as pictorial models. With dignity and pride. Over three generations, they posed for postcards, record and magazine covers, calendars, tourist posters, and promotional exhibits. They were weavers, storytellers, entertainers, and guides. Assertive and honorable,

FIGURE 4. **Makereti: Guide Maggie Papakura, 1910. Guide, visionary, entrepreneur, and Oxford University scholar, Makereti wrote the pivotal text *The Old Time Maori*. It was published eight years after her death. Private collection.**

they controlled their own lives. My grandmother, Hera Tawhai Rogers, lived a rich and remarkable eighty-five years. She was featured on a popular series of postcards and promotional publications from the late 1890s and was frequently celebrated as the "Belle of the Kainga." With Guide Maggie Papakura's renowned concert party, she traveled to Australia and then later Britain. In 1914, she played the lead role in *Hinemoa*, the first feature film produced in Aotearoa New Zealand.[36] Although there is no surviving print of this movie, the publicity poster remains, and like all her other images, it is extraordinary. She often laughed at how some of the pakeha photographers and tourists tried to persuade her and her cousins to show more leg or more chest or in one case (and she remembered only one, and all the girls chased him away!) to take all their clothes off. Nudity in the bathing pools with each other was natural, but to show all that to a pakeha for money was not proper. She was very firm about this, and so were the others in my family of women. You offered your smile, and that was enough. You did not take your clothes off. And you did it because posing for photographs gave you pleasure, the income helped the whanau, and tourists were always trying to take pictures of you anyway. In this scenario, the women being photographed were very much in control.

Until the late 1970s, women from Ohinemutu and Whakarewarewa, the villages closest to Rotorua city, earned some income modeling. Most of them also performed in the evening as cultural entertainers in resorts and hotel restaurants. Some went on to win beauty pageants while retaining other careers. Of my own generation, one worked in the health sector, one became a prominent local politician, and another succeeded as a visual artist and gallery owner.[37] My high school years were funded by beaming toothfully at the camera; I enjoyed the attention and the work. In contrast to my usual weekend jobs washing restaurant dishes or cleaning motels, modeling, which meant standing around wearing traditional Maori costume next to an ornate carving, hot spring, lush fern, or trout pool, paid exceptionally well. Usually the photographers were contracted by the Tourist and Publicity Department of the New Zealand government. Private work for commercial magazines and record covers was rare, though it paid more. In the context of my own community and the family legacy of attractive women whose images were sent around the country and the world, there was very little doubt and discomfort expressed about this type of work. Sometimes it did become absurd, as I noted cynically in the following paragraph:

> One incongruous image that has been repeated several times, and never questioned, is the cooking scene. Women bedecked in ornate regalia, kiwi feather cloaks, long piupiu and rich taniko, pensively suspend a basket of raw food into a steaming pool. No one, not even the

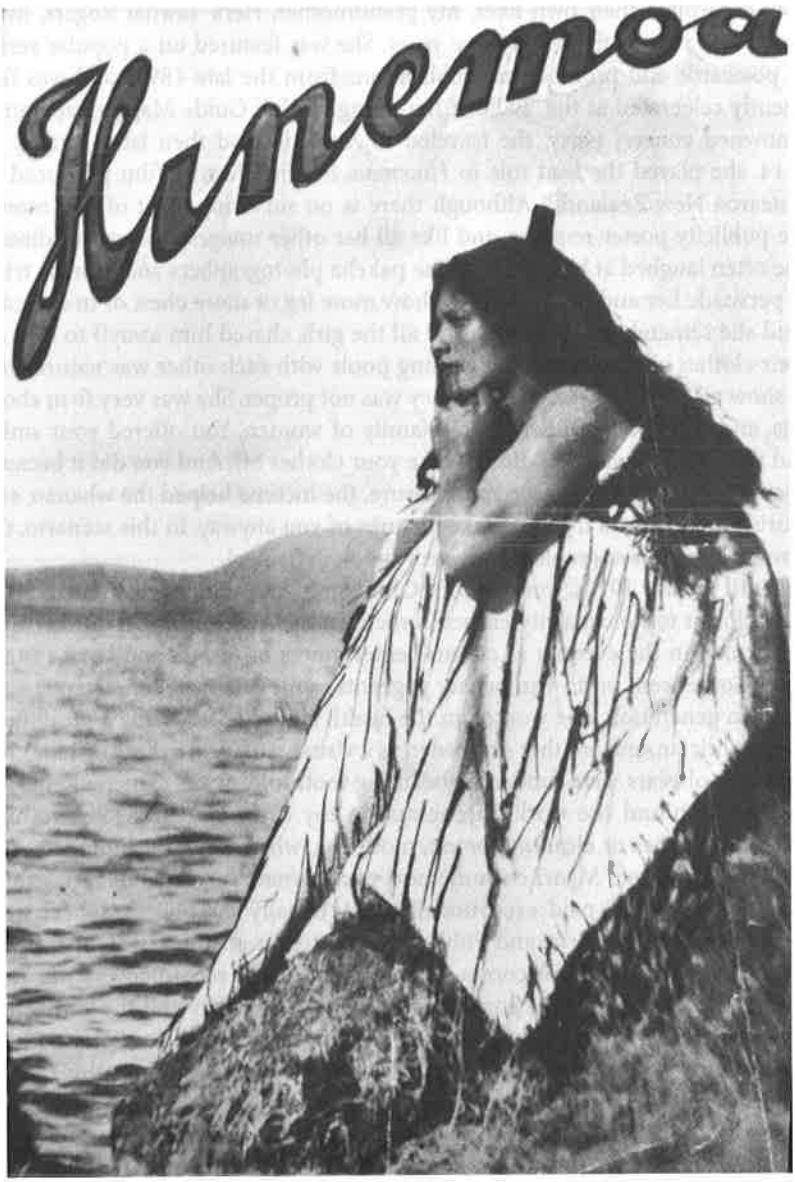

FIGURE 5. **Hera Tawhai Rogers. Promotional poster of the author's grandmother as Hinemoa in 1914. "Hinemoa" was the first full length feature film made in Aotearoa New Zealand. Private Collection.**

> models, pauses to reflect on how they are pay acting at ethnic cooking, clad in the extremely rich and splendid garb used only on exalted tribal occasions.[38]

Another even more bizarre is the constructed image of a Maori maiden leaning over a lily pond to caress a lotus while a foreign ceramic frog whispers in her ear! Behind these images are other layers of tension and possibility; not all the women of the extended family and wider community became models or were sought after by the designers of the early carte visite. Certain "looks" were preferred: long hair, good teeth, large eyes, smooth complexion, and a slim build. Whose aesthetic was this? Did having an appeal to the Western male gaze in this situation then position the models, who controlled what they did for themselves and their families, in the role of collusion? Of collaboration? Were they complicit in their own people's commodification? The women in my family would argue that they retained their mana; they retained their power; they enjoyed financial independence but remained humble about how they looked and how this offered them opportunities. In many ways, as a teenager, I just went along with what my aunts, my grandmother, and my cousins did; we all made the most of what came our way. One summer, aged sixteen, I traveled to Australia for two weeks promoting the thermal wonderland and colorful Maori culture of Rotorua. As a solo act, I sang, I danced, I talked, I smiled, I charmed—and I watched and listened and saw and learned a lot.

Ten years later, I unpacked it all in my doctorate, which involved a tourism and development internship at the East West Center, Honolulu, Hawai'i, from early 1975 until late 1980. During that time, I studied cultural tourism primarily in Hawai'i, with periodic visits to Samoa, Tonga, and Rarotonga. The local women and families I befriended, most of whom were involved in various aspects of the industry, as entertainers, art makers, and tour guides, had a similar view and comparable experience. Concerning the really spurious images of topless women on the postcard racks in Waikiki, when I felt brave enough to ask, they would inform me that the models were not local or even Polynesian but from Southeast Asia or the Philippines! And one self-assured Hawaiian grandmother offered this opinion: "In America, there will always be pornography." Her immediate family also featured prominently in promotional material; this refined elderly woman was confident that what we did was not pornographic because we set the rules and were in control.

Grandmothers carry the power of the Maori and Pasifika community. They assert a quiet control. In the closing years of the past century, for our whanau and hapu story, wahine mau kauae were aged, venerable, and respected. Although sometimes photographed, they were primarily ritualists of immense mana and majesty. Their portraiture fueled the careers of many photographers,[39] but they

were there, in the community, for us. They were reo karanga. They spoke and counseled, mai i te kopu o te wahine, from deep within. They advised, and they remembered. They were there, and as an interesting counterpoint, a few with moko kauae permitted their images to appear on postcards.

For the generation that came after me, however, there is very little work of this kind. More and more young women of this millennial generation are themselves holding the camera and directing the aesthetic, constructing their own version of mana wahine in imagery and power, and honoring the late twentieth-century vision of Maori women art makers like Merata Mita, Robin Kahukiwa, Shona Rapira Davies, June Northcroft Grant, and Lisa Reihana.[40] We are moving in an exciting direction: Maori women as active designers and architects of our own image.[41] Currently, most of the promotional material being produced in the thermal wonderland has an emphasis on families and family groups, entire performing arts companies, and commercial dance shows. Images snapped in the 1960s are still being sold and seen on postcards, on music covers, and in illustrated guidebooks, but there are few contemporary versions of this form. A casual look through a rack of souvenir postcards or glancing at an airline magazine, promotional brochure, or material online reveals an ironic new development: the millennial idealized and muscular Maori or Pasifika male body as an enchanting allure. But that is another line of discursive inquiry.

From the early nineteenth century, in the colonial environment, Maori women actively engaged in political decision making and tribal leadership fora. Entrepreneurs and female fighters like Te Riparata Kahutia of Turanga nui a Kiwa and Heeni Te Kirikaramu Pore of Te Ngae and Pukehinahina, followed by Heeni Materoa of Rongowhakaata, Meri Te Tai Mangakahia of Panguru, and the illustrious Te Puea Herangi of Waikato,[42] feature prominently in the wider discussion as national figures of achievement and impact. In 1937, the Te Ropu o te Ora—Women's Health League—was founded by Maori mothers, aunts, and grandmothers concerned for their children's health and education. Also active in the war effort, they initiated successful marae-based projects extending from Ohinemutu, where it first met, to isolated rural communities in the Eastern Bay of Plenty and the Tai Rawhiti hinterland.[43] Their increasingly radical demands were countered in 1951 by the central government setting up and funding the Maori Women's Welfare League, with a national reach and a policy-driven agenda.[44] Both organizations are still functioning today. Maori women continue to represent the people in Parliament, joined in recent years by our Pasifika sisters. And we will always honor and remember the four decades of advocacy and subtle but effective power asserted across many platforms nationally and internationally by the late Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu, revered by the general public as "The Maori Queen."[45]

The focus of this article has been the women from the village, humble women, and the ways in which they have retained and enacted their power, reassured by their understanding of ancestors, of stories, of place. From these elements, they draw the strength to actively confront and deal with the brutal contemporary realities of systemic racism, land and resource alienation, domestic violence, and socioeconomic disparity, toxic legacies of the colonial process. They work with a clarity of purpose, and they work from home.

They will never give up; they will make a place mo nga uri whakatupu, for those yet to come, encouraged by the resonant voice of the reo karanga and inspired by the increasing visibility and impact of moko kauae, unrelenting, unstoppable. They will always be there,

Ma wai ra e kawe taku kauae ki tawhiti? Who will take my face into the future?

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"FILLING UP THE OTHER *KETE*": AMBIVALENCE, CRITICAL MEMORY, AND THE RESILIENCE OF OLDER MĀORI JEWISH WOMEN

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This article is part of the first study on the memories that Māori Jews share growing up and living in contemporary Aotearoa/New Zealand as well as the effect of their memories on their well-being and success in life. The study was conducted through open-ended in-depth interviews during 2016–2017. Examining more closely how six older women negotiate power and constitute indigenous agency, the analysis in this article looks into the particular way they employ their critical memory in order to overcome their ambivalence toward tertiary education. In my analysis, I apply the recent development in the theory of nostalgia with empirical studies on Māori women, Māori women in tertiary education, and Māori well-being. I demonstrate that these women negotiate kinship relations between up to four generations as they take on tertiary education, which is articulated by their metaphor of "filling up the other *kete*" (the basket of knowledge). I argue that this metaphor epitomizes how these women embed their memories in Māori practices, including learning Te Reo Māori (the language), to overcome their ambivalence toward tertiary education and ameliorate well-being. Their ambivalence contributes to their political awareness and to navigating between Māori, Pākehā, and Jewish knowledges as they become resilient role models for the next generation.

Introduction

This article stems from my postdoctoral research project,[1] the first ethnography of contemporary Māori Jews in Aotearoa/New Zealand, which

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examines how memories of home are employed to enhance well-being and success in life by indigenous people with mixed ethnicity. Here, I base my analysis specifically on the memories of six older Māori Jewish women who were over fifty years old at the time of the study, analyzing their emotions as expressed during the open-ended in-depth interviews I held in 2016–2017. In these interviews, the women typically conveyed a "no-fuss" attitude toward their mixed ethnic identity, which they related directly to their Māori Jewish *tupuna* (ancestors). I look closely at how these women regard, in hindsight, their own actions with relation to undertaking tertiary education and in some cases an academic career from their relatively advanced point in life thanks to their age and education. I then elaborate on their ambivalence toward their path in the "whitestream" of tertiary education (Bunda, Zipin, and Brennan 2012) as a way of demonstrating this ambivalence.

At the outset of this article, I wish to point out that, on the whole, these six women express ambivalence due to racism internal and external to their *whānau* (extended families) when remembering home, similarly to all the other participants in the study, as I argued in a previous article (Ore 2018). The twenty-one Māori Jewish participants in the overall study group employ defiant memory when remembering home to cope with and overcome racism as part and parcel of the infrastructure of their intimacy at home. While expressing nostalgic longing for their tupuna (ancestors), they employ their expressions of ambivalence toward home as a means to critique and overcome racism and other ethnic, religious, and gender-based tensions. In my previous article, I have shown that Māori Jews who live with memories of multiple homes that are grounded in different worldviews become highly skilled in negotiating the social boundaries and hierarchies in their *whakapapa* (genealogy, bloodlines).

However, in addition to that ambivalence in remembering their mixed tupuna, the six older Māori Jewish women in this study shared strong ambivalence toward their tertiary education, implied by the absence of their claim toward an academic career. Considering that three of the six women who hold a PhD were employed by universities in Aotearoa/New Zealand, I was struck by the fact that they shied away from articulating their paths as such and claimed this was not initially intentional. The other three women hold an MA degree, and all six women emphasized their choice of studying practical subjects that relate to health and education. Demonstrating how the women employ their ambivalence toward tertiary study in this article, I explain why their actions could be considered as conveying resilience. I define resilience as resistance that derives from flexibility and strength. In the context of these women's lives, resilience is conveyed by their explicit multiple associations with different worldviews and knowledges despite tensions on the basis of racial, ethnic, religious, and gender affiliations. Their resilience is also expressed by their ability to feel

comfortable in their own skin and their "no fuss" attitude toward their mixed identity.

The theory I employ is based on the new development in the anthropology of nostalgia, which articulates the contradictory way that people express longing for the home they have left behind to convey intimacy and affinity while simultaneously critiquing that home by expressing ambivalence. I expand on this theory and further the understanding of women's specific ambivalence by incorporating empirical studies on the intergenerational differences in the experience of Māori women (Houkamau 2011) , Māori women in tertiary education (Fitzgerald and Smyth 2014), and Māori well-being (Houkamau and Sibley 2011; Muriwai, Houkamau, and Sibley 2015). I do so in order to bring to the fore important nuances in understanding the well-being of contemporary Māori, particularly the place of ambivalence in the life of indigenous women in light of their ethnic diversity in the context of tertiary education. This social positioning of indigenous women in tertiary education and in academia is historically recent in Aotearoa/New Zealand, and the experiences of these women have hardly been researched, similarly to indigenous women in Australian academia (Bunda, Zipin, and Brennan 2012). I relate to other studies on ambivalent groups in other settings and contexts to learn more about their ambivalence and actions. I draw on studies from Aotearoa/New Zealand on international migrants who are making their new homes (Nelson Agee and Culberton 2013; Ore 2015), indigenous women in Australian academia (Bunda, Zipin, and Brennan 2012), and Israeli residents of mixed Arab-Jewish neighborhood (Nathansohn 2017) to support the recognition in ambivalence as an important part of the restoration and maintenance of well-being.

The article first introduces important background for the turn in the theory of nostalgia with regard to understanding how women remember home. This section also integrates empirical data from social psychology on the typical intergenerational differences between younger and older Māori women that are blurred by the women in this study and their ambivalence toward tertiary education. The studies on Māori well-being emphasize that connections with Māori cultural practices safeguard their well-being. Next, I describe the methodology used in conducting my study. I then analyze the women's memories using extracts from the interviews and summaries of the interviews to illustrate how the women reworked their ambivalence by negotiating kinship relationship in their whakapapa. I show that during their tertiary studies, the women also politicize as Māori and become motivated to improve the well-being of Māori people, a motivation manifested through their subject choices. In the final remarks, I establish my claim that the women's choices, memories, and experiences constitute their feelings of being "at home" (i.e., comfortable) by overcoming their ambivalence toward tertiary education and academia. I argue

that their ambivalence contributes to and constitutes their political awareness and their navigation between Māori, Pākehā, and Jewish knowledges as they become resilient role models for the next generation. Their navigation is also expressed by negotiating kinship relationship and expressing resilience. The comparison to migrants in Aotearoa/New Zealand and indigenous women in Australian academia reinforces my claim that whether the social boundaries and hierarchies that create dialectic tensions are "within" people, that is, in their relationship with families and whakapapa, or "around" them, that is, in their residential neighborhoods, these boundaries generate ambivalence that people overcome in various ways that manifest resilience.

Theory: Women's Journeys Home Fraught with Ambivalence

Since the 1990s, drastic changes in the literature on nostalgia—the pain of longing to return home—corresponded to rising recognition for different types of localized feminisms that are grounded in specific cultures. Emphasizing how women express their resistance via nostalgic remembrance of their past homes, the developments around the issue of gendered power relations are recognized in the influential work of Leo Spitzer (1999). Spitzer established an element of defiant memory in nostalgia, pointing out that migrants may resist certain societal and cultural aspects of home by, for example, contesting racism (see also Berdahl 2009; McDermott 2002; Sugiman 2005). Thus, scholars whose work is situated in feminist literature on nostalgia from the 2000s on have depicted this emotive phenomenon as liberating women (Bardenstein 2002; Duruz 2001: 29–30; 2004; McDermott 2002; Parla 2009; Radstone 2010; Rubenstein 2001; Salih 2003; Sugiman 2005). In a case study examining the life stories of Japanese-Canadian migrant women in Canada, for example, Pamela Sugiman (2005) claims that these women reclaim their power, dignity, and positive identity through their expressions of nostalgia for their youthful pre–World War II lives in Japan (49, 65), which was deliberately destroyed via "cultural genocide" during the war (49).

Similarly, Māori women have been recovering and revitalizing their culture since the renaissance in the 1980s, and the number of Māori women who were previously absent from academia is slowly growing. Megan Fitzpatrick and Jeanette Berman's (2016) study highlights that mature Māori women are the largest-growing cohort of Māori engaging in tertiary education at degree level in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The process of these women's cultural recovery and revitalization was articulated by one of the six women in my study group through the metaphor of "filling up the other *kete*," especially associated with her decision to learn Te Reo Māori (the language). Her metaphor derives from the renowned Māori myth about the creation of the world, wherein three kete,

or baskets, are metaphoric vessels of knowledge that is vital for the well-being of humans and their relationships with the environment. Tāne, the forbearer of mankind, the forest, and all the creatures of the forest, ascends through the many realms to the uppermost realm of Io-Matua-Kore (God-the-Parentless) and obtains from Io these three baskets of knowledge. Tāne returns to Papatūānuku (Earth Mother) with these kete and there creates humankind. The three kete brought from the heavens by Tāne are *Te kete aronui*, religious, ceremonial, and other advanced knowledge relevant to the enlightenment of people and to the preservation of physical, spiritual, and mental well-being; *Te kete tuauri*, knowledge of rituals and the history and practices of human lineages; and *Te kete tuatea*, the repository of evil knowledge.[2] The influence and connection of these baskets of knowledge on the well-being of Māori are also illustrated in the two following *whākatoki* (proverbs): Whaowhia te kete mātauranga (Fill the basket of knowledge) and Ā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi (With your food basket and my food basket the people will thrive).

Empirical research in social psychology on Māori shows that the well-being of individual Māori is understood as separate from national well-being and is influenced by the extent of their connections with their Māori identity and cultures, which protect them from stress (Muriwai, Houkamau, and Sibley 2015). Yet despite the cultural renaissance and ongoing decolonization of indigenous thinking in the past four decades, there is growing awareness among contemporary Māori that going back to one's cultural roots is only a partial solution to better their national well-being (Houkamau and Sibley 2011). Moreover, based on their study of five Māori women who are mature students (over twenty-five years old), Fitzpatrick and Berman (2016) show that the women share a dissonant experience: on the one hand, they regard undergoing tertiary education as conceding to demands to assimilate and take on "Pākehā ways" (the ways of white Europeans). As Bunda, Zipin, and Brennan (2012) claim with regard to the growing presence of indigenous people in Australian academia, universities have yet to transform and cease the colonization of indigenous people by including their knowledge and fully recognizing their labor and rights to lands in their pedagogy, structure, and systems. On the other hand, indigenous people are also aware of the empowerment and the abilities afforded to tertiary-educated indigenous women.

Looking further into issues of Māori well-being, Carla Houkamau (2011) raises the importance of understanding the impact of cultural diversity within Māori to explain the current complexity in paradigms of Māori identity. In her PhD on thirty-five Māori women, Houkamau (2011) points out intergenerational differences that illustrate the impact of colonization in Aotearoa/New Zealand from a sociohistoric context. Houkamau demonstrates that older Māori women who were raised in rural areas dedicate their time to whānau

commitments by participating in social and economic activities within their *iwi* (tribes), whereas younger Māori women who were raised in urban areas choose careers that express high politicization by prioritizing Māori interests and forming close relationships with other urban Māori. As shall be seen, the memories of the six older Māori Jewish women in my study blur the intergenerational differences found by Houkamau. This calls attention to the impact of their mixed ethnicity and raises the question of the place of their ambivalence toward academia as they negotiate connections with ancestors, highlighting the multifaceted nature of their memories.

In sum, nostalgic ambivalence in remembering the past is now recognized as a common emotive phenomenon among migrants and refugees that expresses their resistance and critique. In addition, ambivalence (or dissonance) is also recognized in the experience of indigenous women in academia. However, the place of ambivalence in contributing to well-being and resilience has yet to be explored, which is my main aim in this article.

The Participants and the Methodology

The data showcased in this article are based on in-depth, open-ended interviews with six Māori Jewish women who are part of the twenty-one interviewees that participated in my postdoctoral research project. Māori Jews in this project are defined as those who recognize their own Māori and Jewish whakapapa (ancestry, genealogy, lineages or [bloodline]). The intermarriage between Māori and Jewish ancestry occurred as far back as eight to ten generations ago. This means that one woman had Māori and Jewish parents who intermarried in the 1950s, and another had fourth-great Jewish and Māori grandparents who intermarried in the 1830s. According to Jewish Halachic laws and the laws of the state of Israel, only the Jewish maternal bloodline and orthodox conversion are considered as valid for identification as Jewish. Moreover, according to *matauranga* Māori (lore, worldviews), mothers have the right and the obligation to raise their children according to their own religion and culture. The six women in this study are aware of this cultural similarity. Nevertheless, those who had Jewish ancestors and Māori ancestors through the paternal bloodline still regarded themselves as both Jewish and Māori, and I recognize and acknowledge their self-identification as such.

I chose participants who belong to different whānau, *hapū*, and iwi to increase the range of their experiences, though, unbeknownst to them, several are remotely related. The participants reside mainly in Auckland and other cities in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The six women whom I base this article on share an interest Te Reo Māori (the Māori language) and to various degrees in Hebrew, with four of the women speaking Te Reo Māori fluently and two of the

women speaking some Hebrew. In accordance with their high level of tertiary education, the six women are mainly professionals in the arts, health, and education. The exception is a woman who worked in media and in real estate.

The interviews I conducted were between two and five hours, according to the participants' wishes, carried out at their homes, in cafés, and via electronic communication. The interviews were recorded and partly transcribed. I began every session by asking permission to record the interview and reminding participants that anything not said off the record could become so on their request. After a participant signed the ethics consent form, I would ask for personal details or a short demographic profile regarding their age, profession, education, familial status, and place of residence. I also asked about where they grew up and their memories about home and their childhoods. Usually, I would finish the conversation by asking the participant to define home and explain their concept of it to me, locate where they feel at home, and finally define how they see their well-being and grade their current state on a scale from one to ten.

After every interview, I would write up an overview of the meeting, which took the same length of time that I spent with the participant. In this detailed summary, I reflected on what had been said and included descriptions of the atmosphere, the rapport, any striking elements, moments of laughter and tears we shared, and a key sentence that distilled each woman's distinct character. I would do so to enhance the rest of my analysis, whereby I would identify key themes that were common across multiple interviews. I would often receive photos and clarifications regarding names, dates, and locations via e-mail as well as questions pertaining to such matters. I also offered the participants copies of transcriptions and analysis of my findings. In my ethnographic analysis, I use pseudonyms to protect the privacy of the six women, and I refrain from disclosing specific details about their iwi and *marae* for this reason.

On Mixed Ethnicity: Is Remembering Being Māori and Jewish an Issue?

The six women in my study grew up in both rural and urban communities and later either immigrated to a big city in order to gain tertiary education or simply stayed living in a big city. One of the six women returned to her rural community after she finished her education, whereas the other five women remained in a big city. The six women developed careers mainly in health and education in ways that contributed to the well-being of Māori. Two of the women are involved in Te Tiriti o Waitangi claims of their iwi, and all of them maintain strong connections with their whānau and the marae in their *papakāinga* (village, as home ground) to nourish both their rural communities and their urban networks, corresponding to the findings of Natasha Gagné (2013) in her ethnography on urban Māori in Auckland.

The six women are divided into two groups of three based on their different attitudes to being Jewish: the first group of three women regarded being Jewish as a minor issue in terms of their upbringing at home, whereas the second group regarded being Jewish as a major subject generating reflexivity. Since the memories and experiences of the latter group demonstrate more clearly how tertiary education contributed to their negotiation of relationship with whakapapa, this group will be discussed in a separate section. Nevertheless, all six women expressed great ambivalence toward their tertiary education and academic career if they had one. Below is a short presentation and analysis of the former group of three women for whom being Jewish played a minor part in their life.

Miriam is the eldest of two children. She had just retired from academia at the time of the interview and moved back to live in her parents' home with her sister. She never married or had any children. Her parents, however, came from large families of eleven children each. Miriam said about her mother.

> We had a very progressive mother who did not want many children, and believed in education and travel. . . . So I was born in Whangarei. I went to high school here. And then, because our town did not have a teachers' college or university we had to go to Auckland. And so, I went to Auckland as a 16 year old and I spent most of my life in there, except for a year in Rotorua of teaching down there as part of the qualification. And then back to Auckland, picked up jobs here and there. It was never a career path; teaching was a love not a career path. And I stayed in Auckland because one thing led to another. I ended up teaching English to migrants particularly war migrants from Vietnam and from most of the wars across the world. . . . My working life certainly has been in Auckland. But I always came in and out from where we live now. I was ten years the secretary chair of the businesses of our *hapu*. I have always played a part, but now that I am back here, there are other things that I can do as well. And one of them is restoring those inscriptions on these hundred plus year old headstones [in my local cemetery], which is fascinating.

Miriam said that the limited knowledge about being Jewish that her father passed to her was "shallow." When I asked for an example, she expressed her ambivalence by recounting reluctantly that her father would say, "We are good with keeping money because we have Jewish blood in us." Miriam claimed that following Māori tradition, she took on her mother's religious affiliations. Being Presbyterian like her mother, she went to Sunday school and learned the Bible stories. Her mother was Presbyterian, and her father was a nonpracticing Mormon.

Her family lived an austere and frugal life, following the motto "Godliness is next to cleanliness." Order and cleaning were very important to her family and still are, and there were no feasts or traditions that involved excessive gifting. We laughed that it was no wonder that her "Jewish moment" (as she termed it) had to do with cleaning the gravestone of her great-great-grandfather. In this regard, Miriam said,

> Ah, well politically it is, it means that I would have to, for this particular family of . . . , because he is not Māori, it was easier for me just to go with my cousin and we just start the work. If we had gone for some other member of the family, the extended family, we would have had to go through all the permission stuff, and the explanation, and sexism and all that rubbish, and I cannot be bothered with all that. So it was politically experienced to begin with. . . . He is the start.

After cleaning this gravestone Miriam was intrigued and amazed to find out that although her great-great-grandfather was Jewish, all the details, including his name, were engraved in Te Reo Māori. As she remarked, "I find that interesting, he completely, he totally assimilated with Māori, I would say."

Moreover, though Miriam experienced most of her life as a Māori woman, during her PhD she had time to reflect more about being Māori and experienced "an intensified Māori phase" in her life, as she put it. Miriam said she had realized that her role as a Māori woman with the title of a doctorate was to write letters to the council that would ensure better air quality because there is an ore plant that has been releasing blue smoke since the 1960s and no one seems to care. The councilors are all white men, and the only Māori councilor since the 1970s was her uncle, according to Miriam. Hence, through her actions, it is evident that Miriam is able to employ her power seamlessly as a Māori woman with a doctorate in the Pākehā world of her city's council.

Rachel is the third youngest of eight children. Both her mother and her father were born to big families of thirteen children each. Rachel was born and brought up in Auckland and Tonga. Her parents decided to move to Tonga when she was about eight years old to set up the Jehovah's Witnesses church on the island. For this reason, Rachel regards herself as "indigenous Māori-Tongan." Though she remembered all along that she has Jewish-Syrian and German ancestors, these did not have much impact when she carved out her identity through the course of her life. The lack of importance she attributed to being Jewish was equal to the lack of importance she attributed to being German, both threads remaining "relatively unexplored and undeveloped culturally," as she put it. The choice to define herself as Māori-Tongan is a result of a long process of exploration with certain defining points: becoming a mature student at the age of twenty-six

at the university despite her parents' discouragement as part of their censure toward tertiary education for women as Jehovah's Witnesses. She was studying in the 1980s, aware of the political movement of the Māori revival with Tama Iti and others, which influenced her own path when she took on psychology and sociology. Later, she designed the first Māori keyboard, possibly twelve years ahead of its time, investing personal money into it to ensure that "we [Māori] will have our language at the tip of our fingers, and will gain from this fast developing technology."

Being Jewish is something "completely normal and ordinary" for Sarah. "It is a simple fact that is just known and does not require any further worries, acts or anything," as Sarah put it. When I asked Sarah whether she had experienced a moment that was constructive to her being Jewish and Māori, at first she could not remember anything, but later she remembered that as an older Māori student in medical school, she was asked to do the *karanga* (as the woman-caller at the marae) and that there was one event for which she was doing the karanga where she felt that her mother and grandmother were with her as well as other whakapapa (ancestors). It was a powerful moment in which she felt her ancestors' spirits—not an easy moment to get through, even scary initially, but altogether positive. The other moment was a more negative one: in later years, it dawned on Sarah that her mother could not actually believe what she had said on her deathbed: "Do not to follow the Māori ways, because these would do you no good." Sarah remembered that even when they lived in England, her mother always had Māori artifacts in the house, and they would carry and cherish them everywhere they lived, so the advice did not make sense to Sarah, and for years she grappled with this memory. The way Sarah resolved it was to believe that her mother's advice was racist and untrue since her mother felt she had to "impart some generational 'wisdom' on her deathbed," most likely what people used to think and say at her time, but that her mother never actually believed that what she said was true, though it could not have been "unsaid" since she died.

In sum, once the six women in this study entered tertiary education, they became what I would term "reluctant academics" since they had not initially envisioned themselves as academics or aimed to become so. Their reluctance came across through their emphasis of serendipity rather than planning to enter tertiary education. The memories of Miriam, Sarah, and Rachel show clearly not only how they feel comfortable in their own skin but also how they overcame tension related to a gender bias toward women taking on tertiary education in the case of Rachel and racism toward Jews and Māori in the case of Miriam and Sarah, respectively. Miriam and Sarah share strong memories of ambivalent feelings and internalized racism in their relationship with their tupuna, which represents their critique toward the homes they grew up in. This critique is expressed by the memory of Miriam's father for being "shallow" and

racist toward Jews and the memory of refusing to condemn all Māori ways against her mother's deathbed advice for Sarah. For Rachel, the memory of taking on university studies against her parents' wish enhanced her ambivalence toward the academic institution, which is manifested by her articulate reference to colonization in carving out her political awareness during her studies.

As seen, their ambivalence is reworked by their respective choices: Rachel taking on tertiary study and contributing to Māori well-being and identity expression (developing the Māori keyboard), Sarah's regard for Māori ways as healthy and helpful, and Miriam recognizing and cleaning the gravestone of her Jewish ancestor as well as using her power and influence as a retired academic for the benefit of others. Aiming to use their power and influence for the benefit of others was the case for all six women who felt comfortable in the Pākehā world but not without criticism, as Miriam's memories show. Often, the Pākehā world of academia was criticized over antifeminist trends and for indigenous women's poor representation and lack of voice on matters that are communal and collective. The Māori world was often criticized for internal politics, as Miriam implies when she is referring to the order in which she decided to clean the gravestones of her ancestors and for placing the heavy weight of ancestral obligations on women's shoulders, as the memories of Lea show in the section below. The women manifested resilience since they stood their ground as Māori in tertiary education and academia, while they negotiated their ambivalences via their kinship relationships with their female kin, as shall be developed in the next section.

Indigenous Women in Tertiary Education: Negotiating Kinship Relationships

The second group of three women in this study not only recognized their Jewish ancestry in practical, ritualized ways but also exemplified how taking on tertiary education was the result of the relationships they negotiated with their mothers, grandmothers, and daughters (if they had any). These three women regarded their memories of affiliating with Māori and Jewish ancestry and respective cultural practices as equally important. Their experiences and memories are exemplified in my conversation with Lea, Jade, and Rebecca.

Lea is the oldest of six children. Lea has a partner but never married or had children. When she was growing up in her mother's home, Lea was sent to Sunday school to learn Hebrew and Jewish studies, and the family used to celebrate the main Jewish festivals at home with another neighboring family. Lea's mother was a Jewish Māori cultural revivalist, resulting in Lea attending the Jewish youth movement Habonim in Aotearoa/New Zealand for several years. This attendance culminated at the age of eighteen when Lea spent time in a

kibbutz in Israel. In the kibbutz, she learned Hebrew by doing Ulpan (intensive Hebrew course). Then she traveled in Europe, and once she returned home, she studied German as part of her MA. Courses in Te Reo Māori were not available at that time. Her mother's second husband, who was Pākehā, adopted her officially and helped raise her, but all major educational decisions were in her mother's hands. As Lea remembered,

> I think part of the tension was when my mother was alive she would always place things on me and I'd think: "my god, I really don't want to do that," you know, laying it all on me the expectation that I would carry on a lot of these things, when it was not necessarily the priority I had to myself. Um. And yet I have maintained an interest and I'm always the first to defend Māori rights if any bigoted person starts going on about it, and it's part of my job too, so, you know.
>
> Hadas: So could you say that you lived up to her expectation?
>
> Lea: To a certain extent, but you know, I'm not putting myself forward to be on the iwi Rūnanga [the governing council or administrative group of a Māori hapū or iwi] and I'm not putting myself forward to be on everything, cause there's only so much, and some of my relatives their whole lives, I mean I don't know how they commit to so much, I mean, I don't think I could. I mean I, I, I have committed to being a trustee on a land trust, and I'll get involved in projects when I can, and I'll go and support various *hui* when I can, but I don't want to be an official trustee in too many, because I think particularly working full time it becomes too much, and I've got a partner and friends and so on, who are not involved in that world, really, ya, just trying to marry up all these different things is not a simple thing. Ah, ya, but context is absolutely everything. I mean. It's funny I mean being in a totally Jewish group sometimes I feel, I mean I know I'm Jewish. Maybe I am not Jewish as they are? Or amongst Māori—I am not as Māori as they are?

Lea's memories convey ambivalence that drives from two focal points: negotiating her relationship with her mother and her commitment to both the Māori and Jewish ways that her mother represented. Despite her resentment toward the obligation she feels for the legacy of her mother and for both cultural ways, Lea clearly remains obligated to her mother's double cultural commitments and thus manifests resilience. She is able to overcome some of the tensions that arise from her double commitment by setting clear boundaries and navigating her way between the worlds.

Jade is the youngest child of four. Jade is not married and has no children. She described herself as "the most Jewish and Māori" out of the siblings. She said that she can see her Jewish self when looking in the mirror. Many people think she is Indian and do not recognize her facial features as Māori, but she does. Her mother's parents (Jade's Jewish grandparents) were forcibly separated from their eight children and died in Theresinestadt. The children were sent to England and survived World War II. Her mother was eight years old at the time. She never spoke Polish or about Poland. Her mother lied about her age in England, claiming she was eighteen years old so she could study nursing (she was fifteen). When she met her husband-to-be, they fell in love and got married in England. Arriving in Aotearoa/New Zealand to meet his Māori family, as they got off the boat, they were welcomed with a *hongi*. The family story is that Jade's father was the youngest of nine and much loved, so his family made Jade's mother pass tests before they deemed her deserving and accepted her to the family. The first test was to get stung by a wasp that they put in the corn she ate. While eating the corn, she did get stung, and her father's Māori family loved her Jewish mother for being stung despite her red lipstick and unacceptably non–working-class features. Jade's Jewish mother took on her Māori father's culture during their life; she believed in *tapu* and followed other cultural beliefs. For example, as a nurse, she disliked keeping blood in the hospital refrigerator, which was meant for keeping food. As Jade put it, her parents' "master plan was to push all four children to study at university or teachers' college." Her parents moved to Auckland from Rotorua for this purpose, and indeed their plan was realized. The girls also did ballet in the afternoons, and generally they were pushed to do well in the Pākehā world. Jade described a happy childhood at the marae and later on in Auckland on a big family section with many fruit trees. Jade's eldest sister died of cancer around the same time that her mother was dying of cancer. Her eldest sister was a schoolteacher and a principal who took on the Māori ways, learning to speak Te Reo Māori fluently. After she died, the rest of the family lost touch with her children, possibly because of the pain and hurt induced by losing her. After the death of her father, Jade's mother tried to get "back" into Judaism by joining the congregation of Beit-Shalom, the Jewish progressive community in Auckland. But she only had four months of this "return home" before she got sick and died herself. This reestablished Jade's connection with her eldest sister's children.

Jade's memories are steeped with the loss of her kin: her mother's kin in the Holocaust and then her sister, mother, and father. Her ambivalence was conveyed through the racial issue of her looks in comparison to others and her siblings and the family story of her parents' arrival to Aotearoa/New Zealand. Due to the strong sense of loss, her ambivalence toward tertiary education is only hinted at by her saying that she fulfilled her parents' expectation and realized

that their "master plan [was] to push all four children to study at university or teachers' college." Jade also conveyed some critique toward her parents when she described her family life and upbringing as the epitome of a middle-class family, "being pushed to do well in the Pākehā world" and "doing ballet." In contrast to this critique, she felt compelled to clarify that she had a happy childhood and emphasized her parents' sacrifice to move to the city from Rotorua. Jade's resilience was manifested as she was explicitly proud of being Māori and Jewish and claimed that all her losses reminded her how to "live better with memories."

Rebecca is the eldest of six children. Remembering growing up at home she said,

> Well my upbringing, I think a lot of my education was to do with past policies and the assimilation, where similar practices that impacted on the way my parents and other parents have viewed the world. My gran, my Kuia [Māori grandmother], my mum's mother, she went to school, she grew up in a Māori community speaking the language. And when she went to school English was the language, and she was smacked for speaking her language, so she didn't stay at school very long. And her English was a bit broken. But you know, brilliant in Māori things, of course, cause that's her world. So when mum was born, my grandmother, her mother, didn't want her to suffer the same negative school experience. So she sent my mum off to a boarding school at nine. Catholic! Māori girls' boarding school, where my mum eventually settled down and enjoyed herself, made a lot of friends. The nuns were great to her. Ahm . . . and she could, she is a native speaker in all the Māori practices and knowledge and so on.
>
> Hadas: Did they practice any of this at school?
>
> Rebecca: Well interestingly, the girls at school, although they were native speakers, chose to speak English. Because they wanted to be good at English, really fluent and knowledgeable about the English world and Western ways. And they were taught, the nuns taught mum, she told me, they taught her how to eat properly, how to use a knife and fork, you know, a butter knife for butter, you know, have a spoon for the jam, little special things, and how to dress properly, how to talk properly. A lot of those women from the boarding school were very proper, when they left school. They knew all the ways, western ways of behaving and they, it was kind of like another class way, you see some of those women and they have got all those cups and saucers, very dainty stuff, but so she had her English language knowledge and Māori. She

had her two kete full! So she was quite confident and strode out evenly balanced into the world. And when I was born in 1951, which makes me 84 [laughing at her purposeful inaccuracy] mum and dad thought that English is the best way forward. They actually spoke Māori to each other in the house, if they didn't want us to know what they were talking about. So we didn't grow up speaking the language, and I went to Catholic school. And then high school is where I learned Latin and French, but no, in my schooling there was no Māori at all, no cultural practices. And ah, so when I left I had my western knowledge, my kete of western knowledge was full, but my Māori one was pretty empty so I kind of stumbled into the world. Not well balanced at all. My identity was not strong. I don't think. I stumbled through highways and byways of life, taking the wrong turns for quite a long time, and then I lived in Aussie for a while, and then decided to come back. I had a bit of an identity crisis, cause people would say, I was working on the buses in Melbourne and I had Egyptians and Lebanese people thinking I was [like them], cause I think when I was younger I looked perhaps more Semitic, I had a different look about me when I was younger. And I'd have to explain myself: "No I'm Māori from New Zealand." Sometimes people would think I was Italian or, never who I really am or was. And then there came this urge in me to learn the language, and learn about my culture and be with the family. So I came home, and then met my daughter's dad, and had her, became pregnant with my daughter. And I had started out the journey of learning the language then. And got more and more, in those days you could go for a week long immersion, *wananga*, three times a year on school holidays. So I used to do that, go out to Ngati. . . . And then when she was ready to *kohanga reo*, then I was increasing my knowledge again to be in line with her.

Rebecca's memories show clearly how she had carved her political awareness while negotiating her experience in tertiary education alongside forming increasingly closer connections with herself through the Māori world and learning Te Reo Māori. Rebecca lays out the development of her academic studies and Te Reo study as the result of her relationship with her female tupuna: grandmother, mother, and daughter.

The key metaphor in the title of this article, "filling up the other kete," is derived from this interview. This metaphor encompasses and represents the experience of all six women and is by no means coincidental, relating to their political awareness and the long-term labor they invested in attaining cultural knowledge to alleviate their discomfort and create more balanced and healthier ways of living. The metaphor invokes fostering safety and comfort, as Rebecca

explained, since the balance enables one to walk proud, confident, straight, and tall, when stepping into the world rather than limping as one does when one hand is holding a full kete and the other has an empty kete.

The emphasis on the centrality of Te Reo Māori language when carving out their sense of place as home in Aotearoa/New Zealand and negotiating their ambivalence toward tertiary education as Māori while manifesting resilience was common to all six women. In later years, as older students in tertiary education, they were supported to study Te Reo Māori. If their study coincided with getting their children through the education system, this strong connection reinforced their desire to learn Te Reo Māori, as Rebecca's case demonstrates. In the other cases, once they got into tertiary education, their mental growth during that time also instigated their journey of learning Te Reo Māori and their political awareness.

The two women who were not fluent in Te Reo Māori remembered that their fathers recounted being beaten by the teachers at school for speaking Te Reo, so, despite the fact that both parents knew and spoke Te Reo Māori between themselves, their daughters were never fluent. They regard themselves as "passive bilinguals" since, though they heard and understood Māori while growing up in the village, they could never speak it fluently. Instead of learning to speak Te Reo Māori, they chose to promote Māori protocols, phrases, and proverbs, as well as place-names, stories, and myths, and emphasized their Māori looks.

Concluding Remarks

The six older Māori Jewish women in my study express ambivalence toward tertiary education while remembering their past, which stems from racial, ethnic, religious, and gender-based tensions. The racial, religious, and gendered tensions within their whānau and beyond constitute dialectic tensions that generate ambivalence and reflexivity. This ambivalence is expressed in their reflexive claim of "filling up the other kete" through their study of Te Reo Māori, for example. This feminine metaphor stems from the Māori worldview and epitomizes their role in creating a safe and comfortable space for consolidating knowledge and improving well-being. Interestingly, the only study from indigenous women's perspectives in Australian academia begins with a quote that similarly uses the metaphor of the basket as a positive and hopeful prospect (Bunda, Zipin, and Brennan 2012, 1): "Why not learn to bear baskets of hope, love, self-nourishment and to step lightly? . . . Voyager, there are no bridges, one builds them as one walks" (Anzaldúa 1983: iv–v).

By applying the recent development in the theory of nostalgia, however, I argue that they employ their ambivalence toward tertiary education to make

themselves comfortable in their own skin as they embed their experiences, knowledge, and memories mainly in the Māori culture and the study of Te Reo Māori. Their actions express their resilience, as these enable them to negotiate kinship relationship with whakapapa and rework social boundaries and hierarchies. This course of action is commonly the case for international migrants who make their new home in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Nelson Agee and Culberton 2013; Ore 2015). Nathansohn (2017) shows that this is also true in the case of the residents of the mixed Arab-Jewish neighborhood Hadar in the city of Haifa who develop "reflexive coexistence," which may generate actions that eliminate the gap between Jews and Arabs or support it.

The six women in this study are situated in social positionings that generate ambivalence, which not only contributes to carving out their political awareness but also navigates their way between Māori, Pākehā, and Jewish worlds and knowledges as they become resilient role models for the next generation. Thus, the importance of older Māori Jewish women's memories is brought to the fore, demonstrating how their ambivalence toward tertiary education becomes a means for manifesting resilience. They resist and overcome the tension that derives from pressures to assimilate into the "whitestream" academia, not only by choosing subjects that will benefit the well-being of Māori but also by refraining from defining an academic career as their goal.

In particular, when remembering their tertiary education, these women are ambivalent and employ their ambivalent memories as a means to negotiate their power and kinship connections, in some certain cases between up to four generations of females: their grandmothers, mothers, themselves, and their daughters. As they are able to harness their ambivalence for constituting a safe harbor in flows of unhomely moments, they express much love and intimacy when negotiating their kinship relationships.

The older Māori Jewish women in my study who were raised in rural areas dedicated their time to whānau commitments by participating in social and economic activities within their iwi and chose careers that express high politicization, prioritizing Māori interests and forming close relationships with other urban Māori. Thus, the intergenerational differences that Houkamau found in her PhD study (2011) of Māori women do not apply to the women in my study. In fact, as they undergo tertiary education, the politicization of these indigenous women and their subject choices of health and education balance out their reluctance to become academics and participate in this part of the Pākehā world. Equipped with their titles of MA and PhD, these women feel able to better navigate between the Pākehā world and the Māori world and manifest resilience as they feel comfortable in their own skin.

In this article, I explicate the benefits of looking into the nostalgic ambivalence that indigenous women, namely, six older Māori Jewish women, express

through their memories of home toward tertiary education. In doing so, I explore how, by negotiating their relationship with whakapapa, they also negotiate their ambivalence and express resilience. Notably, three of the six women chose not to marry and never had children, a point that may have contributed to their manifestation of resilience against pressures and one that is worth developing in another article. It is my hope that writing this article will invite more analysis that unpacks the ambivalences that indigenous people and indigenous women in particular share, pointing at their ways of expressing resilience and resistance in other contexts.

NOTES

1. I am grateful to the Dame Joan Metge postdoctoral award by the Kate Edgar Charitable Education Trust for funding the research project that this article is based on. I am also indebted to my wonderful supervisor Dr. Carla Houkamau, who guided me through, and the lovely people who participated in the study. My deepest thanks to my daughter Livne Ore for her indelible editing skills and attention to details.

2. https://teara.govt.nz/en/maori-education-matauranga/page-1 and http://maaori.com/whakapapa/ngakete3.htm.

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REFLECTIONS ON WOMEN, POWER, AND FAITH IN PRECHRISTIAN AND POSTCHRISTIAN POLYNESIA

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In this article, I aim to draw attention to the scholarship of Alan Hanson and Neil Gunson, demonstrating that throughout pre-Christian Polynesia, chiefly women—even more so than chiefly men—possessed great mana and the powers to make or remove tapu. Gunson identified many great women chiefs and rulers in ancient Polynesia believed to have been descended from the gods. Hanson showed that the tapu on women in ancient Eastern Polynesian societies was because of their dangerous affinity to the gods. The missionary notion that pre-Christian Polynesians were mired in darkness led to the subordination of women when Christianity replaced the religious systems of ancient Polynesia. I suggest that there is a need, not for the rejection of Christian faith, but for a very critical analysis of Christian teaching and representations on the role of women.

Historical Representations of Gender and Status

Eastern Polynesia

One of the puzzles of Polynesian culture history is that despite linguistic and cultural similarity, significant differences have been documented in the status of women in Eastern Polynesia and Western Polynesia. Eastern Polynesia (Hawai'i, French Polynesia, Cook Islands, and Aotearoa [New Zealand]) is in certain respects a "culture area" (Burrows 1940) that, according to archaeological

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evidence, was settled a millennium or so after Western Polynesia (Burley and Addison 2018: 231–51), a region including Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Tokelau, Wallis (Uvea), and Futuna. In Eastern Polynesia, ethnologists reported that females were antithetical and contaminating to all sacred things. Most classic literature based on early observations of Eastern Polynesian societies emphasizes the exclusion of women from many important aspects of everyday life, because as observers understood this practice, women were ritually unclean. Hanson (1982) refers to accounts of this belief in Eastern Polynesian societies from many sources. For example, citing Malo (1951: 27–29) and Handy and Pukui (1972: 9, 11), he offers the example of Hawai'i:

> Excepting high-ranking women of the ali'i class who owed their position to illustrious pedigrees, women were reported to be devoid of sacredness. They could not handle fishing gear nor enter ritual places. They ate separately from men, and were not even allowed to enter the mua, or house where men of the family ate.

He refers to similar *tapu* on women in Marquesas, the Society Islands, and Aotearoa (New Zealand) associated with their menstruation and childbearing propensities, which were deemed dangerous and defiling to men and were associated with prohibitions on female contact with food in certain contexts, canoes, and fishing. Hanson (1982) proposed a new analytical perspective on these beliefs and practices, arguing that those ethnological descriptions were misinterpreted by scholars who concluded they were the sources of women's social inferiority. In rejecting this view, Hanson draws attention to Smith's (1974: 28–29) insight on the ancient Maori belief that childbirth was "the pathway whereby human beings enter this world, the vagina is a mediator between the human and 'ultra-human' (spiritual or godly) realms." From this perspective, the prevailing Eastern Polynesian tapu on women is evidence that their reproductive functions were imbued with supernatural power, facilitating processes in which preexisting souls from the spirit world were given bodily substance as humans.

Western Polynesia

In Western Polynesia, far milder versions of beliefs and practices imposed tapu on women. In the ethnohistorical literature on Samoa, the only examples of tapu (*sā*) on women that I know of in Samoa were that girls should not prepare *kava* (*'ava*) while menstruating (this was still the belief in the 1970s), that females should not climb coconut trees, and that in the past, females were not supposed to touch specialized fishing canoes (*va'aalo*). However, the sacred chiefs (*ali'i*

pa'ia) rendered everything they touched tapu, so as described by the missionary John Williams in 1830, even the ground they walked upon was desanctified by sprinkling it with coconut water (Moyle 1984). According to Mills (2016), citing Collocott (1921: 418) and Gifford (1929: 18), in Tonga "men" were also tapu, although he does not make it clear whether this applied to all Tongan men or, as is more likely, only to those who were *eiki* (aristocrats). According to his account, a man's child or wife must not touch his head or touch any part of him while he was eating, consume his food or drink, or touch his bed, headrest, staff, weapons, flyswatter, or fan. Citing Gifford (1929: 344), Mills (2016) says that women "were forbidden to step over categorically male products such as weapons, fishing canoes and equipment, or growing yam vines, for fear that their efficacy would be weakened; the vulva's power as a conduit of the woman's *manava* (spiritual powers) was antagonistic to the efficacy of categorically male activities" (Mills 2016, 89). However, he notes that both sexes were tapu to one another and men avoided contact with objects associated with women.

In Samoa and Tonga, unlike Hawai'i and the Society islands, high status is accorded to women through special relationships between sisters and brothers and their respective descendants. In the Samoan version, for example, a sister might outrank her brother in a contractual relationship referred to as *feagaiga,* which may be understood in its ancient meaning as a sacred contract or covenant between two parties of opposed but complementary status (Schoeffel 1995). This status may have been particular to women of high-ranking lineages in pre-Christian Samoa, supported by the belief that those of the highest rank were genealogically connected to the gods, but all women were encompassed by this dignity, as James (1991) notes in the context of similar beliefs in Tonga The institutions of *mehikitanga* (father's sister) and *fahu* (father's sister's children) in Tonga were based on similar ideology that affirmed a sister and her children as ritually superior to her brother and his children (Herda 1987). Similar constructions of complementary gendered oppositions have been documented for Pukapuka (Hecht 1977) and Tokelau (Huntsman and Hooper 1975). Belief in the supernatural potency of a chiefly woman's genitalia as argued by Hanson (1982) also existed in Western Polynesia, for example, in the ancient Samoan defloration rites at the wedding of a *taupou* (chiefly titled virgin) to a high chief. In this rite, she squatted naked, presenting her *measa* (sacred genitals) to her bridegroom in front of a huge audience and allowing him, or his presiding orator, to thrust fingers wrapped in white *tapa* cloth to rupture her hymen (Pritchard 1866: 325). This opened the sacred pathway from which a new descendant of the gods was to emerge by means of physically and supernaturally uniting two aristocratic lineages, as in Hanson's (1982) analysis of Eastern Polynesian practices and as attested to by ancient Samoan wedding songs recorded by Moyle (1975). The resulting blood was smeared in two arcs (1) upon each side of her face and that

of her bridegroom, after which all present celebrated, her female entourage lacerating their heads to draw blood, while songs were sung in celebration. A rite with similar significance was practiced in the Society Islands; at the moment of birth, those present would greet the arrival of the newborn by lacerating their heads, the sacred part of the human body, to draw blood (Oliver 1974: 422). In Hanson's (1982) analysis, by the sympathetic drawing of blood in this way, they removed the sacredness from themselves at this holy moment of transition.

Women's power in their lineages is also attested by examples in Western Polynesia of women's power to curse their brothers and to protect them (Schoeffel 1982). For example, the *mayakitanga* (sacred maid) of Pukapuka (Cook Islands) was:

> . . . ideally the eldest daughter of the aliki "chief" or, if necessary, another girl of the chiefly burial lineage. Each of the chiefs of the four chiefly burial lineages had the right to designate a "sacred maid," who was initiated before puberty, at about 10 years of age. She never married, remaining a guarded virgin for life, and she retained her title even if the father died and the succeeding chief named another sacred maid..
> . .
>
> The "sacred maid" was said to be a "symbol of the power and dignity of the lineage"; yet her great sanctity was coupled with the utmost passivity. She was thought in some way to ensure prosperity, but by no obviously active means, and indeed she seems to have done so by serving as the passive channel for the good will of the gods . . . she accompanied her lineage's voyaging canoe in order to protect it, apparently not by actively supplicating the gods, but rather by simply encouraging their beneficence through her presence. (Hecht 1977: 197)

In this case, it was not the reproductive powers of mayakitanga that made her sacred; she was a virgin for life, revered, fattened, and whitened by seclusion from the sun, and exercised no chiefly authority. She represented the innate sacred power of a matriline to complement the active authority of her father and brother. The same idea of the protective power of a sacred maiden appears to have attached to the Samoa taupou, previously described, who, when an army went to war in pre-Christian times, would march at their head, brandishing a club or (as depicted in nineteenth-century photographs), a whaler's knife. It seems clear she was there to attract the favor of the gods and to protect the warriors. In comparatively egalitarian Tokelau, all women are believed, as sisters, to be endowed with *mamana*, "mystical power":

> . . . From this is derived their ability to curse and their designation as mātua hā "sacred mother" or mātua tauaitu "spirit-holding mother" by their brothers' children.
>
> Prohibited from close contact with her brother, a sister should send her son to look after him when he engages in a potentially dangerous enterprise, delegate a daughter to care for him if he is seriously ill, and dispatch her children to comfort him if he is bereaved. Pule "secular authority" is attributed to brothers, who are enjoined to provide for and protect their sisters and sisters' children. (Huntsman and Hooper 1975)

The widespread Polynesian notion of two interdependent forces, mystical and authoritative, sacred and secular, combining to create legitimate power or *mana,* is reflected in the importance of brother–sister ties in Samoa, Tonga, and Tokelau. In Tonga, in Douaire-Marsaudon's analysis, the Mehekitanga, the father's sister is ultimately revered by her brother and his children because together they ensure the reproduction of their lineage; the sister's power of veto of the father's sister over her brothers' progeny, is symbolized by the Tu'i Tonga and Tu'i Tonga *fefine* (female Tui Tonga) of ancient times; he provides the fertility of the country and she controls the exchanges between the dead and the living people (1996: 162) As Hanson (1982) put it:

> . . . in both eastern and western Polynesia the long-lived and widely held theory of female pollution is incorrect. It is true that women were deemed to be dangerous, that their association with disease, misfortune, and death injected distinctly negative connotations into the set of meanings connected with them. But none of this is to be explained in terms of an idea that women polluted other people and the gods. On the contrary, the position of the female in Polynesia, including its negative component, is more fully understood according to a special affinity, which was thought to link women with the supernatural. (Hanson 1982: 376)

In the Samoan oral tradition, the "Story of Sina" illustrates how certain women in ancient Samoa were conceptualized as having powers over nature, life, and death (Kramer 1994, 125–7). In the tale, Sina (or Hina, a pan-Polynesian heroine, the daughter of heaven or a high chiefly woman) is courted by many suitors. Among them are two brothers, the younger of whom, named Tulau'ena, presents only the foot of a roasted pig, in contrast to the rich gifts

from other suitors. Sina chooses him as her husband, but he is subsequently murdered by his jealous older brother. Sina sets off to find him, personifying him in death as her "enemy":

> On her journey, she came upon Lupe, a pigeon, first. She asked it: "Lupe; the bird of chiefs, Please may I ask if my enemy has passed by?" Lupe answered rudely, saying that pigs like her should dare not speak to Lupe. Sina retaliated by telling the pigeon that his reply had earned him a small stone to put on its beak. Since that day pigeons have had lumps on their beaks. Sina next met a Manuali'i bird. She asked the same question and the bird replied that her enemy had just passed by. Sina rewarded the Manuali'i by giving it some feathers from her mat to put above its beak. Sina continued on her way and came upon a Manumā bird, and again asked the same question. The Manumā replied that her enemy had just passed by, and Sina rewarded it by giving it her shaggy white garment to put on its chest. Next Sina met a Manutagi bird, asked her question, and the bird replied that her enemy had just passed by. Sina rewarded him with her shaggy red garment to put on its beak and chest. Sina continued on her search and she met a Sega bird. She asked the same question, to which the Sega replied: "Keep on walking until you come upon a lady. Matamolali is her name. Take the end of a coconut leaf and beat her with it." Sina rewarded the Sega with her red garment for its chest, and with a garland for its beak and tail. Sina told the Sega that it will feed upon sweet nectar in the bush.

When Sina finds Matamolali (a name that connotes ugliness and disfigurement), she strikes her and asks whether she has seen her "enemy," whereupon

> Matamolali went and opened up the living waters and closed off the dead waters. From the living waters were released all the aristocratic young men and girls. Among them was Sina's man. Matamolali asked him to give her his garland but when he came close, she seized him and beat him and tried to drown him in the waters. The man cried out for mercy. Then Matamolali pointed to the east, to the south, to the north and to the west, and she asked the man to name the directions in which she pointed. The man gave her the correct answers, and then Matamolali took him to her house. Sina was hiding there. Matamolali called out for a cloth for the man to wear, and Sina threw out a piece of pandanus cloth that she and her husband had shared. Taking it, the man told Matamolali that it was like the cloth that he and

> Sina had used, but Matamolali replied that it was her own cloth. Then Matamolali called out for a comb and Sina threw her comb, which the man immediately recognised as the one which he had shared with Sina. Matamolali again told the man that it was her own comb. The man sat sadly in the house, gazing at the cloth and the comb. Then Matamolali called out to Sina to come forth. Tulau'ena saw that it was his wife and the two embraced. They established their family there with the old lady Matamolali, who acted as a mother to the children of Sina and Tulau'ena. (from a Samoan text recorded during the 1890s, Kramer 1994 [1903]: 125–27, and translated into English in 1979 by Malama Meleisea)

Women and Chiefly Rank

Throughout the ranked societies of Polynesia, children of high-ranking men did not inherit their father's rank unless their mother was also of high rank, and in some circumstances, the rank of the father was not an important consideration in establishing chiefly status. Thus, rank may be understood to have passed through chiefly women rather than men. For example, in the Society Islands, "High chiefly women did not worry too much about the paternity of their children" (Gunson 1987: 140)—nor, apparently, did women of the highest rank in Samoa. In modern retellings of the story of the Samoan Queen Salamāsina, it is assumed that her firstborn, fathered by a low-ranking youth, brought great disgrace upon her, but this is a post-Christian gloss. A young woman of paramount rank (descended as she was in the lineages of Tui Tonga, Tui Fiti, Tui A'ana, and Tui Atua) would not have been subjected to such conventions, as evidenced by the high rank of the children of that union in the Sa Levālasi lineage. She and her daughters had names with heavenly connotations: Levalāsi might be defined as "the cosmos," So'oaimalelagi as "connected to heaven," and Salamāsina as "bridge to the moon" or even possibly "descendants of the sun and moon" (Schoeffel 1987). In the English-language fiction of the nineteenth century, we have the trope of the "fallen woman" cast out by society for her sin of conceiving a child outside marriage. This had no corollary in ancient Polynesian societies. Today, Samoans use the term *paumutu* to refer to a woman who is sexually "loose" or is a prostitute. But let us consider what this term meant in ancient Samoa. Literally, it means to "break the skin," a term harking back to the ancient defloration rite to which girls were expected to submit before becoming sexually active and by doing so affirmed the identity of the man who was to father a child with her (Schoeffel 2011). In pre-Christian societies of Polynesia, a child might belong primarily to the family of the

mother and her brother and their line, unless the ceremonial exchanges at the ritual coupling acknowledged the family of the father and his eventual rights of paternity.

Despite the tapu on women in some societies of Polynesia, the historian Neil Gunson (1964, 1987) analyzed the early historical and genealogical records of Polynesian societies and found many instances of women in royal lineages ruling, or coruling with a brother, in the Society Islands, Hawai'i, and Aotearoa (New Zealand), as well as in Samoa, Tonga, and Uvea. He comments that the role of chiefly women in Polynesian history was likely to have been obscured by nineteenth-century recorders of Polynesian history, many of them missionaries, who believed that women's place was in the home and, while they recorded oral traditions concerning the licentious adventures of male gods and heroes, likely found similar bawdy adventures of their female counterparts too indecent to publish. He pointed out:

> Although chiefly women were traditionally important as wives and sisters, the wifely role was usually an accidental one. In other words, the wife was important because of who she was herself rather than because of whom she married. It was only after the introduction of Christianity that the wifely role was developed in its own right....
>
> In traditional Polynesian societies there were two main categories of female chiefs or women who were chiefs in their own right. These were: first, sacred female chiefs who outranked everyone else in their family and the community and who were sometimes virgin priestesses; and second, women of high lineage conveniently described as "female headmen." (Gunson 1987: 141)

In his memoir, William Brown Churchward (who had been British consul to Samoa) recalled his surprise to discover in a district that he was visiting in 1881 that the highest-ranking person was a woman, as he was assured by the chief whom he had previously assumed to be paramount. She was "the highest in the district by birth, being, as was said, descended from the ancient gods" (1887: 324).

Legendary women warriors in Tonga and Samoa had the power of men, as well as the mana of chiefly women:

> There is a marked consistency in the portrayal of dominant chiefly women throughout the Polynesian islands. Besides being aggressive, they were frequently described as being masculine in appearance, and

> often very large in size. Some times their husbands were mere youths. Very often they were known for their prowess in warfare. In Tonga stories were told of the valour of a daughter of the chief 'Ahome'e. "Wrapping bark cloth about herself she fought through a long day with the strength and courage of a man, and was known for a woman only when, relaxing after the battle she threw aside the cloth that covered her breasts." (Gunson 1987: 142–43)

The Samoans had a similar and well-known legend of their ancient goddess of war Nafanua, who fought a great battle, at the height of which she threw aside her cloak to reveal her breasts and, in victory, secured the power to bestow all of Samoa's highest titles.

The cultural institutions that enshrine the power of chiefly women were all founded in pre-Christian cosmology. In Western Polynesian origin legends, Polynesian women were the ultimate vessels of life. Through the potent procreative forces of Tangaloa the creator, who introduced matter and form into the void, the marriage of like and like gave rise to new forms until the geological formation of the physical environment, the geographical form of the islands, and surrounding oceans were complete. In the Samoan version, Tangaloa sent his daughter down from heaven in the form of a plover, a Tuli, to a creeper growing on the land he created; with her excreta, she transformed maggots on the creeper in living men and women. In another origin legend, the sun (Lā) was born of Sinataeolelagi (Sina excreta of the heavens), daughter of Tangaloaalagi, and her mortal husband Tafa'i. Their son returned to his mother's heavenly home in the skies to the east, moving each evening to the west where he rested for the night. An ancestress of Tui Manu'a, who was said to have been the first of the great semidivine chiefs of Samoa, opened her legs to the sun and conceived a male child who thereafter regulated the passage of the sun across the heavens. The house of Tui Manu'a was the Fale 'Ula, the red or glowing house located so that it received the first and last rays of the sun as it rose and fell in the heaven each day. Eastern Polynesian cultures possessed somewhat different cosmologies from the societies from which they originated in Western Polynesia. These acknowledged their migrant origins from an ancestral homeland, "Hawaiki." They possessed a pantheon of gods, among whom Tangaloa (Tangaroa or Kanaloa) was one of many. In Maori mythology, the story of creation was revised, for example, as in the sacred origin myth whereby sky and Earth were personified, respectively, as male and female gods, Rangi and Papa, whose mating led to the creation of the physical universe. In the Hawaiian version, Wakea (space or heavens) inseminates Papa (foundation or Earth) from whom is born a daughter whom Wakea also inseminates to produce first taro and then the ancestors of the ruling chiefs (Schoeffel 1987).

Christian Transformations

The English missionaries who founded the Christian churches in Polynesia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries believed that by adopting the Christian faith, the status of women would be elevated. As Williams, the pioneer missionary to Samoa, wrote:

> . . . I prayed that by the blessing of God upon our labours, the day might speedily arrive when these interesting females should be elevated from this terrible degradation, and, by the benign influence of Christianity, be raised to dignity of companionship with their husbands, and occupy that status in the social and domestic circle which the females of Tahiti, Rarotonga, and the other islands, have attained since the introduction of the Gospel. (Williams 1838: 351–52)

Confusion has derived from the gulf of understanding between the mores of ancient Polynesians and those of the nineteenth-century missionaries regarding marriage. Whereas English clergymen understood marriage as a contract for lifelong partnership between a man and a woman, Polynesians understood marriage as a contract for selective reproduction that, whenever possible, augmented the rank of a lineage. Ancient Polynesian marriage practices did not necessarily involve the permanent transfer of a woman to her husband and his family, nor did marriage necessarily create a conjugal family, as was the missionary ideal; it was a reproductive contract that while not always optional to begin with, was apparently optional in its duration. As well as transforming gender relations, Christianity transformed ancient notions of rank. There were no longer sacred chiefs, and the rank of the highest chiefs was no longer legitimized by the ancient doctrines of divine descent. In Tonga, a new institution of royalty and nobility was grafted onto their chiefly institutions. In the case of Samoa, village pastors of the Congregational and Methodist churches, and Catholic priests, replaced sacred chiefs as the earthly representatives of God. Similarly, the distinction between sacred chiefs (*ali'i*) and secular chiefs (*tulafale*) became blurred; they all came to be likened to an Old Testament patriarch whose authority was ordained by the will of Jehovah. As a result, since the nineteenth century, rank has gradually come to reside in particular titles, rather than being ascribed to particular people. As belief in ancestral mana was discredited, the importance of maternal rank also declined; once rank could no longer be maximized though chiefly polygyny, the Christian requirement of monogamy led to the abandonment of the practice of installing taupou for dynastic marriages (Keesing 1937), and young women of high chiefly descent came to be outranked by the daughters of clergymen. Roles of women were

revised according to Victorian British ideals in the nineteenth century. The substitution of Christianity for the religious systems of ancient Polynesia led to the subordination of females along the lines of Victorian England—at a time when married English women lack rights to control property or to vote in elections, let alone play a leading role in religious rites. In the new Christian order of the founding churches in Polynesia, women were held to be secondary creations whose divinely ordained purpose was to serve as mothers and wives. The Polynesian customs in which marriage could be a temporary arrangement for reproduction did not accord with Christian teaching of the early nineteenth century, which held marriage was a transfer, ordained by heaven, of a woman to a man in a lifelong bond. Ministers of religion and their "helpmeet" wives were expected to demonstrate the new Christian mode of conjugal living to their congregations and have done so (in Protestant Polynesian cultures) for the past 200 years or so. Recognition of the supernaturally sanctioned authority of sisters within the descent group has declined, patriarchal authority is more strongly asserted, and as though in compensation, today many more Samoan women hold *matai* (chiefly) titles in their own right than was the case in the past. But despite this, there are about nineteen villages in Samoa do not recognize a matai title if it's held by a women, and many villages discourage matai who are women from participating in the village council. As I have observed since the 1970s, in the sphere of their descent groups, Samoan women still exercise considerable authority over the bestowal of titles, the allocation of family land and property, and the manipulation of genealogical connections in the competition to maximize claims to rank in order to win renown for themselves and their children.

I conclude this article with my own reflections. I wonder whether it is possible for Christians to respect ancestral practices as an alternative way of being and believing. Does it diminish the Christian faith to celebrate that once every girl and woman was a vessel of sacred or mystical power, intensified by her ancestral rank? I often hear Samoan women asserting that their culture gives high status to women, citing the sort of historical facts I have discussed above. Yet the ill treatment of women in Samoa, other Polynesian societies, and Polynesian women in the diaspora, documented in many studies, is more of a reality today than women being the princesses of their families. In Samoa, married women, if they live with their husband's kin (as is most commonly the practice), are often subjected to violent and humiliating treatment, which I have never heard condemned by the churches in Samoa (Schoeffel, Boodoosingh, and Percival 2018). I suggest that there is a need not for the rejection of Christian faith but for a critical analysis of Christian teaching and representations on the role of women. In the churches to which most Polynesians belong and in the theological colleges that train ministers of religion, the message from the pulpit remains based

more on the norms of Victorian England than the word of God. In Samoa, the major Protestant churches remain stubbornly behind their mother churches in other countries by refusing to ordain women or to allow them other leadership roles in the churches. And how do they justify this? The churches cite their need to move slowly on gender issues to respect traditional Polynesian culture and gender roles of island societies. Yet paradoxically, this is the culture of gender that the churches themselves created.

NOTES

1. These arcs are now drawn in lipstick on the face of young women dressed as taupou and men dressed as *manaia,* although the meaning of the marks seems now to have been forgotten.

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WOMEN MATAI (CHIEFS): NAVIGATING AND NEGOTIATING THE PARADOX OF BOUNDARIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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THIS PAPER EXAMINES Samoan conception of gender roles and transformations examining women's status and situation in light of ideological changes regarding gender relations and expectations in contemporary Samoa. I situate my paper in Samoan ways of knowing regarding gender roles and norms and draw on feminist (Trask 1984) works to provide guiding light for the cross cultural use of feminist theory to Samoan concepts of feagaiga, fa'a-matai (chieftainship system), and gender equality. I study women's roles especially as they take on matai titles and examine what gains have been made and the dynamics involved for matai in the masculine (read: public sphere) of political authority not only in villages but also in government and parliamentary institutions. Concomitantly, as the cultural fabric of Samoan life has been influenced by transnational migration, I examine these transnational dynamics and evaluate how they affect women both at home and in the Samoan diaspora. I have decided not to italicized Samoan words, as Samoan is our official language together with English.

Any discussion of gender roles in and of Samoa is incomplete without providing the social structure in which gender manners of thinking are situated. This provides context for the debates about the uniqueness and viability of Polynesian women power in its own right that this session hopes to illuminate. I also argue the dichotomy of private/public, domestic/public dominant in gender and development discourses is too simplistic to study the complexity of gender relations, ideologies, and the diverse range of indigenous agency that articulates with the processes of colonialism, Christianity, and late capitalism.

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The dichotomy is problematic because many Samoan women still prefer to work with what is called in the Euro-American tradition, "private sphere." Anela and Sina (interviewees) pointed out for Samoa "the domestic and public spheres are not easily separable."

The next section outlines village social structures in Samoa and the interactive relationships within them, then I briefly discuss the historical transformations in feagaiga, fa'a-matai, and gender roles and explore the significance of this more deeply. I then discuss the interviews of several women from rural Savaii and urban Apia, as well as educated adolescents from the National University of Samoa, regarding their views on women and economy and the status of women; I also interviewed the CEO of an Elections Commission Board to elicit information on women's status in the political and parliamentary arena, after which I analyze associated ideas to demonstrate the advances made on gender and women specifically. In the next section, I discuss procedures of matai conferment, a key fa'alavelave (cultural event) in Samoa and fa'a-matai (chieftainship system). I provide examples of two case studies and an analysis of the numbers of matai bestowed, women and men, place of residence, and other factors. In delineating these, I argue although Samoans would like to think of their chieftainship as timeless, it nevertheless has changed to adapt to modern socioeconomic conditions. Like the matai bestowal of titles in fafo (abroad) to overseas kin in the last three decades, the recent matai conferment at iinei (Samoa and local) is examined to demonstrate current changes in fa'a-matai chieftainship system, gender, and tautua activities.

Within a nu'u village, five basic societal groups can be found to constitute the "sociometric wheel" of fa'a-matai (matai system) interacting in a social system performing economic, political, and social functions (Figure). The groups are the tama'ita'i or aualuma (daughters of matai), faletua ma tausi (wives of matai), 'aumaga or taulele'a (sons of matai), tamaiti (young children), and the matai council. These groups function as interdependent organs of the village, each with its designated tasks in the process of government and the provision of goods and services. The village hierarchy is prescribed in village fa'alupega (honorifics and traditional salutations and address) that describes chiefs and orators' position, their roles, and their functions in the social hierarchies of Samoan villages. Thus the social status and position of all four village groups, aualuma, 'aumaga, tamaiti, and faletua ma tausi, depend on the family matai's status in the village fa'alupega. It is important to know that while these categories seem stable and unchanging as depicted in the literature, these are fluid and dynamic. Merely describing the different structures runs the risk of overstating a case for structure and does not help us understand the relationships, the dynamics, ambiguities, power relations, and tensions involved.

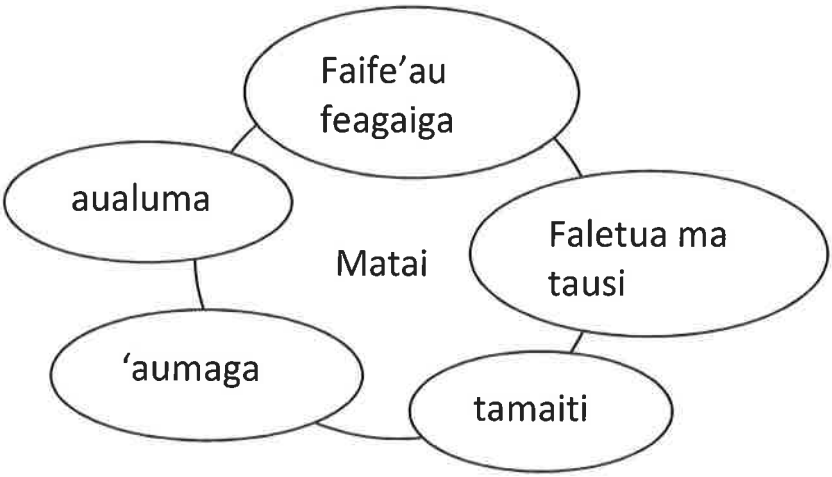

FIGURE. **Sociometric Wheel. Adapted from Ai'ono Le Tagaloa (1992)**

The tama'ita'i or aualuma group contains the daughters of matai who reside locally and are no longer at school, unmarried, or widowed. They are the fai'oa "producers" (they manufacture traditional wealth like mats, fine-mats, and tapa cloth). Other roles of tama'ita'i include being peacemakers and mediators over disputes, not only in families but in the village. It is through the aualuma (the same could be said of 'aumaga) that young women are taught these activities, grooming them for their future roles. Although this is the received understanding, more and more young women work in some form of paid employment, and, in the case of Salelologa, unmarried tama'ita'i are spending fewer hours in weaving mats or fine-mats in aualuma.

As the wives of matai, faletua ma tausi comprise mainly foreigners, since village practices discourage endogamous marriages (although village practices are not always successful in preventing this). The nature of their affiliations, through marriages, lessens direct participation by this group, but as wives and mothers of tama'ita'i, 'aumaga and tamaiti they play an important consultative and advisory role as spouses and matriarchs. The institutional structure of faletua ma tausi basically follows that of the village as declared in fa'alupega (honorifics and traditional address and salutation). In old Samoa the two groups tama'ita'i and aualuma and faletua ma tausi had separate and clearly defined roles. However, over time these two groups in most villages as in Salelologa operate as the women's committee, performing health and instructive functions.[1]

The 'aumaga, sons of matai, also the malosi o le nu'u (the strength of the village) are the untitled men who are no longer attending school. The 'aumaga

is the labor force and consists of producers of agricultural and other foodstuffs required by the village. The strength and power, malosi, of a village is invariably determined by the capacity and courage of this group. With the matai, they comprise the body for policing during curfew times in the evening, during times of prayer before dinner, and later after ten for bedtime. Like the tama'ita'i, faletua ma tausi, 'aumaga hierarchy is again dependent on that of the village.

The tamaiti, or infants and children who are too young to be in tama'ita'i group if female or in the 'aumaga group if male, comprises the final section of village population, with the bulk of its membership being at school. This category does not operate as a group but is recognized as a group with rights and responsibilities. As descendants of matai, they inherit rights to utilize family land and to be holders of matai. They are otherwise the errand element of the village work force.[2]

A new group that has been integrated into this social organization is the faife'au (the clergy people in villages). The church has been integrated into fa'a-Samoa, and this group is referred to as feagaiga (polite address for faife'au), but feagaiga is a literal term reserved for brother–sister relationship as discussed at length in anthropological studies of Samoa (Schoeffel 1978). This special relationship prescribes that brothers had an obligation to consider the interests of their sisters and their sisters' children. Culturally, the sisters help keep peace and harmony of aiga through their advisory role as sisters and as mothers to their children. Le Tagaloa (1992) argues that the ability of fa'a-matai to incorporate a new group faife'au (missionary servant) into the system in the early nineteenth century is a testimony to the malleability of fa'a-matai. The new group was placed not as faife'au (servant) but as fa'afeagaiga, which resembles the tama'ita'i of family and village. The missionary was given maximum protection, privileges, and rights of tama'ita'i in the eyes of fa'a-matai, a group with similar responsibilities as the tama'ita'i.

The leading group in village government is the matai council or assembly of matai (consisting of chiefs and orators). The matai council is the governing authority, which exercises the powers necessary to regulate the daily lives of its inhabitants according to established practices and conventions. The matai council is the village legislature that makes laws and regulations. It also makes executive decisions on village government, which are carried out in accordance with its instructions. Villagers who act in contravention of village laws are dealt with by the assembly in a manner it considers fit and proper. Legislative, executive, and judicial functions are carried out by the village council as an undifferentiated process (Va'ai 1999). In carrying out the various functions of government, however, the essential procedure in determining issues and problems is soalaupule (the balancing of authority) with tofa ma le fa'autaga (profound wisdom

and fairness). Procedures may vary, but the essential requirement is the discussion of issues before decisions are made.

The work of Penelope Schoeffel (1995) examines the cultural transformation and persistence of Samoan gendered statuses and associated ideologies of religion and kinship. She describes the historical transformation of "feagaiga" from a covenant between brother and sister to the traditional idea of feagaiga, with sacred sister power in the pre-Christian era, while the mana spiritual aspects attributed to female heirs, especially since chiefly status has largely ceased. As Le Tagaloa (1992) noted, the malleability of fa'a-matai with the creation of a new category fa'afeagaiga (polite term for clergy, minister or pastor, and caring relationship) was the beginning of the erosion of feagaiga as it was traditionally conceived. The feagaiga that is practiced today is through formal exchanges during fa'alavelave (funeral, matai investiture, wedding), where family support and reciprocal exchanges transpire. Schoeffel showed, "the concept of feagaiga provided (and to some extent still provides), a metaphorical foundation for the ideological structure by which order is maintained in Samoan society" (1995, 85).

A recent study by Latu Latai confirmed Schoeffel's observations. He writes,

> The role of women in pre-Christian Samoa as feagaiga held important status that gave them superior power and encompassing role over their brothers . . . has important role in maintaining a state of aptness and harmony within Samoan society both within the family and village as a whole (2016, 51).

Latai studied the Samoan pastor, feagaiga, and pastor's wives new status and the continuing transformation of gender ideologies where the "sacred sister" was replaced by "sacred pastor." One cataclysmic change in gender relations regarding tama'ita'i as in aualuma and faletua ma tausi (women married in or in-laws) occurred as a result of the combination of these groups that had separate roles and functions but shared complementary responsibilities not only among themselves but also with the men groups (Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991, 2001). When the aualuma and faletua ma tausi were combined in komiti tumāmā (sanitation committee) during New Zealand's administration in the 1920s to assist with village health and sanitation efforts, it further eroded the mana (spiritual, and respect status of aualuma, sisters, and women in general) argued Schoeffel (1995).[3] In her study of Nu'u o Teine (Women Village Government) of Saoluafata, Simanu-Klutz (2011) described similar transformations in Saoluafata. Thus, the increasing secularization of female roles has resulted in increased gender inequality. In the matai, men generally view women's responsibilities as an extension of the wifely duties of caring for families,

which is considered private and peripheral (relative to men's work), compared to when komiti work, which is viewed through the tama'ita'i and ali'i organizations of villages that work together in a "shared responsibility" caring for families, villages, and districts.

Women and Economy: Education, Services, and Politics

To gauge village women's views of their experiences, I conducted interviews between June and July 2017. Interviews in Savaii June 2017 regarding views on women's role and mataiship in contemporary Samoa offered consistent understandings of gender roles based on Samoan customs and usage and social hierarchy as prescribed in fa'alupega (village honorifics).[4] The proverb, "E sui faiga ae le sui faavae" (The material form changes but the structural foundations remain) came up many times. Ake Elia is a tama'ita'i female and sixty-four-year-old grandmother in Savaii and lives at her natal homeplace but also spends time at her husband's home, which is within walking distance. When I asked her about her thoughts on women's work and responsibilities she responded:

> AE: There is quite a lot of changes, yes . . . but personally as the saying, "E sui faiga ae lē suia faavae" [Material things change but foundations remain]. Us daughters, female and mothers look after the children, take care of home and household, take the kids to school, weave mats, prepare food and advise husbands, and/or brothers with family affairs. But our brothers, husbands and fathers they tend to plantations, deal with heavy work and attend to church and village affairs you know!

When I asked Ake about matai being bestowed on females, she acknowledged that women can be matai but we should defer to our male kin first, when there are none, then of course a female can take it. Ake can be seen as traditional, but is quite progressive in terms of what females can do and also defers to traditional roles of sister and brother relationship and, foremost, wants harmony in family and village life. Bundled in the above response is the assumption that men bring money to the family and women maintain the welfare of the household by caring for the young children and earning extra revenue from her mats and handicrafts when she can.

Anela Feleti, thirty-one, is a high school teacher in Palauli village in Savaii; she obtained her Teaching Diploma from the National University of Samoa (NUS) in 2009 and lives with her parents and siblings. She is single and the main financial supporter for her parents. When I asked Anela about her views on women's roles and responsibilities she responded:

AF: Well, our aganu'u (Samoan culture) describes everyone's position and role as in village social structure, the fa'alupega (honorifics) prescribes matai's status and this is how we know our social location within the nu'u (village) and role expectancy. There are changes but these are done within the limits of aganu'u, like "E sui faiga ae le suia faavae." While female traditional roles as fai'oa (weaving mats, fine-mats, siapo and handicrafts) is true today, more and more women seek employment in formal and informal labor markets. There are also those who don't work at all but look after the children and care for the household. In our village, men work outside the home as government workers, or in private firms or work in the plantations and bring food daily for the family.

SLD: Are there changes in villages today and how are these affecting women and families?

AF: Women are multi-tasking, care for the families, fai'oa economics, there's the women's committee, church meetings, on top of keeping her family in order . . . a woman's work is never only in domestic arena but traverses public arena too. Nowadays, the Bingo is the main thing many village churches use to fundraise for their projects. In the short run, it's a simple way to fundraise, but I also see negative impacts of Bingo. The other very good thing that is happening is the government had this program where the women are challenged to weave only large soft 'ietoga (fine-mat) for a price. This has changed the quality of fine-mats and has brought back the good quality fine-mat of old.

SLD: What do you know of women's rights, do you think our women have rights?

AF: Yes

SLD: But do they have a voice in meetings and organizations?

AF: Now, we do, but before we hardly speak we defer to our men because of customs and usage, and we defer first to elders, we ask their advice. As in the saying, "E fesili muli mai iā mua mai" [Younger ones and newcomers ask the older ones and firstcomers first]. I personally respect my elders, and tautua (serve), them. A problem that we have is the thinking that separates domestic space and public space, like the men speak at public events and women speak at private or to do with

> home events. I feel with education, women have improved their own lives and those of their families. Like in education e.g. Tuitama'i your friend from primary school is the principal of our Primary school. In our district alone there are more female principals now than before. You hear of female CEOs in government departments and women are leading and adding their voice to the workplaces.

Previously villages used to do concerts and plays to fundraise money for projects, then they started going to New Zealand in the 1970s, but a popular way for villages to fundraise today is the Bingo. It would be wrong to say that only woman attend Bingo because in a face to face interaction life in villages, men, women, and even children are seen participating during the weekends. There are really no rules in an open fale (hall). While the economic benefits are viewed as positive, the social and cultural impacts are more detrimental than people realized. As Anela noted, if women are constantly going to Bingo and neglect their families, social problems and health problems are created when the children are not given directions and routine for homework, and chores.

A positive impact for women and household income is the government program that reintroduced the traditional art of weaving 'ietoga (fine-mat), which is soft, big, and finely striped, so the fine-mat is special in quality like the old ones. This program has resulted in the women's committee reviving and reinvigorating their participation in fale-lalaga (weaving guilds), and it is bringing back the quality of real "fine" mats.[5] The reintroduction of this craft has provided pride and respect for this art and treasure, and they are demanding prices like $500 to $3,000 tala depending on the size and quality. These fine-mats take one to twelve months to make. Women weavers are also doing this individually, families can order 'ietoga for their special occasion and the money is craftswomen earn is enough to use for household needs. With the reintroduction of weaving 'ietoga, women and men are valuing each other's work; the revived 'ietoga has a redeeming impact on fa'alavelave, and families are not so concerned about the quantity, but rather want a quality fine-mat that is worthy of their kin connections and genealogy. It has also stemmed the cheapening of fa'a-Samoa and an unnecessary burden on families according to those I interviewed.

Another tama'ita'i I interviewed from Savaii, Ti'a Tuitama'i, is a fifty-four-year-old female matai and Principal of Salelologa Primary School. Before Salelologa, she was an Acting Principal at Iva Primary School, then a Principal at Salelavalu Primary School.

I asked her about women's role and status in education, and she responded that there has been improvement with regard to females holding senior positions in education, citing the fact there are thirteen female principals of primary schools in Fa'asalele'aga district, including herself. There are more female

principals than male now. There are definitely improvements in that aspect, and felt she was supported by the DOE and the CEO female Dr. Afamasaga Fuata'i. Ti'a talked enthusiastically about her work and was very motivated. She has sought assistance from the Australia High Commission in Apia for money to help build a fence around Salelavalu Primary School compound, to buy carpet for the classrooms at her previous school prior to Salelologa. She continued that when she became the principal of Salelologa Primary School, the road was all gravel, the compound was so rocky and rough children cannot play in it, so she sought assistance from the DOE and New Zealand High Commission. She got funding to pave the road to the school and eventually level the field, and also buy carpet for all the classrooms! Soon after, she learned the toilets and faucets for drinking needed to be fixed, and she worked with the school committee to get the bathrooms fixed and water running better. Overall, she observes Salelologa village and their families are becoming more accepting of having female matai. "My matai is a chiefly one, my family bestowed the title on me in recognition of my achievement and service as a teacher . . . no doubt it is also my family's tautua (service) and genealogical connection to it. I know at the moment, female matai have not been able to sit and take part in weekly matai council meetings. I can't because I work, will see!"

Irrespective of their location and villages, women matai are doing extraordinary work professionally dealing with the government, private sector, and their village school committees to provide the best education and facilities conducive to learning. To capture the diversity of places and age groups, as well as economic and education statuses of women, interviews in the capital of Apia were conducted in July 2017. Females I interviewed in Apia included Ola Letui, a fifty-five-year-old manager of a Computer Technology company, and Adele Stewart, a fifty-two-year-old manager of their family's hardware business. Both OL and AS were raised in Apia, were educated overseas on government scholarships, returned home to work for the government, and then moved to the private sector. AS has a connection to Savaii because her mother has family in Salelologa and her brother was the coach and captain of the Fautasi *Tolotolo Uli*, and she has some insights to share about women in the village. When I asked about the women and status in terms of leadership position, and the work they do OL and AS both agreed:

> Today women are taking on more roles that traditionally were taken by men. In urban situations, more women are working in government as CEOs, like Revenue, Education, Central Bank, MNRE, first female Attorney General, and first female Justice. Advancements are also made in the private sector there are female CEO of Banks like BSP Apia, ANZ in American Samoa, women who found and own

> businesses such as Fiti Leung Wai CEO of SSAB. In the government, look at Fiame Naomi the first female Deputy Prime Minister, and was a cabinet minister for thirty years. She's a good role model she started good initiatives, like parliamentarians by bringing in students to parliament, show them rights and own voice. In the last 10 years, women are finding their voice in many sectors and areas. If there are good role models there will be change . . . believe it reflects a global trend, look we have more female leaders like Prime Minister of Denmark, Germany, Britain, and New Zealand. In the last general election 2016, one of the five female candidates came in that way, she was the closest in numbers she won and is now a legislator. You should talk to Lemisio of Elections Commission for more info.

Regarding women's leadership in villages, AS said that her brother Pauli Ivan always talked proudly of the women's committee from Sakalafai Salelologa and their support during the Fautasi practices and Fautasi Race at Independence Day. He said that without the women's assistance with logistics, food, and organizing things, they wouldn't be able to function and win. It allowed Pauli to focus on coaching and training the crew. Women's committee was an integral part of the Fautasi Activities.

To gather views on the political aspects I met with the thirty-seven-year-old CEO of Elections Commission Board, Matthew Lemisio, and asked him about government and women's participation, gender equity, and CEDAW.[6] Samoa ratified it in 1992 (Centre for Samoan Studies Report, Leasiolagi et al. 2015). Lemisio noted that when Samoa signed onto the CEDAW in 2013, however, the government didn't have the political will at that time, but as government noted the low number of female participants in leadership roles, an amendment to the constitution was proposed. The Tongan government announced it will ratify CEDAW in 2015 for the women of Tonga to close the gender equity gap. There were widespread protests, and the newly coronated King through the Privy Council pronounced the government's plan unconstitutional (Lee 2017). At the UN meeting in Papua New Guinea in 2015, Samoa was invited to present how it will implement it. CEDAW was officially implemented in the 2016 General Elections.

> ML: So with political candidacy, Samoa used the idea of "gender neutral" no special treatment if a female, so male and female go through the same procedures: be a legal registered matai, reside in Samoa for 3 years, new monotaga bill, and women compete at the same level as men.

ML feels Samoa is a small country but has a big voice in the UN, the reality in Samoa is we have made huge strides in terms of gender rights as in maternity

leave with the Labor Act from six weeks to three months Centre for Samoan Studies report (Leasiolagi et al. 2015).

In talking about the relative impact of this move he cited the epigraph, "o le i'oimata le tuagane lona tuafafine" (one's pupil is delicate and so important to sight that is how a brother's love for his sister is)

> ... it is this manner of thinking about gender relations that Samoans remain flexible with these policies although there was resistance initially from the larger population, then there's the rural vs urban, different villages, government and private sector, and the church. But there is changing attitude and big improvement from the last ten years with regard to women taking on leadership roles. One of the female candidates from Safotu, Sasina Gagaemauga won because of this new policy and now we have five female members of Parliament, I hope to see more female matai run in our elections. [Yes that's Losa Stowers, we were classmates in high school]. I work with Fiame Naomi a key role model she has "gravitas" when she speaks everyone listens e.g. 2015 meeting in PNG for CEDAW. Women have a huge impact and positive contribution in our organizations ...

In an interview in January 2019 Hawaii (Sina Viane from Samoa, a twenty-one-year-old in her final year at NUS who visited for a few days during the holidays), I asked about gender roles, gender equity, and status of women generally.

Sina describes the notions of itupa vaivai (weak side) for female and itupa malosi (strong side) for male, that sheds light on perceptions of gender inequality that prevails in Samoan thinking.[7] Yes with regard to the public sector like government jobs advances have been made there are more female CEO and acting CEO positions. But it has not grown to the extent that we can say there is gender equity. Also this does not mean women salaries are at the same rate as their male counterpart.

> SLD: Why do you think there is gender inequality?
>
> SV: There are still structural constraints on women's struggle for equal treatment, recognition of their work as God-given ability, pay equity and others.
>
> SLD: Who is to blame? What is the cause of this problem?

> SV: E amata mai a i luga pule o le malo, ma le faiga o tulafono [Starts from the top, government leaders and policies that are implemented]
>
> Even in villages when you have female matai the recognition given to them are not exactly the same as male matai ... It's not all families and villages or everywhere but it exists, in our families, we defer first to our male counterparts when we deliberate during meetings or arranging an fa'alavelave. Like Malie village, for the longest time they banned women from becoming matai, and then just last October 2018, they announced, "we allowed women to receive matai title! Regarding salaries, the men often have higher salaries than the women even when they have the same degree.

SV's responses echoed same sentiment as Anela Feleti Interview January 2017.

Fa'a-matai, Women, and Moral Economy

The recent phenomena of faigā saofa'i (lit. making of matai titles) in the last decade, especially in the last five years, is examined to illustrate the increase in matai titles as well as an increase in female matai. I look at place of residence, Samoa and overseas; uxorilocal residence, that is if the women matai is in her natal village and her husband lives with her family; and virilocal residence, that is the women lives with her husband's family, which is the most common. In describing this, transnational movements of Samoans especially those from the case studies are noted. Concepts of tautua (service), fa'alavelave, and vā (care for relationships) were repeatedly mentioned to refer to relationships, connections, and notion of legitimacy. In terms of where families are located, terms like fafo (overseas) and iinei (here), in Salelologa discourses oppose iinei as a source of spiritual, sacred, and material sustenance, against fafo as a source of economic power (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2004). The study provides further impetus to the transnational literature regarding Samoan chieftainship, fa'a-matai, as in "transnational matai agency" (Anae 2019), and the transformative challenges to gender expectations.

As already discussed, "place" is an important factor in retaining Samoan values, but change is also negotiated and contested in different places. It is possible to invest in the 'aiga not only through movement abroad and educational achievements but also by conferring matai titles overseas. Today, the conferring of matai titles has become more frequent in Samoa, and with many more titles, with numbers ranging from forty to even one hundred matai titles in one occasion (Fruean 2019). Despite the decline in the traditional economic role of matai, their social and political roles remain intact. The village fono retain the

political power to sanction unacceptable behavior. It is the matai who organizes the pooling of resources from immediate and extended family members, combining their contributions to hold fa'alavelave and then redistributing the gifts. Skillful organization of these institutionalized rituals enables matai to reposition their power base in society.

Traditionally, certain matai titles (chief or orator) came with the right to confer other titles (Meleisea 1989; Va'ai 1999). These can be conferred based on service to the matai and 'āiga by those related by toto (blood), tino (by adoption), or service connections and usually assumes that the conferment is done in Samoa on the malae where maota (chiefly house site) and laoa (orator house site) are located, for this adds legitimacy and authenticity to titles. While being in resident and residency are vitally significant, the proverb, "E malae tau 'ave le Samoa," translated, Samoan heritage, i.e., one's genealogy, and dignities are transposable, meaning people carry these with them wherever they go, people don't have to stay in one place to legitimize their place of birth or belonging, acknowledging the mobile nature of its society and people's relationships to their fa'asinomaga (heritage) as long as one maintains vā (care for relationships) with the home place (Lilomaiava-Doktor 2009).

I examine how indigenous knowledge is maintained and reproduced in the diaspora, if metaphors and metonyms define women's roles, their movements, and ongoing interactions in Samoa and in new transnational contexts, what are the implications for gender roles and responsibilities as in tautua (service), fa'alavelave (lifecycle cultural events), and fa'a-matai (chieftainship system)?

Prior to 2015 only about 5 percent of all village based matai were women (Centre for Samoan Studies Report, Leasiolagi et al. 2015). In comparing the percentage of female to male matai, where historically only 5 percent have been female, there has been a big increase recently, for example, one village from Savaii in 2015 showed 38 percent of matai were women, and one village from Upolu 2018 showed 43 percent were women. The normative data showed a huge increase; however, the descriptive data provide other factors that are barriers to participation of women particularly in aspects of decision-making in political life.

Case Study 1

Matai saofa'i Luamanuvae title Salelologa, Savaii August 31, 2015, and the distribution of female and male matai and residences (Tables 1 and 2). There were sixty-six Luamanuvae ali'i titles, twenty-six were female matai and forty were male matai. At the same time, the Leatigaga (supportive title to Luamanuvae) was also bestowed on twenty-one in total, seven females and fourteen males.

TABLE 1. **Female Matai and Place of Residence for the Two Titles.**

Title	Savaii, Salelologa	Upolu island	American Samoa	New Zealand	Australia	USA, Hawaii	Total
Luamanuvae	6	6	1	5	7	1	26
Leatigaga	7	0	0	0	0	0	7
Total Matai	13	6	1	5	7	1	33

TABLE 2. **Male Matai and Place of Residence for the Two Titles.**

Title	Savaii, Salelologa	Upolu island	American Samoa	New Zealand	Australia	USA, Utah	UK	Total
Luamanuvae	11	11	2	9	5	1	1	40
Leatigaga	7	1	1	3	2	0	0	14
Total Matai	18	12	3	12	7	1	1	54

Case Study 2

Matai saofa'i Afamasaga, Faumuina, Niulēvāēa, Lepa'imasina Fasito'otai December 31, 2018 (Tables 3 and 4). There were twenty-one Afamasaga titles, nine were females, twelve were males; thirteen Faumuinā titles five were females and eight were males; two Niulēvāēa titles, one female and one male; and one newly established title Lepa'imasina bestowed to a female.

Irrespective of village and location in Samoa, the two case studies showed the large numbers of matai being conferred in one large ceremony; in the not so distant past there were fewer matai titles and was done usually when matai passed away. Certainly, matais have established faiā (connection) to the titles through criteria of toto e tasi (faiā through blood, genealogical) and tino e tasi (faiā through adoption, or service) with varying degrees. Of the sixty-six Luamanuvae matai, twenty-six were women and forty were men, or about one-third were females. It was indeed the first time for any woman to be conferred with the title and was quite a record for the family and Salelologa village. Luamanuvae is a chiefly title, and most of the recipients have senior status as children of direct descendants of previous holders. All of the female matai are daughters of matai of the family. Half of them live away from the homesite either in Apia/Upolu or overseas. Some are widowers living with adult children in their husband's villages. No female in virilocal residence but several in uxorilocal residence living at home (Samoa) received title Luamanuvae.

The Leatigaga matai had fewer, and this title is a matua (supportive role to chiefs, Tinousi, ma Luamanuvae), it is often given to the younger men of families and faiavā (uxorilocal) husbands of tama'ita'i (daughters and sisters of matai) of 'āiga. Of the fourteen Leatigaga men matai, eight were faiavā and six were younger brothers or cousins of elder siblings who received the Luamanuvae title. Again, of the fourteen of them six live overseas compared to eight who live in Samoa. Interestingly, of the seven Leatigaga female matai, all of them live in Samoa at the time, and most are from the next tier younger generation. Most were also living in Apia and some work in government offices.

As mentioned, previous faigā saofa'i (matai investitures) in Samoa had exceeded these numbers. On the surface, people went with the flow and the head matai's directive, but there was conservative cultural sentiment from those in the family who argue that giving so many Luamanuvae title is not right according to the suafa (title) and how it was, and that giving matai to women is not the custom, all this is cheapening fa'a-matai. Nevertheless, there was overwhelming agreement as to the appropriateness of the title, especially given the tama'ita'i faiā connections, the honors they brought to 'āiga from their achievements, and tautua they provide during family fa'alavelave. When I asked matai regarding

TABLE 3. **Female Matai and Place of Residence for the Four Titles.**

Title	Fasitoʻotai, Samoa	American Samoa	New Zealand	Australia	USA	Total
Afamasaga	5	0	2	2	0	9
Faumuinā	3	0	1	1	0	5
Niulēvāēa	0	0	0	1	0	1
Lepaʻimasina	0	0	0	1	0	1
Total	8	0	3	5	0	16

TABLE 4. **Male Matai and Place of Residence for the Four Titles.**

Title	Fasitoʻotai, Samoa	American Samoa	New Zealand	Australia	USA	Total
Afamasaga	6	0	3	2	1	12
Faumuinā	3	0	4	1	0	8
Niulēvāēa	0	0	0	1	0	1
Lepaʻimasina	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	9	0	7	4	1	21

views on saofa'i, why the large numbers, and more female matai? Luamanuvae Viane replied:

> Yes, this is unheard of in the old days, but nowadays, we have to adapt to changing needs of 'āiga, ua tupu 'āiga [families are growing] and dispersed iinei here and fafo overseas. Another reason for more female matai is there are more females than males in other cases only females are left here and all of the men are overseas. As the saying, "E sui faiga ae lē suia fa'avae," We have to follow criteria of selecting matai, then provide gifts (food, fine-mats, and cash) for the village matai council in order to legitimize matai investitures, and church ministers and guests. I see why people of 'āiga desire matai it's important to them and with living overseas a matai is your link to family whether you interact with them or not that is their call, if they love us, good if not, pau lava [just the way it is], but at least they have something to remember their family, and it's useful also for where they live and work particularly when fa'a-Samoa is practiced anywhere Samoans live.

The research demonstrates the change in thinking of being in residence and managing resources, as (Schoeffel 1995, 105) writes "that the increase in matai and particularly for women is because titles have become increasingly separated from the custodianship of land other fixed assets and also separated from particular polities and locations." From the matai and family members point of view, they believe getting a matai title is an important addition to the economic status one gets from education or economic strength. Thus, titles are given to honor persons of achievement living away from the homesite as representatives of 'āiga irrespective of gender. Bourdieu's (1984) idea of "symbolic capital," that a ritual status adds significance and weight to one's credentials; it is also important to their self-esteem.[8] The exchange with the matai and conversations with fellow Samoans reveals a pragmatic response and that it depends on the context and pointed to the making of matai and other changes as a practical matter. It also is about tradition motivating change and that Samoans have used traditional cultural practices to justify changes they were making to their own cultural practices.

In the case of the matai investiture, at Fasito'otai village as in Salelologa village the number of female matai has increased. Of the thirty-seven matai titles bestowed, sixteen were women matai, and twenty-one were men matai, with twenty matai holders living fafo and seventeen living in Samoa. Again, for Fasito'otai village it was the first time women received matai in this family. In comparing Fasito'otai to Salelologa the number of matai living fafo is 54 percent to Salelologa's 43 percent.

I interviewed Afamasaga Viane regarding the bestowing of matai to women and the participation of women in political and village government affairs as in concepts of sao (contribution), ʻai (achievement), and leo (voice in decision-making).

> AV: I am in our village matai council, been doing it for a long time. I know the tamaʻitaʻi have positive contribution to faigā-nuʻu, village social and political organizations. Now that more women are becoming matai they should be included in (matai council meetings) [political administration of villages in matai council]. But still see no women matai in matai council meetings like in Lepea, or Salelologa, but in Fasitoʻotai women matai participate in matai council meetings and make decisions. Women have made significant changes to help with village projects, church projects, health and hygiene of households. Women have a lot to add to village political life especially in the matai council. [SLD: Well I was told by two of the new Leatigaga female matai when they went with their tauga (food to share) to the Sunday toʻonai (brunch) of matai, one of the senior Leatigaga chased them off, saying don't be cheeky don't come to this place]. Why?

Descriptive data, as in interviews, reveal the actual happenings in everyday life and point to barriers to political involvement, access and participation of women in decision-making in matai council meetings presenting significant barriers to women's participation in local and national leadership decision-making. As long as women are excluded and their leo (voice) missing in village councils, church committees, community organizations at the village level, "it is difficult for women to become or be seen as national leaders" (Centre for Samoan Studies Report, Leasiolagi et al. 2015).

When I probed AV about the reason for the lack of leo (voice) of women in political life, he was quite frank with his response.

> AV: Ah . . . yes traditional village government system has organized gender roles with separate statuses of women and men with executive authority vested in men is a given in Samoan customs—we are accustomed to thinking this way, but we know Samoans have changed, amended rules, just like we introduce universal suffrage in 1991 allowing 21 year-old and above, matai or not to vote, to CEDAW in 2016, so we can find ways to incrementally introduce change because the truth is, women are doing so much good work in our families and can do more in matai council. We must have the fortitude to change things for the better. Today, we need women matai in matai council

> meetings to change incidents of corruption and cliques that's running amok in village government, need intervention badly today [today any small infringement of village rules and people get outrageous fines or banishment of individuals or families.[9] There is abuse of the authority of matai and abuse of the aganu'u (culture) that's going on because of power of money that's influencing matai.

In saying this about female matai inclusion, it is believed women are more involved, will bring a broader and balanced perspective, also a caring perspective to decisions. In other words, care for the vā relationships and seeking consensus before rendering serious decisions that affect people's lives.

The famous adage, "O le ala I le pule o le tautua," the way to authority is through service, is how a person is selected to be a matai in addition to other attributes. Recognition of women's contribution and work as in tautua (service, serving) is confirmed and acknowledged in many conversations; however, this is not explicitly translatable to women matai automatically having a "seat at the table" so to speak or equal leo (voice) in village matai council meetings as in the case of men matai. This is a significant barrier to a fuller integration of women matai in local and national leadership roles and thus achieving gender equity.

How has transnational migration enhanced women's status? The research confirmed that women in the diaspora have done well regarding decision-making because of the absence of "rigidity" of traditional village structures and the church. It also suggests that as women's economic strength improved their desirability increased. The renewed interest in matai and the conferment of matai I suggest is twofold: many overseas Samoans have accumulated "real" power by virtue of their economic positions relative to those in Samoa; therefore, their desirability increased. But it is also a sign of indigenous Samoan institutions' supremacy becoming paramount, as Ti'a stated in the interview, the prestige a matai title can bring, which constitutes in Bourdieu's term "symbolic capital" adding weight to one's infrastructure status is sometimes highly irresistible.

Conclusion

Feminism is the belief in social, political, and economic equality of the sexes and has made huge positive impacts in women's struggle for gender equality and gender equity. I agree with its tenets, but a weakness of the feminist approach is assuming the category *woman* is culturally neutral and can be applied automatically in "reciprocity-based society," where women are relationally rooted in cultural understanding (Liki 2015). The research demonstrates the strong influence of cultural ideologies of traditional village government, that at times is supported by government policies despite the rhetoric of the unique and viability of

Polynesian women power. The interplay of indigenous, agency, and imposed factors are articulated, disarticulated, and rearticulated in the research. The indigenous roles of Samoan women have been both reproduced and transformed by colonialism, Christianity, and late capitalism. On the one hand, Samoan women have adapted and transplanted their power or power sharing roles into new social and political structures imposed by colonialism and the church. On the other hand, colonialism and Christianity have imported a brand of patriarchy, which has distorted and limited women's participation in decision-making. While there are improvements evident in the research, these are not equally shared by women and tend to benefit those with higher education status, those in urban areas, and overseas and limited to government and private sector. Contemporary Samoan men and matai have been willing to acknowledge the traditional importance of women as long as male dominance remains the visible reality.

NOTES

1. Penelope Schoeffel (1978, 1995) ethnographic studies of Samoan women and the concept of feagaiga are instructive and provide comprehensive coverage of gender and development. Women's komiti, Komiti tumāmā, and change from parallel organizations of matai and aualuma to women's committee as an extension of household activities.

2. However Fanaafi Le Tagaloa (1992) and Saleimoa Vaai (1999) noted members of this group have lodged complaints in the Land and Titles Court asserting their rights to be consulted in matters of title succession.

3. Leadership of women's committee komiti tumāmā were led by wives of matai, and the komiti became subordinate to the matai fono council rather than standing as a parallel institution as had the aualuma o tama'ita'i. The komiti tumama's role (relative to the work of men) was conceived of as being private, domestic, and contextually peripheral; it assumed duties that were wider extensions of the domestic work of the household, rather than the ceremonial roles that had been the prerogatives of the aualuma o tama'ita'i. However, feagaiga relationships within the komiti continued to provide a template for determining women's relationships in the komiti.

4. Moreover, the village fa'alupega acknowledge the personalities, and hierarchies of villages, districts, and national matai entities. It is the source of information on villages and titles, status, rank, authority, or lineage.

5. The 'ietoga is Samoa's most important wealth. It was very fine and silky in the old days, but by the 1980s as fa'alavelave increased both in Samoa and overseas, the 'ietoga was mass produced and the quality was compromised. Since women and families were concerned with the quantity, it cheapened the 'ietoga.

6. CEDAW, which stands for Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, is an international treaty adopted in 1979 by United Nations Assembly. Described as International Bill of Rights for Women. It was instituted in September 3, 1981, and ratified by 189 states.

7. "itu pa vaivai," weak side denoting women and "itupa malosi" strong side denoting men is paradoxical because while it gives the impression that the women are weak, in reality it was the women that saved and won the war for the losing side by defeating the powerful warriors, when the warriors learned it was a woman who defeated them they were ashamed and apologized, origin from Nafanua story and Malae ole Mā.

8. Nevertheless, some people question giving titles to young people, usually those in their mid-20s, because they are seen as youthful in their knowledge of fa'a-Samoa.

9. In the last twenty years, village fines and punishment of individuals and families were so frequent that it became a burden for families. Families questioned the integrity of the village matai council in giving out these fines, often with a month or less turnaround after notification to pay one hundred pigs or its cash equivalent of $5,000–10,000 tala.

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MATAI TAMAITAI: "THE MISTRESS OF THE FAMILY"

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This article examines faamatai (the Samoan chiefly system) and the impacts of globalization that have disempowered or reempowered women in new ways. The discourse of "women" in a transnational context is explored by perspectives from six life-story interviews of matai tamaitai in Hawai'i, Sydney and Oceanside and data from 88 women matai from a global online faamatai survey.[2] It explores the faamatai tenet of 'lima malosi ma loto alofa' (strong hands and a loving heart), experienced as the exertion of her pule (secular authority), malosi (economic strength), mana (spiritual power), and mamalu (reverence, dignity, and social power) free from 'traditional' village and male-dominated village councils,[3] and church male leadership.[4] In essence, the transnational space away from Samoa, which has been ravaged by the forces of colonialism, Christianity and capitalism, provides the opportunity for the revitalizing of the power of matai tamaitai which has been subsumed since 1830s.

Shore's Model: Symmetrical/Complementary Relational Sets

NEARLY FORTY YEARS AGO, AN ANTHROPOLOGIST of island Samoa, Bradd Shore (1981), summed up his own and other scholars' perceptions of the Samoan symmetrical and complementary social levels of status among Samoan people by outlining three main status sets. The first is that statuses may be different from one another and not interdependent, for example, matai, father, and sub-village. The second possibility he outlines as different but interdependent are complementary sets, for example, parent/child and matai/taulealea. The final status he calls symmetrical sets, defined by more than one token of a single

Pacific Studies, Vol. 43, No. 1—Jun. 2020

status, for example, a set of several brothers, a body of matai, a collection of villages, or a collection of subvillages within a single village. He describes these statuses as "linked because they are logically or functionally identical or 'metaphorically linked'" (Shore 1981: 198). See Figure 1.

Symmetrical Status Levels

Being in some way identical to one another, symmetrical levels of status are hard to distinguish from one another. There is a tendency for boundaries to become fuzzy and for relations to be unstable. In Samoan thought, symmetrically related status levels that may replace or stand in for another are of great importance. For example, one village may stand in for another in district affairs or may represent its entire district (i.e., all other villages) on ceremonial occasions (Shore 1981: 199). A younger brother is normally expected to replace an older brother as matai on the death of the latter. The same equivalence holds among sisters.

Such symmetrical relationships are therefore inherently competitive and conflict ridden—there is much competition, rivalry, and often mutual aggression, such as sports or village competitions, competition for matai titles, and war. The proverb "Ua faafeagia sega'ula" (The red sega (vini) birds face each other) suggests that the people confronting each other are equals—the same

Complementary relations **(Interdependent)** ***"O le faafagatua e le tutusa'"***	**Symmetrical relations** **(Functionally linked)** ***"Ua faafeagai sega 'ula"***
• Cross-sex relationship	• Same-sex relationship
• Different but interdependent e.g. parent/child; matai/taulealea (untitled male)	• Logically/functionally identical e.g. a set of brothers; a group of matai; a collection of villages
• Representing each other e.g. feagaiga (special covenant) between brother/sister; tamafafine[v]/tamatane[vi]; alii[vii]/tulafale[viii]; faifeau[ix]/congregation	• 'sui' - replacing' or 'displacing' as alternates e.g. uso (symmetrical sibling)
• impulse control	• Unrestrained impulse expression
• social order and stability	• Competition, aggression and conflict

FIGURE 1. **Complementary/Symmetrical Relational Sets**

(Shore 1981). When people are not equals or the same, then the proverb "O le faafagatua e le tutusa" (Those locked in wrestling combat are not the same) indicates the inappropriateness of the relationship, for example, an alii engaged in a contest with a tulafale. Symmetrical relations suggest competition, fission, and overt expressions of aggression are expected in such relationships, causing strain among brothers and sisters. Between brothers and their descendants, titles are normally split and competing itu paepae (title-division segments) and fuaifale (maximal descent group branches) originate (Shore 1981).

Complementary Status Levels

Complementary status levels are qualitatively different from one another. The paired functions are complementary to each other, suggesting significant interdependence (Shore 1981: 201). These relationships represent each other because of their functional interdependence. For example, a wife represents her husband's title in the village women's committee because of the complementary functional link between them, and in the same way, the tulafale speaks for his alii. Importantly, this link does not imply replacement or displacement but rather reinforces the interdependence between statuses. "It is the dissimilarity of the two statuses that allows the tulafale to represent the alii" (Shore 1981: 202). Thus, Samoans associate symmetrical relationships with competition, aggression, conflict, impulse expression, and fission and complementary relationships with deference, impulse control, alofa, and faaaloalo. Social order, rather than conflict and fission, characterizes these relationships.

Shore's analysis gained considerable interest from Simanu-Klutz (2011). In her PhD thesis *A malu i fale, 'e malu fo'i i fafo: Samoan women and power: Towards an historiography of changes and continuities in power relations in le Nu'u O Teine of Sāoluafata 1350–1998,* Simanu-Klutz summed up her and other scholars' perceptions of the dilemma of the Samoan power matrix of feagaiga and suli when women claim titles.

As the vast historiography literature on faamatai in Samoa reveals, ancient Samoan sociopolitical organization is ideologically ordered along genealogical and gendered lines. Samoans maintain that within this structure, men and women have shared a bilateral relationship that manifests itself as the feagaiga (sacred covenant) between tamatane (male relatives) and tamafafine (female relatives) in a family, and in the rights of suli (heirs) to family titles and lands (Simanu-Klutz 2011: 1). Within the va (space and time) of feagaiga, men and women share pule (secular authority) and complementarity of roles (Shore 1982). Simanu-Klutz (2011) points out that the women's claim to titles on the basis of their being

suli places them in direct opposition to what Shore has claimed in his power matrix: in that vying for matai titles within villages and competing against their brothers has forced a symmetrical cross-sex relationship in violation of feagaiga with their brothers—a relationship that is competitive, aggressive, and in direct opposition to the complementary nature of the feagaiga, which is mutually beneficial and peaceful (Shore 1982). From this standpoint, Simanu-Klutz (2011) contends that Samoan women have laid claims to positions of relative strength within their extended families and villages, exercising as much, and sometimes more, political and economic authority than their brothers.

Despite the numerous challenges posed by the forces of colonialism, neocolonialism, and neoliberalism, it is still the belief of many Samoan women that with feagaiga and suli as sources and mechanisms of power, they exercise their pule, invoke their mana (spiritual power), flaunt their malosi (economic power), and uphold their mamalu (reverence and dignity, or social power), even if they are not matai (chiefs) of the family (10).

Within the last twenty years, dynamics of power relations at both village and national levels, particularly where women are concerned, have produced significant transformations in economic and political realities in Samoa in several ways. Since the early 1990s, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of women who have become matai and who have mapped themselves into national politics and leadership positions in the village and the workforce (11), there has been mounting pressures from international women's organizations that focus on human rights (12) and that advocate the elimination of discrimination of women, and there are more women graduates employed in all tiers of the professional workforce (13). The establishment of the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development signifies the economic prowess of women, which has been exploited by the traditional and modern political systems of governance and the church (14), In addition, the Honorable Fiame Naomi Mata'afa was appointed as the inaugural female deputy prime minister of Samoa in March 2016.

Simanu-Klutz's seminal research on the women's power matrix in Samoa questions Shore's complementarity of roles and relationships as coded in the feagaiga. Moreover, her research is a significant watershed on the problems of symmetry of power relations of suli as constitutive of the body politics in Samoa. Her findings signify the emergence of the effects of women as matai on the dynamics of feagaiga on family and village affairs where these women are situated and on their involvement with their respective village organizations.

Her exegesis of her village's Teine's mana and mamalu confirms the significant contributions of Samoa's women to the maintenance of values and principles and traditional manifestations over centuries. What is clear, however, is the resilience of what she calls a certain spirit that despite the hegemony of the Christian faith, social engineering by colonial administrators, and postcolonial discourse,

has enabled the "pulse of Teine Samoa to beat steadily despite structural damage to the leadership and underdeveloped resources" (15). However, despite this and certain taboos that continue to be violated, their spirit has remained resilient:

> The Teine have kept their feet grounded and their heads high. There remain the lessons of the past such that when their men folk took off to war in all corners of Sāmoa, they, the Teine, were the ones who tended the fires of worship, tilled the fields, harvested the oceans for sustenance, and kept order in the village. Through it all, they have sustained a degree of mana and mamalu, of spiritual and social powers. With such, they have remained the "mistresses of their own favors." (Simanu-Klutz 2011: 294)

I contend that there is a similar power matrix for women matai in the "loto alofa ma lima malosi" paradox, especially in the transnational space where there is an absence of village and male-dominated village councils and churches. These matai qualities are characterized by lima malosi, which is competitive and aggressive in direct opposition to the complementary nature of loto alofa, which is beneficial and peaceful. My purpose in this article is to use this power matrix to examine women matai and their perceptions of faamatai in this transnational space (Figure 2).

My question is: How does Shore's power status matrix translate across time and space to transnational Samoan women matai in the twenty-first century?

Women and Power in Samoa

In 2015, a groundbreaking report on political representation and women's empowerment in Samoa by Meleisea et al. highlighted several disempowering

	COMPLEMENTARY	SYMMETRICAL
Bradd Shore	Social order and stability	Competition, aggression and conflict
Fata Simanu –Klutz	Feagaiga (mana, mamalu) ◄—► Suli (pule, malosi) Peaceful, beneficial	Competitive, aggressive
Transnational matai research	Loto alofa (mana, mamalu) ◄—►	Lima Malosi (pule, malosi)

FIGURE 2. **Loto Alofa Ma Lima Malosi Power Matrix**

factors affecting women in Samoa in terms of achieving leadership roles within villages and in politics. Research findings highlighted that the system of traditional village government in Samoa presented significant barriers that limited not only women's access to and participation in decision-making forums in local government councils and church leadership but also their participation in school management and community-based organizations, thus making it difficult for women to become—or to be seen as—national leaders (Meleisea et al. 2015: 8). The most common obstacle to women's voice in local government is that few female matai live in villages, and even fewer sit on village councils. Their absence results from the perception that women feel uncomfortable participating in village meetings because of the customary concept of 'o le va tapiua (sacred space), in the feagaiga covenant of respect, and how this may be compromised during meeting discussions (Meleisea et al. 2015: 9). This perception then reinforces public perceptions and religious beliefs that decision making is a male prerogative, not only in village councils but also on village school committees and in national parliament. Another important finding was that justification for the exclusion of women from decision-making roles in villages also had religious grounds due to barriers erected by the male-dominated church leadership that prevent women from becoming ordained priests or ministers across all church denominations in Samoa (Meleisea et al. 2015: 10).

These obstacles to female empowerment in Samoa were reinforced in a report following the elections of 2016, which documented common themes emerging from interviews of 24 female candidates who stood for the election (Fiti-Sinclair, Schoeffel, and Meleisea 2017). Research findings reinforced Meleisea et al.'s (2015) previous research—that the "women" issue occurs because customary male leadership within village councils and churches has been so normalized that women voters did not support female candidates even following vigorous modern methods of campaigning using technology and media hype (Fiti-Sinclair, Schoeffel, and Meleisea 2017: iv). Some suggested in this report that this may be because of jealousy; others pointed out that women in Samoa are accustomed to men being the leaders and decision-makers. But the most alarming finding was the invidious disempowerment of the thousands of nofotane women living in the villages. Nofotane women are women living in their husband's villages with often exerted on them to serve the husband's family and to vote in elections according to his or his family's choice (Fiti-Sinclair, Schoeffel, and Meleisea 2017: 47).

The nofotane's vulnerability to violence was highlighted by the Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG) in its submission to the 2015 state of human rights report, in which they noted that violence and abuse of nofotane made up much of their caseload. In 2017, SVSG launched the two-year Economic Empowerment of Nofotane Women in Rural Samoa project. Aimed at improving

women's economic positioning and participation in domestic and community matters, at the project's end in 2018, SVSG spoke of engaging 182 villages and gaining support of nofotane rights from more than 2,000 matai. Some villages are said to have implemented measures to stop discrimination against these often-marginalized women, such as bylaws and village council decisions to formally advance women's rights, for example, allowing nofotane women to attend community meetings and wear the same clothes as other women, as well as ensuring that a nofotane representative has a seat at every village council meeting (*Samoa Observer* October 11, 2018). However, the project has met opposition, especially from members of parliament. Comments such as "This is one project that our country does not support," "no stupid family in Samoa would treat the nofotane women any differently [than now]," and "the project will promote nofotane women to run the family when that is not their place" abound in the newspapers and social media (*Samoa Observer* June 23, 2017).

In her 2017 study of women's leadership in traditional villages in Samoa, Finau echoed the disempowering factors for women outlined above. She found that barriers were based on cultural values, religious beliefs, and social assumptions. Cultural values were the most influential in people's perception of a leader, as male leadership was, and still is, entrenched as the true cultural norm. Religious beliefs that emphasize the importance of the father as the leader and the head of the family reinforce these cultural restrictions on women accessing leadership positions. Social assumptions that associate women's work with household tasks further curb women's leadership aspirations. The participants in Finau's study believed that their rights to leadership were being disrupted by the structure of local government, as leadership for them has been restricted to the confinement of the women's committees. Women cannot participate fully in village councils because they do not hold matai titles, and even when they do, they are not recognized or acknowledged by male leaders (Finau 2017).

Thus, it is clear that the current status quo regarding the discriminatory practices of nofotane and dominance of male leadership locally, nationally, and at church and village levels will remain firmly in place as barriers to female empowerment and leadership in Samoa.

Women and Power in the Transnational Space

Faamatai may have been mediated by colonization, Christianity, and capitalism (Macpherson and Macpherson 2009), but global transformations of faamatai have been mediated by transnational matai. Transnational families and their kinship connections have produced not only new economic reliance on remittances and other cash flows, such as tourist visits (16), saofai (title bestowal ceremonies), funerals, and more recently family reunions (17), but also cultural

affective ties that have created new faamatai strategies for development from afar (Anae 2019; Anae and Tominiko 2019). Mobility for a family requires that some family members must leave. But as we have seen, some members must also stay. The transnational faamatai strategy depends on the contradictory principles of maintaining transnational realities and at the same time maintaining identity and tradition (18).

In Samoa, most leadership roles are held by middle-aged or elderly men. All village-based matai are older men, with 92.5 percent of them over 40 years old (Meleisea et al. 2015: 24). While the Samoan population in Samoa is reported to be 187,820 (19), it is estimated that there are approximately 384,007 Samoans living in New Zealand, Australia, and United States and among them thousands of matai (20). Given that the Samoan diaspora has more than doubled the population in Samoa, in the future, matai titles are increasingly likely to be bestowed on those born and raised in the transnational space. So there is a need for more information about who transnational matai are and how they experience and practice faamatai—their chiefly roles and obligations to aiga (family) and villages in their host nations and in Samoa.

This research looks particularly at the "affective ties" of transnational Samoa, the complex emotional and social ties between Samoan migrants and their communities of origin (Macpherson et al. 1994: 83). These affective ties underpin the faamatai as a system and framework for action that defines the relationships between people economically, politically, socially, and culturally (Iati 2000: 71–72). My work among New Zealand–born matai in my PhD Thesis '*Fofoaivaoese: Identity Journeys of NZ-born Samoans*' completed in 1998, describes matai affective ties as "to be tino malosi ma loto alofa," and it is this affective tie that encourages transnational Samoan women to take up the duties of a matai (pp. 183–193). But how is transnational life transforming the way they "do" everyday faamatai? And what are the challenges and possibilities for the persistence of women matai outside Samoa?

The qualitative component of the study focuses on six women matai in the three research nodes of Sydney, Hawai'i, and Oceanside and San Diego and explores themes from life-story interviews carried out with each matai over a three-year period from 2015–17. The matai tamaitai included two retirees, one housewife, and three professionals—a public servant and two teachers (four pioneer matai and two younger matai) (21). Four were pioneer-generation (first generation) migrants, and the others had lived for over 30 years in their host countries. All became matai while living in their host countries. Their matai titles included four alii titles and two tulafale titles. Titles were from the villages of Sapunaoa, Nuusatia, Solosolo, Falelatai, Saoluafata, Vaiusu, Puapua, and Sataua. They were aged between 50 and 94. The interviews took place in Sydney, Honolulu, and San Diego and were in English and Samoan.

Faamatai: "Loto Alofa ma Lima Malosi" Themes

These transnational women matai manifest overarching loto alofa and lima malosi characteristics. As lima malosi, it is pule (secular authority) and it is malosi (economic strength). As loto alofa, it is mana (spiritual power) and it is mamalu (reverence, dignity, and social power). It is what I call matai tamaitai, or Samoan womanist power (22). This power was energized by Salamasina, Nafanua, and our Samoan matriarchs. This power has been subsumed in Samoa since 1830s by the forces of colonialism, Christianity, and capitalism, but in transnational spaces, it has been liberated and reenergized by our matriarchs—in the context of this study, transnational women matai (Anae 2017).

The absence of male-dominated village matai councils, churches, and villages has driven or required new institutional settings for expression and teaching of faamatai. For example, the churches are sites where most Samoan oratory takes place apart from ritual occasions in the community. Hence, opportunities are created for the pioneer women matai to teach and mentor faasamoa and Samoan language. Similarly new institutions for passing on Samoan language and culture—schools and university classes—offer career and authority opportunities for women.

These women were all well educated with professional occupations, including the retiree. Three of them are heads of households. They were all (former) teachers bar two—one who is a government employee in the public sector and another who is a housewife—and are all strong personalities. They were noticeably more confident than the younger male matai we interviewed in the three nodes about their faamatai and faaSamoa and about stating publicly what they think is right or wrong culturally. Several of the younger male matai interviewed acknowledged and deferred to them, especially to the pioneer women we interviewed.

The matai tamaitai that these women practice are based on five characteristics in which they incorporate their pule, malosi, mana, and mamalu to affect change:

- It is aggressively opposed to oppression in any shape or form—by men, by the church, by matai in Samoa, by anyone who transgresses their understandings of faamatai protocols.
- It is based on everyday people and life devoid of status and position in unifying imbalances and indifferences in power and resources for Samoan people and communities. Thus, multilevel tautua was integral here—tautua to Samoa, the village, parents, their church and communities, and the need to teu le va of relationships (Anae 2016).
- It is based on inclusivity rather than divisiveness and uses dialogue to provoke action, especially the hosting of dignitaries, e.g., Samoa's head of state or the governor from American Samoa.

- It is completely and wholly based on the well-being of their aiga (in Samoa and abroad), their community in Hawai'i, and faasamoa.
- It is based on spiritualized politics—social justice activism and perspectives informed by spiritual beliefs and practices that undergird any political action (Phillips 2006: xxvi).

Faamatai Responses

These women had the following shared understandings of everyday faamatai (23):

> Over here, you have to belong to an aulotu, a church community. If you want to use your matai, that is where you will be acknowledged as a matai. But the sad thing is if you are not on the steering committee of the aulotu, e.g., president, vice president, secretary, then you just sit there. When an aulotu get together, it is the secretary that does the talking. When a faatau is held, even if I am not supposed to get up during a faatau, if I hold the position of secretary, I have to get up. In Samoa, there a certain people that do the faatau. You know where to sit, you know what to say, you know who you are. In here, as the old men say, "e sau a se tamaitiiti, se tama'i matai fia tautaliitiiti," "a child comes, or a small matai and they become cheeky"—meaning when they become a secretary they want to stand up. There are a lot of good ones, but there are also a lot of naughty ones. (pioneer matai, Sydney)

> Ia o o'u uiga, ga, e kolu a mea o la'u fausaga galue, ole loko kele, ole faamaoni, ole alofa e kolu a, ia kele a mea a le Akua ga aumai, ae kolu a mea ga ou kausisi iai, a?

> I had three things important to me in my work ethic, to have a big heart, to be honest, and love is the third one, God gave me heaps of things, but those three things is what I live by. (pioneer matai, Hawai'i)

Elite factionalism is scorned and illustrated in the phrase "If our Tama a Aiga comes . . . it is for the whole of Samoan communities in Hawaii to host him . . . not the elite few" (younger matai). The community must therefore have recognized and legitimate representation and a leader who is able to mobilize the Samoan community. Often in Hawai'i and elsewhere, this leadership role is given to a woman matai. Similarly. This leadership role is also mobilized

in times of crisis for aiga and people or communities in Samoa, for example, during cyclones and tsunami, when it is always the women matai and women's church committees who take the lead in mustering support in terms of financial and other resources to take to Samoa—container loads of money, clothing, and furniture donated from people all over Hawai'i:

> . . . all that is explained by the matai to the family back home that are doing tautua, you are overseas, you can't do much, all you can do is help where you can, that's what you call tautua mamao, different from tautua tuavae, when you are there to do everything for the matai, but tautua mamao, is another important one, so when you get to samoa, you are loved haha. (pioneer matai, Hawai'i)

Tautua to Family and Village

Tautua to parents, families, and Samoa dominated their considerations of the service and work they have gladly performed as matai, mothers, and heads of households:

> Ever since I became a matai, I've had my village over three times. The first taligamalo [hospitality] I had was my church choir. They came here to launch a CD and to raise funds for an organ in the church. I had 17 people live in my house and I had to feed them for 3 weeks. About 5 years before that, when I went to Samoa, they came and saw me with food and said they needed an organ for the church. So I came back and talked to the family and said we need to donate an organ to the church. It was $3,000.00 for the organ and $1,000.00 to ship it. But the funny thing is when I went back, they said thank you for the organ, but we also need a synthesizer. I said, what, that was just last week, I'm still paying for my credit card (laughs). (pioneer matai, Sydney)

> It is quite difficult when faalavelave (24) all come at the same time. It would be ok if the faalavelave happened at different times. One of my cousins, Peseta Luteru usually notifies me whenever there is a faalavelvae in Pu'apu'a. As for the Tiumalu title, yes I am actively still serving it because there is hardly any of my family members left in the village. Even though it is difficult when faalavelave all come at once, you still have to do them. You still have to do them because no one is from "one stomach." You are always from "two stomachs." I am just a servant

> but love is the foundation of everything. Since I had my Magele title bestowed this year, there has yet to be a faalavelave but I am always in contact with my extended Magele family. You have to do all that is expected of you as a matai because you said yes to the title. This is your duty, to give, to nurture, to love. You cannot be one sided. If you family thrives, so does your village. (pioneer matai, San Diego)

Their work is often unacknowledged and tireless, but all of them come together in the acknowledgment that education for the younger generation was pivotal for the continuation of the faasamoa and faamatai.

Regarding passing on esoteric knowledge to a younger generation:

> You need to write down the faamatai and share . . . everything is Americanised in this country . . . faamatai tarnished by matai from Samoa . . . they demolish everything that's happening here haha . . . it's like the power of Tutuila is more than the people here . . . (pioneer matai)

They are well aware that their everyday "job" is to teach faasamoa and faasinomaga (Samoan identity) in the diaspora. They also share an acute awareness that faasinomaga and faasamoa needed to be taught to new generations born outside of Samoa in secondary and tertiary classrooms.

Mobilizing the Church

One of the younger matai speaks at great length about the tautua she carries out for acknowledgment and hosting of Samoan dignitaries, as well as the lack of male matai leadership and the churches to be able to do much in this regard:

> The church . . . I think there is probably not one faifeau that doesn't know who I am, even the eldest of the faifeaus, I asked the leading faifeau, the last time that Kuilaepa came, maybe a year ago . . . he was here. I co-ordinated the programme. I was the one who invited all the faifeaus, the senior faifeau from Methodist to do the Church service for the Prime Minster. The week that just passed was the meeting between myself and the other faifeaus because I'm the leader of the committee for the Samoan Flag day in Hawaii. There were many people who wanted to do it but I did not agree because I know I am the only one whose heart is true and the only one that can do these things. The faifeau all support everything. Right now we holding meetings with faifeaus because of the flag day, I was the one that started the evagelias from 6am in the morning to 6pm. The focus of this occasion is to balance the spiritual and the

physical well-being. So we've done it again this year . . . so we were doing preparations Friday past, so that was the time we had our meeting with the faifeaus. (pioneer matai, Hawai'i)

When the Catholic church had their world youth day, I had the Deacon, the Fesoasoani and his youth group and the parents of the youth, I had them stay here with me for a week or two. So I had to feed them and look after them, and provide transport for them. (pioneer matai, Sydney)

The last one were matai from my village, when we had the church built, they had to do renovations to the church. I had the matai come over and I took them to the community radio, so they can ask the Vaiusu people to come together so we can raise funds for the church. Every time we have a po siva, we have to give more than a $1,000.00. We had a tusigaigoa [fundraising pledges], and during that time we had to look after them and feed them, transport them, and on top of that, you have to look for money for you ipu at the tusigaigoa. After the tusigaigoa, you have to ta'i a sua [make a contribution] for them and their wives, give their wives' puletasi [dresses], and meaalofa [presents] because they are going. You also give them pocket money for when they go back. (matai, Sydney)

The faasamoa is being practised inside of the church. I forgot to ask our President of our church, what is the relationship between church and the matai, because the Samoan minister of my church is from Siumu. Ever since becoming a matai, the minister hasn't really paid much attention to it. He seems to keep religion and culture separate, because he is a church minister and not a matai. However, I am the speaker of our church, which is kind of like being a matai. It's quite sad. In the way he runs things, it's like he thinks he is a matai and forgets that his main responsibility is the bible and the altar. (pioneer matai, San Diego)

Well-Being and Social Justice

Much of the talk around tautua, by the pioneer matai especially, contains graphic details on these women's ability to mobilize the Samoan community in times of

trouble and catastrophe, often resulting in expensive trips back to Samoa and extensive fundraising activities:

> When the tsunami hit Samoa, my husband's cousins were involved. My husband, my family, my sons, we spoke about helping out . . . so we put together load and loads of clothing to take and toys for all the kids. When Cyclone Evans hit Apia, Faatoia and all that area, I went and had a look at my husband's family. The whole house was flooded. Everything in the house was swept away, the fridge, the beds, everything. I looked at his sister who lives in the family, and I saw how sad she was, like a lost soul. I came back and spoke to my sons, and my husband said, we need to do something. We need to help. So we put together a container. We took furniture, kitchen utensils, clothing, toys etc. Our friends and colleagues at work donated a lot. It was more than a container. After the container was loaded, there was a lot of stuff left. So my son, who has passed now, took all the stuff left and distributed out to all our other relatives. In the second container, we took furniture for my side of the family, one of my brother's house, the roof was blown away and the furniture was damaged by the rain. After we looked after our relatives, there was still a lot. So we made extra boxes of food and clothing, and went to Faatoia, Leone, part of Apia, and a little village over there they call Uelegitone near Magiagi, and just gave them boxes of stuff. It was a joy to give . . . to feel you could help someone you don't know. (matai, Sydney)

> O matou foi o tatou aiga, e iai taimi ua na'o le tilotilo lava i luga i tagata maumea ae le se'i tilotilo i lalo i tatou tagata vaivai ma le matitiva. O se vaega o la'u galuega o le va'ai lea 'aemaise o tatou aiga Samoa ua leai ni mea e nonofo ai and one of the biggest issues in Hawaii at the moment.. . . E iai le alagaupu fa'asamoa, "E ā ulu tafega ae selefutia ai Vaisigano" E faapena foi tatou, a sese ona fai fuafuaaga a se aiga, o le 'a'afia ai le solosolo lelei ma le saogalemu o se aiga i le so'ona fai.

> Sometimes our family are more concerned about those who are wealthy and well off but forget those of our families who are poor and struggling. One of our duties as matai is to help our people in need as well as looking after our people who are homeless. This is one of the biggest issues in Hawaii at the moment. There is a Samoan saying, "E aulu tafega ae selefutia ai Vaisigano"—"Although the river starts inland, everything

gets swept down to Vaisigano." It is like us. If one person does something wrong, it affects the whole family. (pioneer matai, Hawai'i)

If the men are good leaders. I believe there are always leaders and followers. If the men are followers, how can we expect them to lead our family or our village? Some men are very lazy, some men don't have the motivation, they can't think, the women has to tell him to do this and that. It's the woman that is always doing the job, reminding of his duties, reminding him what to do, and in some cases, reminding him what to say. I think if a woman is a leader, by all means. It is for the betterment of the family and the betterment of the village . . . providing the husband is supportive. (matai, Sydney)

From what I see, there is no priority for the male side. A boy and a girl are nurtured together by their parents when they are little. The girl is also the feagaiga to her brother. But now the feagaiga role is given to the church minister since the arrival of the Christian church at Mataniu Feagai ma le ata. The feagaiga is cared for like the pupil of an eye of her brother. A boy can also be a feagaiga to another boy. We have a family Usupua, who has a feagaiga with the Head of State. (pioneer matai, San Diego)

It is good for a female to be a matai. It is more appropriate for then to be an alii rather than a tulafale. Some matai alii don't know how to handle problems within his family so by giving the title to a woman, they are much better at mediating and peacekeeping because it is what they naturally do. There is however the traditional role of taupou, but nowadays you hardly hear of taupou bestowals taking place. (pioneer matai, San Diego)

Back in the Village

These matai are also aware that "not much is happening in the villages back home":

Na ou taunuu atu i le matou nu'u i le isi vaitaimi sa ou faia ni polokalame e pei o fa'alelegapepe ma una'i le matou nu'u e toto laufala, ma fai ni fagu'u e faatau e maua ai tupe a le nu'u aua mea e fai a le nu'u. Ou te

mana'o e toe fa'aolaola komiti a tina o le nu'u pei ona sa sau ai aso ia. O le a le taimi ta te foi atu ai i le matou nu'u, e na'o le nofonofo lava e leai ni mea fou o fa'atino.

On one of my visits to my village, I encouraged them to do little projects like growing pineapples and making coconut oil to sell and to bring in money to do things that the village want to do. I want to revive the committee of the wives and mothers as it used to be in the old days. Sometimes I go back to my village and all that they are doing is sitting around and not doing anything useful. (pioneer matai, Hawai'i)

Same as for Matai we always made decisions for our families. The new generation have their own views and own opinions. Whenever I go to Samoa I have to be well organised. When I returned back to my village of Safata, I noticed that the people there were also beginning to behave like palagi. When I returned to my village, I called a meeting with the matai of my family. I planned all the things for our New Year celebration. I was shocked that I was the one that had to make decisions as none of my family members in Samoa had even thought of organising something like this for our family. (younger matai, Hawai'i)

Samoan Transnational Matai Survey Data

This online survey commenced in 2016 and as of February 2019, there were a total of 550 completed surveys, 88 of them by Samoan women matai.

What Do You Think Are the Qualities of a Matai?

Top four priorities for women matai:	**Top four priorities for male matai:**
Be understanding	Be respectful
Be patient	Know Samoan traditional protocols
Be respectful	Know the family gafa
Be a good decision-maker	Be caring and loving

Female responses are depicted in Figure 3. Male responses are depicted in Figure 4.

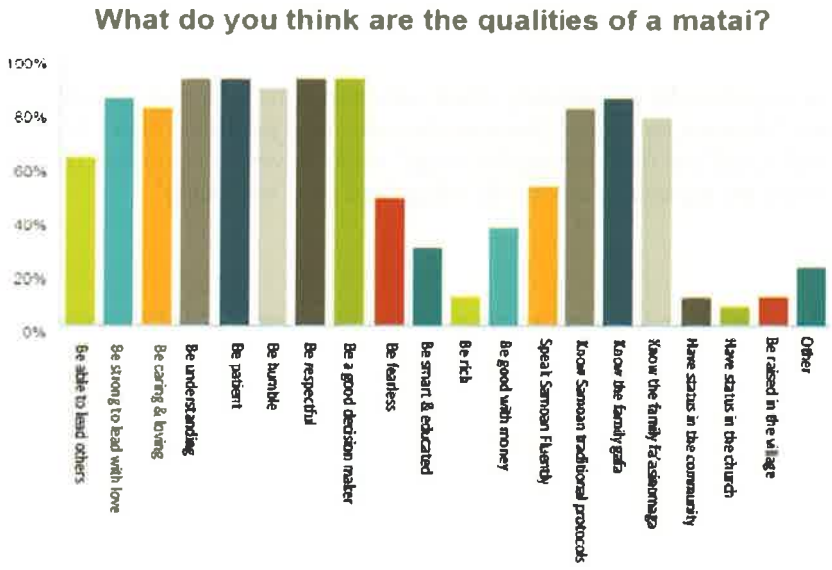


FIGURE 3. **Female Responses to the Question, What Do You Think Are the Qualities of a Matai?**

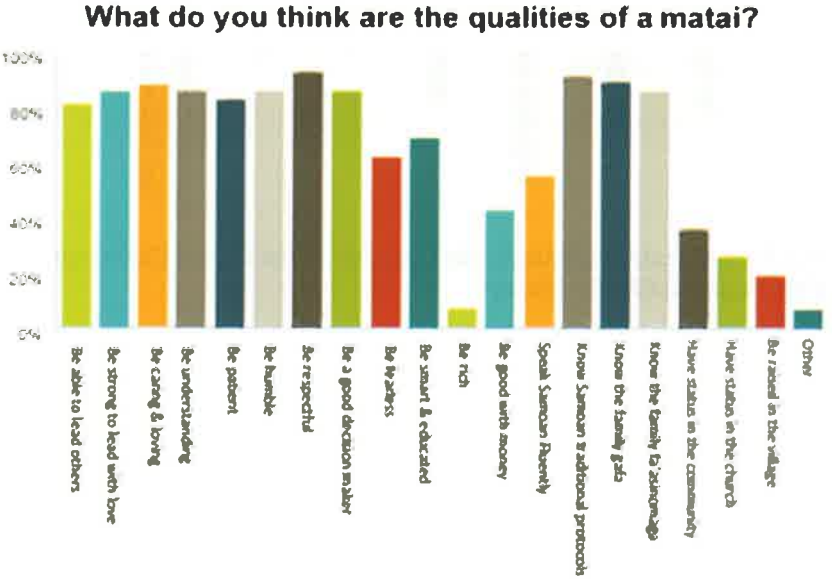


FIGURE 4. **Male Responses to the Question, What Do You Think Are the Qualities of a Matai?**

What Is Your Understanding of the Faamatai Chiefly System?

Top responses by respondents, which were shared by both men and women were "To serve the family." However, the men's next priorities (Figure 5) were "well-being" and then "serving the village," while the women's priorities (Figure 6) were the opposite—"serving the village" and then "well-being."

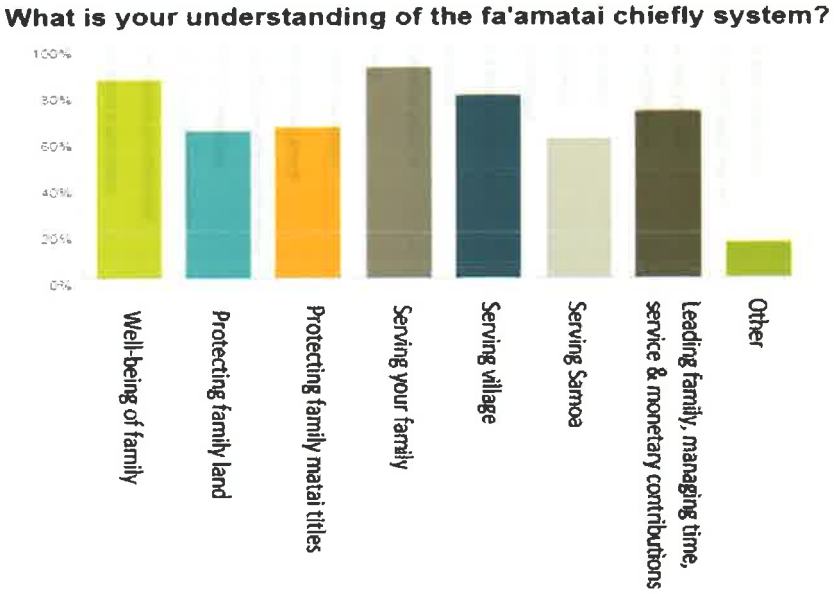


FIGURE 5. **Female Responses to the Question, What Is Your Understanding of the Faamatai Chiefly System?**

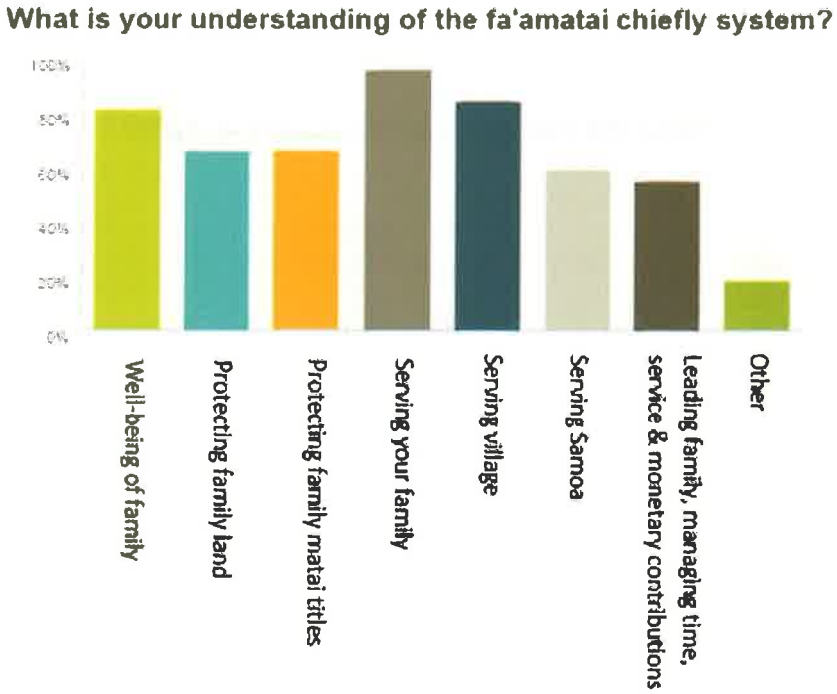


FIGURE 6. **Male Responses to the Question, What Is Your Understanding of the Faamatai Chiefly System?**

Why Did You Choose to Become a Matai?

Top four priorities for women matai:	**Top four priorities for male matai:**
To serve my family	My family wanted me to become a matai
My family wanted me to become a matai	To serve my family
For the love of my mother	For the love of my father
To keep the title in the family	For the love of my mother

Female responses are depicted in Figure 7. Male responses are depicted in Figure 8.

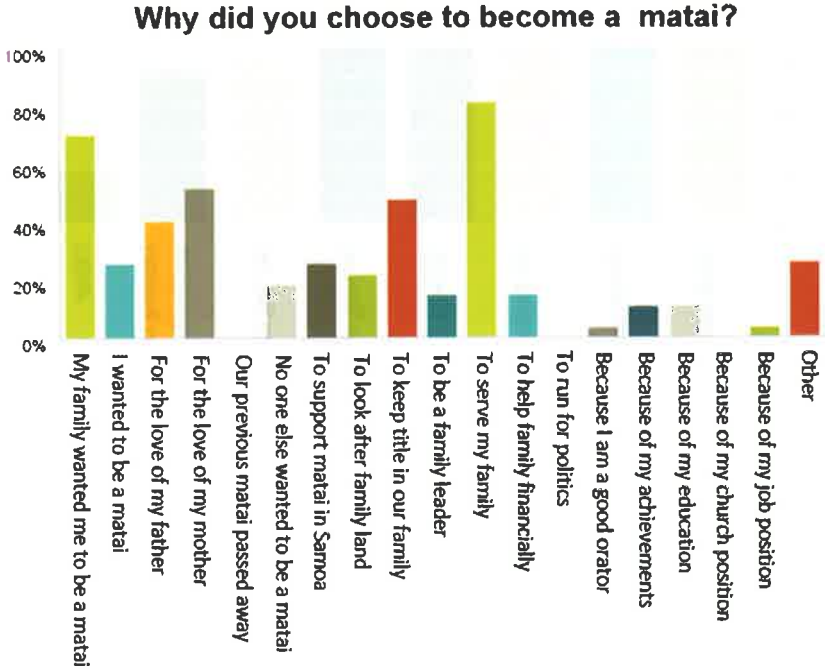


FIGURE 7. **Female Responses to the Question, Why Did You Choose to Become a Matai?**

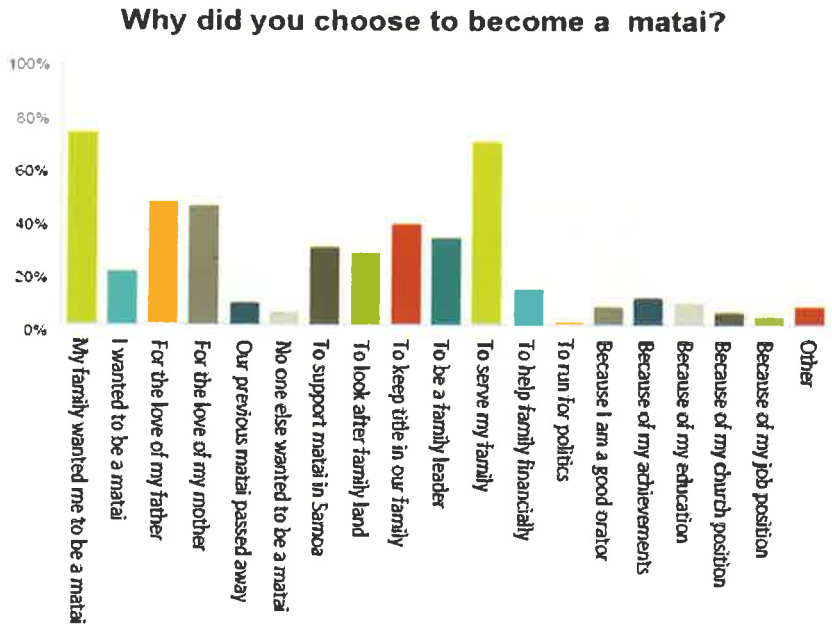


FIGURE 8. **Male Responses to the Question, Why Did You Choose to Become a Matai?**

Do You Think You Are Respected as a Female Matai by Male Matai?

In answer to this question, 74.07 percent of the respondents said "Yes" and 25.93 percent said "No" (Figure 9).

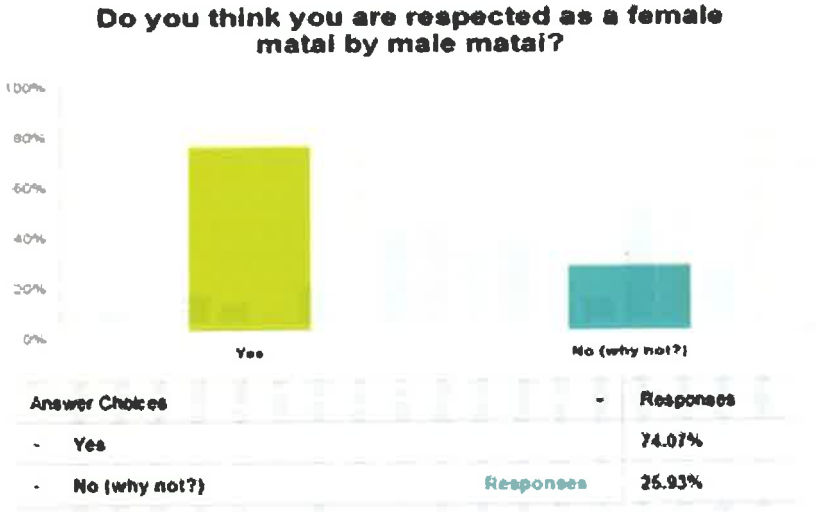
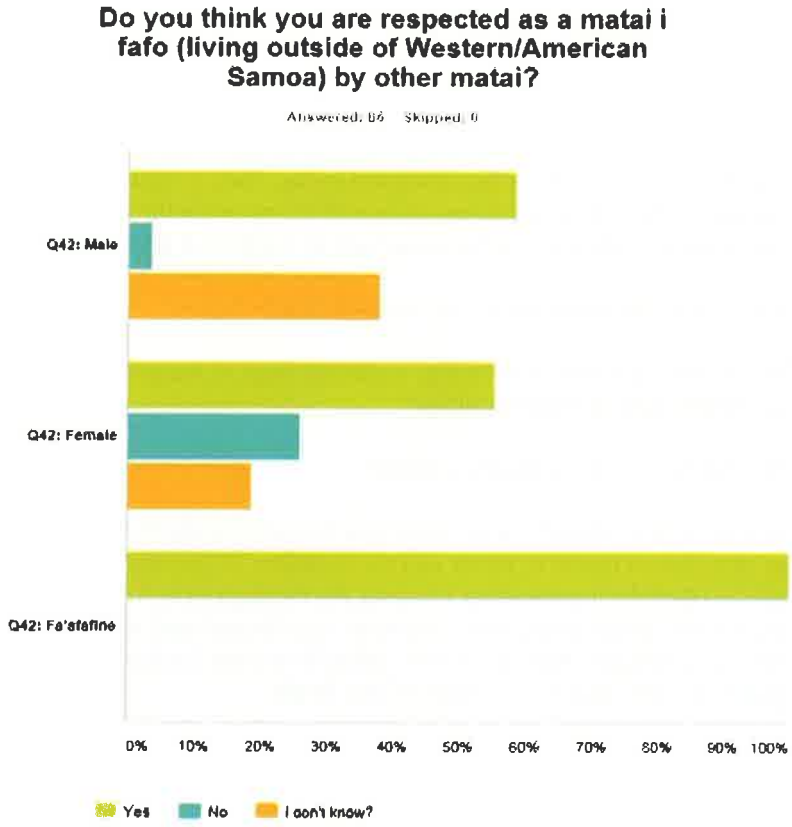


FIGURE 9. **Responses to the Question, Do You Think You Are Respected as a Female Matai by Male Matai?**

Of the "No" responses, reasons given were "I have a lot to learn," "Because men think they are superior in my experience," and "Men seem more dominant."



	Yes	No	I don't know?	Total
Q42: Male (A)	58.62% 34	3.45% 2	37.93% 22	67.44% 58
Q42: Female (B)	55.56% 15	25.93% 7	18.52% 5	31.40% 27
Q42: Fa'afafine	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1.16% 1

FIGURE 10. **Responses to the Question, Do You Think You Are Respected as a Matai i Fafo by Other Matai?**

Social Transformation

From the survey above, comparative data between female and male responses are telling.

What Do You Think Are the Qualities of a Matai?

As mothers and sisters, for women matai, the main qualities are to be understanding, patient, respectful, and a good decision maker, while the men's priorities are to be respectful, know Samoan protocols, and family gafa (genealogy), with their fourth priority being caring and loving. Thus, women's responses are primarily nurturing, harmonizing, and coordinating, while the men's top priorities are more "technical," e.g., knowing Samoan traditional protocols and gafa.

What Is Your Understanding of the Faamatai Chiefly System?

Both women and men had similar understandings of faamatai, viz. "serving your family" and "serving the village."

Why Did You Choose to Become a Matai?

Women and men shared similar reasons for becoming matai. In their responses, the centrality of tautua to family and the centrality of obeying aiga wishes for them to take titles is paramount. However, the fourth priority for women was to keep the title in the family, which illustrates assertiveness and antioppressionist views of keeping the title at all costs within their own families, rather than it going to a male member of another related family.

Do You Think You Are Respected as a Female Matai by Male Matai?

An overwhelming majority of women felt they were disrespected by male matai "because men think they are superior." This mirrors the interview data by pioneer matai above. Their strong antioppressionist view, which drives these women matai in Hawai'i to assertively mediate and arbitrate in community settings, is overt and accepted by many of the male matai in the Hawaiian Samoan communities.

Do You Think You Are Respected as a Matai i Fafo by Other Matai?

The male responses (68.62 percent) and female responses (55.56 percent) attest to positive feelings of respect as matai i fafo. The interesting fact is that of the "No" responses, there was a comparatively higher percentage (25.93 percent) responses for women as opposed to only 3.45 percent of men who didn't feel respected as a matai i fafo, which reveals the continuing oppression of women as matai by others (Figure 10).

As evidenced by my research findings (interviews and surveys) above, the methods of social transformation and Samoan womanism that these women

matai (25) use in their everyday practice of faamatai are driven by the lima malosi ma loto alofa paradigm and cohere around the activities of harmonizing, coordinating, balancing, and healing. These overlapping methods work in and through the va of relationships, rejecting oppression, violence, and aggression but not assertiveness and include dialogue, arbitration, mediation, spiritual activities, hospitality, mutual aid, self-help, and "mothering" and "sistering" in the feagaiga.

Discussion

Shore's model is useful in this discussion of transnational matai because it allows for systematic consideration of local models of symmetrical or complementary social levels of status sets, in which symmetrical relationships are aggressive and conflict ridden, while complementary relationships are indicative of deference, alofa, and faaaloalo. Simanu-Klutz questions Shore's model to account for the symmetrical and complementary suli and feagaiga social levels within cross-gendered faamatai in Samoa, where symmetrical and complementary status sets are not as clear-cut and where sometimes there are aggressive complementary statuses and submissive symmetrical statuses. Both of these models have their limitations, but both are useful because they allow us to see the dynamism inherent in the lima malosi ma loto alofa paradigm.

My fieldwork data and the matai tamaitai tendencies among women matai in Hawai'i, Sydney, and Oceanside and San Diego suggest that although Shore's model goes some way in accounting for the lima malosi ma loto alofa transnational faamatai paradigm, lima malosi ma loto alofa is more than what this dichotomous model proposes. I concur with the problems pointed out by Simanu-Klutz (2011) in her research on suli and feagaiga research findings.

What is clear from this study is that while symmetrical relational status sets are not necessarily hierarchical, neither are complementary relational status sets. Shore's analysis is therefore problematic but useful, because it allows us to see the dynamism inherent in the lima malosi ma loto alofa paradigm.

Faamatai in Samoa and i fafo today have developed organically, resulting from forces acting i fafo, as well as from within. These developments need not be adversarial, they need not be in competition with each other, they need not be mutually exclusive, and they need not be opposed to each other—old faamatai versus new, traditional versus contemporary, right versus wrong. What is important is the faamatai, in whatever shape or form it is being practiced today wherever Samoans live, work, play, and breed and how it is constantly being reenergized.

Finally, Samoan women matai who were interviewed in this study are exemplary models of Samoan leadership in the transnational space. These matai tamaitai all had sound knowledge of planning, organizing, and implementing skills evident in the successful completion of community projects

and interactive activities. Their leadership and womanist qualities display interpersonal, communal, decisive, participatory, nonhierarchical, flexible, and group-oriented leadership styles. From this study, we glean that they have received their titles for their knowledge of faasamoa and their multilevel tautua that they are practicing in transnational spaces and for their Samoan kin elsewhere. At the same time, all have successful parallel careers in the western world in their professional and head of household capacities. What makes them such exceptional leaders is that the womanist qualities that led to them being honored with a matai title also make them successful in their careers, so that their career and matai title give authority to each other. Would such exceptional women be recognized as matai and leaders in the same way in Samoa?

Samoan womanist power is but one element of contemporary faamatai, which has been present in Samoan matriarchs since time immemorial—since Salamasina, Nafanua, and Fofoaivaoese and through our grandmothers and mothers (Efi 2016). Matai tamaitai have been refracted by the transnational experience to reclaim Samoan women matai once more as mistresses of the family and pillars of strength for Samoan aiga so central to faasamoa and faamatai i fafo.

The power of matai tamaitai currently weakened in Samoa is now active in the transnational space. In the context of this study, transnational women matai have been liberated from the shackles of male-dominated church and local and national political governance in Samoa, which as a place, as homeland, is suffering from the effects of colonialism, neocolonialism, Christianity, and the neoliberal rollercoaster world we live in. Samoan women matai are being reempowered by transnationalism and are free once more to breathe life into the faasamoa, the faamatai, and the future generations of suli, our matai-in-waiting. Soifua

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to thank Association for Social Antropology in Oceania (ASAO) for its support for the publication of this Special Pacific Studies Journal Issue which emerged from ASAO sessions in 2017-2019. The author also wishes to thank the Marsden Fund, Royal Society of New Zealand for their assistance, without which we would not have been able to conduct our research. We also wish to thank our research participants who kindly agreed to be interviewed by the team—Lupematasila Misatauveve Dr Melani Anae, Seulupe Dr Falaniko Tominiko, Malepeai Dr Ieti Lima, Muliagatele Vavao Fetui, and Pacific Studies, Te Wānanga o Waipapa, University of Auckland for supporting this research project. We also thank Tiresa Poe for collating the data from our online Samoan

Transnational Matai survey questionnaire, and Seira Aukuso-Sue for help with formatting graphs. Faafetai lava!

NOTES

1. The online survey is part of the research project "Samoan transnational matai (titled chiefs): Ancestor god 'avatars' or merely title-holders?" which is funded by the Royal Society of New Zealand's Marsden Fund. Data here are taken from women matai (n = 88, February 5, 2019).

2. See Meleisea et al. (2015) for absence of women in village councils.

3. See Meleisea et al. (2015: 8). The system of traditional village government presents significant barriers that limit women's power in local government councils, church leadership, school management, and community-based organizations and thus remains an impediment for women to become national leaders.

4. 1893 English definition for matai tamaitai from Pratt (1893: 213).

5. Sister's descendants.

6. Brother's descendants.

7. Sacred chief.

8. Political chief: orator.

9. Church minister.

10. See Simanu-Klutz (2011). For extended discussion on faamatai, see Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa 1992, 1997; Tanuvasa 1999; Vaai 1999: 29–55; So'o 2007, 2008: 17–19; Huffer and So'o 2000.

11. See the following sources: Meleisea et al. 2015; Simanu-Klutz 2011; *Samoa Observer* March 9, 2011; Tcherkézoff 2000: 9, 128.

12. See the following sources: Meleisea et al. 2015: 11–12; Simanu-Klutz 2011: 2.

13. See the following sources: Fairbairn-Dunlop 1991, 1998, 2000.

14. Simanu-Klutz points out that the hubris of church and government on the traditional body politics of the Nu'u o Teine has resulted in the marginalization of the Teine; both agencies have touted the desire to democratize and develop rural villages in order to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. Yet in the process, they have violated the sanctity of the space of feagaiga to the extent that Samoa's Teine and those of Saoluafata have had to scramble through a western education to reclaim their voice and their position in politics at the village and national levels (Simanu-Klutz 2011: 3).

15. During these trying times, the Teine's institution—Nu'u o Teine, or aualuma elsewhere—has suffered structural damage in that leadership has been missing and resources remain underdeveloped (Simanu-Klutz 2011: 302).

16. See the following sources: Anae 1998, 2001, 2002; Macpherson and Macpherson 2007, 2009; Lilomaiava-Doktor 2007.

17. We contend that the four major sources of remittances to Samoa are cash remittances, tourist dollars spent in Samoa by transnationals returning to Samoa for family visits, transnational saofai costs or donations to villages, and funerals and family reunions.

18. This paper presents some initial findings from a three-year study still under way into matai living, born, or raised outside the islands of Samoa. The transnational matai in the Marsden research are Samoan pioneer migrants and their first-generation descendants who have become matai while living outside Samoa.

19. Information taken from the Samoa Census 2011, available at http://www.sbs.gov.ws/index.php/population-demography-and-vital-statistics.

20. Samoa Census 2011 states that there were 16,787 matai residents in Samoa. Meleisea et al.'s study states that there 13,423 were living in traditional and nontraditional villages, so that of these, 3,000 lived in nontraditional villages in Apia (2015: 25). There are reported to be about 70,000 matai title registrations in the Land and Titles Court (Meleisea in Potogi 2016: 130).

21. Pioneer matai were those who were the migrant generation. The other participants were either first generation born in Sydney, Hawai'i, or Oceanside or San Diego or had been raised in the host country.

22. Womanism is an alternative to western feminism and manifests five overarching characteristics: it is antioppressionist, vernacular, nonideological, communitarian, and spritualized (Phillips 2006: xix).

23. "Everyday" in this sense means the everyday practice of faamatai, as opposed to ritual occasions.

24. All family occasions requiring service, money, and time roles and responsibilities.

25. Although this article is based on women matai in Hawai'i, the Marsden data, which span Sydney and Oceanside–San Diego research nodes, reveals that Samoan womanism and methods of social transformation are shared by most women matai interviewed across the nodes.

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Papatūānuku

Karlo Mila

I love that I've read
that Tangaroa was your first lover.
That despite the weight
of being primordial parents,
you lived other lives.

I imagine
the ways
you might have dissolved
in that salty saline water
where the edges of your bodies met.
The pull of those tides.

And then Rangi,
within that stifling, sensuous,
co-dependent embrace
– and beyond it –
the demands of children!
All that longing.

But I love best
that your bountiful body
is everything we land on, stand on,
ground in.
You, woman,

are our go-to.
The earth under our feet.
The goddess that is all maunga,
all muscle, all soft slopes, fertile flat surfaces.

You, Mother,
are home.

Papa – foundation, base in 26 of Austronesian languages
Tū – to stand, arise, erect in 45 living languages
ā- Nuku – land, island, sand in 20 Fijiac languages.
Papatūānuku – Goddess of all goodness.
Giving to us all, even the unworthy.
The absolute unconditional of you.

I could write about how we defile and despise you,
commercialise and divide you.

But that would be about us,
not about you,

Your serene resilience
rules supreme
in the face of what we chuck at you.

I could write about how violently the whakatauki changed
– at the end of guns of an army of empire –
from men dying and losing themselves completely
– over women and land –
Mā te wahine, mā te whenua, ka ngaro te tangata.
To a legally binding adage whereby we all,
– women and land – become the property of men.

Whereby the conceit of 'dominion over' dominates.
But that would be about them, not about us.

'Dominion over'
doesn't feature
in any of our epistemologies.
There are no single male creators
in any of our cosmogonies.

A man couldn't create on his own.
We made sense of our universe coming about
through co-creation, pro-creation, copulation
where immensity and space were pulled to each other
begat children . . . the amino attraction
of male and female elements.
We are a family of relatives.
That includes the trees, the rocks, the sky and you,
Papatūānuku, are the mothership
of all the female elements.

And as much as "the man" tries to bind you,
bend you to his will. You will resist.
That is one of your many legacies.

When we love on you, we love on ourselves.
When we pause, in the busy noise of our days
and look to you, we look to ourselves.
We when we nurture, tend and care for you,
We care for all of us.

In a world of lost goddesses,
my own Tongan darling
more lost than most,
Hikule'o, elder sister of Maui and Tangaloa,
desecrated, defiled, burned, beaten,
still found with the noose around your neck
scattered sculptures overseas
the only proof of your presence
in museums and mausoleums.

Hikule'o, even in Wiki
they've made you a man.
But the curves of your breasts
your beautiful belly,
your unmistakeable fertile places
endure beyond that lie.

When we honour you,
we honour ourselves,
we honour women

The Jonathan Napela Center for Hawaiian and Pacific Islands Studies

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