

Currents of Migration: Writing and Representation in the Pacific Diaspora

Janet Wilson, University of Northampton

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I. Introduction: 'Our Sea of Islands'

Recent reimaginings of the Pacific region, -- from Samoan novelist Albert Wendt who defined it as the New Oceania in the 1970s and from Tongan writer/anthropologist Epele Hau'Ofa who called it 'our sea of islands' in the mid 1990s¹ and this century from Elizabeth de Loughrey who uses the term tidelectics - a portmanteau blend of 'tidal' and 'dialectics', borrowed from Kamau Brathwaite, (an alternative epistemology) which emphasises the cycles of the tide and movement of the sea -- all these overturn the colonial, Orientalist view of the region as one of geographical fragmentation cartographically imaged by scattered, disconnected islands, in order to promote a more coherent and homogenous concept of the region. This self-conscious and strategic regionalism drawing on intrinsic oceanic linkages between island locations, is reinforced by political - economic organisations such as the South Pacific Forum (1971) the South Pacific Creative Arts Society, the establishment of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone, and the ongoing influence of the University of South Pacific (founded in the 1960s) as a centre of intellectual intervention and creative resources -- these provide some counterbalance to the power of APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) formed in 1989 to

¹ 'A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands', *Contemporary Pacific*, 6 (1994), 147-61

promote trade and economic cooperation , which excludes all the pacific islands (including only the wealth countries on the rim) except Papua New Guinea.

Today we witness global patterns of Pacific mobilization as borders have expanded to reach Asian regions like Japan on the Pacific Rim, and new diaspora communities are created from overlapping and intersecting currents of travel (MIRAB) throughout the region. Migration, always a feature of Pacific island life since before European settlement as seafaring and ocean going Pacific Islanders were voyaging and exploring different parts of the Pacific, continues to expand in relation to developing geo-political and economic forces (more recent?), as Pacific islanders move to the metropolitan centres of the pacific rim (NZ, Australia, Japan and USA) for economic advantage, education, remittance and government surveillance (MIRAB societies). The continuous history of trans-oceanic migration has led to a certain type of regional literary production (De Loughrey, PAGE). In this paper I will focus on writing from Aotearoa/New Zealand where the Pacific island community is the fastest growing (Calleja 204), now consisting 6.9% of its population of over 4 million.

IMAGE I of three population groups Melanesian, Micronesian, Poiynesian

Discussing representations of/ talking about the Pacific diaspora, exile, migration within the Pacific region requires different theorization of movement in relation to decolonisation and globalization than those applied to patterns of migration in the northern hemisphere or from the global south to the north (and there is NO EASILY IDENTIFIABLE THEORY ON PACIFIC MIGRATION AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION) -. This is partly due to the changing patterns of migration and settlement over the last half century since post- war migration sped up due to industrialization and the

demand for labour, and partly to the variability of movement from islands to metropolitan centres and between different islands: The key concept of the return to the place of origin, powerfully articulated through the European Jewish model of diaspora with its myths of homeland and belonging, based on nostalgia and longing, was initially dominant, as the first of my examples will show -- Albert Wendt's 1973 novel, *Sons for the Return Home*; IN light of the 'sea of islands' imagery of the Pacific it is also tempting to define more than one return suggesting a flowing oceanic circular movement, implying opportunity to move between home and host society, defining a to and fro pattern of migration. Terms descriptive of this fluidity are also used, such as transnationalism, the translocal (i.e. movement between localities and temporal frames) or rhizomatic, i.e. being multidirectional and multi locational. But in 2002 the geographer, John Connell (*Pacific Diasporas* 80) comment that the remittance economy and the returning citizen willing to invest are no longer the case. He and other geographers and sociologists like Paul Spoonley, Richard Bradford suggests that Migration tends to be to the metropolitan Pacific rim centres with a permanent transfer of resources : the return is often seen as an admission of failure or made for reasons of nostalgia, or a limited and provisional return, usually because of economic reasons . This is evidenced by Aotearoa/ New Zealand's previous dependencies like Tokelau, Niue and Cook islands where there are now more islanders in NZ than on the islands. A flood of migrants are expected in the next decade.. Of the range of attachments to different places and degrees of belonging or not belonging (Paloma) that the migrant experiences many may be in memory or the imagination, (Brah's living diasporically). Relationships with the homeland operate at a geographical distance through various means of communication , affiliation and

identification; and these multiple interconnections all substitute for the physical return

With the settlement and the growth of PI communities consisting of new generations born in the host society, who have never seen their island homeland at first hand, geographical, territorial links are weakened.. In the cultural production that began to flower from the end of 1980s, the period in which the Polynesian communities (especially from Samoa, the largest of all the PI communities in Aotearoa/NZ) begin to form their own PI culture, Niu Sila is the new home.

Nevertheless the new generations show interconnections with the Polynesian world. based on employment, remittances, education, being sustained within and beyond the host nation through ties of kinship, religion and family obligations, and through new digital and web-based technologies which encourage global diasporas, Continuity and variation in of Polynesian ethnic identity comes from the shared lifestyles, customs, and values between Pacific communities and in particular e.g. interethnic affiliations from inter-marriages (Tongan and Samoan, Samoan and Maori). Also since the late 80s /1990s in Aotearoa/New Zealand has been the growth of the new media (outside the main stream media- TV channels, radio stations) which has encouraged PI communities to have more control over their own images and to participate in the re/production of stereotypes that renegotiate their origins i a paradigm of racial difference and distance, enabling a stronger sense of community and to emerge.

All the same in terms of ethnic culture, kinship relations and heritage, Pacific migration is not quite the 'shock of the new' , that is experienced by many Northern

hemisphere diaspora, from the population flows from Asian and African countries to Europe, although it still demands reconfigurations of identity, language, and culture, and responses to white settler racism, and the violence associated with the abrupt and jolting experience of being treated as the 'other' in a foreign land.

In the rest of paper will discuss the fluidity of cultural transition /movement in artistic representation (as roots are realigned to routes (as De Loughrey and Clifford would say) is in the cultural energies that emerge in the 1970s. In examining the motif of the return in selected texts, I will also examine how indigenous, mythological forms of expressions jostle against European genres, formats and languages in the new Tangata Pasifika . as Polynesian cultural forms are reconfigured -- not eroded-- with some alignment towards western genres, a continued use of indigenous languages with linguistic mixing-- and a hybridization of cultures. Literary, visual and media representations of migration within and around the Pacific from about the early 1970s, shows forms of expression, genres, and aesthetics that borrow more from indigenous modes of communication, (dialogue, interaction, oral story telling, magic realism, Polynesian myths, fable , fairy tale that was already accommodated into the Samoan form of fagogo in the colonial period) than is found in the European diaspora novel, as artists seek to articulate a new and collective form of Pacific identity and belonging.

II. THREE TEXTS and HOME AND BELONGING

Albert Wendt , Sia Figiel, John Pule

Different Histories by Stephen Edmund Winduo

My people no longer to me

Are the people of my childhood's history
My Papa and Mama are no longer to me
The protectors of my life
My home no longer to me
My place of being
But a mere reference of my whole history.

Stephen Edmund Winduo (another scholar shipper) from PNG who went to school and university in Aotearoa/NZ illustrates in poem the kind of reconfiguration that occurs in thinking about 'home', when there is a need to reestablish a different concept of belonging -- one that loosens ties of kinship and of the individual as being identified with a particular place, to one that is more abstracted/metaphorical – my whole history. Three texts that follow show variations on this theme

In *Nuana : Pacific Writing in English since 1980*. ed. Albert Wendt.(Auckland UP , 1995); 249-50

Aotearoa/NZ's traditional economic and political influence in the region has been the source of its ongoing political and social engagement with its Pacific neighbours..

Through the decolonization process, it transformed its colonial presence into that of host for islanders from Western Samoa, the Tokelau, Niue, and the Cook Islands, (previously NZ territories) and Tonga, Fiji and Tuvalu (educational sector links)

SLIDE - DOTTED LINES ARE OF EARLIER DEPENDENCIES WHOSE INHABITANTS ARE NZ CITIZENS; STRAIGHT LINES ARE OF EDUCATIONAL LINKS This evolving demographic pattern of transnational relations has a distinct genealogy because the nation's traditional literary association with the Pacific through the Polynesian myths of migration - as well as its prominent colonial presence means that it is often treated as a South Pacific culture. **Thus** Maori writers (of the Maori renaissance) like Patricia Grace and Witi Ihimaera are aligned with the Pacific Islands like Tonga, Hawaii and Samoa. –This is now imaged in the doubled name Aotearoa/New Zealand, -- i.e. it is

both part of a Pacific island collectivity and a European nation – and evidenced in the promotion and internationalisation of its culture, e.g. *Sione's Wedding* outside of NZ is marketed as *Samoa Wedding* – so NZ the country of origin for the film, is seen as the 'native' country, as the name Sione is translated into Samoa for the benefit of the rest of the world who need a translation (of Sione into Samoa).

Wendt's first novel, *Sons for the Return Home*, (1973) described as a classic diaspora story, is set in the 1950s and 60s, a time of racial discrimination, when there was little understanding of racial and ethnic diversity. Like most diaspora texts it adapts the form of a Bildungsroman (here in fact a Künstlerroman) to the themes of a mixed race love affair, racial discrimination, and divided loyalties between host and homeland. Wendt wrote it after he returned to Samoa in c 1965 having been to school and university in Aotearoa/NZ as a scholarship student since 1953. In Samoa he promoted South Pacific Literature—while working at the University of South Pacific, and developed his concept of a new Oceania, based on transformation of the past and 'free from the taint of colonialism' (REF)- he came back to NZ in 1988 to be Professor of English at University of Auckland, thus epitomising the to and fro pattern of some migrants.

Sons for the Return Home traces the lives of a Samoan family who migrate to Aotearoa/NZ for economic and educational reasons, and it focuses on the son who falls in love with a Pealgi woman at university; the Return of the novel's title figures as a point of reference throughout. The family find the urban desolation overwhelming: the father who works in a factory along with men whose language he does not understand, feels as though he is trapped in the belly of a huge metallic

fish and the monotony of the work (which was not fit for a man) humiliating: The son realises that without the woman he loves :

this city, this country would be a barren place of exile—without her the labyrinth would eventually turn you into stone, for modern cities are the new man-made deserts in which man traps himself and bleeds himself of all his rich warm fertile humanity and goodness (129)

Seeing their lives in Aotearoa/NZ as a form of exile the family's return to Samoa after 20 years, is a moment of triumph especially for his mother, epitomising her hopes and dreams of wealth and influence (economic advantages by which cultural deprivations of being in diaspora are justified) ; so raising their social status in the island community.

So she continued throughout the years until a new mythology, woven out of her romantic memories, her legends, her illusions, and her prejudices was born in her sons: A new fabulous Samoa to be attained by her sons when they returned home after surviving the winters of a pagan country (76)

But for the son it is about disillusionment , (he was unprepared for the flies, mosquitos, the lack of sanitation etc), his betrayal by his parent's dreams of triumph and success in the classical sense of the diaspora novel (usually about intergenerational conflict) , realising they were based on fantasies /image on TV: 'So many years and now nothing more than an uncomfortable seat, as a stranger in a bus packed with mythical characters of the legends his parents had nourished him on for so long' (172). Yet there are benefits, in discovering that Samoa fails to be the Edenic home just as New Zealand fails to host the same fantasy: homecoming allows him to understand his heritage, by discovering the family secret of his grandfather's murder of his grandmother- and understanding more about with this hidden moral genealogical faultline.

As has been noted, by Paul Sharrad and others novel is gendered and presents a patriarchal world view.). But despite its clear cut distinctions (and hierarchies) between race/gender/ and place, it concludes by occupying the middle ground, in liminal position between nations, 'in the air' on flight back to Aotearoa/New Zealand, (a moment in which gender hierarchies are also inverted-) the son now exorcises memories of the girl he has loved and lost by tearing up the seven poems he has written about her, and identifies his aspirations to be a writer by taking his chances with fate, with the pan Polynesian trickster Maui who dies between the legs of Hine-nui-te-po. (the death goddess whom earlier he had seen as associated with love which ensures his mortality and destroys him)

He had nothing to regret; nothing to look forward to. All was well, He was alive; at a new beginning. He was free of his dead. He took out his pen and on the cover of the slick Technicolour tourist brochure [. . .]he wrote in large letters. *And Hine-nui-te-Po woke up and found him in there, And she crossed her legs and thus ended mans' quest for immortality.* He imagined Maui to have been happy in his death, (Sons, 217)

TWO IMAGES OF MAUI

The son's decision to leave Samoa both a typical rebellion against family as he rejects mother's position on Samoan way life in order to find his own place in the world (Sharrad) by returning to the seemingly inhospitable white settler society which he had left, distancing or alienating himself from his island life, his family and its Samoan values, and about the growth of individualismhis birth as a writer

HOME & RETURN, are therefore positioned as diametrically opposed in the novel's ending : the 'home' that he returns to in Samoa is not what he wants any more than Aotearoa /NZ is home. The title's equation between these terms is pulled apart, and

Wendt leaves existentially wide open the question of where home is, and whether even if a single place/location of homeland can now answer that need to belong (as for other migrants around the Pacific— are they interchangeable homes/homelands?). The key to this hinted-at transition comes in the narrator's statement that 'He was free of his dead'— that is, he has shedded the weight of his Polynesian heritage, the legacy of his ancestors in order to find a new path in life; and this question -- of how to come to terms with the Polynesian ancestors/way of life in a western white society -- defines a central tension in the migrant's life and I see it as a repetitive theme in the literature of this period up to the 1990s.

Sia Figiel, *Where we Once Belonged* (1996);

More than two decades later, in her debut coming-of-age narrative, *Where We Once Belonged* (1996) the performance poet/artist writer Sia Figiel engages in a gendered dialogue with Wendt's novel. The terms 'where' and 'once' of her title already suggests that 'belonging' is a romantic notion attached to a past world propped up by a falsifying essentialist value system of kinship/ religion/community. That an departure from family/cultural expectations has occurred, involving some rupture of the homogeneity of island life is suggested by positioning of the female presence as unruly, rebellious and challenging. Figiel writes through the voice of a young teenage/pubescent girl, and her friends in Male-ae-fou a small village in Samoa, as they discover sex and its alluring, disruptive powers, colliding with the strict moral and religious values of their community, and being shocked and betrayed by the hypocrisies and deceptions of their elders. More disturbing than the discoveries of the young girls, is the image of mental derangement—of the first girl from the village to go to Aotearoa/ NZ on a government scholarship. She returns with a BA and an

MA in History in 1972 – but is unrecognizable to the islanders and tears up her BA and burns her MA certificate

After that day Siniva started walking round the streets of Apia. She walked barefoot with a lavalava around her waist and her breasts hanging under a shocking pink polyester jacket. [...] She would sit under the clock in Apia and smoke banana leaves and wave at Palagis.
'Go back to where you came from you fucking ghosts! Gauguin is dead, There is no Paradise! (*Where we Once Belonged*, 187)

Siniva's demolition of Palagi romantic myths of the Pacific island, represented by Gauguin's painting, is one that a postcolonial writer like Wendt would approve of, but her critique comes at a personal sacrifice. Furthermore her abjection is a pointed contrast to the grand return of the son in his novel. As the most educated man on the island with two degrees (like Siniva) he is seen as a hero by the receptionist in the hotel where he is staying (she has read about him in the paper), who falls in love with him. Sia Figiel's abject woman, therefore, illustrates the risk of education, of becoming westernized and dispensing with colonial idealisation of island cultures, but with nothing else as a substitute. Wendt's hero turns to alternative indigenous myths of pre-colonisation to shape a sense of himself and his destiny and to establish a critical distance from the Samoan social structures. More realistically the fate of Figiel's woman corresponds to the clash of expectations between the 'fa'asamoa' (Samoan way- the collectivity) and the western ways, a conflict experienced by many young Samoan girls living or recently migrated to Aotearoa/New Zealand who were brought up according to strict moral codes; in interview one of them says: 'It wasn't til I moved away from my home environment that I realised I had no self identity [...] I really felt I was going crazy'.²

² Anna Marie Tupoloa "Fa'asomoa in the 1990s: Young Samoan Women Speak' in

John Puhiaatau Pule: *The Shark that Ate the Son : Ko e Mapo ne Kai e La (1992).* In

contrast to the expectations of home, belonging and return in Wendt and Figiel's work is John Pule's debut novel, told from the point of view of a young boy, Fisi, and referring to a different ethnic group, the Niuean Islanders, who are in the novel part of a large colourful Polynesian community based in South Auckland : for such a community in the 1960s and 70s the return is not an option although the island where they came from, and their Pacific identity as shaped by that island experience influence them in ways they can neither understand or resolve. Like Wendt's hero, the father, Puhia, who migrates from 'The Rock', finds that entering this modern world makes him aware of his mortality :

Living in New Zealand there is a new horizon that is more powerful than the word death, look at my house magic light spits from the ceiling at the turn of a switch my own little sun in my own square box. (56)

And this reconstruction of a fatal conflict, between dispossession and dislocation, and liberation into the false promise of modernity, provides the core of the story which revolves around the father's lack of resources in establishing his new life. A manual worker, he along with other Polynesian labourers, who see themselves as being at the bottom of the social stratum seemingly live only for their own company and that of women at the end of teach day, where they squander their earnings in the various pubs dotted round central/west Auckland: as the family move about from Ponsonby Rd., Grey Lynn, to the West Auckland suburb of Otara

On Karangahape Road, on little Polynesian Street, that's where the Niueans drink, at the infamous Family and Naval and The Rising Sun, where men get drunk and shuffle from one tavern to another; where bloody fights paint the walls red and men are thrown into police wagons (55), But family also feel that they along with other

Polynesians were deliberately ghettoized, made abject and forgotten by the rest of the society because

It was the policy of the time to push the labourers, low income earners, back, back to the south, back south land is cleared of bush, farmhouses, and in its place houses, block houses, cheap ugly, So there we were Polynesian, outcasts, living in a state house, with others like ourselves. (183). Raises the question of whether they are abject: they are officially part of the state and entitled to the same rights as other citizens; not officially excluded from its cultural limits, but neither are they particularly encouraged to better themselves—although at the end the man in the remand school tells Fisi to get out and not to undertake manual laboring jobs or he will become like the others. (Powers of Horror, 2)

Alcohol, violence, family abuse, poverty, domestic chaos, are the litany of his father's behaviour until the day he dies, as he drinks to 'forget Niue, forget home, forget the dusty roads, forget the plantation, the melon fields, the coconuts, the crabs, the fish and the church, the church that sucks money from the poor, forget everything from the past'. (56) and the narrator comments on the futility of his lifestyle and the monstrosity and desparation it breeds in him :

Behind Puhia was a cruel and unkind man who in reality was sick of life, what it did to him, bringing him all the way here to this spot, on this vast land, to be housed in a box. So far away from home, The past had caught up with him., slowly and unawares. It buried his mind in a haze of ghosts and curses. (200)

To the father and other Niueans Aotearoa/NZ is some kind of Nirvana, Puhia had first arrived in 1944 and was soon shipped back to the rock for his inability to handle alcohol, and he worked hard, married again, had a new family (including the narrator aged 2) and migrated a second time .. Niue (described as an uplifted coral island between Tonga and Samoa) IMAGE was annexed by NZ in 1901 and became

self-governing in 1974 (after this family had migrated) - the novel suggests that colonisation imposed a level of religious and moral rigidity which crippled the people's spirit, reducing their life force, repressing them as a third world culture: in fact it was so harsh that three prisoners escaped from jail one night in 1953 and murdered the Commissioner, NZ's representative, who jailed Niueans for drinking alcohol, gambling, adultery and holding hands in public in the belief that they were ridding themselves of a tyrant (Alison Horwood News report, 16 September 2002) .

So the Niuean pathology in response to cultural displacement hints at the condition of the refugee in the sense of being rejected- which seems paradoxical as they are in fact NZ citizens, but they can be considered in this light (more than the Samoans) not because they are seeking asylum or are stateless, but because living conditions in Niue are not fit for the modern world. See the definition by the civil rights lawyer B.S. Chimni::

in search of an escape from perceived injustice or fundamental incompatibility with her home state. She distrusts the authorities who have rendered continued residence in her country of origin either impossible or intolerable, and desires the opportunity to build a new life abroad.³

Niue Islanders suffering from economic deprivation and social disempowerment are escapees from a limited island society which offers few expectations and opportunities for younger generations, and is opposed to modernity. As Peter Simpson in a review of Pules' work says: the book tells of a people, colonized, Christianised, dislocated, relocated (Landfall) . Memories of the land and places they cannot return to are captured in stories, legends, folk tales, which they tell

³ B.S. Chimni, "Who is a Refugee?," in *International Refugee Law: A Reader*, ed. B.S. Chimni (New Delhi: Sage, 2000): 18.

in the pub,, and many of these are transposed into Pule's eclectic mix of literary genres and modes, , in which letters, stories, poems, historical accounts are interwoven with the boy's narrative of family life in Auckland. Such a subliminal attachment can be described in terms of Kristeva's semiotic, the prenatal pre-linguistic communication that exists between mother and child. - while the realm of the symbolic the law of the father- the one of acquired societal behaviour, including communicable language and the unwritten codes of power as they operate in any given society –is represented by that of the country to which they have arrived, western, neither particularly hospitable nor understanding of their plight—this seems out of their reach .⁴ As the boy says 'Migrancy is a form of truancy' (WHERE) a perception of the anarchy associated with movement, which acquires an aesthetic dimension in art. In both his writing and his painting, Pule fuses the real and legendary into the same space, blending images, representational and abstract, traditional and private- [showing a fractured chronology slippages in narrative view point, exotic symbolism] as witnessed in the surreal prose poetic opening:

The year robs the soul's river and leaves fat creatures with old eyes wearing sunglasses. I see a mountain overpopulated with the working class, the outcast, the drunkards, the black, the poor, the Polynesian , the white.

The blue sky has that melancholic countenance of islanders when their eyes become telluric wastes, instrumental sounds of countries destroyed. (*The Shark that Ate the Sun*, 9-10)

These subliminal ties to the island society that constantly pull the men back in memory – like that of the father in Albert Wendt's novel who wanted to be close to the land of Samoa when in NZ and to continue farming-- underpin the

⁴ 35 Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, tr. Leon S. Roudiez (Pouvoirs de l'horreur: essai sur l'abjection, 1980; New York: Columbia UP, 1982): 2.

mysterious illness that one man, Lagaono, succumbs to and who is sent 'back home to where the gods are the only hope for his recovery, and to find out the cause of the sickness. He went back home to Niue, back home to the village where he was born, to the darkness which breeds legends and superstition. He died in the village not long after he arrived. Goodbye.' (238).

III. Since the 1990s

I AM—A Samoan...but not a Samoan
To my 'aiga in Samoa...I am a "Palagi" (extended family/ white man European
foreigner)
I AM—A New Zealander...but not a New Zealander
To New Zealanders... I am a "bloody coconut," at worst,
Or a "Pacific Islander," at best
I AM—To my Samoan parents... their child.

[Melani Anae , 'Papalagi redefined: Toward a New Zealand-Born Samoan Identity' in *Pacific Diaspora: Island Peoples in the United States and Across the Pacific*, ed. Paul Spickard, Joanne L. Rondilla and Debbie Hippolite Wright (Honolulu: University of Hawai' Press, 2002), 150-160 (150)]

Conflicting images and stereotypes that complicate identity for migrant

A different pattern of settlement and migration emerged in the late 1980s when the total number of New Zealand-born Samoans exceeded the number of those who had migrated to the country; that created a defining moment in the development of a Tagata Pacifika identity among the Samoan community (Fleras and Spoonley, 1999, 209)⁵ Second and third generations of Samoans and other islanders (like the Niueans) develop new identities and distinctive cultural characteristics with Aotearoa/NZ as

⁵ Fleras and Spoonley ?; Paul Spoonley and Cluny MacPherson, "Transnational New Zealand: Immigrants, Cross-border Connections and Activities". In *Tangata tangata: the Changing Ethnic Contours of New Zealand*, ed. Paul Spoonley, MacPherson and Pearson (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 2004), p. 180

the host society, and they provide a highly localized PI cultural presence that is particularly visible in Auckland, now the largest Pacific city in the world. . IMAGE Furthermore the nation's identity as a multicultural pacific rim society has subsequently become more complex and nuanced due to the diverse literary and media representations that have emerge from the Polynesian diasporic communities. The migrant experience has been represented in other visual/oral genres that engage with media stereotypes and preconceptions about racial and ethnic difference and redeploy them for comic effect; a vibrant creative multiculturalism. Comic theatre groups like the Pacific Underground Company, and the Naked Samoans, and in the 1990s the comic TV series 'Skitz' (Keown, p.47 *Moving Worlds*, 8.2. (2008)), and *bro'town* draw on indigenous motifs of the oral comedy sketch notably the *fale aitu* (House of spirits) use collaborative methods, rely on communal understanding of local, oral jokes and insights, all traceable to the folk humour of Samoan culture and subservient attitude to political authority) and partly anticipated by the populist elements in Wendts' early work.

Instead of the trope of the return, therefore is the revitalized concept of the arrival, drawing on the setting and stories of those migrants who are by now established or were born in Niu Sila, known as, 'this place we now call home'. This is how *Fresh off the Boat*, a play by Oscar Kightley and Simon Small, starts and it comically redeploys familiar stereotypes, drawing upon a widened domestic ethnic and social base: instead of the nuclear migrant family, is a Samoan mother with her NZ-born daughters; her white boyfriend and another NZ born Samoan, of her daughters' age, called Samoa. FOB is a well known epithet (used by Pule) for the new arrival, and the comedy turns not just on the cultural gap, the misconceptions and

misunderstanding -- that occur when their family's uncle Charles, arrive from Samoa (p.12), but also on the assumptions and expectations of the audience. Among the stereotypes that are overturned or mocked are: NZ is an Edenic land of milk and honey, migration is a form of liberation, new arrivals spend all their money in the pub, migrants live in a ghetto, Samoans are a homogenous group, as Charles announces at the end, 'We are all Samoans', when his sister accuses him of trying to change the family's lifestyle back to a Samoan one (62); this play and others reintroduce Polynesian voice, language and culture through linguistic mixing; and in place of the motif/trope of the return, the New Zealand-born second generations of Samoan children who have never visited their ancestral island homeland, discover where they came from in encountering a FOB arrival who represents the island's social, cultural and linguistic specificity, and explodes their own stereotypes of what Samoa is.

CONCLUSION

The shift toward the popular culture of the 2nd and 3rd generation of migrants in Aotearoa/New Zealand with, emphasis on the visual, on parody, satire and on linguistic borrowing and innovation is comparable to Asian British culture of the 1990s with popular TV shows by Meera Syal, e.g. *The Kumars of No 9*, *Life is Not all Ho Ho Ha Ha Hee Hee*, films *Bend it Like Beckham* and *East is East*, light hearted and entertaining and knowing of cultural differences as expressed through relativizing attitudes. The episodic narrative structure of *Sons for the Return Home*, and *The Shark that Ate the Sun*, tends to disappear in the later versions of the PI diaspora culture. It appears in film scripts, e.g. *No 2*, and *Sione's Wedding* by Toa Fraser, but; other aesthetic modes – discontinuous narrative, juxtaposition take over in the collective collaborations between multiple ethnic minorities: Maori, Chinese, Pacific Islanders

. What is lost, however, is the existential, male-oriented dilemma, the focus on the protagonist's state of mind, the growth of individuality and self awareness as the subject/ protagonist struggles to find ta place and identity. Providing a cultural presence that refuses to bow to assimilation but instead marks up identity distinctiveness and difference.? The second generation more articulate about the cultural hybridity and their place in the nation's imaginary, less concerned with home and belonging than the first – confirming the diaspora experience elsewhere. To reinvoke the new model of the Pacific region with which I began, the end of this phase of migration shows that transnational movement, has energized a cultural fluidity, anchored to a new land, and emanating from a multicultural base .