

Editorial

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(Re)crafting Creative Criticality: Indigenous Intergenerational Rhythms and Post-COVID Desires

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EDITORIAL

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The Moana (Oceania) includes numerous land masses scattered within the expansive ocean waters of the Pacific. The Indigenous cultures there are resilient as many have, and continue to deal with, colonial and imperial occupation, while others have gained sovereign rights to their homelands. The Moana, often celebrated for its beautiful landscapes and scenery, is also a critical and interpretive space where arts and research converge—an intersection that only deepens our understanding of the region and fosters a dynamic dialogue between creativity and intellect.

For this special issue, we called for proposals focused within the Moana and its communities, based on Indigenous ways of experiential and creative criticality, nurturing of intergenerational relational rhythms, and post-COVID desires. This entailed creative forms of expression that embody Indigenous intergenerational sense-making and meaning-making within the post-COVID theorizing space.

Indigenous intergenerational cultural sources inspire, empower, and energise relational rhythms transferred across families, kinfolk, and communities across the diaspora of Tonga, Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, United States, and beyond. Intergenerational sources sustain, continue, and support the thriving and flourishing of the next generation. These cultural sources in the art form(s) of poetry, metaphor, storytelling, ceremony, et cetera, open doorways into the interconnected ways in which Indigenous people honor the inseparability and sensibilities of knowing—seeing—feeling—doing—being—becoming across tā–vā (time–space) realities.

A diverse group of authors have presented their (re)crafting, creativity, and criticality as a part of this special issue. There are academics, artists, creative writers, designers, dancers, poets, researchers, and storytellers. Many can be seen as

emerging scholars and artists that are contributing to the intersectional work within the arts and research to make visible the Moana Indigenous contributions, issues, and experiences.

CONTRIBUTIONS

This special issue unfolds a literary atoll; hosting twelve carefully selected peer-reviewed articles and two insightful book reviews that connect with the scope and focus of this issue, which lie at the heart of the Pacific's nexus of arts and research. The twelve articles will be divided evenly into three sections. The three thematic concepts that will guide the structure of this issue are: 1) Experiential and Creative Criticality—ways that personal experiences can shape interpretations of artistic work or cultural phenomena. 2) Relationality—the interwoven threads of culture, environment (space and place), and people that create a unique but familiar mat amongst Moana peoples. 3) Intergenerational—the echoes of the past resonate with the aspirations of the present to then reimagine possibilities for the future. Each contribution invites readers into Indigenous stories to better recognize the uniqueness that exists within Moana communities, but also seek ways to be in relation with these communities, too.

The first four articles focus on the theme of Experiential and Creative Criticality. **Ruth (Lute) Faleolo** co-authors an article with her three children, **Sh'Kinah**, **Lydia**, and **Nehemiah Faleolo** (Nehemiah's contributions to the article are posthumous and had been documented to the year 2020). The authors used selected images and their artwork to comprehend and make sense of their diasporic experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia as Samoans and Tongans. Artists and authors **Fire Fonua**, **Sonia Fonua**, **Lavinia Fonua**, **Sulieti Burrows**, and **Tui Gillies** are all involved in the Tongan cultural art making and practice of tapa and ngatu. They have looked at the creation and gifting of tapa and ngatu through a contemporary lens to understand the intergenerational knowledge tied to this cultural practice, and recognizing how this cultural practice helps inform Tongan identity in Aotearoa New Zealand. **Steven Petelo** uses Indigenous research methodological approaches of talanoa (Fa'avae, Jones & Manu'atu, 2016) and portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) to combine them together and create what he has called artiture. Artiture allows for an artistic expression and ability to capture art as data through the process of talanoa. Petelo uses his qualitative approach of artiture to focus on the lived experiences of Tongan Americans who were incarcerated during their youth and the potential effects they face attending college in the United States. The last article of this section comes from **'Esiteli Hafoka**. Hafoka focuses her research on the experiential criticality of angafakafonua (way of the land) as the process that Tongans have navigated the United States since their migration in the 1950s. Tongan identity is then analyzed through different generations by their religious affiliations and interactions with gangs.

Relationality is the next theme in which the following four articles are categorized. **Lama Tone** and **Charmaine 'Ilaiū Talei** begin this section with their article that investigates the architectural meanings of Moana as a central concept that brings practitioners, designers, and academics together. Their use of 'Mana Moana' in their article is used to refer to the ancestral relationships between Tangata Whenua (people of Aotearoa) and those of the wider Moana by using these relational connections to educate and create more liberating spaces. The next article by **Hine Funaki-Cole, Liana MacDonald, Johanna Knox,** and **Daniel McKinnon** are all Māori Indigenous scholars who express the importance of setting the stage for future generations by telling their narratives in creative forms such as nonfiction and poetry. The authors have a sense of urgency to create these artistic forms of knowledge through storytelling as their stories are seen as vital to support emerging Indigenous researchers and scholars to not only learn of their past, but also to have the desire to share their stories. In **Inez Fainga'a-Manu Sione, Ruth (Lute) Faleolo** and **Cathleen Hafu-Fetokai's** article, they give perspective from the intersections of being women, Christian, Tongan and academics that reside in Australia about the complexities of coloniality (Tecun & Siu'ulua, 2023) shaping their experiences in tu'a Tonga (Tongan diaspora), especially in academia. The authors provided insights of their collective journeys within various colonial spaces to decolonize and allow for Indigenous spaces to exist. Lastly, **Michelle Johansson** uses the interactions between the arts (specifically dance), education, service, and leadership to articulate her past and present understandings of being a *creative native*. Johansson's theatrical finesse invites readers to step onto a stage of narrative exploration that blurs the lines between performance and social justice education to better understand the relational connections of Moana peoples in South Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand.

The final theme, Intergenerational, features articles that provide sense-making and meaning-making through time and across generations. **Dagmar Dyck** and **Caroline Fanamanu** take on a unique approach of providing their own respective experiences and with litter crossover. Dyck and Fanamanu articulate and illustrate the material culture of Moana peoples as precious connections are maintained in diaspora contexts and back in the motherlands—forever an umbilical cord to the Oceania fonua/fanua/whenua (land). The authors also introduce falanoa as an arts-based methodology that privileges the fala (mat) as a neutral place to share and teach stories. In the next article, **Sonya Withers, Charlotte Harper-Siolo, Samuel Dunstall, Pelerose Vaima'a, Kristina Gibbs,** and **Alexander Te'o-faumuina** are all connected through design disciplines of spatial design, fashion design, and concept design. The authors reflect on their attempt to design an academic course that deliberately brought in intergenerational knowledge because that knowledge would typically be found outside of their classrooms and studios. Their process transcended their institution of learning to connect with cultural and art practitioners, community, and their families. **Telesia Kalavite** focuses her article on the sustainability of Tongan

language and culture in Aotearoa New Zealand and the motherland. She explores the interrelationships between young Tongans, older Tongans, as well as between Tongans and non-Tongans. Kalavite recognizes the need to continue to strengthen language and culture, and shares that the stronger the sense of Tongan identity one has, the more confident one becomes in pursuing their aspirations. The last article comes from a collective of Tongan scholars, **Ruth (Lute) Faleolo, Edmond Fehoko, Dagmar Dyck, Cathleen Hafu-Fetokai, Gemma Malungahu, Zaramasina Clark, Esiteli Hafoka, Finausina Tovo, and David Fa'avae**. The collective of scholars share in their article the creation of the Tongan Global Scholars Network (TGSN) and how this online virtual space has supported emerging Tongan academics and researchers from Tonga, Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, and the United States. The article discusses the critical talanoa (discussions) that are had during these virtual gatherings, opportunities to connect with more senior Tongan academics and researchers, and the collaborations that have transpired due to the nurturing of relations amongst those that participate and join TGSN.

To close this special issue, there are two book reviews. The first is by **David Fa'avae** on Winston Halapua's (2008) text, *Waves of God's Embrace, Sacred Perspectives from the Ocean*. The second is by **Ruth (Lute) Faleolo** on Tēvita Ka'ili's (2017) text, *Marking Indigeneity: The Tongan Art of Sociospatial Relations*.

CONCLUSION

The koloa (gift) provided by *Arts/Research International Journal* to allow a special issue for Moana Indigenous voices to be shared invokes my gratitude for their foresight and commitment to support the work of communities that are not visible to many. From the exploration of our themes of experiential and creative criticality, to the examination of relationality and the poignant insights into intergenerational dynamics, this collection of articles and reviews acknowledges the various ways arts and research intersect in a Moana context. Our hope is that readers depart not only with a greater knowledge of the Moana, but also with an appreciation that ignites interest in learning more and/or creating relations with those in the Moana and beyond.

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