

Wetland: Draining mana whenua

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Abstract

Māori and Pasifika people in Aotearoa/New Zealand have overlapping interests in the work of sidestepping the settler state, not only for more productive but, let's face it, for more interesting conversations. Once we turn to see each other, however, how do we articulate our connections and distinctiveness without reinscribing colonial configurations of assimilation or competition? While the term 'mana whenua' ('the people from here'; 'the people of this place') speaks to specific indigeneity, a concept that has meaning throughout Te Moananui-a-Kiwa (the Pacific Ocean), the term 'mana moana' feels more complicated. In state and institutional contexts, 'mana moana' may be a helpful shorthand for 'the people you otherwise call Pacific or Pasifika', but in Indigenous contexts, and specifically in Aotearoa, surely 'mana moana' would include Māori? Indeed, this article seeks to problematise the relationship between Māori and Pacific scholarly networks in Aotearoa by asking a simple and self-serving question: Must I, as a Māori scholar of Pacific Studies, leave Aotearoa in order to be a Pacific scholar again? Specifically, this article reflects on the process of turning watery land—swamps, rivers, tributaries, reservoirs, aquifers, streams, lakes—into dry, 'workable' land for the sake of the settler state. I hope that 'drainage,' which has been central to land alienation and has a legacy of devastating environmental effects, might provide a way into a tricky conversation about these slippery terms. Reflecting on how easily we forget that the making of dry land has been a colonial project, responding to long-standing calls from Pacific Studies to decolonise how we understand the relationship between land and water, tracing the emergence at the University of Waikato of 'Pacific and Indigenous Studies', and thinking about the sheer liquidity of whenua (land; placenta) in both meanings of the term, I seek to imagine configurations of mana moana that connect rather than drain.

Keywords Mana whenua; Mana moana; Tangata whenua; Indigenous; Diaspora; Academia; Pedagogy

Introduction

Can we remember
the ways we expanded our islands
to the fullness of their environments?
Birds, sea, sky, coral reef, where the oceans
are our pathways to each other?

And when we find ourselves
in single file city streets,
how do we move as a collective?

How do we find our pathways
to each other?

—Karlo Mila, 'Finding Our Way', ll. 49–58

A decade or a hundred years from now
what traces will there be of these short weeks spent together?
Will anyone recall our discussions, our assignments, our
names?¹

In different but overlapping ways, Māori and Pasifika people in Aotearoa/New Zealand have a lot to gain from sidestepping the settler state for more productive and indeed more interesting conversations. Dominant stories of Māori² origins mean we are used to introducing ourselves in relation to waka/navigation histories and descent from, but also future return to, Hawaiki, and there is a supple thread of cultural, social, political, activist, creative and genealogical connections in Aotearoa between Māori people and people from elsewhere in the region. Many years have gone by since I wrote in a chapter of my PhD thesis about when and how Māori do—and do not—articulate our connections with the Pacific (and vice versa). It has already been a decade since I sent off my book manuscript *Once Were Pacific: Māori Connections to Oceania* to University of Minnesota Press (Te Punga Somerville, 2012). My interests in these (dis)connections did not end there, however. There is always so much to talk about—to remember, to notice, to imagine—beyond our

¹ These lines are excerpted from an unpublished poem, called 'Firsts', I wrote for the students enrolled in PACIS100: Introduction to Pacific Histories, Languages and Cultures at the University of Waikato in 2018

² 'Māori' is used by the Indigenous peoples of both New Zealand and the Cook Islands; in this article I use the term to refer to New Zealand Māori unless otherwise indicated.

respective (and, yes, different) relationships with the state. Once we turn to see each other, however, how do we articulate our deep connections and mutual distinctiveness without reinscribing colonial configurations either of assimilation or of being in competition? *Wait, did Alice use the term Pasifika in the first line of this paragraph? Didn't she get the memo about terminology? Didn't she hear that we ('we') have moved on to 'Moana'?*³

The framing of this special issue invites discussion about the terms of the discussion: What do we mean by 'mana whenua'? What do we mean by 'mana moana'? Why these terms and not others? Why are some versions of mana moana defined by difference from mana whenua, while others refuse state-sanctioned articulations of distance from mana whenua? While the term mana whenua speaks to specific indigeneity (the people from here; the people of this specific place),⁴ a concept that has analogous meaning throughout the Pacific region,⁵ the term mana moana feels more complicated. Sometimes 'mana moana' refers to Indigenous people of the region, as in the Māori-inclusive 'Mana Moana Digital Ocean', the extraordinary digital collaboration between "leading Māori and Pacifica artists" (Mana Moana, n.d., n.p.) that has a life online but has also taken the form of massive projections around the Wellington Harbour; another example is Robert Sullivan's expansive 2015

³ For reasons that will hopefully be clear from my arguments about the problem of using 'Moana' and 'Pacific' as if these terms logically exclude Māori, I am using 'Pasifika' as the stable term in this article to refer to non-Māori Pacific people with particular (usually residential) connections to New Zealand. I am aware of the complexity of terminology and the various perspectives within the Pasifika community about this. I also note that the style guide for this journal requires Pasifika to be used in the way I describe here.

⁴ Certainly the term 'mana whenua' is complicated and has moved from rare to common usage in recent years to the extent it is used variably to mean the local Indigenous people of a particular place (so, where I live: Ngāti Wairere and Ngāti Hauā specifically, and Waikato Tainui more broadly) and, it seems, people who are Indigenous to the territory of the state of New Zealand (excluding, notably, Indigenous people from the Realm countries of Cook Islands, Tokelau and Niue). Although my own preference is usually to use 'mana whenua' for the former meaning and 'tangata whenua (or 'tāngata whenua) for the latter, I am using 'mana whenua' in this article as a stable term closer to the latter meaning (i.e., relating to New Zealand Māori) because this enables me to focus on the complexity of the term 'mana moana'. I am hopeful this terminology continues to be discussed, argued over and nudged in many spaces including, perhaps, this special issue.

⁵ I refer to, and teach, David Gegeo's (2001) work on this topic in the famed 'Native Pacific Cultural Studies on the Edge' special issue of *The Contemporary Pacific*.

PhD thesis *Mana Moana: Wayfinding and Five Indigenous Poets* that focuses on writers from Sāmoa, Aotearoa, the Cook Islands and Hawai‘i. Likewise, there was a ‘Mana Moana’ celebration hosted by the Wellington-based Hurricanes rugby team during a clash with the Auckland Blues because, according to the rugby franchise’s website, “It’s time we paid homage to the Maori [*sic*] and Pacific communities who have played such an important role in the success of the club since 1996” (Hurricanes, n.d., para. 2).⁶ But then there is the Māori-exclusive Leadership New Zealand programme called ‘The Mana Moana Experience’, “an integrated leadership programme for Pasifika* leaders”, with the asterisk explained in the following way:

We define Pasifika leaders as New Zealand residents who originate from, are descendants of, or who identify with a Pacific Island heritage, including: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu. If you identify with another Pacific Island nation and wish to apply, please contact us. (Leadership New Zealand, n.d., para. 2)⁷

And in the call for contributions to this special issue we find ‘mana moana’ set alongside ‘mana whenua’ as if these are discrete categories.

‘Mana moana’ may have become shorthand in Aotearoa for ‘the people you used to call Pasifika’ in some state, institutional and scholarly contexts, but is it logically possible for the term to exclude Māori? What risks are there that Aotearoa-based conversations make assumptions and pronouncements about the entire Pacific region that feel like familiar colonial impositions? How do we grapple with the risk that mana moana reinscribes the very colonial separations it attempts to sidestep: not just the Poly-centrism of the word

⁶ A different rugby-related use of ‘Moana’ has appeared as ‘Moana Pasifika’, a unique configuration that brought together non-Māori Pacific players to play rugby against the Māori All Blacks late in 2020; from 2022, a team by this name competes in the Super Rugby competition – the layers of inclusion and exclusion related to this new team surely demands a whole new special issue of a journal.

⁷ This list of states almost completely maps onto the British Pacific, with little room either for other empires or for a range of forms of ‘independence’/colonialism in the region; a similar list of particular nation-states is used by New Zealand universities to define ‘Pacific’ students.

moana, but also its use to exclude people Indigenous to the moana (on the basis of indigeneity to the whenua?)

In this article I seek to problematise the relationship between Māori and Pacific scholarly work and networks in Aotearoa by asking a simple and self-serving question: Must I, as a Māori scholar of Pacific Studies, leave Aotearoa in order to be a Pacific scholar again? The article makes its way through three different approaches to the question. First, I propose a metaphor about the relationship between whenua and moana in Aotearoa from the history of land drainage; second, I trace the development of Pacific and Indigenous Studies (PACIS) as a subject at the University of Waikato; and finally, I reflect on some ways in which academic institutions and networks shape how whenua and moana ‘make knowledge’.

Drain: The separation of land and water

It is not uncontroversial to say that Pacific Studies has called for us to decolonise our thinking about the relationship between land and sea. In the context of noisy centuries-old outsider visions of the Pacific Ocean as empty and separate from human connection, most of this decolonising work involves rethinking the ocean as *presence* or perhaps *substance* rather than *absence*—as superhighway rather than as natural border. Inspired by the injunctions of a king tide of Pacific thinkers to understand the ocean according to Indigenous Pacific rather than European knowledges, we have collectively reclaimed the ocean and our connections to and through it. We cast off terms for this region because they are too colonial, too outsider-ish, not from here. Echoing Wendt (1976, p. 49), we stridently claim “I belong to Oceania.” Following Hau‘ofa (1993), we look sideways at the idea that the Pacific is full of impossibly small, separate, tiny islands and celebrate, instead, our interconnections. Like Crocombe, we labour behind the scenes to bring together people from across the region.⁸ People thinking about, and

⁸ I am referring here to the work of Mama Marjorie Crocombe, the formidable Cook Islands scholar and educator whose editorial and community-building work is behind the publications connected to ‘Mana’ (the section of *Pacific Islands Monthly*, the *Mana Annual* anthologies and several issues of the journal *Mana Review/Mana*) as well as the South Pacific Creative Arts Society. Although she has written a large

practising, navigation have naturalised, celebrated, analysed and recalled ways in which Pacific people have moved across and through vast stretches of water. In Minnesota, Vince Diaz (2019) connects Micronesian knowledge of seafaring with Dakota knowledge of moving around lakes and rivers. In Melbourne, Fijian historian Tracey Banivanua-Mar wrote *Decolonisation and the Pacific* (2016) with a stunningly clear vision of the connections between the histories of places now chopped up by forgetful twenty-first-century imaginaries. Hawaiian scholars in so many sites have been restitching their archipelago back into the region: in Wellington, Emalani Case (2021) reignites the pathway between Hawai'i and Kahiki; in Michigan and later on Maui and Oahu, Kealani Cook (2018) traces nineteenth-century visions of a connected Pacific; in Minneapolis, David Chang (2016) reframes Kanaka Maoli as global explorers rather than passive natives waiting for Europeans to arrive; in New England, Kehaulani Kauanui (2007) reclaims the long history of Hawaiian presence in that place. Scholars working alongside (and as) activists, poets, community members, voyagers and filmmakers turn our attention to the sea as an Indigenous Pacific space; we become reacquainted with atua we forgot for a while—Tangaroa, Hinemoana, Tagaloa, Kanaloa. Certainly, rethinking our relationship (relation-ship) with the moana is important work, and certainly we should collectively keep doing it.

Sometimes, though, I wonder about the reverse, or reciprocal, process: whether or how thinking about the relationship between land and ocean gives us opportunities to rethink whenua. How do we re-know land once we have collapsed the hard boundary between land and ocean? How is land produced, and how is it produced in relation to its opposition to or difference from water?⁹ The doubled meaning of 'whenua' as land and placenta is so well

body of critical work, a great deal of her scholarly work has been the often-invisible and ongoing labour of bringing others together and towards publication. I am doing some work on her legacy through my current project, 'Writing the New World: Indigenous Texts 1900–1975'; no account of Pacific intellectual history that excludes her contributions should be taken seriously. My students are used to hearing me describe her as the 'third musketeer' next to the more widely known and widely cited Wendt and Hau'ofa.

⁹ I want to be clear that these questions are not endemic to the Pacific. Scholars in fields related to other oceans and bodies of water—especially, but not only, the Atlantic—grapple with this as well. Brian Russell Roberts, an American Studies

known it has become something of a cliché; maybe it can help us here. It is impossible to think about the placenta without noticing its liquidity. We refer to kin as ‘flesh and blood’ but the placenta itself is both. A placenta is a complex network of tubes filled with fluid; by the time a baby is ready for birth, 600 millilitres of blood circulate through the placenta per minute (Wang & Zhao, 2010). Having considered this, when we turn to the other kind of whenua—the kind on which we depend once we have left the womb—we can be nudged to notice the ways in which land is likewise full of liquid. Swamps, rivers, tributaries, reservoirs, aquifers, streams, lakes, shorelines, estuaries—they are all there, pulsing and connecting and trickling. What, then, is the effect on whenua of thinking about whenua in opposition to—or at least defined by difference from—moana?

The deliberate making of dry land has been a feature of the colonial project in Aotearoa. Indeed, this article’s title invokes systems of drainage which change the nature of whenua and have a legacy of devastating environmental effects. The whenua has been made dry—it has been desiccated—by deliberate structures of environmental violence. Particularly (although not only) throughout the twentieth century, large state-funded public works projects have turned watery land into ‘workable’ land for the sake of the settler state and the environmental exploitation on which it depends. This dryness has enabled its incorporation into practices and logics of capitalist ‘use’ and (dis)possession; no longer wet, the whenua becomes both recognisable (in the sense related to Coulthard’s (2014) critiques of colonial recognition) and alienable. In February 2021 I attended a workshop at the National Library in Wellington called ‘Rapua te Kura Huna: Opening Our Environmental Archives’ which was hosted by Philip Steer and Marg Forster as a part of their Marsden-funded project on settler literature and

scholar with interests in what he calls ‘Archipelagic Americas’, makes a fascinating and thought-provoking (and Pacific-inclusive) contribution to thinking beyond a water/land boundary in his recent *Borderwaters: Amid the Archipelagic States of America* (2021). I wish here to express a caution that we do not confuse the urgency for developing a ‘here’-centred canon or scholarly conversation with parochialism. The promise of Indigenous Studies and Pacific Studies as interdisciplinary sites is their expansiveness—what they bring into view: scholarship, scholars and contexts that are from all over the planet but do not travel along dominant intellectual arteries.

environmental knowledge. At the workshop, Ngāpuhi geographer Meg Parsons shared her fascinating research and work concerning the Waipā River, and particularly focused on the legal, labour, environmental and colonial contexts to the drainage of wetlands (Parsons et al., 2021). It was a sharp, clear and fascinating nudge: as she spoke about Māori participation in drainage schemes, and the consequences of deliberately producing dry land from damp whenua, I saw a connection with the ways in which the watery dimensions of the Māori world more broadly are excised (for the purposes of the state, and often through Māori labour, but in impossibly curtailed conditions of agency).

Drainage is a material reality to be reckoned with but also offers a rich metaphor for thinking about the way in which whenua is not just possessed but *produced* as land by the colonial project.¹⁰ As Māori, we find ourselves making important arguments about land and our relationships to it in a context of ever-increasing scarcity. We drain our whenua. We have been drained by colonialism, but we have also laboured on drainage because we feel locked into patrolling territory against further loss. Where I write in Kirikiroa, I am surrounded by acres and acres of colonial violence as far as the eye can see; this whenua has been soaked with blood but also dried of freshwater. Despite being named for the majestic river that runs through it, much of the Waikato region has been turned into a stage for short-term (because unsustainable) performances of dry agriculture. Over time, land which was supposed to be wet refuses to play its part. One of the effects of drainage in this region has been the exposure of peat, the unique sponge-like substance now thrusting uncontrolled and invisible quantities of carbon into the air. The drainage of peat has similar effects as the coal-burning Huntly power station on the Waikato region's massive contributions to climate change; this kind of dehydration is both invisible (who knows about it? who can see it?) and hypervisible. In so many paddocks, topsy-turvy power poles

¹⁰ To this extent, I acknowledge but part ways with the calls of Tuck and Yang (2012) to restrict decolonisation to the realms of the non-metaphoric. Certainly, it is problematic when decolonisation is treated merely as symbol or utterance without changes to power or material conditions. As a literary scholar, however, I cannot so easily separate the metaphoric from the material when I observe the many ways in which these (the metaphoric, the material) are mutually intertwined.

bring a dangerously comedic element to obstinately serious farming scenes (Gibson, 2021). The only way to address the draining of peat—the draining of whenua—is to carefully reflood it: to painstakingly undo the damage, which we cannot do until we understand how the damage was done and for what purposes. What remedy is there for articulations of whenua that are brittle from being kept too separate from moana? We gently unblock dams, we clear silt that has accumulated in overused places, we listen as water newly trickles far below our feet, we reconnect whenua with moana. Metaphorically, one place this process can happen is the classroom.

Pacific Studies and Indigenous Studies make knowledge

I did not plan to devote so much of this article to the teaching of PACIS as a subject at the University of Waikato. I have fretted that this level of detail takes me away from my central questions, and I have carefully considered the suggestion of the article's reviewers to publish this section as a standalone piece. As I wrote, though, I realised this article has become my response to Teresia Teaiwa's posthumously published *Charting Pacific (Studies) Waters* (2017), in which she both argues and demonstrates that work about pedagogy can and should sit alongside the work on Pacific Studies research methods and institutional forms:

The urge to publish arose from my horror in coming into the field charged with beginning an undergraduate program and discovering that in spite of its fifty-year history, little had been written about teaching and learning in Pacific studies. (T. K. Teaiwa, 2017, pp. 270–271)

Teresia Teaiwa directly challenges us to write more about Pacific Studies teaching and pedagogy in order to provide another dimension to our thinking about the discipline itself. Upon rereading her article in preparation for this one, I also realised that writing about PACIS was also, for me, a process of documentation. Not coincidentally, as I drafted this article I was also reading *The Teaching Archive: A New History for Literary Study* (Buurma & Heffernan, 2020), which proposes that the classroom is a key site not only

for individual student engagements with a discipline but also for the discipline's own production of knowledge about itself and about the world:

The value of literary studies inheres in the long history of teaching as it was lived and experienced: in constant conversation with research, partly determined by local institutional histories, unevenly connected with students' lives, and as part of a longer and wider story that has never been written down. . . . Restoring a full material history to the ephemeral hours we spend in the classroom will not in itself change institutional structures or revolutionize labor practices. But it will bring a usable history back into view . . . (Buurma & Heffernan, 2020, p. 6)¹¹

If the theme of this special issue is about how *mana whenua* and *mana moana* make sense of each other, how does this sense-making occur in the university classroom?

When I accepted a role as Associate Professor at the University of Waikato at the end of 2016, the academic entity into which I was moving was itself going through big changes. Swayed by arguments—partly disciplinary, partly political—that the School of Māori & Pacific Development, which had been located within the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences (FASS), should gain independent status, the university administration had recently created Having been a School of Māori & Pacific Development within the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences (FASS), university administration had been swayed by arguments—partly disciplinary, partly political—that the School should gain independent status as the Faculty of Māori & Indigenous Studies (FMIS). When I was discussing the proffered position with the then-Dean, Brendan Hokowhitu, he (correctly) anticipated that I would ask about the jettisoning of 'Pacific' from the name and explained that this more honestly reflected the unit's staffing and expertise (all academics at the time were New Zealand Māori) and that the change in name was primarily to signal a departure from 'Development'. Alongside this change in nomenclature was a change in disciplinary organisation which would have more tangible effects on Pacific teaching and research than a name over the door. As part of a major

¹¹ Thank you to my friend and colleague Nadine Attewell (Simon Fraser University) for bringing this book to my attention.

undergraduate curriculum revamp across the university, the new Faculty would offer three subjects in which students could major (Te Reo Māori, Māori & Indigenous Studies, and Pacific & Indigenous Studies). I was curious about the latter both conceptually and, given the expectation that I would lead the development of the subject, pragmatically. What was 'Pacific & Indigenous Studies', and how would it connect with the existing and future teaching and research of the faculty?

As a teacher and researcher, I could see the timeliness and potential of training students in Pacific Studies *and* in Indigenous Studies. Among a suite of new papers developed for the Faculty of Māori & Indigenous Studies were three PACIS-specific papers (PACIS100: Introduction to Pacific Histories, Languages and Cultures, PACIS200: Pacific Migration, Diaspora and Identity and PACIS300: Contemporary Critical Issues in the Pacific). Core requirements for students majoring in PACIS are PACIS100, PACIS200, PACIS300, MAORI203: Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples and MAORI303: Critical Indigenous Theory. Majors emerge with roughly a third of their papers focused on Pacific Studies/the Pacific and roughly a third focused on Indigenous Studies; the remaining third is open for a second major or electives.¹² I was keen to see what research and pragmatic contributions could emerge in a place where the critical questions of Pacific Studies could be brought to bear on communities and objects of study usually designated 'Indigenous' and, of course, vice versa. It was 2017 when I started at the University of Waikato and the concept of indigeneity was animating conversations all around the region: in New Caledonia, with a string of independence referenda; in Fiji, with the negotiation of difficult questions about history, race, place, land and resource distribution leading up to post-coup elections; in Hawai'i, with the increasing interest in a telescope project at Mauna Kea as well as the continued ripples from intense

¹² I was advised that the vision was for PACIS as a subject to be co-owned by FMIS and FASS (who actually shared this vision, or believed it was a good vision, turned out to be sticky questions). FASS had already offered a minor in 'Pacific Studies' for several years, made up of a cluster of Pacific-themed papers from around the faculty, most of which were offered by Anthropology; this would be discontinued when PACIS came online, but its papers would contribute to the new PACIS major.

consultations about federal recognition; in Guam, with massive build-up of military infrastructure and people; in Sāmoa, with questions around changes to land title; in West Papua, as leaders of other Pacific nations (mostly, but not only, Melanesian) increased the volume on calls for an end to Indonesian genocide and colonial rule.

At the same time, Pacific Studies as a discipline was paying closer attention to the relationship between diasporic Pacific communities and the Indigenous communities on whose lands they (or their ancestors) had migrated. (Notably, this has not been a focus of Pacific Studies in Aotearoa.) Students and scholars of Pacific Studies (most, although not all, of Pacific descent) in many places were becoming increasingly engaged in research, curriculum development, institutional work, creative networks and activism, which sought to better understand the relationships between 'Pacific' and 'Indigenous' people in particular sites. By way of example, as PACIS100 was being taught for the first time in 2018, the Australian Association for Pacific Studies Conference in Adelaide featured the transformative work of the four Aboriginal women who make up the local scholarly/artistic Unbound Collective. Finally, there was a blossoming of new institutional entities focused on Pacific Studies, a discipline that until then had been dominated by the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, the Australian National University, the University of Auckland, Victoria University of Wellington, the University of Otago and (due to clusters of academics over particular time periods) the University of Michigan and the University of Illinois. The University of the South Pacific (USP) signalled its unique position and curricular responsibilities to its student communities by adding 'and Pacific Studies' to the name of the Oceania Centre that had been established by Epeli Hau'ofa; David Ga'oupu Matthew Palaita was establishing 'Critical Pacific Islands Studies' at the Community College of San Francisco; the University of Utah undertook a cluster hire of Pacific scholars to establish the foundations for the discipline in a place which has been home for many generations of Mormon Pacific migrants; the movement of the Pohnpeian scholar Vince Diaz and Chamorro scholar Tina DeLisle to join Hawaiian scholar David Chang in American Indian Studies at Minnesota established that as a new hub for the

field. All of these new sites for Pacific Studies emerged from a combination of specific appointments of Pacific Studies academics, the development of new curriculum, and a commitment to engaging with local (student, Pacific and Indigenous) communities. As well as this broader regional and disciplinary context that suggested the time was right for Pacific Studies and Indigenous Studies to be in closer conversation, on a personal level I accepted the role at the University of Waikato because it was an opportunity to contribute my research and teaching in Indigenous Studies *as well as* in Pacific Studies. Having written and thought a lot about the potential of closer connections between Indigenous Studies and Pacific Studies, and yet being keenly aware of the ways in which the questions and academic workers in the respective fields only sometimes (and often only loosely) overlapped, and having been involved in curriculum development in previous academic roles, I was keen to do the institutional service version of putting my money where my mouth was.

Laying the foundations for the subject of PACIS has been the standout privilege of my time at the University of Waikato. In 2018, I (nervously, if I am honest) fronted the first ever PACIS paper: PACIS100. The approved paper title was 'Introduction to Pacific Histories, Languages and Cultures' (which felt too survey-ish and, well, anthropological to me¹³) so I decided to tweak it to be an introduction to the Pacific region *as region*. This would lead to PACIS200, with its focus on migration and diaspora, and finally PACIS300 about key issues facing the contemporary Pacific. I planned with an eye on the four very different student communities I imagined would take the papers: PACIS majors, who I hoped would emerge from our weeks together with a sense of the history and scope of the discipline of Pacific Studies and familiarity with key Pacific thinkers; Pacific students focused on other majors/degrees taking it as an elective, who I wanted to experience an opportunity to think and learn in a space in which Pacificity and Pacific knowledges were at the centre of the room; Māori students with interests in te ao Māori who were majoring in either or both of the other FMIS majors and

¹³ Nothing wrong with being anthropological, of course, but this was Pacific Studies. The University of Waikato already offered a major in Anthropology, and they already had their papers focused on the Pacific.

taking this as one of their first year FMIS elective papers to meet the requirements of their degree and who I wanted to get to know their Māori worlds in new ways; and international students on study abroad who saw it as something unique to their semester in Aotearoa and whose basic questions and genuine excitement are always an absolute gift to a teacher working in a mixed classroom in which many students may feel too shy to ask about things they feel embarrassed to not know. With the exception of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on study abroad students in 2020 and 2021, these expectations about students taking PACIS100 have been borne out in the diverse PACIS student community. In different ways, PACIS100 and PACIS200 directly address the relationship between Pacific Studies, Indigenous Studies, and the more-complex-than-it-might-appear question of what it means to do Pacific Studies in the Waikato region.

I designed PACIS100 so students would emerge with some specific knowledge but, more importantly, with a set of questions and intellectual genealogies to carry with them into future studies and beyond. Most of the semester is structured by Hau'ofa's (1993) famous essay 'A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands', with weeks organised by themes described as 'Our Sea of XYZ', where 'XYZ' stood for People, Things, Arts, Activism & Resistance, Migration & Movement, Research, and Stories. Each of these themes was intended to introduce one of a vast range of ways in which the region is experienced, understood, challenged and—yes—produced. Assessment was designed to foreground the relationship between specificity and regionalism. The major assignment, due halfway through the semester, is an essay called 'Pacific Connections'. Students select one 'thing' (examples provided were "a plant, a food or dish, an instrument, a ceremony, a language, an atua, a pattern or design, an art form, a linguistic term . . .") and write about "how the 'thing' is similar and different" across three Pacific sites. Inevitably, focusing on three locations means students occupy both insider and outsider positions in their work; although in Indigenous Studies some might admonish researchers to only write about their own communities, it is impossible in Pacific Studies to responsibly describe a region—even one site in that region—without writing about people who are not relatives except in

the broadest sense. In order to ensure students engage with the intellectual work of the region (and their own community/ies), and to avoid replicating structures of knowledge that focus on the Pacific as object of study but not as site or source of analysis, they are required to engage at least one article written by a person from each of the three places they select.¹⁴

The relationship between whenua and moana is at the centre of the second module of PACIS100, titled 'Aotearoa in the Pacific'. I start the series of lectures by naming this predicament: I ask them to brainstorm the reasons it is and is not good to have a Māori person teach PACIS100. Unsurprisingly, most PACIS students already know that the relationship between Māori and the region is complicated on a good day and problematic a lot of the time; for many (especially students from Tokoroa and, to an extent, Hamilton), the possibilities and limits of this relationship are part of their everyday. We talk a lot about how Māori are and are not like the rest of the region; we talk about where Māori are treated as part of the region and the stakes and locations of when we are 'Pacific' and when we are not (drawing from my own research, we consider examples of the Polynesian Cultural Centre in Hawai'i and the visual representations of the Tangata o le Moana permanent exhibition at Te Papa Tongarewa/Museum of New Zealand). We talk candidly about the role of resources in shaping these dynamics by considering how my presence at the front of the classroom represents the absence of another, Pasifika, scholar of Pacific Studies who might otherwise hold my job.¹⁵ We trace the usual connections (cultural, linguistic, whakapapa, technological, artistic, activist) but also the relationships between Māori communities and Pacific people who have come here in the past two centuries. The story of non-Māori Pacific migration to, and presence on, this whenua is framed by Tahitian chief Tupaia's famous painting that is also central to *Once Were Pacific* (Te Punga

¹⁴ Students became aware of the complexity of finding published critical material by Pacific thinkers far more acutely than they might have done if I had merely stood in front of them and talked about the politics of citation; they emailed me frantically, asked relatives with university connections, contacted researchers from their own communities, shared references with each other.

¹⁵ We also think about the structures of power that normalise us (Māori, Pasifika) scrapping over the crumbs; and why we think about non-white academics in terms of scarcity.

Somerville, 2012). Tupaia's arrival with Captain James Cook in 1769 is offered as the basis for refusing the white supremacist narrative that Pacific people arrived 'later' into a country that was (that has been naturalised as) 'Māori and Pākehā'. I have had the opportunity to deliver a lecture four times now in which I emphasised:

There has never been a moment in which Pākehā have been here without the simultaneous presence of Pacific people. . . . We must not allow dominant histories and power relationships to distract us from the two-and-a-half centuries of us (re)connecting . . .

Although Pacific Studies conversations in Aotearoa are so often dominated by people based—or raised in—the larger centres of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, there are overlapping but particular ways of being 'Pacific' in the regions, including in the Waikato region where migration for forestry and paper mill work has led to intergenerational Pacific communities in a number of sites but especially Tokoroa.¹⁶ In the Waikato region, the relationship between whenua and moana has an additional dimension. Students read, and write responses to, a chapter from Katerina Teaiwa's *Consuming Ocean Island* (2014) about the importation of whenua (in the form of phosphate-based fertiliser) from Banaba, an island of Kiribati, specifically to the region for the purpose of farming. The chapter opens: "Sometime in the mid-1880s, on a typically overcast day in the Taotaoroa Hills between Cambridge and Matamata, a pair of brothers mounted their horses and went exploring the New Zealand hill country" (K. M. Teaiwa, 2014, p. 150). During lectures we talk about how this Banaban whenua is a third kind of Pacific presence here (alongside tangata whenua and Pasifika communities) and how the economic effects of phosphate-fuelled agriculture led to the creation of the university from which we all now benefit as employees and learners. We wonder with each other about whether eating food produced by phosphate-enhanced soil is a form of cannibalism. We consider the space

¹⁶ Tokoroa's unique situation is an obvious site of Pacific presence in the region, but there are other sites too: I show them photographs from the quarterly magazine *Te Ao Hou/The New World* (1952–1975) of Tokelauan community members being welcomed at Maketu after migrating to work in forestry there.

Pacific Studies *and* Indigenous Studies hold for us to consider spiritual and cultural knowledge in this way. It is a shock for Hamilton-based students to realise their connections—their complicity—with an island most of them hear about for the first time in this class. I will never forget an outraged Māori student calling out “Does the King know about this?”, referring, of course, to the Māori king, Kīngi Tuheitia. The student recognised immediately the significance of this history (and present) of Banaban presence—Banaban whenua—as a matter demanding political and diplomatic attention at the highest levels.¹⁷

In 2019, in my role as Associate Dean (Academic) for the faculty, I put together the required masses of paperwork (and arguments) to extend PACIS into the postgraduate level of study. Students with degrees in PACIS wanted to continue with study at higher levels, and students coming to FMIS to undertake postgraduate Pacific research after completing degrees in other subjects were missing the opportunity to be trained in the discipline of Pacific Studies. As in the undergraduate degree, the required papers were half Indigenous Studies (MAORI570: Indigenous Studies Research Methods) and half Pacific Studies (PACIS500: Critical Pacific Studies). We gained approval from the Committee on University Academic Programmes later that year, and our first enrolment in postgraduate PACIS study was Marylise Dean, a fabulous, sharp Cook Islander/Samoan student from Tokoroa who the month earlier had become the second student (after Sau Lefeau/ Lau Young) to graduate with an undergraduate qualification in PACIS. The first class of PACIS500 was offered in the second semester of 2020, and the cohort was a small but fiery bunch: Maluseu Monise (Rotuman), Mel Cottingham (Niuean) and Mavae Ahio (Tongan) in addition to Marylise. A few weeks before the class started, the faculty had appointed its first designated PACIS hire—Chamorro scholar Dr Jesi Lujan Bennett—but because of a delay around visa approvals I ended up teaching the paper with the support of Dave Fa’avae, who had

¹⁷ The follow-on paper, PACIS200: Pacific Migration, Diaspora and Identity, foregrounds Indigenous approaches to diaspora and mobility by refusing to allow the settler state to be the dominant frame. Instead, we start with the whenua on which we are learning together as we work through three modules: Pacific Waikato, Pacific New Zealand, and Pacific Diasporas around the Region and around the World.

recently been appointed in Education at the University of Waikato. Also in 2020, we rolled out our first 'non-compulsory' PACIS-coded paper, PACIS201: Pacific Texts.

The foundations of PACIS at Waikato have been laid by all of us together: FMIS, who had dreamed the subject into being before I arrived; and all of us who have arrived since. The tutor for PACIS100 in 2018 was Jess Pasisi, a Management PhD student working on Niuean women and climate change. Since 2018, Jess has become Dr Jess and has taught PACIS300 twice; doctoral students Wanda Ieremia-Allan, 'Elisapesi Hepi Havea and Tepora Wright have contributed to PACIS100 and PACIS201 as tutors. Now-Dr Havea also taught PACIS200 in 2020 as a Teaching Fellow. It is important to talk about all academic staff connected to these papers, because our students' learning was certainly strengthened by having teachers with very different whakapapa, perspectives and disciplinary training. Tutoring is one way we teach the field: tutors learn about Pacific Studies (or Indigenous Studies) as they attend lectures and run tutorials and mark assessments. Disciplines like these are doubly disadvantaged when universities try to save money by limiting short-term hires of teaching assistants: our postgraduates miss out on the immediate economic and professionalisation benefits, and many of the postgraduates working in these interdisciplinary spaces have undergraduate training in other disciplines. (And, indeed, many permanent Indigenous Studies and Pacific Studies academics have little formal training in those fields.) Tutoring Pacific Studies provides an opportunity to develop a sense of collegiality in the field and in the context of the university but is also a key site for producing and reproducing the discipline.

Lana Lopesi's wonderful text *False Divides* (2018) was published just in time to be a course text for PACIS200 late in 2018. Lopesi's text was such a hit with the students, so clearly provided context to the colonial and cultural context of the region, and was so affordable (not an insignificant factor) that it became the course text for PACIS100 from 2019. The book also demonstrated a lot of things I wanted PACIS100 students to see: heavy engagement with Indigenous Pacific scholarship, grounded but sharp writing, and an opening acknowledgements section titled Mihi which is almost entirely

in the Māori language. We spent an entire lecture going through that mihi—not merely translating it (although this did enable students from immersion reo schooling to shine in the classroom early in the semester) but talking about why, and how, and what the effects were. In 2019 I invited Auckland-based Lana to visit PACIS100, and I was thrilled she was gracious enough to accept. I asked the PACIS100 students to consider how we would welcome this manuhiri (guest) and gave them class time to figure it out; thinking about tikanga in a cross-Pacific context is a rich opportunity to consider practical issues we otherwise discuss in theoretical terms. The morning Lana visited, I got to the lecture theatre to find the Māori students were teaching the others how to bring her in with the haka ‘Te Waka’. Even before I opened the door to the lecture theatre, I could hear them rehearsing, with the chorus “Te Waka!” audible between the words of the leader. The whenua was being slowly rehydrated, which made it a firmer base for everyone standing t/here. Inside, a Tongan student was dressed and ready with garlands to present, and a student from Tokoroa was prepared to welcome Lana with a turou, during which he not only addressed our guest in Cook Islands Māori but also switched to New Zealand Māori and Samoan for good measure. (Yes, I may have shed a couple of proud tears.) This was PACIS in action. This may also be, I want to suggest, a starkly interdisciplinary version of the vision proposed by the editors of this special issue, of “decentring that would enable recentring on the Pacific, the place of collective inhabitation so that our thinking and research might become a unique expression of this place”. Mana moana and mana whenua were making knowledge together—knowledge of each other, knowledge of Pacific thinking about the Pacific, and knowledge of the context in which they not only operate but overlap.

Making knowledge in (and about) university

Pacific Studies is not the same as mana moana, though, and Indigenous Studies is not the same as mana whenua. Both interdisciplinary forms exist only in the context of the academy—both domestically and internationally—and it is worth clarifying that not all Māori people at universities are Indigenous Studies scholars and not all Pacific people at universities are

Pacific Studies scholars. Furthermore, many Māori and Pacific people in university leadership have their own views about these two disciplines in the context of their portfolios focused on particular students, knowledges, resources, services or staff at their respective institutions, and these sometimes (these people, these portfolios) often dominate institutional conversations about either discipline (let alone how the two might interact). I have written elsewhere that cherished teachers played tricks on me during my own undergraduate years, demonstrating a robust expansive Indigenous-centred version of literary studies that turned out to be a (loving) ruse (Te Punga Somerville, 2021). I realise now that back in the 1990s, Albert Wendt, Witi Ihimaera and Reina Whaitiri were also playing another, more subtle trick: they made me think it was normal for Māori and Pasifika academics to work together, and for Māori and Pasifika students to be brought into conversation—into community—with each other. It turns out that this rarely happens in New Zealand universities: we so often make knowledge of each other by ogling each other across crowded (white) rooms; and even institutional contexts in which we are together on paper seldom deliver on their promise.

My first book, *Once Were Pacific: Māori Connections to Oceania* (Te Punga Somerville, 2012), explores the connections between ‘Māori’ and ‘the Pacific’ at the regional and national levels. Despite growing up in an Auckland neighbourhood where most of the kids at my primary school were Māori or Pasifika, when I got to university I found that Māori stories came in two flavours: ‘Māori’ and ‘Māori and Pākehā’. Indeed, ‘Māori’ and ‘Pacific’ were such different categories that I was a recipient during my master’s studies of a University of Auckland ‘Māori and Polynesian’ scholarship (as if there is a Māori out there who is not Polynesian). I first became a Pacific person when I was a Māori PhD student standing in a carpark at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa campus in Honolulu. Keith Camacho, a Chamorro scholar at the University of California, Los Angeles who was then doing his PhD in History, said, “It’s so great there’s another Pacific Islander in the English Department”, and I replied, “Wow, great—who is it?” After he looked at me, baffled, I realised he was talking about me. When I returned to that institution years later as an

academic (as a Pacific literature specialist), several people asked me quietly about why no Māori writers had been selected for the Fulbright/Creative New Zealand Pacific Writer's Residency, which brought a Pacific writer to the university each year. "We're not Pacific people at home", I explained to people who often looked as baffled as I had looked at Keith back in 2003, and I would trace the genealogies of resources and decision-making that meant there was a separate pot of money, and a different organisation, for Māori artists and writers. These genealogies matter, of course. It is important that Māori have particular resourcing and standing; this is a basic protection afforded by Te Tiriti o Waitangi after all. And it is equally important that 'Pacific' writers in Aotearoa have a space, and resources, and writer's residencies. But what do we make of—and *how* and *where* do we make knowledge about—the baffled looks, the versions of who is and is not 'Pacific' that do not travel well?

I have had a shifting relationship with the term 'moana', maybe because its meaning has changed, and maybe because I have. When I was wrapping up my PhD, I kept a blog with three colleagues—the abovementioned Keith Camacho; Anna Marie Christiansen, a Māori scholar based in Hawai'i; and Tongan scholar Tevita Ka'ili, who at the time was wrapping up his own PhD in Seattle and who has been a key advocate for the wider use of the term 'moana'. Our blog was called *Moanageeks* and at the time the term felt playful, although Keith raised important questions about how collective 'moana' is beyond Polynesia (these questions about Poly-centrism are inadequately answered, indeed exacerbated, by the contemporary widespread usage of the term). Since moving home to Aotearoa, my enthusiasm for the term has been dimmed, mostly by its increased use to refer to Pasifika but not to Māori, to the extent that I had actually forgotten ever being part of the *Moanageeks* collective! Perhaps my concerns about Māori-exclusive uses of the term 'mana moana' could be (mis)construed as policing how another community describes itself. But I cannot see any logic by which 'mana moana' *cannot* include Māori people. Logically, 'mana moana' *does* refer to me and my community too. Let me be crystal clear: I know—and I am explicit in my research and teaching—that being a Te Ātiawa/Taranaki person does not make me a Pasifika person; my experiences are not connected to, and I cannot and will not speak for,

Pasifika communities in Aotearoa.¹⁸ There are spaces for Pasifika communities that I do not enter, and that I protect from the outside. And there are spaces for Māori—especially but not only spaces bordered or produced by Te Tiriti o Waitangi—that are only for Māori. I will protect those too. I am happy to step back, step up, step aside and step behind at the appropriate moments, and I am more than happy to receive feedback and nudges when I do not figure out what those moments are. I strongly believe that in our understanding of the different and specific experiences of Māori and Pasifika communities we find the foundations for new forms of connection, recollection and collaboration: new research questions, new classrooms, new critical bookshelves, and new grounds for solidarity. I am buoyed and inspired by strong expressions of solidarity between Māori and Pasifika people in so many spheres and, when you decide to look carefully, across so many years.

Sure, *mana moana* may not on the face of it be explicitly anti-Māori. The risk that I see, however, is drainage: continual articulation of a version of *moana* from which Māori are absent(ed) precisely because we are *mana whenua*. Despite anticolonial or decolonial intentions, Māori-excluding uses of the term ‘*mana moana*’ operate—or are made to operate—in settler colonial ways. That is, in ways that participate in the end (absence, invisibility) of the Native and the allocation of resources that reinforce colonial structures of power.¹⁸ Māori are drained. Exhausted. I do understand that some Māori have limited energy for people with whom we share oceanic genealogies because of fear that engaging could flood the dehydrated territory we have fought so hard to retain. Reciprocally, some versions of Pacific Studies in Aotearoa feel anti-

¹⁸ Growing up in my home neighbourhood provided no more meaningful proximity to Pasifika than any other non-Pasifika person who grew up there. Despite some people awkwardly insisting I make a point of it, neither is marriage to my Indigenous Fijian/Solomons husband either the origin of—or basis of authority for—my work in Pacific Studies.

¹⁸ Certainly this is a risk in *any* colonial context. Along with several other Māori scholars, I have written about being Māori on Indigenous lands elsewhere: North America, Hawai‘i, Australia. As a small community of ‘Māori diaspora’ researchers thinking critically about the experience of being simultaneously Indigenous and yet not-Indigenous-to-this-place, we have found it very useful to engage with people like Candace Fujikane and Dean Saranillio who conceive of Asian settler colonialism in the specific context of Hawai‘i.

Indigenous, such as Salesa's (2017) visions of Aotearoa's Pacific future that is perhaps a version of 'recentring on the Pacific' but seems to elide Māori presence, let alone sovereignty, Te Tiriti o Waitangi or mana motuhake; Māori mostly feature in his book *Island Time* as co-statistics when describing deprivation. More subtly, there is seldom crossover between Māori and Pasifika scholars in conference programmes or bibliographies. When I was working on an application for Marsden funding to support the research that went into *Once Were Pacific*, my good friend Maria Bargh asked me about how the project contributes to tino rangatiratanga, and I went blank. I could see all the ways my work risked reinforcing the logics of the settler colonial state—especially the idea that Māori were merely the first arrivals in a country of immigrants. Over time, however, I realised the potential for (re)connections with the moana can be a deliberate strategy for sidestepping the attention-seeking settler state. And the answer also has something to do with the radical potential of Pasifika (and regional Pacific) solidarity with mana whenua *in every Pacific place*.

There is another layer. (Another wave? Another current? Another tide?) If the concept of mana whenua is related to specific indigeneity, is mana moana about being Indigenous to a region? In a recent review in the online arts magazine *The Pantograph Punch*, Vehia Wheeler and Mareikura Whakataka-Brightwell (2021) problematise the role of non-Tahitian Pacific people agreeing to participate in a Danish museum's exhibition about Paul Gauguin. Certainly all Pacific people have been affected by Gauguin's representations, Wheeler and Whakataka-Brightwell argue, but Pacific people from elsewhere should consider the particular place (or absence) of Tahitian voices in an exhibition about the impact of his work. While one can only be Indigenous to particular places, in so many ways we from the Pacific region speak for or about the region. I do it every time I claim to be a Pacific scholar—we all do. Wheeler and Whakataka-Brightwell (2021, para. 11) raise an important consideration about the ways in which speaking for the region—the mana moana dimension, perhaps—risks undermining mana whenua:

[T]he curator responsible for the exhibition, Anna Kærsgaard Gregersen, admitted that – according to their criteria – no

Tahitian artists had been suitable for the exhibition. In fact, this was a deliberate choice, as the museum wanted to showcase a ‘pan-Pacific’ perspective instead . . .

Although all of the artists discussed by Wheeler and Whakataka-Brightwell are Samoan, their presence in the Scandinavian gallery space is on the basis of their being ‘pan-Pacific’; the issue for the writers is not that they are Samoan, but that they are not Tahitian in a representational and historical context in which Tahitian people have particular stakes. This makes me recall an awkward conversation about the hosting of a conference at the USP’s Laucala campus—many of us from elsewhere in the region were disquieted by the lack of Indigenous Fijian presence (including, but not only, via protocol) whereas the hosts felt that because USP is a regional institution it could not prioritise one of the 12 member countries it serves. The subtle but, I think, significant difference between settler colonialism and this problematic form of regionalism is that while the former relates to a claim to particular place via the logic of a colonial state (that relies upon Indigenous absence), the latter depends on a claim to region (*mana moana*?) that may well be positive and space-creating but risks trumping, if you will, the claims and responsibilities of local Indigenous communities in any particular Pacific place. How, then, do we productively and ethically engage the concept of regional connection in relation to specific place?

The editors of this special issue ask us to think about the kinds of critical scholarly work we do here on this whenua by (re)conceiving the starting points and horizons of a social sciences canon. Perhaps this does not feel like an article about sociology, and in the strictest terms it is not. However, as Pacific Studies and Indigenous Studies continue to gain a foothold here, not only in university but in secondary school classrooms, increasingly these interdisciplinary locations are sites where we reckon with and produce the social science bookshelves in and of Aotearoa.

In her stunning poem ‘Finding Our Way’ excerpted at the beginning of this article, Karlo Mila (2013) hopes for coming together on the basis of memory and practice—“. . . the oceans / are our pathways to each other”. The final assignment for PACIS100 is an oral presentation of a poem responding

to Hawai'i-based Ngāti Toarangatira poet Vernice Wineera's 'Heritage' (2009). "Take the sharpened pipi shell", writes Wineera (2009, p. 45) as she opens her poem by daring the reader to "carve upon my face". In response, each student opens with "Take the . . ." and then names a cultural object or idea or practice on which they focus for the rest of the poem. Wineera's poem ends: "where all who can read will perceive / that I am taking my place on this vast marae / that is the Pacific / we call home", and students can change "marae" into whatever works for them. The final week of class is always incredibly moving as students stand up one by one to announce to each other in their own specific way that they are taking their place in the Pacific we call home. A Māori poem provides non-Māori Pacific students with a pathway by which they can connect to this whenua as well as to the region; it provides Māori students with a pathway to the moana that thinks through, rather than away from, whenua. The scholarly bookshelf of this place we call home will surely be as vast as Te Moananui-a-Kiwa, but bookshelves also structure habits of reaching and reading. As we dream up how we make knowledge in this place, let us start by reading—by reaching—each other.

Epilogue

As I wrap up the final draft of this article, my late-night job is the completion of visa applications, preparation for packing up our home in Hamilton, researching unfamiliar childcare and school policies, and emailing new colleagues in Vancouver. I am off to another watery place: the University of British Columbia in the rohe of the Musqueam nation. I will be a Professor in English and in Critical Indigenous Studies, with particular focus on Pacific literatures. Sometime in January 2022 my family and I will board a flight that will perform the magic of turning me back into a Pacific person (no such magic is required for my husband or daughter whose Fijian/Solomons whakapapa makes them 'Pacific' wherever they are). The rhetorical question I posed earlier—Must I, as a Māori scholar of Pacific Studies, leave Aotearoa in order to be a Pacific scholar again?—has become an actual question that requires an answer beyond "Hmm—good question." Suggesting that being understood as a Pacific scholar is my main or only consideration around moving to

Vancouver would be a misrepresentation of my decision to leave Aotearoa. However, suggesting I am leaving only because of the structural racism at my current institution is also an incomplete explanation. I am drained: the diminishing invitations to participate in ‘Pacific’ things here; the increasing need to argue for ‘Pacific’ presence in FMIS; comments in a meeting that a Māori person teaching Pacific Studies is no different from a Pākehā scholar teaching it; a meeting held elsewhere on campus with ‘Pacific Studies’ scholars at FMIS to which I was not invited; a published article which rewrites the emergence of particular Pacific activities at my institution without reference either to PACIS or to Māori contributions to the development of those activities (Hemi et al., 2021). The combined effect of all this has been draining. As I prepare to leave, I find myself already pining for this whenua and also for my students here. I have to hold onto a hope that I have unclogged some culverts and nudged at some dams to the extent that whenua and moana are finding themselves in a different relation at the University of Waikato than they were when I arrived, but only time can tell. Now I have finished with undergraduate classes, all that I have left is a handful of postgraduates to supervise: all Māori or Pasifika; all on this whenua; all from the moana. I cannot wait to see what happens next for PACIS—maybe it will, or will not, have an easier ride without a Māori scholar in the mix. Meanwhile, the ‘Protect Pūtiki’ Twitter handle, providing public updates on a Ngāti Pāoa occupation at the construction site of a new marina on Waiheke announces: “We are living in a time where our people are being trespassed from the ocean. Can you believe it? We can’t.” (Protect Pūtiki, 2021). By the time this article is published I may already be in Vancouver, far away from my own land: taking my place in my ancestral waters, this vast moana—this vast whenua—that is the Pacific we call home.

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