CULTURE AND IDENTITY IN OCEANIA
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The Role of the University of the South Pacific

A Report by Ulli & Georgina Beier

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THE DECOLONISATION OF THE MIND
The universities throughout Africa and the Pacific were colonial institutions. They were created by colonial administrations when they realised that they would have to hand over power to indigenous governments, and that there was a need to create a reliable elite trained in the modes of Western thinking.

This was not so much a hidden agenda as sheer ignorance and arrogance: many British academics could not conceive of the existence of any worth while culture in the world other than their own and they believed that the primary task of a university in a British Colony was "to uphold British standards". In 1950 the foundation professor of history in the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, could proclaim in all earnestness: "there is no such thing as African history: there is only the history of the British in Africa." He was not contradicted by any of the staff and the syllabus was constructed accordingly. After all, the colonial education ordinance stated clearly that "education is an instrument of change."

Literature was by definition "English Literature", beginning with Anglo-Saxon. No French was taught, even though Nigeria was surrounded by French speaking countries. Communication with neighbouring countries was not encouraged. Instead the students could study Latin and Greek to degree level. Nigerian students could go through this university without ever being made aware of the existence of African kingdoms, African religion, poetry, art or music. They acquired tastes in European clothing and were lured with the prospect of high salaries into habits of consumerism that alienated them from the rest of the population.

The new ruling classes of African countries did not always act in the interests of their own people. The sellout of the Ogoni people of Nigeria to foreign commercial interests, the ruthless exploitation and destruction of their environment by the oil giant "Shell", the judicial murder of the writer and civil rights leader Ken Saro-Wiwa are only extreme examples of the total alienation of African elites.

Forty-six years after independence many Nigerian are still thinking in Western terms. They still evaluate their country in terms of Western concepts of development and through the jargon of the World Bank. Only a minority of Nigerian intellectuals are fighting for true independence of mind, for alternative solutions that suit their own country rather than the commercial interests of the West. African universities, by and large, have failed in their primary duty, which should have been to initiate the process of "decolonising the mind."

The University of the South Pacific founded two decades after the University colleges of Ibadan and Accra had the advantage of learning from other's experience. The British model was never imposed as crassly here as it was in Africa. An Institute of Pacific Studies became part of the initial concept, whereas it took sixteen years in Nigeria for the universities to think of African studies.
Nevertheless USP is being accused by many members of its own staff of having failed to give its students a sense of Pacific identity. It is argued that the training is merely job orientated and what education a student has is essentially the same as what he or she would receive in Auckland or Sydney.

It is being said that USP is indifferent to - even hostile to - the traditional arts and culture of the Pacific Islands, that it has accepted the notion that Pacific Islands are small, helpless and utterly dependent on Western countries, and that they have no choice except to integrate themselves into Western modes of living. If that entails allowing foreign business interests to exploit resources at the expense of the people - that's too bad. All's well as long as the World Bank is happy?

It is further stated that many students can go through USP believing that Pacific History begins with the coming of the Mission, that "the period of darkness" before the "bringing of the light" is not worth knowing about. The unique way of life of the Pacific Islands, its grandeur, its aesthetic refinement, its heroic stance and peculiar forms of cruelty remain taboo subjects to many.

We feel that such criticism levelled at USP by its own staff is unfair or at least exaggerated. The number of courses that deal specifically with Oceanic culture, history, literature, agriculture, etc. are impressive. But many of these courses are optional or they are not given sufficient prominence in the degree structure.

There is a strong awareness amongst the staff of USP that things ought to change. Professor Epeli Hau'ofa's stimulating essay *A New Oceania: Our Sea of Islands* and the numerous responses it provoked show that the staff is not lacking in awareness of the issues, but that the fault tends to lie in the slowness and cumbrousness of the decision making process in the institution. We should like to conclude this introduction with two quotations from *Our Sea of Islands* which stand for many others we could have chosen:

> We are quite good in training experts: accountants, economists, earth scientists, even English language specialists! Why don't we teach island values of wealth-sharing rather than wealth-accumulation?

*(Eric Waddell)*

Western political, financial and economic systems which we have adopted or adapted and relied upon to plan our future, are in a state of disarray unable to respond adequately to changes experienced by Western societies themselves, let alone those which have inherited these systems.

If we accept the view that these systems have become obsolete or have lost their resilience all of us in a position to influence others have an obligation to question the validity of those systems and to devise new ones if they are found wanting.
Are we able to make the distinction between the much used and more abused terms "standard of living" and "quality of life"? Should we not when interacting with the thousands of our students whose lives we are in a position to shape, be guided by the principle that such intangibles as our culture, legends, traditions, beliefs and values contribute at least as much to our quality of life as do our material acquisitions? For is it not true that bread alone is insufficient sustenance for man?

(Hari Ram)
PROBLEMS AND PITFALLS
Tourism

Governments in countries that were formerly under colonial rule far too often promote the view that tourism helps to keep their culture alive. This is a very convenient viewpoint to take: it exonerates the administrators from pursuing a cultural policy. Above all tourism pays for cultural activities and thus relieves the government of its own responsibility. The reality is, however, that tourism can be a serious obstacle to a meaningful development of contemporary art in any new nation. Artists, dancers and musicians perform to satisfy the cliché image which the tourist has of Pacific islanders. As a result, performances, even by very competent, professional dancers, all too often degenerate into a night club act.

Albert Wendt, in an article called Contemporary Art in Oceania: trying to stay alive as an artist in Paradise\(^1\) has said it all better than we ever could, and we therefore wish to quote him here at length:

But first let me deal with what is being advanced by some of our leaders and the captains of the 'saintly' tourist industry, as proof of that recovery. You can travel throughout Oceania (including New Zealand and Australia) and find, mushrooming and proliferating everywhere, international arts and crafts geared to the palate of the outsiders, especially tourists. Dance, music, architecture and food are even affected. The promoters claim that this art is solid proof of an artistic revival, and, even more important, of how the 'generous' tourist industry is reviving Oceanic arts, (some of which were dead!)

Art objects in our pre-papalagi societies had a meaning directly related to those societies. The clients who now want these traditional objects do not understand or care about their traditional functions; they want what they deem to be 'authentic traditional art'. And the more sensational and grotesque and exotic it is, the better. So to stay alive, our artists and craftsmen produce lifeless imitations and much inferior art.

This fake tradition has become a straitjacket for most of our artists. And, because in most of our countries there are no alternative clients to tourists, this tradition is intensifying. Most of our artists are imprisoned in tourist artifact shops aglitter with masks, lampstands, spears, tikis, war clubs, miniature canoes, crocodiles and turtles and dolphins and snakes (and other creatures such as monkeys, often not of the country), swords, grotesque carvings of every size and shape, and copy upon copy of African and Asian carvings. They are even giving the tourists the exaggerated primitive that they are looking for: fornicateing pigs, outsized penises, more ferocious grimaces and teeth. All under varnish. From Suva to Vila to Honiara to Port Moresby. From Apia to Alofi to Avarua (and a penis-anchored Tangaroa) to the gift shops of Kiwiland and Aus-sieland. Double-tragedy! Nearly all the artifacts shops are either pakeha-owned or foreign-owned or both!

Once a year, at least, in nearly all our main towns, hefty exhibitions of paintings are held. These are usually the work of evening art classes or groups of weekend painters. The painters are usually housewives (and expatriates) who can afford the oil paints and brushes and their time. The art teachers are usually expatriate and well-meaning in their attempt to 'raise' local art standards.

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\(^1\) In: Sydney M. Mead and Bernie Kernot: "Art and Artists in Oceania".
These polite exhibitions are being peddled as good art, as exemplifying high artistic standards which should be emulated by the local artists. Art courses in our schools also perpetuate these mediocre standards.

The same paintings keep appearing year after year, exhibition after exhibition, only the artists’ names being different. Clichéd seas and shores, corny palm trees, orderly un-lived-in native huts, blazing orange and pink sunsets, nobly-shaped maidens and warriors. All so tame. And nice. And lifeless.

There was a painting competition at the First South Pacific Arts Festival. The first prize of $1000 (given by an expatriate tourist resort owner) was awarded (by the sole judge who was an American professor) to an expatriate housewife for her painting of a coconut lying on the ground, sprouting.

Tourist and weekend art are acting as major barriers to the emergence of a vital Oceanic art which reflects the realities of our societies in truly unique Oceanic ways, styles, images, and symbols.

One of many typical examples of the impact of the tourist industry on the arts is the recently built National Cultural Centre in Nuku’alofa. The Japanese who donated the buildings made a magnificent job of it. Huge steel beams, that are laced with sinnet, and support the curved thatched roofs. The method may be unorthodox, but it works both aesthetically and structurally. We were told that the buildings are actually modelled on a Samoan ‘fale’ rather than a Tongan meeting house, but the people of Tonga don’t seem to mind that. The Samoans had so much cultural influence on Tonga that such a building does not look strange in Nuku’alofa.

The centre has a museum section that displays some beautiful old carvings (mainly weapons and head rests) and historical photographs of early European contact and of the Royal Family. The photographs are gradually disintegrating. There are several portraits of members of the Royal Family of Tonga, competently painted in oil colours in a nineteenth century European “photographic” style. The pavilion designated to "modern art" has a display of baskets, mats and tapa of indifferent quality and being more or less identical with similar displays in the various craft shops down town. The term "modern" here seems to refer to a number of smaller tourist paintings, executed on tapa cloth, but being artistically very inferior to traditional designs.

Every afternoon groups of tourists are taken on a conducted tour, and can watch tapa making, mat weaving and wood carving in progress. Human beings as "exhibits" are an embarrassment at the best of times, but this "token" display is both absurd and humiliating. Whereas tapa making is normally a group activity, here a single woman was commanded by the young male guide to demonstrate the process of beating, stencilling and drawing. The sham performance lasted less than ten minutes. The artist looked depressed, even cowed. The guide treated the artist like a servant. He had no real information to offer on the technical processes, the dyes, the names of the designs or their symbolism. This
"demonstration" of traditional culture was an embarrassment for both artist and spectators. The tapa on display at the cultural centre is of indifferent quality - but significantly, the same artist had some magnificent works to show at home, where she was working with her regular tapa-making group in the traditional context.

No university can prevent the development of tourist culture. But it is both the duty and the function of a university to enlighten their students, the public and the government on its effects and to ensure that this pseudo-activity is not mistaken for the real thing by the people themselves. Tourist culture is a form of prostitution, and like every form of prostitution it ends in an act of mutual humiliation.²

Tourism is not only a problem in the Pacific or other "Third World" countries, but also in Europe. In Spain long stretches of beach have been turned into concrete jungles. Entire islands are being taken over by noisy, beer-drinking German tourists. In Italy anti-tourist feeling has run so high that one is advised not to drive a car with a German number plate! Because of the disastrous impact of tourism on the social and cultural life of Southern Europe a research institute has been set up in Munich to study the social, cultural, environmental and political costs of tourism. Drawing their lessons from this, a number of tourist agencies in Germany now offer what is known as "alternative tourism".

It caters for serious people: doctors, artists, academics who are not satisfied with staying in luxury hotels (owned by foreign firms!) and being served a kind of "Ersatz" culture in the form of "native" floor shows. These firms offer lectures on the art, culture and politics of the countries to be visited. They compile reading lists for the travellers. Trips are accompanied by knowledgeable guides. The travellers stay in locally owned hotels, eat only local food and arrangements are made for them to meet writers, artists and musicians in the country. They travel in small groups, usually not exceeding ten and are concerned that foreign-currency earnings end up in the hands of local people, not with multinational corporations who export their profits back to Europe or America. Such alternative tourist agencies also have stands at the Berlin tourist fair that takes place every March and which is usually attended by representatives of the Ministries for Tourism of Pacific countries.

The University of the South Pacific could, by preparing a thorough study on the cultural and social costs of mass tourism, help to influence the various Pacific Governments, with the hope that they may encourage the development of an alternative tourist industry, instead of the overall sell-out to multinationals, who pursue their own profits and who care little about the long term interests of the countries in which they operate.

² For further discussion of the impact of tourism on culture see also: Peter Kros: "Tourism: Encouraging Tradition or merely an "idiotic performance"?, Institute of PNG Studies, Discussion Paper No. 10, 1975.
Aid

In modern society the arts cannot subsist without some kind of patronage - but at the same time the artist must be able to maintain his independence from social, political and economic pressures. In Western societies big businesses blatantly use the arts as a form of advertising or as an image-building device. Many of the industries that have a bad public image because of the disastrous effect they have on the environment, hand out largesse to the arts in order to persuade the public that they are not mere exploiters, but rather firms who care about their social responsibilities. It is rare to find sponsors in Europe who support the arts because they take a genuine pleasure in supporting creative activities.

In the Pacific the universal and simple answer to funding the arts appears to be aid. Every time we tentatively tried to suggest a cultural project to USP, the automatic answer was: well, we might ask UNESCO to fund this, or we can talk to the Australian Embassy about this ... as if no form of creative activity is worth having, unless somebody else pays for it. No doubt, Pacific Island States cannot do away with aid - nor can USP. But total dependency on aid is a dangerous thing, because the aid donors usually have economic and political interest in the country. Aid creates dependency.

The embassy officials who actually negotiate the aid deals are mostly people with a genuine interest in - and often love for - the local culture. But the people who later-on use aids dependency to twist a government's arm are a different lot of diplomats or businessmen. A simple and obvious example: those who protested vigorously and forcefully against the French atomic tests at Mururoa were Australia, New Zealand and Japan rather than the countries who were most affected. The latter couldn't afford to be outspoken. Too much dependency on aid is humiliating.

In *Rediscovering our Sea of Islands*, Vijay Naidu says:

The flourishing aid industry in the Pacific benefits metropolitan based consultants and experts more than it does Island peoples.

There is a category of well educated islanders whose preoccupation is to keep pace with the latest international fad with respect to aid so that they can write up projects and be rewarded handsomely by way of employment and consultancy at UN rates.

Smallness, however you define it, is something deliberately cultivated by some Pacific Island nations to attract sympathy (and more aid money) from the developed world.

The humiliations to which Pacific Islanders are subjected when they try to depend too much on aid are brilliantly analysed in Epeli Hau'ofa's story *The Glorious Pacific Way* (in *Tales*
of the Tikongs) which should become required reading for anybody dealing with the arts in the Pacific.

The impact of total dependency on aid is perfectly illustrated by a theatre company that is operating from one of the islands and which depends 100% on British aid. Currently the company receives £300,000 per annum. The director explained that to attract international funding it is advisable to deal with themes that are currently in with such organisations, for example: environmental themes like logging, pollution, the endangered reef and so on (atomic testing is out, because that might offend aid giving bodies of allied countries). Another group of themes are family conflicts, women rights and - of course - AIDS. Such themes are laudible in themselves; and one function of a theatre group could be to act as an arm of the office of Information or as a division of the education department to propagate certain topical issues. On the other hand, if theatre wants to fulfil its function as an independent art form it must also be prepared to take critical views of government and society - like Vilsoni Hereniko's The Monster or Sudesh Mishra's Ferringhi. That would be extremely difficult, if the project depended entirely on foreign aid. No foreign government would be prepared to upset its business relations with the aid receiving country for the sake of an idealistic local playwright.

Vijay Naidu's statement "the flourishing aid industry in the Pacific benefits metropolitan based experts more than it does islands people" is borne out by the above example. After six years of operation the expatriate directors of the company still write and produce all the plays (as we see in the video they produced about their own operation) and in one instance the costumes were ordered from a company in Melbourne. In one case a serious subject (the dangers to the reef) is trivialised in a Walt Disney manner. Here style and language of the production are a total imposition. Considering the fact that lively, committed and skillful playwrights have been operating out of USP on a shoe string (Larry Thomas, Vilsoni Hereniko, Sudesh Misra) this lavishly aid-funded company does more harm than good. The themes are worth while, the actors talented - but they do not speak or move like Pacific Islanders and the ideas, initiative, expertise, and money all come from overseas.

An aid project is only successful, if - within a number of years - it makes itself superfluous. Not only should local people take over the responsibility and the directorship, but the project must become so successful that the government will see the need to carry the responsibility for its continuation after the aid money has dried up. It is particularly dangerous, therefore, if aid projects start on too lavish a scale, for that means that chances of a local organisation taking over are remote from the beginning. We have all come to accept the fact that aid is necessary, in fact unavoidable, and we might just as well make the best of it. We are all put to shame, however, by one man who created his own university virtually unaided. That is Futa Helu who created the Atenisi University in Nuku'alofa as a truly
independent institution. Of course, he has had to pay the price: he earns no big salary, lives in a house that many USP lecturers would regard as a slum dwelling. He built his university in a swamp and it has taken him years and enormous efforts to fill in even part of it with crushed coral. Yet he has found good staff who are willing to work for him under these conditions, his students (as we can testify from the many people we met who had gone either through his High School or his University) adore him and adore the institution. Even though his concept of education was decried as eccentric by many, he has won world wide recognition and his students are given full credit for courses taken at Atenisi in Australia, New Zealand, the US - in fact world wide.

The Tongan government has given him no support other than allowing him to build on a piece of swamp that no one else wanted. But it means that he can be fiercely independent in his teaching and in his public statements, in addition he can criticise both church and state in a way no one else in Tonga can, because even his enemies respect his unique achievement and acknowledge his fiercely independent spirit. Futa Helu has always put the contents of education first. He is not interested in amenities, comforts or pension schemes. That is why he could largely dispense with aid.3

No doubt some people will argue that there is only one Futa Helu in this world and that he is merely the exception to the rule. But we must bear in mind that aid can be a useful stimulus and incentive, it can help people to overcome the initial hurdles. But if aid is not matched by a comparable local effort it becomes potentially dangerous and invariably absurd.

To end this chapter: here is a classical example. As a gesture for independence USIS donated sets of 150 books to some of the smaller Nigerian local government councils. Some of these books were "know-how" books, but the majority dealt with patriotic American history - the heroes of colonialisation, the Civil War, World War II, etc. They celebrated the American way of life and American ideals: freedom, democracy, opportunity. There is of course nothing wrong with that. Why should Nigerians not read about the American way of life? But the trouble was, that the local government councils never spent their annual library vote (meagre as it was) so that towns with 20.000 or 60.000 inhabitants found themselves with a library equipped solely with American books!

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3 See also: "Atenisi: A unique Experiment in the Pacific. An Interview with Futa Helu", IWALEWA Haus 1996 (in print).
The Media

Creative activity cannot take place in a vacuum. It serves a purpose within the community. In the so-called "traditional" communities of the Pacific, the artist's position in society was clear. A woman making masi or a man carving an image knew exactly what function their work would fulfil in the society. They knew by what criteria the work would be judged and who would want it. There were fixed situations when people danced; songs related to specific events and performers played to "captive" audiences. In certain areas of life this situation has not changed: a church choir is still singing for a captive audience and a group of women producing tapa cloth still works in a context of social exchange.

Once the artist moves into the area of experimental art forms, the audience is not ready made: it has to be built up laboriously over the years. A painter working in a modern, very individual style, a playwright taking a critical view of society, a musician experimenting with new forms, or multicultural music must work to build up his or her audience over years - sometimes decades.

In a contemporary situation much depends on the cooperation of the mass media, and this is where a particularly unfortunate situation exists in the Pacific. Fiji has two newspapers: one is owned by the Murdoch empire, the other by the government. In fact they are indistinguishable from one another. Both are there primarily to serve commercial interests. More than 50\% of the space is taken up by advertisements (mostly from foreign supermarket chains). Many "articles" are in fact adverts in disguise. The news coverage is flimsy: only sport and the British Royal family receive systematic coverage. The monthly Review is highly praised for its bold investigative journalism; but its interests centre on the economy and on business rather than on the arts.

Fiji radio does an important job in broadcasting local pop music such as Fude, but the station is also run like a business, with no pretensions towards cultural responsibility. The radio station expects USP to pay for any cultural programme that it submits for broadcast. In other words: a programme that is produced with the intent to further the education of the people of Fiji or a programme that tries to introduce new cultural developments to the public are treated by them as an advertisement.

The same situation is said to obtain in most other countries of the Pacific region. In Tonga the radio station is broadcasting a great deal of Tongan music - but any new composition is subjected to a kind of censorship. A review committee is listening - not so much to the tune, but to the text. The text should not be too direct, but it should - in the traditional manner - express itself only in oblique metaphors. It is felt that some of these new emotio-
nal texts are vulgar, coarse and foreign. I can sympathise with the feelings behind this vetting of modern song texts, but ultimately it is counter productive and impedes innovation! It would be far better for the radio station to broadcast the new songs, and then stimulate a public debate on their merits or otherwise. In this way the radio could make a positive contribution to the development of contemporary music in Tonga.

Ironically, the very same radio station that is so finnicky about Tongan song texts, puts no restriction at all on the broadcasting of Fijian, Samoan, or American pop music. It is argued that since most people do not understand the foreign languages, not much harm can be done. This is an absurdity. In an effort to protect the "purity" of traditional Tongan values, the radio actually favours foreign music at the expense of the local product - not intentionally, but de facto.

Of all the radio stations in the Pacific, the one on the Solomon Islands is the most active and successful in promoting the arts. Creative writing, story telling, drama, music, are all given regular spots. This is largely due to the commitment, energy and imagination of its programme director Julius Maka'a. Unfortunately, however, the government of the Solomon Islands is currently taking steps to commercialise the radio station. Privatisation will mean the end of the cultural programmes and - like most other stations in the Pacific - the broadcasts will be "trivialised!" USP should now intercede with the Ministry of Information in the Solomon Islands and warn them of the high price the country will pay in the long term by the privatisation of its only radio station.

Television in Fiji amounts to indoctrination with foreign values. It promotes heavy consumerism, shows almost exclusively foreign films of a cheap soap-opera variety, and has a news programme that is more interested in social events than in politics. Its contribution to the culture of Fiji is nil. Radio and television can be, and should be, major tools for education, rather than cheap forms of entertainment. They could be used to develop critical opinions and debates on national issues. They could be used to acquaint the nation with the latest developments in their constantly changing cultures. Instead they are being employed by foreign businesses to further colonise the minds of the people and make them more dependent on foreign goods, foreign expertise and foreign aid.

Because governments have the power to issue and withdraw licences and they have the option of attaching conditions to their licences, they ultimately call the shots. Between 1974 and 1978 the National Broadcasting Corporation of PNG was government owned and made only limited use of advertising. The Institute of PNG Studies had a large input into its cultural programmes. A research fellow of the Institute produced a dozen radio plays - and this was by no means the only source of radio drama. Many plays by students of UPNG
were adapted for the radio. The Institute of PNG Studies ran its own series of programmes, for example:

- POETRY (where the work of young PNG writers was juxtaposed with poetry from around the world);
- THE ARTS IN THE THIRD WORLD, a series to draw attention to the second BLACK ARTS FESTIVAL in Lagos (1977)
- RELIGIOUS MUSIC (both Christian and non-Christian)
- MELANESIAN FOLKLORE and many others.

These programmes were being listened to and used as teaching tools by most High Schools in PNG. This is merely a small example of what can be done in the educational and cultural field through a government controlled radio station.
What can USP do?

1) USP might start its own radio station.

We hear this is already happening, but it is a pity that this station is to be the voice of the students only. Student radio is very important, particularly as an opportunity for the students to become professional broadcasters, but the staff of USP should also have an outlet - whether on this wavelength or another one. Systematic broadcasts on cultural topics or on Pacific Studies could make a great deal of difference not only to highschools, but to the general public in Fiji. Programmes produced at USP and broadcast locally should then be sent out to all the regional centres. It is a shame that at the time of writing this report, the students of USP felt obliged to give a public reassurance that they had no intention of using the radio station criticising the government! No culture can develop without an open discussion.

2) An attempt could be made to persuade a local Newspaper or Journal to allow staff of the USP to run a regular cultural page (not as an "official" USP organ, but on a more generalized basis).

Many newspapers neglect the arts, not only because they think culture is not important, but also because they have no staff to handle it. When we started the Mbari Writers and Artists Club in Ibadan (Nigeria) in 1961 (with Wole Soyinka, Christopher Okigbo and others) we went around all editorial offices of newspapers in Lagos and Ibadan to persuade them to run a review section, so that our exhibitions, plays etc could be discussed. Invariably, we were told that they had no staff competent to do it. We then organised our friends at the University of Ibadan and between them they ran weekly review pages for six newspapers. Within a year the papers had their own staff to take over. By then, of course, a public demand had been created for this kind of thing. (We have experienced that most newspapers in many countries underestimate the intelligence of their readers.)

3) USP could try to influence the media policy of the respective governments in the region.

Surely there must be enough USP graduates in influential positions in Government and the Public service for the University to have some kind of access? Perhaps a UNESCO conference on media policy could be organised?
Bureaucracies are necessary - but they are inevitable evils. As they grow, they become self-perpetuating and loose a sense of reality. They become a law unto themselves. When that happens they no longer serve the cause for which they were created.

A perfect example is the bureaucracy of the European Union which suddenly has grown so unwieldy that it has begun to endanger the very future of the organisation because of complex new laws and regulations which it spawns. As a result of their insensitivity there has been a rise of local patriotism - even chauvinism - throughout Europe. There have been anti-European demonstrations, even riots. People do not want to be told that they must stop producing a certain cheese, which they have produced for hundreds of years, and which their village is famous for, because it does not conform to EU "standards". Nobody likes to be told that they are not allowed to keep a single cow, because it does not pay the milk distributors to collect milk from dairies that have less than 200 cows. (A friend of ours in Germany was forced to kill a cow that was given to her as a pet when she was a young girl. The law now forbids you to keep a cow for your own needs only.) Immigration laws have always made it cumbersome for German universities to invite foreign scholars, particularly from Africa or Asia. We have always had to fill out guarantee forms which made us personally responsible for the guest’s health insurance, accommodation etc and where we even had to guarantee to pay for the cost of deportation should this unpleasant situation arise. Since the so-called Schengen agreement (which dispenses with visa regulations between five European countries) it has become even more difficult to invite foreign scholars, because we now have to satisfy the combined demands of five different bureaucracies.

Of course, no university has ever entagled itself in its own regulations the way the EU has. The most efficient university will be the one which has devised a quick and efficient decision making process and does not allow projects to drown in endless committee proceedings.

A dramatic example of this can be told from our experience in Nigeria: from 1971-1974 I was Director of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ife, Nigeria. One day a building labourer came to me with a small terracotta head, that had been unearthed while the foundations for a private house were being dug.

As we suspected on stylistic evidence, carbon dating later proved it to date back to the 14th century. We persuaded the owner of the house to delay his building for one month, so that our resident archeologist could carry out a rescue excavation. This meant, of course, that we had to employ a couple of dozen labourers, who had to be paid. To obtain the funds I had to call an extraordinary meeting of the Institute’s research Committee. The Committee,
which included historians, art historians, linguists etc, deliberated for four hours without coming to any conclusion, then deferred the discussion to the next scheduled meeting which was to take place in three months, by which time the site would have been built over! In order not to lose the unique finds we had to pay the labourers from our own pocket. (Later the Vice Chancellor, a man of great vision, insisted on refunding the costs - but that is beside the point.) The excavation of the site, that became known as "Obalara's Grove" is up till now the last fourteenth century site ever discovered in the holy city of Ife!

When, in 1981, I was invited by the University of Bayreuth to start a cultural institute called IWALEWA-HAUS, which researches and presents contemporary art and music from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, I accepted under one condition: that I would not be part of any faculty, that the institute would not be governed by any committee and that I would be responsible to the Vice Chancellor only. In return for this freedom I agreed to accept six months notice at any time, should the university be dissatisfied with my performance or should we fail to achieve a working relationship.

The reason why I am telling these anecdotes here, is that in any activity that deals with the arts and with creativity one must be able to improvise. Planning an arts programme in too much detail is self-destructive: in the arts one must always be on the look out for the unexpected and be prepared to respond to entirely unexpected situations. Any form of art is a journey of exploration. A normal academic structure, useful and proper for the planning and administration of degree courses, becomes a strait-jacket when one is dealing with the creative arts. Within the University of the South Pacific, the Institute of Pacific Studies has proved to be the most flexible structure. We strongly recommend therefore that the Coordinator for the development of the Pacific Arts programmes, workshops and courses be loosely attached to that institute, which will enable the director to act with a maximum of flexibility and freedom. Given that amount of freedom, the appointee should be prepared to accept an untenured position.
During the *Pacific Arts and Culture Consultative Workshop*, sponsored by UNESCO in December 1995, we noticed that the participants were thoroughly depressed about the cultural situation at USP. There was a feeling that USP had failed its students in an important aspect, that the University had stifled too many initiatives; that it had shelved too many reports and had demotivated those who felt a genuine commitment towards developing an arts and culture programme. There were those who felt that the UNESCO workshop was just another device to buy time and that the report would once again be shoved about from one committee to the next until it would be gradually forgotten.

USP has many assets that can be harnessed for this cause. There are many members of staff with good ideas and several university institutions well suited to carry out the proposed programmes. The main problem seems to be the absence of a coordinator with funds and power to implement the programme.

**The Institute of Pacific Studies**

This institute has an impressive publications programme (unique in the Pacific); it has a solid research record and can boast of a world wide reputation. It has a dynamic director, a committed staff and a flexible structure that makes it ideally suited to carry out both formal and informal cultural programmes. The Institute has demonstrated an ability to act quickly and spontaneously, but there have been indications lately that the administration is trying to curb this freedom to act spontaneously. This is a great pity, because culture does not thrive in a strait jacket. We are of the opinion that when a coordinator for cultural studies and activities is appointed, he had best be based loosely in the Institute.

**The USP Centres**

We have met only three centre directors: John Hermann, Salote Fukofuka and Makarita Va'ai. We found all of them highly committed and enthusiastic. In their different ways they were running impressive operations. While most of the work is taken up with the more formal type of extension studies, the Centres have the facility to organise informal workshops and have done so successfully. However, the centres have a feeling of being neglected by the main campus and this causes sense of frustration. We are in no position to examine to what extent this feeling is justified but undoubtedly the Centres need more visible signs of attention and cooperation from Suva. Great efforts should be made to ensure that interesting visitors to Suva be sent around the region. This will become essential when, as we hope, USP will embark on a programme which encourages artists, writers and musicians in residence.
Continuing Education

Having worked with continuing education in Nigeria for sixteen years I realise what a wonderful institution it could be for creative work. The very fact that there are neither entrance qualifications for students nor examinations means that essentially this service to the community can run without cumbersome academic committees. At Ibadan, we were responsible ultimately to the Director of "Extra Mural Studies", as it was called, but in practice our activities depended on the wishes of the students. If the students insisted on studying political science, it was our job to find them a teacher. If on the other hand we persuaded them to study African literature or to produce a play, we were free to do so and no University committee could stop us. We met the Director of USP Continuing Education and found her an energetic person open to ideas and very keen to involve herself in the cultural programmes of USP.

Reading the Continuing Education handout we were disturbed by the powerful committee that presides over it, and by the fact that the language of the handout addresses itself more to academic peers than to those who are supposed to benefit from this unique educational facility. Perhaps there should be a second handout, written in more direct language that will tell potential students what wonderful windows on the world USP Continuing Education Classes can open up for them.

The Media Centre

The Media Centre is potentially a wonderful asset for a university planning to encourage creative work. It has been lavishly equipped. The average German university has nothing comparable. If, for example, IWALEWA-HAUS needs the services of a photographer or filmmaker we simply have to go out and hire professional photographers. Our university is not equipped to do what USP can do. Unfortunately USP is wasting this resource from a creative point of view. The staff is mainly employed in routine activities, such as filming lectures for extension services. We do not question the importance of such activities, but it should not be the only use of the centre.

The representative of the Media Centre at the UNESCO Seminar reported that staff with creative talents tended to leave because they were frustrated not being able to exercise them. We find it sad that the Centre has not produced professional films documenting the cultural activities which are happening in the region. If such films were sent around the USP Centres, this would stimulate a lot more creative activity. The films we saw of Pacific Week and of a play production at USP seemed to be student exercises.
With all these wonderful resources the university offers no degree or diploma courses in Photography or Film Making - even though the staff and the equipment exist. For example: we were highly impressed by the work of the staff photographer whose work is not only technically but artistically of a high standard. His talents are being wasted taking photographs of students in mortar-boards on graduation day. Such routine work could be safely left to a commercial photographer from town. To make full use of the MEDIA Center, its function should be redefined so that it becomes a major factor in developing the art and culture programme.

The greatest asset of any University is its staff.

We found many staff members not only committed but inspired. It is the duty of a university to make full use of every one’s talents by putting as few obstacles as is humanly possible into the way. We have known universities both in Europe and in Africa where any creative activity is going on inspite of the University, not because of it.

We have been impressed and encouraged by Epeli Hau'ofa's publication: *A New Oceania: Rediscovering our Sea of Islands*. His optimistic (even idealistic) point of view and the lively debate in this publication make us feel confident that USP has the staff capable of implementing a new cultural policy within the university - once sufficiently encouraged.
Pacific Studies at USP

There are already some 20 courses taught at USP with a high Pacific content and another eight with at least some Pacific content (see Prof. William Clarke's Paper: Degrees and Programmes in Pacific Studies). But to date there is no Degree Course in Pacific Studies. It is surprising that the university has not taken the logical step of developing such a programme, when there is so much expertise on the campus. It is also regrettable that, since most of the existing courses are optional, it is possible for a student to complete his studies at USP without learning anything about his region. Students might just as well study in Auckland or Sydney, as far as the content of education is concerned.

At the UNESCO seminar there was consensus on two points:

1) That every student at USP should be required to take a course in Pacific Studies - regardless of his degree programme.

2) That the introduction of a degree course in Pacific Studies and postgraduate programmes in Pacific Studies should become an absolute priority.

Compulsory degrees and Programmes in Pacific Studies

We understand that initially, students of USP had to complete a preliminary year because Highschools did not take them beyond year six. This gave the University an opportunity to introduce an introductory course in Pacific Studies, which every student had to take. Since the Highschools have introduced Class VII, which now replaces the Preliminary Course, that opportunity has been lost. In most of the 18 member states of USP Year VII has no Pacific content. There are, basically, two options open to the university:

There has been a suggestion that the degree course at USP should be extended into a four year course, with the first year entirely devoted to Pacific Studies. This is a bold plan and presumably a costly one, but it would make USP a unique institution, world-wide. It would address educational and political issues squarely. It would enable the University to produce generations of motivated graduates who fully identify with their region. The social, cultural and political consequences could be enormous. This decision should have been taken 27 years ago when the university was founded; and we realise that it is more difficult to take it now.

If the University finds itself unable to take such a courageous decision it should at the very least squeeze a compulsory Pacific Study Course into Year One.
An excellent proposal for such a course has already been drawn up by Prof. Vijay Naidu. We should have preferred it to be a two semester rather than a one semester course, but we understand that an original, more comprehensive idea was already pared down by committees to this minimum course. We strongly recommend that a decision on this will be taken urgently.

Degree Courses and Programmes in Pacific Studies

There is no university better placed than USP to run a degree course in Pacific Studies. There is an excellent proposal for such a course which was drawn up by the Institute of Pacific Studies. We can only hope that the University will make a very quick decision on this proposal. Some of the delays in implementing proposals about Pacific Studies at the various levels obviously have to do with personal rivalries within the University. These are inevitable human problems that any large institution faces. We only mention this here, because we understand that there are plans to break up the Schools into conventional departments, which would further increase competitiveness and rivalry between staff and make the decision making process even slower. The Schools were established to facilitate interdisciplinary cooperation. To break them up might be a retrogressive step. Administrative conveniences should not be allowed to override academic interests in an institution of Higher Education.
LITERATURE
As the Pacific Island states were moving towards independence in the late sixties, a new sense of identity and confidence developed which led to the growth of a vigorous young Pacific Literature. Universities cannot produce writers - but they can create a climate in which writing may flourish by playing various supportive roles. The University of Papua New Guinea assisted this development with Creative Writing courses, a literary magazine called KOVAVE and with the *Papua Pocket Poet* series.

At USP Marjorie Crocombe initiated the *South Pacific Creative Arts Society* which was to play a leading role in the development of a new literature, though it was rather less influential in the fields of music and visual arts. To create a forum for young writers, the *South Pacific Monthly* was persuaded to include a literary section which was called MANA, and by 1976 MANA was launched as an independent bi-annual. In addition, MANA PUBLICATIONS published individual poets, poetry anthologies and drama. The Institute of Pacific Studies of USP helped to distribute these publications. All these activities were concentrated at Suva, but their effect was soon felt throughout the Pacific region and local literary magazines sprang up, not so much in competition to MANA but complementary to it. FAIKAWA, for example, concentrated on new writing produced in Tonga - both in Tongan and in English. It was an excellent example of how an influential magazine can be produced with the simplest technical means and with a minimum of capital.

These diverse and dynamic activities were not formally launched or financed by USP; but much of the drive and success depended on commitment of USP staff, like Albert Wendt, Marjorie Crocombe, Subramani and many others. The Seventies and Eighties are now seen as a kind of "golden age" of Pacific literature. Since then creative writing has lost some momentum. Many of the smaller magazines have ceased to exist. MANA is coming out rather irregularly and some people have declared it to be "virtually dead". Some of the protagonists have left USP (Albert Wendt and Marjorie Crocombe, for example), and somehow the early enthusiasm has evaporated. Writing in the Seventies and Eighties fed on the euphoria of independence, on a new pride in Pacific Culture and traditions; on a bright vision of the future.

In the nineties a certain disillusionment has set in. Governments have not always been successful in coping with growing social problems. It has become more and more difficult for Pacific Island States to protect their environments. Intellectuals sometimes feel ill at ease with their own national governments. The dream of the University of the South Pacific has only partly been realised, and some problems arising from the relationship between Suva and the regional centres still remain to be solved. All these problems contribute to a feeling of disillusionment, sometimes even a feeling of hopelessness.
However, it is not necessarily the function of a university to launch literary magazines. In fact there is much to be said for keeping such initiatives independent of committees and above all independent of bureaucracies. Literary magazines have their natural life span, like human beings. If some people now feel that MANA has run its course and has fulfilled its invaluable pioneering task, then perhaps it's time for others to conceive a new magazine, with a new concept, a new set of priorities and a new profile. Such an initiative may, or may not come from the staff of the USP. The Universities should give such a venture their support by helping in the distribution (through IPS) by feeding ideas into it, by discussing it with the students, etc. Creative writing classes can help to feed such a magazine with new material. Less formal creative writing workshops could be organised through IPS or Continuing Education, which operate outside the university's regular course structure.

New stimulus for Pacific Literature could be provided by a writers-in-residence programme or at least by short visits of prominent writers from Asia, Africa, the West Indies and the Pacific Rim countries. It was a great idea to invite Derek Walcott - and we hope that this idea was not abandoned, but only shelved and will still be carried through. I would recommend that a prominent writer be invited every year to visit USP and, if not all the USP centres in the region, at least as many of them as time and money allow.

The writer's activities should depend on what he/she feels is most suitable: readings, lectures, workshops etc. Many names come immediately to mind for such a programme: Wole Soyinka (Nigerian Nobel Prize laureate), Keri Hulme, Hone Tuwhare, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Denis Brutus, Ama Ata Aidoo, Vilsoni Hereniko etc.

It is particularly important also, that the writers who are on the staff of USP should also be involved in this programme. If Epili Hau'ofa, Subramani, Konai Helu could visit some of the outlying USP centres, this would not only stimulate local writers; it would also make the USP centres feel that they are not being neglected by the main campus in Suva! At the UNESCO Seminar on Pacific Arts and Culture, for example, John Hermann described the impression that Albert Wendt made when he came to read from his works in the Cook Islands USP Centre. Even through this second hand account and a long time after the event we could feel the excitement, the pleasure and the hope that this brief visit stimulated. We wholeheartedly support John Hermann in his request for more such visits by prominent writers to the outlying centres. A writers-in-residence programme might well provide the stimulus that Pacific writing needs at the moment.
Writers Group

An encouraging development at the USP main campus is the recent formation of a Writers Group, which draws its members from staff, students and townspeople. They meet regularly to read their works to each other and a first publication is under way. This is not an official creation of the university; it has no formal links to any department - but it was the initiative of individual members of staff like Robert Nicole. We strongly feel that this writers group should stay independent, but the university could and should give some assistance where it can, for example: visits by prominent writers from the region and elsewhere could be channelled through this writers group (and other similar groups that exist in the regional centres). USP, normally an aid receiver, could in this case act as an *aid giver* to such spontaneous initiatives. As the Vice Chancellor of USP has pointed out on several occasions: the principal role of USP in the arts should be that of a *facilitator*. 
Literature Courses at USP

Throughout the former British Empire conventional courses of English Literature have been propagated as the only worthwhile academic literature courses, to the detriment of incipient local literatures. In Africa there are still universities who propagate this colonial thinking or who have reverted to it. In comparison USP is impressive by the breadth and variety of courses offered. Literature students have many choices including Pacific Literature, Orature, New English Literatures, Creative Writing, Fijian, Hindi and Japanese Literatures. This broad spectrum provides plenty of stimulus and incitement to prospective young writers. At the same time we would agree with those who have demanded the upgrading of Pacific Literature into a major subject of study.

It has been argued that this might bestow a false value on some Pacific writers who produce "programmed literature" and who keep exploring the same hackneyed themes. The answer to this is surely that

a) there are many writers who are taught in conventional English literature courses whose works are only of interest within the context of the history of English literature, but whose works cannot stand up as masterpieces on their own, and whom few people would want to read in Germany or France.

b) the works of Pacific writers will be looked at critically in such a course and students will be taught to sharpen their critical faculties not only by reading masterpieces but also by learning to understand why other works are not great literature.

c) a Pacific literature course should not limit itself to the islands that are the partner states of USP, but should include writing by Papua New Guineans, Australian Aboriginals and Maoris from New Zealand, in which case there must surely be a sufficiently high standard.

There has been a further proposal from Pio Manoa that Orature should be turned into a Major. While Orature should also be a compulsory part of the Pacific Literature Major we could also see that Orature could be developed into an additional major on its own, because links can be established between Orature, History, Religion, Ritual, Anthropology, Traditional Drama etc. Orature could form the core of a course on Pacific Cultures. The problem here would be to decide which languages to teach. How many different Pacific languages could any university afford to offer and how many different languages can one expect a student to master? The alternative question is: to what extent can orature be taught in translation? It is our hope that Pio Manoa will work out a detailed proposal and that the university will give it sympathetic consideration. The loss of ones language ultimately amounts to the loss of ones cultural identity and that should be a major concern of USP.
Conclusions

Of all the expressive arts, literature has been the most successful in the Pacific Region. During the last two and a half decades an impressive body of new writing has been produced, which helps to create a new sense of belonging that transcends national boundaries. Historically there has always been a great deal of movement across the Pacific Ocean and cultural exchanges between different island groups are ancient. The creation of national boundaries after independence has given rise to a new sense of separateness - but Pacific writers are helping in no small measure to overcome such artificial divisions.

In this development USP has played an important part through its literature and creative writing classes, through the IPS publications programme and through writers workshops run by IPS and continuing education. At this point in time USP could help to give Creative Writing in the Pacific a new impulse

- by upgrading Pacific Literature into a Major
- by developing Orature into a Major
- by initiating a writers-in-residence programme and/or a visiting writers programme
- by monitoring all new spontaneous developments (like the creation of a writers group at USP) and providing encouragement, expertise and financial support when necessary

Even after the departure of Albert Wendt, Marjorie Crocombe and Vilsoni Henereniko there are enough writers of stature on the staff of USP for the institution to play a decisive role in the development of a new Literature in the Pacific.
THEATRE
No other art form can influence society in the way that theatre can; by exposing human weaknesses, it can challenge the establishment, deal with political, social and economic problems, question established values, offer new options for dealing with problems and contribute indirectly to the development of a new identity. Theatre can reach a much wider audience than either art or literature. It can be a popular art form and, what is more, it need not to be costly. A university can involve itself in theatre on many levels: students theatre, community theatre, formal theatre studies and research into traditional forms of theatre.

Student drama

One does not need a big budget to set up a student drama society. The university of PNG created one in September 1967. It never received any funds from the university nor from any outside source, yet it was a most successful and creative venture. The day after our arrival in Port Moresby, the Professor of English called a meeting of staff and students and founded the drama society. Without further ado, the society set to work on its first production, which turned out to be a weird conglomeration of three performances, which did not relate to each other. The Economics Professor produced an ancient Greek tragedy; a young Australian clerk in the Administration (Peter Trist) produced one act of Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan* and the students themselves produced Leo Hannet's *Em Road bilong Kago*. The Greek tragedy was a slightly awkward *tour de force*; *Saint Joan* was a remarkably good students exercise, but Leo Hannet's lively pidgin sketch was bursting with vitality and had the audience roaring with laughter. Thus the society found its bearings quite naturally.

As the creative writing class got off the ground, it began to feed the drama society with scripts: Artur Jawodimbari, Kumalau Tawali, John Waiko, John Kasaipwalowa, Rabi Namaliu and many others produced plays mostly on topical issues, though some attempts were made to re-interpret traditional myths (Artur Jawodimbari's *The Sun* being the most successful). The theatre enabled the students to communicate not only with university staff, but also with illiterate labourers, who flocked to the performances, and with the first generation of New Guinea politicians who were already striving for independence. The student theatre became a social and political force. It often upset the colonial establishment, but at the time it was a unifying force in PNG.

While the students' own plays formed the bulk of the productions, international theatre was performed occasionally with great success - for example Bertolt Brecht's *The Exception and the Rule* and Adrian Mitchell's *Man Friday*, both of which were adapted to PNG conditions. The students drama society was twice invited to perform in Canberra and Sydney and their performances were well reviewed. Most of the plays required few props and no sets.
Production costs were covered from contributions by the staff involved and later from box office taking. All work was voluntary and lack of finance never posed a problem.

Drama Society for USP

In principle there is nothing to prevent USP from reactivating its now defunct students drama society. Student drama has been highly successful at USP. Most productions were, I am told, communal efforts by the students themselves, with some guidance from the staff of the Department of Language and Literature. Plots were worked out in brain-storming sessions, raw scripts were developed and the rest was left to improvisation. This seems to be an ideal formula for grass-roots theatre. The drama society seems to have no problems at all attracting audiences in Suva. Such an experience would also equip the more gifted students to go out into their villages to initiate community based theatre groups.

What was responsible for the lapse of student drama? One can identify several reasons:

1) In the absence of a lecturer in theatre studies, the student drama society placed considerable extra strain on the staff of the English Literature and Language Department.

2) There is no suitable performing venue at USP.

The big lecture theatre has no back stage facilities, no changing rooms and the auditorium is so steep that the audience tends to view the top of the actors' heads! I am told that there is an open air venue at USP, but that Fiji weather is so unpredictable that it is unsuitable for theatre performances. Prof. Epeli Hauofa has suggested the use of tents. This could be an option - except for the fact that in a tent a heavy downpour would interrupt the performance because of the noise!

3) Lack of rehearsal space.

This, according to Prof. Horn, is the most serious handicap. The big lecture theatre is occupied until six p.m. in term time and there is barely time to set up lights, sets and sound systems for an evening performance.

In spite of these handicaps a Solomon Islands student mounted a play during last years PACIFIC WEEK. Two Rivers meet deals with the somewhat hackneyed theme of the "conflict of cultures" (the old and the new, the village and the town, the illiterate parents and their son at the university), but the author had used well chosen dramatic devices and the performance was lively and extremely popular with the students.
Playwrights at USP

There are several playwrights on the staff of UPS and they have managed to mount interesting productions - mostly on a shoe string. Terry Thomas produces sketches that hold up a merciless, realistic mirror to the community. He has his ear to the ground and knows about life in the housing settlements and the slums in all its aimless, harassed depression. He raises no argument, he offers no solutions, but by producing situations in which the audience recognises itself, he does stimulate a discussion within the community. His plays have been very successful in the framework of USP Extension services. Vilsoni Hereniko's approach is more intellectual and more controversial. He tackles important issues of racial tension (Fijians and Rotumans; Fijians and Indians) and fearlessly tackles political situations (The Monster). His most sophisticated and successful play is Last Virgin in Paradise. Whereas most plays produced at USP have been content to raise just a single issue, the Last Virgin treats a number of cleverly interwoven themes. The play acknowledges the funny side of an intrinsically tragic situation. Above all, there is an attempt to integrate a traditional form of theatre (clowning) into the play. 4

Sudesh Mishra's Ferringhi also excited audiences by its bold treatment of a current political issue and finally Pat Craddock of the Media Centre is a gifted playwright and producer. With so much talent there seems to be unlimited possibilities for theatre. Staff and students who have been mounting these productions deserve much more support from the University and a descent venue for theatre productions at USP is long overdue!

Research into traditional theatre in the Pacific.

Very little is known on ancient theatrical forms in the Pacific. Captain Cook describes a performance staged by aristocrats - an intriguing contrast to the European tradition where performers (both actors and musicians) had a low social status. We can gather from early writers about the Pacific (Williams, Mariner, Grimble etc.) that daily life was extremely formal, dignified and ritualistic. Rhetoric was a major art form and even a kava ceremony assumed the dimensions of a dramatic performance. Playwrights have so far shunned the possibility of exploring historical themes.

Pacific Islanders succumbed so quickly to Christianity, that there was not much opportunity to evolve syncretic forms of religion and thought as in Africa or South America. As a result, Pacific Islanders still tend to believe the missionary misinterpretation of history ("from

4 We are aware of the fact that Vilsoni has left USP for Hawaii, but what is to prevent USP from inviting him back for an occasional theatre production?

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darkness to light") and certain subjects remain taboo until today. Compare that with the matter-of-fact ease, with which a writer like Wole Soyinka can explore the meaning and value of pre-Christian Yoruba philosophy in a play like *Death and the King's Horseman*.

Pacific writers owe it to themselves and to their people to confront the much maligned past and to explore its grandeur - with all its cruelty, but also with its elegance and sense of style, its dignity and its heroics. Unless this is done and unless the historical heritage will be confronted squarely, it will soon be too late to salvage what is left of ancient forms of drama and music.

For this reason alone Vilsoni Hereniko's *Woven Gods - a study of clowning in Rotuma*, is a very important book. It is an exciting book, partly because of the new ground that is being explored, partly because of the unorthodox method pursued by the author. Above all Hereniko sees possibilities for contemporary theatre in the adaptation of traditional forms. He sees the chance

....for ritual clowning to evolve in the direction of theatrical clowning - that is, clowning within a comic sketch guided by a plot. Such a convergence between secular and ritual clowning need not be seen as a loss in potency; it could turn out to be an ideal site for commentary on important social, cultural, and political concerns of the day.

Should this happen, a new type of theatre will emerge, similar to contemporary *fa'ale iatu* that is now seen on television in American Samoa, or as part of the annual comedy competition during Independence Day festivities in Western Samoa. In Samoa - as in other parts of the Pacific - the rich cultural heritage of the past informs modern performances that are not averse to exploiting the tools of contemporary western theatre.

Hereniko hopes that through his work the role of the female clowns in Rotuman history and ritual will not be forgotten and that his record will be "an inspiration and catalyst, assisting young Pacific scholars and artists as they navigate the uncharted waters that beckon - within and without." In *Last Virgin in Paradise* Vilsoni himself has taken the first step towards evolving such a new form of theatre. But a great deal more needs to be done in order to explore these possibilities. USP clearly has an important function to fulfil in promoting research into traditional forms of theatre and to encourage local dramatists to explore new forms of theatre.

**Community Theatre**

Community-based theatre groups are found all over the Pacific, often they are funded by foreign organisations. Julian Maka'a reports that community theatre in the Solomon Islands is funded by CUSO and by the Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT). The latter uses
theatre mainly as a means to help its outreach programme. CUSO formed a men's group called SEII ACTION GROUP and a women's group known as MERE ACTION GROUP. A third group was formed on Savo Island. Theatre in the Solomons goes back to the 1960's when the main initiative came from the late Francis Bugotu. A play called This Man was the first treatment of the theme of "the old and the new": the man who works in the city is seduced by its charms and temptation and as a result loses the trust of the elders in his village. It was so successful that it was turned into a film. The eternal theme - which cannot be resolved in peoples' minds - is being taken up again and again (most recently in Two Rivers at USP).

In the late 70's and early 80's, Julius Maka'a was himself involved in a theatre group called LUKLUK WANTOK which was made up of Secondary School teachers, teachers-in-training and city workers. The group enjoyed great popularity playing in schools and community halls. It collapsed when some of the main protagonists left Honiara.

Community drama in the Solomon Islands may be livelier than in many other places in the Pacific, but by and large one can find similar development everywhere.

In Apia we came across a clerk at the USP Centre: Alan Alu, who had recently produced an opera for three soloists, chorus, piano and drums. He did this in his spare time and without funding, using unemployed and hitherto unmotivated youths as a cast. Unfortunately we arrived a couple of weeks too late to see the performance and no video or audio tape exists. But the young man's initiative alone is remarkable!

It is a pity that the tyranny of distance prevents these companies from knowing about each other and from receiving inspiration through each other's productions. Only the massively funded "One Small Bag Theatre" from Vanuatu can afford to travel round the Pacific. In the absence of such possibilities USP has a potential role to play in recording such performances and building up a Pacific Theatre library. This can become a useful tool, because such a library could be used by a lecturer in drama who might tour the various centres with a selection of videos which he could discuss with students. This is clearly an important task for the USPMedia Centre and we hope that they will be given sufficient staff to carry out the work.

There is yet another form of impact which USP could make. Students who have gained experience in drama (whether in Integrated Arts, a students drama society, or a more highpowered production by USP staff) will most certainly involve themselves in Community Theatre when they return home after graduation. Higher standards throughout the region and raised awareness must follow.
Summary of recommendations on theatre

1) The Students drama society should be revived.

2) A good performance venue should be built, serving theatre, music and dance performances. This venue should not be used as a lecture theatre so that it will be available for rehearsals at all times. The creation of this venue is a matter of urgency.

3) Research should be promoted into traditional forms of theatre.

When Wole Soyinka (Africa’s leading playwright and one of the most important dramatists writing in the English language today) returned home from England in 1959 he had already written and produced two or three plays. On return to Nigeria he was given a grant to spend one year to study traditional theatre in Nigeria. This really helped to form his style. Whereas a play like The Lion and the Jewel, written in England, could be called an English restoration comedy in Nigerian dress, Soyinka’s theatre, starting from A Dance of the Forest (1960) became unmistakably Nigerian because it began to draw heavily on Nigerian dance, poetry, music, rhetoric and religion - without ever losing its topical and universal appeal! A research fellow into traditional Pacific Theatre could be attached to IPS, but a practising playwright, rather than an anthropologist. One would hope that such a fellow would sooner or later involve himself in students theatre.
MUSIC
In Europe and America, "Ethno Music", "World Music", "Fusion", "Multicultural Music" are extremely popular. One can go to any large record shop and find a good collection of classical and contemporary Indian, African and South American music. But it would not be easy to find music from the South Pacific. The reason may partly be that musical tastes are depending on marketing strategies and on fads - but there are some other very obvious explanations.

1) Much of the finest traditional music in the Pacific Region was stigmatised by the missions as "pagan" and subsequently suppressed.

2) Far less musicological work has been done in the Pacific than in, say, Africa, and as a result there are not many good recordings available.

3) Music that has been recorded by local radio stations in Suva, Apia, Nuku'alofa etc. is of poor technical standard and therefore not acceptable to modern record companies.

4) While there is a great deal of music on tape stored away in the radio stations, there is little information available about the performers and the musical and social background of the music.

5) The vast majority of music coming out of the Pacific now is choral music which is very strongly influenced by Church music. Most European listeners would find this music too familiar to be of any interest. This may be a superficial judgement, but it would certainly affect the marketability.

6) The Pop, Jazz, Reggae scene in the bigger towns of the Pacific is imitative, isolated and lacks originality. It could not possibly compete with American popular music which it imitates. Hawaiian influenced string-band music is a form of entertainment with little real musical interest.

Here emerges a clear task for the University of the South Pacific.
An archive of Music from the South Pacific

is an important priority.

During the UNESCO workshop reference was made repeatedly to the large collection which the English musician David Fenshaw has deposited at the UPS. This unique archive of Pacific music appears to have deteriorated, because the reel to reel tapes have never been transferred to DAT.

We hope that the Media Centre can salvage at least some of this material. There are of course copies of the Fenshaw collection deposited in Australia from which new copies could be made straight onto DAT. This may be expensive, but it would be money well spent. This is, of course, not the only collection of Pacific music. We know of two other collections, both of which should be incorporated into the proposed archive.

Richard Moyle has worked extensively in Tonga and Samoa and an effort should be made to buy copies of his archived material. Ad Linkels, a Dutch Music Teacher, has also done some outstanding work in Tonga and Samoa. He has published CDs and has a very large archive including a collection of videos of Tongan and Samoan dancing. His publications include: "Sounds of Change in Tonga" and "Fa‘a Samoa - The Samoan Way". Unlike many orthodox musicologists, who are purists and reject any form of interaction with Western music as "not authentic", he is interested in cultural dynamics. We were surprised to see that his work and his recordings seem to be unknown at USP and we recommend that the University employ an ethnomusicologist or a practising musician to start a music archive at USP, whose job would be:

- to rescue the Fenshaw collection
- to acquire copies of the archives of Richard Moyle’s and Ad Linkels' archives
- to contact the Music Archive of the Institute of PNG Studies in Port Moresby and exchange materials
- to locate other collections of Pacific music and arrange to incorporate them into the USP archive
- to carry out research into Pacific Music and start a well documented series of CDs for the overseas market and MCs for local consumption

We would strongly recommend Ad Linkels for this job, or - if he's available - the American ethnomusicologist, Steve Feld, who did brilliant work in PNG among the Kaluli.

A music archive would become a resource of world wide importance, but more importantly, it would be of immense help for musicians in the Pacific and to the
development of local theatre. Music archives should also be set up in the regional centres, wherever the facilities are available.
The Music Scene in the South Pacific

It is impossible for a visitor who spends such a short time to grasp the complexity of the music scene in such a vast region. The following are some impressions we had and suggestions arising out of them.

Choral Singing

In Fiji, Tonga and Samoa we heard choirs of amazing beauty. The fact that many of these choirs had 'untrained' voices did not really matter; on the contrary: with academic training they might well have lost their zest, their energy and their joyfulness. Choral singing, whether "à capella" or with brass band, is dominated by church music. We found the singing in some of the "local" churches more interesting than that in the Wesleyan churches, which mostly followed European conventions. Even when, here and there, a local composition was offered, it was still in a very traditional European form.

Singing in the Constitutional Church in Nuku'aulofa, on the other hand, and in the Church of Tonga incorporated many more traditional elements. These choirs were more powerful and more convincing. The hiva usu songs in the Church of Tonga arouse real passion. They have an archaic power that cannot be found in more orthodox church singing.

Less spontaneous, but extremely beautiful was the singing in the Constitutional Church. This relatively new Church made Handels "Hallelujah Chorus" from "The Messiah" come to life in a way we have never experienced before. It was not so much the free handling of the harmonics that made it so different, but rather the attitude of the singers: their enthusiasm, the freshness and originality of their approach, that turned this otherwise "pompous" music into something utterly moving. In Samoa the radio station kindly copied for us a tape of what is known there as "Heavy Music" - meaning serious music as opposed to mere entertainment. It is very traditional choral singing, accompanied by percussion. The "drum" is a rolled mat which is wrapped around some pieces of bamboo which serve as resonance chambers. This musical form is still very much alive there at village ceremonies.

Most choirs have a good knowledge of European church music which they perform well. The University cannot contribute very much, except to research and record the older forms of music and provide a concert venue for performances in order to accord them the prestige they deserve. There is, however, an unfortunate tendency amongst some of the more "modern" Pacific Islanders to look down on such music, to consider it old fashioned,
"primitive" and uncivilised. The University should contribute towards keeping such music alive.

Old Instruments

The Pacific region did not employ very many instruments, but with relatively simple means some very interesting and beautiful sounds were produced: conch shells, nose flutes, jews harps, wind organs and pan pipes are in danger of dying out. They are worth preserving and they should be included in the USP Education Department’s music courses.

A large variety of slit gongs, like the Fijian lali, are used all over the Pacific, and some very good rhythms are beaten out on them. The slit gongs - particularly batteries of slit gongs - could very well be adapted to jazz and fusion music. Unfortunately the lali is now mostly degraded into a signal drum that calls the worshippers to church with a monotonous, entirely unrhythmical beat!

The Jews harp is a simple instrument but one that has enormous musical and rhythmical possibilities. USP should seriously consider an international Jews harp workshop with players brought from: Tonga (and any other Pacific Island where the instrument is still being played), PNG, Indonesia, India ("Morsing"), China, Germany ("Maultrommel") etc. This would not be an expensive exercise to carry out. Jews harp players are soloists - so even a single player from each country would be worth while and it might be possible for each country to sponsor a musician. Musicians at the workshop could:

- play for each other
- study each others playing techniques
- exchange instruments (each performer should bring spare instruments to give away)
- finally work out some pieces together and give a public concert.

The University can further play an important part in preserving and developing such music by offering a concert venue to musicians and by slowly and systematically building up an audience for that music.

Popular Music

It was inevitable that the Pacific Islands were swamped - like the rest of the world - with American popular music, such as Rock, Pop, Country and Reggae. The only venues for
popular musicians are tourist hotels and night clubs. In each case tourists form the main clientele and they want to hear the music they are used to - or at least something that is so familiar that they need not make any effort listening to it. We did not have the opportunity of listening to such music outside Suva, but radio tapes indicate the music is similar in other Pacific cities. There are many competent guitarists, pianists, singers, even saxophonists and trumpeters around, but they have had little opportunity to experiment playing in venues where nobody listens anyhow. Most of this music sounds routine and somewhat listless.

Fijian Fude music is an attempt to offer some local flavour, but few attempts have been made to give a genuine local character to a pop band in the manner of the now world famous Australian Aboriginal band Yothu Yindi. Saimone Vuatalevu has made some very interesting use of the lali in a piece called Viti Na Noqu Paratasisi, one wishes he could have developed that much further! The most successful attempt to integrate traditional instruments into a modern pop band comes from the Solomon Islands. Chris Asipara, who is a student at USP, exploits pan pipes, slit gongs and other instruments. There is a commercial tape, MANGURO, released in Honiara, but a more recently recorded demo tape is even more interesting.

Chris Asipara should be encouraged to start a students' band at USP! But in this case it should not be a Solomon Islands Band, but really a Pacific Islands Band making use of whatever talent he can find amongst the fellows. He should involve as many traditional instruments as students from various islands are able to play.

Unlike the Choral music scene, which has found its own level in the Pacific and has successfully assimilated foreign traditions (on occasion really "indigenised" it) - the popular music scene badly needs exposure. USP could help here, by inviting a number of musicians-in-residence who could work and perform with local musicians. This is not a case of teaching, but of exchanging ideas and simply working together. The musicians should be very carefully chosen. They must be artists - but not stars who are costly, and above all want everything to centre around themselves. The emphasis is on exchange of ideas and cooperation.

There are some really sensitive and good musicians on the Pacific scene. Apart from Chris Asipara there are people such as Tom Mawi. Mawi is a guitarist who is good enough to be mentioned in Downbeat and to be invited to Jazz festivals in Australia. But by and large he has to play music that is not interesting enough for his talent and earn a living by playing in the lounge of a tourist hotel (six nights a week) where nobody listens. Such a musician should have the opportunity to meet and play with more interesting people, who have both a different repertoire and technique, with whom he might work out new ideas.
IWALEWA-HAUS of the University of Bayreuth could be of assistance here. Since we have a long-standing programme in multicultural music (the institution was founded 15 years ago), we have many innovative musicians at hand who are experienced in communicating with musicians from different cultures. (Jaume Bosser, Spanish Flamenco guitarist; Wafir Sheikh el Din, Sudanese Lute player; Ralf Siedhoff, German jazz guitarist etc.)

Percussion

Apart from the mats which form a fascinating percussion instrument in Samoa, traditional percussion throughout the Pacific is performed on a large variety of slit gongs. Many different playing techniques can be heard, ranging from the fluid, driving rhythms accompanying Cook Island dancers to the complex cross rhythms of Manus Island. USP should consider the idea of a Lali Summit - a meeting of slit gong orchestras from all over the Pacific. They could experience each others rhythms, learn from each other and try to form bigger and more complex orchestras. Such meetings might end up in some kind of joyous chaos, unless an experienced drummer with a wide range of international experience could travel around the islands, study the various percussion styles and then "orchestrate" the Lali summit.

Such a meeting of slit gong players would be a far more creative event than the usual Pacific Week where groups from different islands perform their repertoire for each other but don't really interact artistically. The hopes of the former Vice Chancellor Dr. James Maraj, that Pacific Week might encourage some cross cultural activities have not yet been realised. Events like the Lali Summit would give musicians the opportunity to develop entirely new ideas.
Percussion in Popular Music

Though the lali has occasionally been used successfully in Fude music and other popular groups, there is an increasing number of young Pacific Islanders who want to play jazz drums. Most of them have had little exposure and one role USP could play here is to invite jazz drummers to hold "drum clinics" (the fashionable word) or simply to form percussion groups with local musicians and introduce new rhythms, new techniques and new inspiration. Someone such as the African-American drummer Bill Cobham has a lot of experience in this sort of thing, but he is probably not affordable. Nearer home a great "kit" drummer is Greg Sheehan in Sydney who has led workshops all round Australia and has performed with many different groups both in Australia and Europe.

Classical Music

We haven't found much evidence of classical music being studied in the Pacific other than choral music. Only the Atenisi University in Nuku'alofa teaches this kind of music and some Pacific Islanders have gone to Australia or New Zealand to study piano and other instruments. At this stage it is not a priority for USP to promote this type of music. However, we have a suggestion for those who wish to get further training and exposure and experience. In the German city of Bayreuth there is an annual International Youth Music Festival, known as THE MEETING. Between three and four hundred participants come from all over the world. There are courses and workshops in vocal and instrumental music, classical music and jazz and opportunities to participate in chamber music concerts, symphony concerts and opera productions. Participants must be under twenty-five and have achieved a degree of professionalism. They must pay their own way and there are fees for tuition and lodging - but to our knowledge this is the best exposure any young musician in the classical field can have. If there is any real talent around the Pacific, State governments should be encouraged to provide some sponsorship.

There might even be room here for the participation of a choir provided it has some original music to offer. In 1995 there was a very successful performance of a choir from the University of the Transkei in South Africa. We would be happy to make the necessary contacts.
Summary of Recommendations

1 Music Archive

An archive of Pacific music should be built up as a matter of urgency. The musicologist should be attached to the Institute of Pacific Studies.

2 Records of Pacific Music

IPS should extend its publications programme into the field of music. Drawing on the research work of the musicologist, a series of CDs (mainly for the overseas markets) and MCs (mainly for the local market) should be produced. Judging from our experience at the Institute of PNG Studies in Port Moresby such a venture could become self-supporting, once it gets off the ground with an initial grant.

3 Concert Venue

Musicians who want to perform any kind of music other than church tradition or entertainment orientation (such as jazz, classical, experimental, or fusion) have neither a venue nor an audience. USP can make a major contribution by building a music venue and by helping to build up - over the years - a more enlightened music audience. This can be done. In Nuku'alofa Futa Helu has built up an audience for European opera!!

4 Music Workshops and Encounters

Pacific Week and the Pacific Festival of the Arts are interesting and successful events. It is important that such celebrations are being held, but like all such festivals, their impact on the development of music is limited, because everybody remains strictly within the confines local cultures. One can go beyond such festivals by creating workshop situations in which musicians from different regions exchange their experiences and build up new music between them. A Jews harp summit and a Slit gong summit are examples of what could be done!
5 Musicians in Residence

Musicians in the Jazz and pop scene badly need exposure. Guitar playing is largely influenced by the simplistic Hawaiian string bands. Guitarists and percussionists who can work with local musicians towards a joint concert (rather than straight forward teaching) could stimulate a lot of new ideas. Such musicians should be moved around the region. Cooperation with IWALEWA-HAUS would be useful.

6 Overseas Contacts

USP could be instrumental in building up overseas contacts (for example with THE MEETING in Bayreuth), in order to help local musicians to get some wider exposure and experience.
USP AND THE VISUAL ARTS

The University of the South Pacific can boast of many achievements in the sciences, economics and many other subjects - but it has not yet given much attention to the visual arts.

The Libraries in the University Centres have not made systematic collections of books on art. And most of the books are on European rather than Pacific art. Even the Atenisi University in Tonga does not stock books on Pacific art.

The University of the South Pacific has unfortunately not made any collection of local art works - neither traditional nor modern. This may not reflect a lack of interest, but the few art works on the main campus are not well looked after.

A magnificent slit gong from Vanuatu - a classical masterpiece of Pacific art - was badly displayed between two toilets in front of the main lecture theatre and was used by students as a notice board. Georgina Beier spent five hours removing several hundred staples! The School of Social and Economic Development has several paintings by Pilioko which are displayed in the corridors of the building. They show the adverse effects of the climate, and the embroidery, which is behind glass, should be reframed.

Some Misconceptions

While the development of contemporary literature, drama and music in the Pacific has been relatively organic and successful, "art" is still a problematic issue. Modern literature in the Pacific grew out of a very specific need: students at UPNG and later at USP became aware that their cultures had been analysed extensively by foreigners: explorers, travellers, missionaries, adventurers and anthropologists all had their say, all of them seeing Pacific cultures through their own prejudices. The sixties and seventies witnessed the debunking of some of the great names in anthropology - notably Malinowski and Mead. Pacific Islanders now wanted to tell their own side of the story, instead of having themselves defined by others. An American critic has accused Pacific writers of producing "programmed Literature"; but then the "programme" had been forced upon them by others, and early writing in the Pacific played an essential part in the process of decolonising the mind.

In the field of art no comparable development has taken place. Much of what is known of as "contemporary Pacific art" is a response to an alien imposed Western notion of "Art". According to this concept, art with a capital "A" is some kind of academic exercise, some
imported skill, like electronics or business studies, that has to be learned according to methods and techniques invented in Europe. Alternatively it is being thought of as some undefined freedom of expression, a kind of individual indulgence that does not require any particular skills but that symbolises the liberation of the individual from his "backward" tradition and from rigid prescriptions of his community.

This kind of art is considered something that modern nations ought to have - like supermarkets or armies. But does anybody really need it? How many Pacific Islanders collect this type of art? How many governments buy it? Even in Samoa, which can boast of the most elaborate modern art school in the Pacific, the artists donate their works to government offices, because the government would not dream of spending money on art.
Living Traditions

What may look like disinterest in art or even disrespect for works of art may simply be the result of a different concept of art. Museum culture, the idea of preserving art and of revering it, are essentially European concepts. So, too, is the glorification of the artist as an individual. Most Pacific art forms were communal and functional, and many of them are still very much alive today.

Tapa in Tonga, Masi in Fiji, Fine mat weaving in Samoa and Rotuma are examples of traditional art forms which are still very much part of Pacific societies. If we disregard the small percentage of works produced for the tourist market, one can say that these art forms have retained a very high standard of excellence.

There exists the unfortunate notion that "art" is an oil painting on canvas, whereas a painting on bark cloth is merely craft, but the women artists of the Pacific are more than designers or craftswomen. In one of the departure lounges of the airport in Nadi there is a piece of Masi from Taveuni which can only be described as a great work of art. If it were hung in an exhibition of contemporary European abstract art it would make Soulage look feeble, Kandinsky merely playful and Jackson Pollock amateurish. Women are the great painters in the Pacific! Bark cloth is integrated into the life of the community in a way in which no European art form ever was. It was produced communally (and competitively) by groups of women. The beating of the cloth was done rhythmically, musically and the sessions were occasions for story telling, erotic joking and clowning. No profit motive was involved. The cloth was produced as a social and ritual exchange item. Its functions were manifold and effected almost every situation in the peoples lives.

People slept on bark cloth, used it as blankets, as mosquito nets, as room dividers and carpets. Huge carpets were laid on the ground for kings and chiefs to walk over. Bark cloth was used as clothing, particularly in dancing. As an enhancement of honour, a Fijian chief might be dressed in continuing loops of Masi that measured up to 150 yards and turned him into a living piece of sculpture. In Tonga the dead lay in state on piles of Tapa, they were buried in Tapa and more was displayed on the tomb. Some of these functions may have lapsed, but bark cloth is still used as room dividers, wall hangings, burial clothes and ceremonial dress for dancing. Above all it is used as a gift and treasured heirlooms. Even at funerals in New Zealand or California, bark cloth is used as a form of social exchange.

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5 This is a typical Western distinction. It would not occur to the Japanese that their great potters are not artists, but mere craftsmen manufacturing utilitarian objects.
In Europe people buy a work of art and then have it permanently displayed on their walls. Paintings are part of the furniture. They are meant to create atmosphere. One can hear people say at an art exhibition: "I'd love to buy this - but we just haven't got any more wall space". The Japanese, by contrast, keep their paintings rolled up in a box and now and then they take one out and contemplate it.

Pacific Islands attitudes are similar. Art treasures are neatly stacked in boxes or cupboards. Most people have far too many to display. They are waiting there for a festive occasion, when they will either be worn, or displayed or - most likely - given away. Even the most "modern", or Westernised Pacific Islanders still have these treasures hidden away, waiting for the right occasion, which will transform the life of the community. Ironically it is the very fact that this art form is still so meaningful, needed and integrated into every-day life that is often used as an argument to denigrate it into mere craft. In this concept, art is individual expression. The artist breaks with tradition and works to satisfy emotional and intellectual needs - the community can take it or leave it.

Pacific Islanders who deny their own art forms are in fact measuring their own culture by European criteria.
European-Type Art Schools in the Pacific

There are two Western art schools in the Pacific, both are run by Europeans. The National Art School in Apia is the more formal of the two. It is run by an Italian artist, who is known to his students as "maestro". Even though he paints in a semi-abstract style himself, the European Renaissance is held up as the great model to be emulated. When we visited the school, the blackboards in all the classrooms were filled with commentary on the great masters: Leonardo, Raphael and Michael Angelo (sic).

One student had produced a larger-than-life image of Christ, executed in perfect Renaissance style and technique. The carved wood was covered with gesso to give it a perfectly smooth finish when painted. Technically it was a masterpiece. But what does it mean to produce a work of art in the 1990s that imitates a foreign, 16th century style? What does it mean for another local artist to "express her individuality through cubism" (as stated in a video film made about the school)? Such European art forms are some eighty years out of date. Cubism is the logical result of Europe's discovery of African art and its geometric abstractions. It was a response to the visual stimulus they received of exotic sculpture and helped European artists break away from academic conventions. How can they now be held up as models to young artists in the Pacific?

Another young artist in Apia works in at least four different styles at one and the same time. Thus proving his outstanding dexterity, but also that he does not really know where he is going yet. There is no denying that the students of the art school in Samoa acquire many technical skills: work in mosaic, stained glass, painting, water colours and sculpture. But they are taught to see the world through European eyes. The school's library has dozens of books on European art, mainly renaissance, but also on ancient Greek mosaics or modern artists such as van Gogh or Picasso. There is only one single book on Oceanic art. That fact is offset, however, by admirable energy and a sense of commitment. Everyone is very productive. The teachers are idealistic and they work for a pittance. "Art is a matter of the heart," said one of them, "not of money."

In Vanuatu a Russian artist has become a generous promoter of Pilioko, who is perhaps the best known modern artist in the Pacific today. He has evolved a distinctive style and his embroideries are particularly popular, perhaps because the craft element imposes a kind of discipline on the artist which is lacking in the oil paintings. Minoushkine and Pilioko jointly run an art centre where they conduct workshops for practising young artists. The idea seems to be to create a happy mood, a joyful get-together where everyone does his own thing. Their workshops were sponsored by USP in various university centres and the results of the 1995 workshop are still visible on all walls of the ISP building. The work is casual in
execution and the artists did not seem to coordinate their individual efforts. Most of the paintings are not well composed within the available space, and the total result is rather restless and disturbing. A similar effort by the same workshop in Nuku'alofa seen in the dining room of the USP centre is rather more disciplined, and is altogether more pleasing.

Both these art schools work on the assumption that a development of contemporary Pacific art should be based on European ideas, ways of seeing and reasoning. One should ask oneself, however, how much Europe has to offer at this moment. The type of Art school that is propagated at Apia is essentially a 19th century concept. At this point in time, European art schools are finding themselves at a loss: how can one prepare a student to become an artist in a society in which art has become a meaningless consumer item? In Europe art no longer fulfils the kind of function that Pacific art forms like Masi or Tapa still do today.

Art has become an intellectual game which is largely determined by a coterie of gallery directors, art dealers, critics, businessmen (investors) and the media. Any freak object can be hyped to become celebrated overnight. All that matters is that money can be made on the object. This is not the place to discuss a bankrupt European art-scene, but in view of the fact that European art is held in such esteem in the Pacific, a recent example is relevant. The *Guardian Weekly* reported on December 10th, 1995 that Damien Hirst, Britain's most famous artist, had won the prestigious £20,000 Turner Award. The paper describes him as "the leader of the movement that made London the centre of the art world".

His prize winning piece is called *Mother and Child Divided* and consists of a cow and a calf each cut in half length-wise and encased in formaldehyde. The work of art is worth £140,000. The Director of the Tate Gallery, Nicholas Serota, said "the jury noted that Hirst's work extended into the late 20th century tradition of art that deals with the issues of life and death, and praised the thoughtfulness of his approach." The jury took four hours to reach the decision, having fought over the relative merits of Hirst and Mona Hatoum, who produced a video "of a journey through her intestinal organs." Three years ago, we are told, Hirst had already been a runner up for the prize, when his display of a rotting cow's head caught the jury's fancy. In other words: what is being propagated as contemporary European art in the Pacific has long been discarded in Europe and it is doubtful whether the spiritually bankrupt contemporary art scene in Europe has much to offer the rest of the world.
Second time lucky for Hirst

Michael Ellison on the £20,000 winner of the Turner Prize

DAMIEN HIRST, who only scraped through to a level art, had his name preserved in the formaldehyde of history last week when he won the £20,000 Turner Prize.

Hirst, aged 30, the manipulator of dead animals and leader of the movement that has made London the centre of the art world, had considered turning down his nomination for the award.

"I hate all this stuff because the other three are friends and you can't compare one artist with another," he said. "I'm surprised by the award, because I didn't think I'd done anything this year."

The judges took four hours to reach their decision on Britain's leading modern art prize, and were understood to have fought over the relative merits of Hirst and Mona Hatoum, who produced a video of a journey through her internal organs.

Nicholas Serota, director of the Tate Gallery and chairman of the judges, said: "The jury praised him for having created an extraordinary series of objects that have caught the public imagination."

"The jury noted that Hirst's work extends into the late 20th century tradition of art that deals with the issues of life and death, and praised the thoughtfulness of his approach."

Britain's most famous artist was first shortlisted for the Turner three years ago when a rotting cow's head took the jury's fancy.

This time it was an exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery, west London, which put Hirst on the front pages when an unemployed artist poured black ink into a vat of formaldehyde.

Inevitably Hirst stole the thunder from the other shortlisted artists - Henry, Mark Wallinger and Calum Innes - when the Turner exhibition opened a month ago. The Tate was unable to show his £140,000 Mother And Child Divided for the first week, because it was judged too dangerous to put before the public.

Extra work had to be done on the work, comprising a cow and a calf each cut in half lengthways, because of fears that the glass cases for the two pieces of calf might not be strong enough to contain the artist's signature component of formaldehyde.

Hirst, who made his name with The Physical Impossibility of Death In The Mind Of Someone Living, a 14ft tiger shark, is as celebrated for his bonhomie in Soho clubs as he is for his art.

His friends include the rock star Dave Stewart, who was at the awards dinner at the Tate, David Bowie, who was missing because he is on tour, and the actor Keith Allen, who is starring in a film directed by Hirst.

Brian Eno, the musician, record producer and visiting professor at the Royal College of Art, presented the award to the artist, who was once rejected by Central St Martin's School of Art and Design.

Hirst has also directed a video for Blur and a television commercial, and has turned his hand to journalism.

THE SUNDAY TIMES - 18 FEBRUARY 1996

HIV blood used in exhibition

A WATER PISTOL and a plastic flower that squirt HIV-infected blood are the pride of a publicly funded art exhibition that was due to be opened last night by Boy George, the androgynous pop star, writes John Harlow.

Over the next few weeks hundreds of schoolchildren are due to visit the Walsall museum and art gallery in the West Midlands to see the show, which has been paid for by the Department of Health and the Arts Council. Additional funding has been received from Walsall council, which until last month was run by Citizen Dave Church, a leftwinger suspended by Tony Blair.

Also on display in the show, which has a poster outside warning that some exhibits may be "challenging", are red Aids ribbons stained grey with the ashes of a female drug addict who died from the disease, and pictures of nude male couples printed on bed sheets. One sheet is stained with blood from the American artist Barton Benes. Benes has also set up test-tubes filled with his blood which, says the museum, has been heat-treated to prevent a health hazard. The joke flower and pistil called Lethal Weapon, are behind glass. "This is a serious show about basic issues - love and death and risk and responsibility," said Liz Wright for the museum.
Grass Roots Developments

It can be argued that Pacific societies are changing, gradually eroding and giving way to Western values. People are exposed to an avalanche of Western images: advertising, magazines, films and religious images impose a Western way of perceiving reality. It is natural for Pacific islanders to respond and experiment. They might wish to play around with foreign forms and develop them in their own manner. But there is not much evidence that this is actually happening. One can walk through Suva, Nuku'alofa or Apia without encountering any kind of street art. No hand painted advertising, not even spraying! No slum dweller attempts to liven up the environment by painting a mural on timber shacks (as slum dwellers do in many parts of Africa). Even the Churches - if they permit any imagery at all - are mostly content with imported reproductions in garish colours of Leonardo da Vinci's last supper!

There is nothing comparable to the contemporary music scene. European church music is sung with gusto and many classical European compositions are rendered in new and indigenised versions. In hotels and night-clubs bands play country music, Reggae and Fude, some musicians even experiment with jazz. Guitars, pianos, drums and more rarely saxophones and trumpets are handled skilfully. There are some groups which tentatively introduce traditional music into pop bands. It is a lively scene, ready to interact with the outside world.

In the visual arts nothing comparable exists. Of course, we have only seen a fraction of the Pacific Region and within two months one can only skim the surface. Much may have escaped our attention. However we would like to point out two spontaneous developments that give hope for optimism because they demonstrate the capacity of Pacific Islanders to respond creatively to a changing situation. Neither of these developments owes anything to outside sponsoring.
Tivaevae

Quilting and appliqué in the Cook Islands.

Needlework techniques were probably introduced by missionaries, but it is not known whether by the London missionary Society in the 1820s or several decades later by missionaries from Tahiti. Whichever the case, women soon integrated the new medium into their social and ceremonial lives. Such a textile art is a communal activity. As in Tapa making women work in groups. They sing love songs during the work sessions and share a meal at the end. Domestically, quilts are used as bed covers and wall hangings. Many are stored in wooden chests for ceremonial occasions. Quilts are brought out and given away for weddings, hair cutting ceremonies and funerals. One artist, Taarouru Apara, reports that when her mother died she wrapped her in all her quilts and buried them with her. Quilts are not normally for sale: "I don't sell my Tivaevae because they are too hard to make. I just give them away to my children and my grandchildren", says Rangi Enoka. ⁶

In many respects Tivaevae have replaced traditional mat-making and Tapa-making in the Cook Islands, but there are also aspects of the activity which are distinctly modern. Though there are groups of women working on the same quilt, there is always one designer and the different designers have distinctive, individual styles, even though their repertoire is mostly restricted to flower motives. Though the Tivaevae makers do not usually sell their work, they like to exhibit it and there are regular exchange visits between Tahiti and the Cook Islands when the women exhibit their work.

There is some commercial quilt-making in Suva, but the work has not, so far, reached the artistic sophistication and originality found in the Cook Islands and Tahiti. Tivaevae is an exciting new art form, because it shows that Pacific Islands women are capable of channelling their creative talents into new techniques. They can adapt their creativity to a changing society and invent an entirely new artistic vocabulary.

Honouring the Dead

In Tonga the dead were laid out in state on a pile of Tapa cloth. They were buried wrapped in Tapa. The mound of sand over the grave was covered with white coral, which was called "the mat". A woven mat was erected like a low wall at the head of the grave. This was decorated with flowers and garlands. The tombs of important chiefs were distinguished by black stones placed in the centre of the mat. Round basalt stones were used and they were oiled, to make them shine and glisten in the sun. This simple funerary art has been elaborated upon in recent years, as new materials have become available to decorate the tombs. It is now customary to redecorate the graves on Tonga and Fiji at Christmas time.

The white coral "mats" and black basalt are still used, but the wall at the head of the grave can be made of a wide variety of materials: brightly coloured and printed textiles, sometimes with the name of the deceased embroidered upon it; glittering silver, blue or purple lurex; kitschy textile reproductions of Leonardo da Vinci or Raphael; elaborate and skilful appliqué work - often representing luminous, multicoloured stars. Extravagant arrangements of artificial flowers blend with the frangipani trees that shade some of the graves.

On the cemeteries there is no limit to imagination, no convention has to be followed, no rules apply. Innovation is sought and an overall joyous carnival atmosphere is created, the different displays add up to an extravagant cumulative effect. It is not the details that matter here - no single item is of any particularly artistic significance. It is the total impact of the different displays interacting on one another, the blazing burst of colour set against the stark, dazzling whiteness of the coral, the almost surrealist interaction between so many different heterogeneous elements, that build up to a strange sense of elation.

Walking around the large cemetery just outside the Atenisi University in Nuku'alofa we understood for the first time the words of Joel Bulu, the Tongan missionary who went "to carry the light" to Fiji. Speaking of his own conversion in his autobiography he remembers: "looking up at the heavens where the stars were shining, this thought suddenly smote me: 'Oh the beautiful land! If the words were true which were told us today, then are these lotu people happy indeed' for I saw the earth was dark and gloomy, while the heavens were clear, and bright with many stars; and my soul longed with a great longing to reach that beautiful land. 'I will lotu, I said, that I may live among the stars." 7 The feeling of this innocent, beautiful elation is reflected in Nuku'alofa cemetery. Here is an example of

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7 Joel Bulu, the Autobiography of a Native Minister in the South Seas London, Wesleyan Mission House 1871; republished 1993 by Friendly Islands
spontaneous popular art, a vigorous grass roots art produced with no ulterior motives of
gain but giving a distinctly local interpretation of an imported religion.
The Role of USP in developing the Arts

A Degree in Fine Art?

Art schools are a European invention of the 19th century. Art in all cultures - including Europe - has always been transmitted through an apprenticeship system.

During colonial times it was taken for granted that formal art education at university level was part of the total "package" of cultural indoctrination through which colonial powers were trying to create a local "elite". In India and Africa British-type art schools introduced European methods of learning and seeing. Anatomy, perspective, life drawing and a heavy emphasis on European Art History from the renaissance to the end of the 19th century, made up the burden that was imposed on the Colonial student. Students with strong personalities and original creative talent often took years to liberate themselves from this heritage.

Great artists from the so-called "third world": Sultan Ali (India) Trevor Nickols (Australian Aboriginal), Nja Madhaoui (Tunisia), Ibrahim el Salahi (Sudan), Obiora Udechukwu (Nigeria), all have the same story to tell. They took years to reorientate themselves after their art degree in order to produce work that was relevant in any way to their own character. They had to go back to rediscover their traditional wall paintings or sand paintings, their ancient calligraphy or folk art in order to overcome the process of alienation they had been subjected to. A conventional European degree course in fine art can do more harm than good. Unless the structure and concept of such a degree programme can be completely rethought, we would recommend strongly against implementing it, at least at this point in time.
Integrated Arts Programme

The Integrated Arts Course within the Department of Education is comprised of the following courses: Drawing and Painting, Crafts, Drama, Music and Dance. The Music Courses offer an ambitious array, but with a single member of staff to teach them, it seems hardly possible that they can all be carried out. It is not conceivable that a single musician could possibly be competent to teach quite so many instruments or musical traditions. Many members of staff have in fact critisised Mr Solomona for giving too much attention to choral music, especially church music. However, a musician can only pursue his special field and the answer is surely to employ more musicians who are competent in other fields - for example in pre-Christian Pacific forms of music such as Tongan \textit{hiva usu} songs or the music performed by Samoan \textit{aufaipese} choirs.

Since music constitutes a degree course, students should also have the opportunity to study jazz or Indian music and all the other options mentioned in the course description. Unfortunately we were unable to meet Mr Solomona, who was out of the country during the UNESCO workshop and subsequently had to travel again to conduct a workshop in Vanuatu. Nor could we see the music studio, because no one was able to find a key to it! We were told however that it is inadequate in size, near the main road and lessons were disturbed by traffic. We further understood that Mr Solomona's studio was shifted three times - an indication that music has a low priority at USP.

While the integrated arts course was intended for school teachers, it is curious that the major enrolment relies on law students who believe that the drama course will improve their performance in court. The idea is intriguing! We had naively believed that the law has to do with justice or with an intricate knowledge of legislation. Have the law students seen too many films? Should a BA in drama become a required qualification for the Attorney General? Should law students take courses in rhetoric? Should they study famous plays with court scenes? (Brecht's \textit{Caucasian Chalch Circle}? Adrian Mitchell's \textit{Man Friday}? ) Should creative-writing students write sketches of court scenes for law students to act?

Be that as it may: the drama course as sketched out in course description seems inadequate to serve either law students or their teachers. For one thing there is too little time allocated to it. For another one suspects that some of the exercises would make people self-conscious rather than uninhibited! A drama student who is given exercises such as "imagine you have a headache" instead of coming to grasp with a dramatic text, is like a drumming student who is given "wrist exercises" rather than being taught to play a \textit{groove}. Perhaps Integrated Arts students should be encouraged to form a drama group when they finished their course - or join an existing drama society.
We gained more insight into the art section of the Integrated Arts Course by spending some time with Mr Teweiariki Taeero, who received his art education in Melbourne and is well aware of the processes of alienation which this involved. He is sincerely working his way towards a deeper understanding of his own culture and is openminded, flexible and determined not to impose too much on his students.

Such student work as we saw was not very exciting, with the exception of a superbly crafted ceramic, but then the students had taken their best works home. Only three hours are allotted for drawing and painting. Sensibly these three hours have been lumped together. We support the idea that assessment depends on overall performance rather than a final examination. The art course is severely handicapped by the lack of suitable studio space. Since the original space was demolished over a year ago, the class has been shifted into a tiny room without running water. It might be just about adequate for ten students to work in - but not for sixty. The students work in the open air, whenever possible, but the situation is demoralising for both teacher and students. Funds allocated for buying materials are grossly inadequate. Storage is poor. Furthermore, the supply of art materials in Suva is limited and erratic. During our stay it was not possible to buy a pencil other than HB - hardly a tool for drawing.

The pottery is located in an attractive shed in the garden, but as there is no lockable space nearby, clay has to be carried from the studio for each lesson. Since the distance is fairly far and the clay is heavy, this has to be done by taxi.

Traditional crafts are taught by highly competent traditional practitioners - but the time allocated is insufficient for students to acquire a thorough grounding in technique, who are keen and whose work is remarkably good. Considering the conditions under which this course is taught, one might get the impression that it is a "token" project and that the university gives it very low priority. Mr Taeera's paper, "Arts Education at the University of the South Pacific: Problems and Prospects", describes some of the issues.

The art course lasts only one year. This need not matter so much, provided that the students can work under conditions where their interest and enthusiasm is aroused. They could then continue to work on a non-credit basis in an Arts Club. The University should provide a useful studio and reasonable materials. The art teacher should be available for informal criticism and advice and the USP Art Club should be open to staff as well as to students.
Recommendations

If the University wants to take the Integrated Arts Course seriously, it should provide adequate facilities for an art studio, for drama rehearsals and for a music studio. Since art supplies are difficult to find in Suva, the USP Book Centre should be asked to help. All creative activity should be encouraged in informal art clubs, drama societies, music groups (choirs, jazz bands and multicultural groups). The University should encourage staff to take an interest in these activities, to provide space where they can take place and to provide materials - for example musical instruments. If students cannot be motivated to make pictures, produce plays or play music without getting university credits for it, it merely proves that they would not become successful artists or performers in any case.
Pacific Week

For twenty years the University of the South Pacific has been celebrating "Pacific Week" every year. This festival, to which students from each Island State are meant to contribute, was instituted by Dr. Maraj during his term as Vice Chancellor of USP. He expressed the hope that "Pacific Week" would help people to define the much talked about concept of the "Pacific Way"; and, more ambitiously, expressed the hope that there might be some real interaction between the numerous Pacific cultures, leading to some genuinely multicultural forms of expression. It appears that Dr. Maraj's hopes have not been fulfilled. Pacific Week has not brought the different Island Communities closer together. Different student groups perform for each other, rather than with each other. This is particularly noticeable in the long dance night, where performances are often very skilful, but uncomfortably reminiscent of those one sees in the tourists hotels. Some of them are floor shows, rather than traditional dances.

Students have often resented the pressure that is put on them to perform. Pacific week has become an irksome duty rather than a pleasure. If Pacific Week has become a routine, as some people have suggested, then it has become counter productive. Routine is the deadly enemy of every kind of creativity. Professor William C. Clarke has written an imaginative critique of Pacific Week and has proposed instead the institution of an alternative.

Pacific Ventures

puts the onus of organisation onto those who want to perform or contribute in any other way. Prof. Clarke suggests that a committee be set up to administer funds that will be granted to those who present worthwhile music, dance, theatre or art projects, with the main criterion being the "Pacificness" of the proposal, as well as its artistic merit. The definition of what is "Pacific Culture" or "The Pacific Way" will eventually emerge from the body of contributions over the years - it is not something one can or should define in advance.

The University should also try to invite star performers from outside the region - perhaps from the Pacific Rim Countries or even further afield, so that local performers measure themselves against artists with international reputations. Prof. Clarke has provided a brilliant analysis of the issues confronting Pacific Week and we can only give our warm support to his proposal for a Pacific Ventures programme or festival. We hope that USP will take a quick decision.
Research into Pacific Art

Compared to the work that has been published on the arts of Australian Aboriginals, that on Pacific Arts, particularly on contemporary Pacific arts has been meagre. What is needed is a very critical look at contemporary art forms, rather than the benevolent encouragement that writers have felt they should give to the incipient Pacific art movements. As far as traditional art is concerned, there are numerous and excellent anthropological works, but few of them deal with aesthetics per se. Most of these works discuss Oceanic art with European terminology. What we need to find out is: what terminology do Fijians or Cook Islanders or Tongans use to discuss or evaluate a work of art? What qualities do they look for beyond ritual or ceremonial function?

There seems to be no study comparable to Chief Narubutal's and John Kasaipwalowa's essays on the Trobriand concept of Sopi or David Mawaljarlai's definition of "beauty" in the Kimberleys. It is surprising that up till now there is no comprehensive study on Tongan Tapa! There are a couple of publications on Quilting in the Pacific, but by and large we have few studies looking seriously at changing visual conceptions. How are dance costumes modified or elaborated? How are foreign materials incorporated into traditional arts, for example the use of coloured wool to form patterns in mat weaving? How has people's taste changed in clothing? How do they combine Western clothing with mats on the occasion of a funeral? Why do people produce "token" mats in plastic? How strong is the input of local designers into commercially printed textiles?

In what way is the construction of the Samoan fale now modified by the use of modern materials? In what way did the government's "beautification" programme in Western Samoa help to develop gardening into a major art form?

Art is more than a painted portrait or landscape hanging on the wall of a middle class living room.

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A Museum and Art Gallery for USP

Traditional art works

Suva has a well run and well kept museum of traditional Pacific Art. USP could not or should not compete with it. However, it would be of importance to have each of the member states of USP represented by one or two major art objects, that should be displayed in buildings that are normally accessible to all staff and students - i.e. the library, IPS, lecture theatres etc. Such a display would help to create the sense of regional identity that is so much being talked about. Such objects need not necessarily be purchased. Provided the member states can be persuaded that the art works will be looked after properly and that USP has a curator/restaurateur on its staff, they might be given on a long term loan.

Contemporary Art

The need for a display of contemporary art from the Pacific is much more urgent and even more significant. The University has no facilities for holding an art exhibition (even though the Bure can be used for certain types of exhibitions that do not require too much light.) Nor is there a proper art gallery in Suva town - the Suva Arts Society is an expatriate organisation, and even though they would make their facilities available to USP from time to time, I strongly feel that USP needs an art gallery under its own control, so it can pursue a cultural policy through a carefully planned exhibition programme.

During the UNESCO Workshop it was argued that "the lack of the critical mass" has militated against the development of a vigorous and high powered Pacific Literature. There is not yet a sufficiently large and enlightened public who will read and discuss the books that are produced by the writers. This is even more true of art. Contemporary art does not play an important part in the lives of most Pacific Islanders and this is even true of the students and, to a certain extent, the staff of USP. An art gallery with regular exhibitions by relevant contemporary artists would help to create such a public; a public that would take an interest in, discuss, criticise and eventually even buy contemporary art.

Little is known here about the important artistic movements that have developed in Papua New Guinea, among Aboriginal Australians, amongst Maoris and so on. Exhibitions from these key areas would provide a great deal of stimulus for local artists and they would, at the same time, set a very high standard. Arrangements should be made, wherever possible, to tour such exhibitions around the regional centres. Not all centres have facilities for
exhibitions, but some (for example, Nuku'alofa) do. Efforts should be made to build exhibition galleries for all regional centres, so that they can avail themselves of these facilities.

Efforts should also be made to build up a permanent museum collection of Contemporary Pacific Art. Australia and New Zealand might be prepared to donate contemporary works by Aboriginals and Maoris. I might be successful in persuading the German Government to donate some works by contemporary artists from PNG. Eventually one could widen out the collection to other countries of the non-western world: India, Africa, Latin America and American Indian and Inuit art from Canada. However diversified the cultures of all these artists are, they all face the same problem, namely how to express themselves in a modern vocabulary that is universally understood without giving up their national identity.

Such a museum - if followed through over the next decade - could become a major attraction of USP and lead to Art History courses with an entirely new orientation. To pursue such a project the university would ultimately have to appoint a qualified museum specialist, trained in preservation and restoration and being capable of planning and mounting exhibitions. Museums can easily degenerate into "mausoleums of culture". The life of such an institution will therefore depend to a large extent on artists-in-residence who will interact with the public and with local artists.
Film

Film has been the most influential art form of the 20th Century. Films have reached a wider audience than any other medium and for better or worse they have shaped the aesthetic, social and moral ideas of millions of people. The more successful the medium has become commercially, the more violent have become many of its products. In the Pacific Region, as elsewhere in the world, governments have reason to fear the impact of films on crime. But with the distribution of films through video cassettes attempts to stop the impact of violence and pornography have little chance of success. A single undesirable video cassette that makes its way past customs can be duplicated ad infinitum.

From what we have seen of commercial cinemas, TV programmes and video shops, it becomes clear that young people can become addicted to film and video watching without ever becoming aware that a film can also become a work of art. Most European towns now have at least one cinema which makes a careful selection of films and tries to make sure that every production it screens has some artistic merit. Every university has a film club, in which students have the opportunity to become acquainted with film classics. No university can counteract the destructive impact of the commercial cinema; but it can and should help students to form critical opinions about film and give them access to great masterpieces of twentieth century culture.

A university film society, run by committed staff, would be a very great asset to USP. It need not be a very expensive undertaking, because if enough students join, and if people from the town can be attracted to it, it would soon pay for itself. Of course, Embassies would fall over backwards to supply films to such a group, but here - as in any other case of AID - one has to be careful. Film libraries in Embassies are not necessarily selected from an artistic point of view. Many are merely meant to portray their country in a good light and documentaries usually outnumber feature films. One small anecdote here may suffice to make the point. In the 1960s USIS sent a van round Nigeria with film shows. The USIS officer in charge of the operation said to me: "I don't care what these films are about. As far as I am concerned its sufficient for African audiences to see that in the US a black man can be a success."

Nevertheless the film libraries of Embassies should be tapped as well as other sources. The University Media Centre could ensure that films get the professional screening they deserve. A film Club could also become the basis of formal film appreciation classes, but this will depend on the availability of staff with the relevant interest. Films are also an excellent educational tool for University Continuing Education courses, as they can be
easily carried into remote villages. USP Centres could form their own film clubs and be put on the circuit of the USP Film Society.

Film as a Medium for Self-Expression

The staff of the University Media Centre carries the heavy burden of providing extension services with video films of university lectures. According to the report given by Pat Craddock, the staff in the video section is very heavily worked and they can barely find the time for any really creative activity. There seems a definite need to employ at least one extra person to take on different tasks.

The Media Centre can hardly be extended into a fully fledged film school, but perhaps USP could look at experiments that were carried out amongst Aboriginal communities in the 1970s. Many such communities on the so-called Welfare Stations or on Mission Stations were depressed and aimless. Having been forced to give up their traditional way of life, they lost their sense of orientation and belonging. Teenagers and young men and women had had poor education in those days and practically no job prospects. Political awareness and Aboriginal rights campaigns had not reached the remoter settlements and the result was that many of them took to alcohol.

An Australian film maker, Cecil Holmes, went to Roper River, an Aboriginal settlement and gathered young people together and gave them a video camera. He explained how it was operated, and gave them a stock of film, inviting them to use the equipment to make a statement about themselves, to portray their lives, their hopes and frustrations for the benefits of their own community and perhaps also of others. The youngsters sat down, concocted a script and went about shooting their material. A couple were later taken to a simple studio in Sydney where they were shown how to edit the film. The result was neither a great work of art, nor a technical masterpiece, but it was a moving and relevant statement about the plight of an underprivileged community. I don't think the activity earned them any money, but it helped them to gain self-respect as well as to develop a sense of social responsibility. Several such experiments, which were supported by modest grants from the Australia Council, ultimately led to some young Aboriginals finding their way into the National Film School. In the meantime we have witnessed the beginnings of an Aboriginal film art.

Cecil Holmes' experiment was inspired by earlier projects that had been carried out in Canada amongst the Inuit communities. I believe it would be relevant for the Media Centre of USP to obtain copies of the above mentioned films through the Australian and Canadian High Commissions and look into ways of mounting similar projects. In urban centres, such
as Suva, disenchanted youths in squatter settlements or government housing estates, already feel left out and deprived. A sense of alienation has led to the growth of violence and crime. It is extremely doubtful, whether courses in painting or sculpture would attract them. But certainly they would grasp a video camera with enthusiasm, and have no problem learning the technical skills required.
Art Workshops

IPS has already organised a number of informal art workshops around the Island States. A kind of pattern seems to have been established: a kind of painting jamboree and rather free self-expression. Participants tend to be people who are already artists and have evolved their styles already. It might now be time for change, a different kind of workshop that concentrates on artistic discipline and involves the acquisition of technique. The proposed film workshop would be one example. Participants would automatically have to abandon any preconceived ideas on "what is art", because the medium requires a completely different way of seeing.

The same could happen in a photography course and there are trained photographers everywhere. Photography, however, is seen as a tool for documentation - not as an art form in its own right. We were impressed by what we saw of the work of Willie Chong at the Media Centre. His portrait photography is well known, because it is displayed in the Media Centre, but even more impressive are his photographic collages. Willie Chong might be a very suitable person to conduct a photography workshop. Another one would be John Cato from Melbourne, who is one of the world's greatest landscape photographers and a very experienced teacher.

Finally, we would like to suggest a workshop in welded iron sculpture. The unusual medium would force the students to transpose natural forms - instead of being satisfied with facile representational art. An iron workshop would be another effective way of breaking the workshop routine. It would be worthwhile also (occasionally) to involve artists from outside the region. In the case of the iron sculpture workshop we have suggested Mufu Ahmed from Nigeria. A complete proposal for such a workshop has already been handed in to IPS.
Natural Dyes Project

There is a famous photograph depicting Daisy Bates in flowing Victorian gowns and a broad-rimmed hat standing opposite an Australian Aboriginal. The man has immense dignity. He is impressive with his huge mop of hair and long beard. His wiry body has not an ounce of superfluous fat. But the eccentric old lady has no eye for the tribal elder's austere beauty. She has both arms raised over his head and she is about to slip a European shirt over his shoulders. There is no denying that Daisy Bates was well in advance of her times in her understanding of Aboriginal culture and her sympathy for the people but even she thought that "clothing the natives" was part of Europe's "civilising mission".

Clothing the natives was carried out with missionary zeal, not only in those areas where people were happy to wear a minimum of clothing or where they dressed up in paint or tattoos, but also amongst people who produced magnificent fabrics of their own, be they woven cotton or mats or tapa. Only the wearing of European clothes turns a savage into a civilised human being and in the early days the wearing of European clothes distinguished the Christian convert from his pagan brethren. Like so many moral issues it had an agreeable economic side-effect, European textile industries began to clothe the world.

Pacific Islanders were once among the most splendidly dressed people in the world, but a century and a half of European impact have led them to accept the relative drabness of European clothing, at least in everyday life. Even on festive occasions, a kind of compromise is reached, in Tonga, for example, everybody dresses up in a mat for a funeral - but the mat is wrapped over black European dresses or trousers.

Clothes are part of our identity. It is because we sometimes want to change that identity, or because we want to carry the spirit of another personality, that we wear masks or disguise ourselves with paint. To adopt the dress of another culture permanently is an act of assimilation that cannot be dismissed lightly as a superficial gesture. Since the wearing of European apparel is hardly reversible there are two options that might be explored:

1) manufacture clothing at home, so that at least the profit is made by local people.

2) redesign the styling to distinguish it from other peoples' clothing.

Both these processes have been successfully carried out, at least up to a point. For example, the Fijian Sulu is distinctive national dress. And there are machine printed textiles that make use of Pacific design motives. Many of these textiles are extremely elegant and some businesses which produce them are locally owned. Unfortunately they are too expensive for
a large part of the population and they also have been somewhat usurped by tourists, who want to give themselves an "exotic" flair - at least so long as they are on vacation.

A further possibility which could be explored is the introduction of tie-dye and batik techniques and developed as a home industry. Building on standard designs, women can develop their own individual styles and they can work at home, providing for their own needs but also earning an extra income by selling surplus articles. The work could also become a social activity, such as mat weaving or tapa making. Between 1974 and 1978 Georgina Beier introduced tie-dye techniques in several Motu villages in PNG.

She soon had 120 women working in three different villages. All the work was done communally. The Papuan women, who had a long tradition of making string bags, picked up the technique of tie-dye very easily, because they had dextrous hands. They produced tie-dye fabrics which must rank amongst the most beautiful in the world. Pacific Islanders, with their ancient traditions of mat weaving and tapa making, would find tie-dye and batik congenial.

It would be possible to produce such fabrics with imported dyes, some of which are easy to handle, but this would considerably raise costs and it would also, in part, destroy the purpose of the exercise. No one seems to have experimented with natural dyes in the Pacific. No one knows, whether the rich brown and black colours used in painting tapa or masti could be made into a textile dye. Even indigo, which is being produced from a variety of different plants in West Africa, India, China, Thailand, Laos, the Philippines and Japan is unknown to Pacific Islanders. Yet plants grow in this region from which this useful dyes can be produced.

Any workshops in tie-dye and batik techniques should therefore be proceeded by a workshop in dye production, which entails a fair amount of work. Plants from which dyes can be produced have to be identified. We have undertaken a first step by obtaining a list of dye plants available in Thailand from Dr. Patricia Naenna, an expert teaching at the University in Chiang Mai. Prof. Randy Thaman and Mr Saula from the Herbarium have been able to confirm that more than half of these plants can be found in Fiji. The next step would be to locate the plants and prepare a dye-garden.

For a natural dye project one would have to plant half an acre of indigofera tinctoris (the plant can be found in the Western part of Viti Levu, but it is believed that it could grow in Suva). The plant needs three months in the wet season to mature. When the seeds are still green and a few leaves just begin to turn yellow it is ready for harvesting. The leaves can be processed into a paste which lasts for years. Furthermore, 10 kilos of annatto seeds
would have to be collected and for a batik workshop, 10 kilos of bees wax must be at hand. (It is of course possible to use candle wax, but this is again an imported product)

We should like to suggest that Dr. Patricia Naenna be invited to conduct a dye production workshop. She has been working in Thailand and Laos with natural dyes for 20 Years and obtained her doctorate from the ANU in Canberra. She is currently teaching textile art and pottery at the University of Chiang Mai, having revived the textile arts among Laotian refugees. Dr Naenna would be available from July through September. Preparatory work in identifying and locating plants and preparing a dye-garden would have to be done prior to her arrival. Mr Saula of the Herbarium could be entrusted with this task. He was highly recommended to us by the Department of Agriculture and the Plant Quarantine Department.

Once women have mastered the production of natural dyes, they can be introduced to the techniques of tie-dye and batik. We do not doubt that they will find all these techniques congenial. A tie-dye and batik home industry would provide women with a lively social activity, a sense of achievement, identity and income. Such an activity resembles traditional craft production and would also initiate a gentle transition towards a more modern and more individual form of art. It is likely that with new techniques a greater variety of designs and a more personal style will evolve. A contemporary Pacific art is more likely to develop organically from such a process, than from the artificial imposition of pedantic European realism.

Dr Patricia Naenna can be contacted at the following address:

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Suthep Mu 2, Chiang Mai, Thailand 5000
FAX/Phone: 66 53 217707
### APPENDIX: Natural dye plants used in Thailand and their availability in Fiji:

- **A** = abundantly available
- **C** = common
- **O** = occasionally found
- *** = not known in Fiji**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English name</th>
<th>Botanical name</th>
<th>Fijian name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yellow</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| C                  | 1. Forest Mango  
                    | * Mangifera caloneura  
                    | Mago         |
| C                  | 2. Mango  
                    | * Mangifera indica  
                    | Utoni, Idia  |
| C                  | 3. Jackfruit (wood)  
                    | * Artocarpus heterophyllus  
                    | Kari, Verega |
| A                  | 4. Turmeric (root)  
                    | * Curcuma domestica  
                    | Cago Uto     |
|                    | 4. Breadfruit (wood)  
                    | * Artocarpus altilis  |             |
| **Orange**         |                                                          |             |
| O                  | Anatto (seeds)  
                    | * Bixa orellana (found in home gardens)  |             |
| **Red**            |                                                          |             |
| C                  | 1. Sappan (wood)  
                    | * Caesalpinia sappan (introduced at Agriculture Department)  | Koronivia   |
|                    | 2. Indian Mulberry (root)  
                    | * Morinda citrifolia  | Kura        |
|                    | 3. Madder  
                    | * Rubia tinctorium  |             |
| **Blue**           |                                                          |             |
| O                  | 1. Indigo (leaves)  
                    | * Indigo tinctoria· I. suffruticos (grows in the West of Viti Levu which is dry)  | Wiri Wiri/ Banidakai |
|                    | 2. Indigo (leaves)  
                    | * Strobilanthes flaccidifolius (ornamental)  |             |
| *                  | 3. Indigo (leaves)  
                    | * Baphicacanthus cusia  |             |
| C                  | 4. Black soap (lard)  
                    | * Jatropha curcas (common living fence)  |             |
| **Black**          |                                                          |             |
| *                  | 1. Ebony (seeds)  
                    | * Diospyros mollis (there are 9 local varieties if Diosyros)  |             |
|                    | 2. Cutch  
                    | * Acacia catechu  |             |
| **Brown**          |                                                          |             |
| *                  | 1. Myrobalan (wood)  
                    | * Terminalia chebula (there are 9 local varieties of Terminalia)  | Tavola/Tavola Lato, Tivi |
| C                  | 2. Iron Wood (wood)  
                    | * Xyilia xylocarpa  | generally classed as Vai Vai |
| A                  | 3. Cassia (wood)  
                    | * Cassia siamea  |             |
|                    | 4. Coconut (husk)  
                    |             |             |
| **Green**          |                                                          |             |
| *                  | 1. Indian Trumpet  
                    | * Oroxiium indicum  |             |
A USP cultural centre?
In the preceding chapters we have discussed cultural issues and made numerous recommendations. The question now is: what structures should the University of the South Pacific create so that its cultural programme can be carried out? Many projects simply do not need a structure; they depend on the initiative of staff and/or students and run themselves. A writers group (already in existence), a drama society, an art society and a film club would immediately fill the campus with activity and life. The university can help mainly by providing premises in which such activities can take place.

But there are many other activities (art workshops, the natural dye project, art exhibitions, concerts etc.) which will need a co-ordinator or director and some supportive staff. The position of the Professor of Cultural Studies, which was created some time ago, but has never been filled, should be used for this purpose. It is ultimately irrelevant what title he will be given (Professor, Director, Co-ordinator), provided that his functions and powers are clearly defined. The person in charge of these activities should:

- have considerable artistic judgement relating to art, music, and literature (altogether not easy to find)
- be energetic and prepared to disregard normal working hours
- show initiative and imagination as well as be able to inspire others

To enable the candidate to work effectively the following working conditions should be available:

- a highly efficient secretary
- at least one young Colleague who can eventually take over the job
- not subordinated to any school or department, but rather attached loosely to ISP
- a budget allocated which can be freely spent within the legitimate functions of the assignment
- Freedom from over-riding committees which impede cultural programmes in many universities.

We have been involved in numerous cultural organisations and institutes in the past any or several of which could be used as models:
1. The Mbìri Club in Ibadan, Nigeria (1961-66)

A private initiative of writers and artists, supported by a foundation in Paris. Programmes included: art exhibitions, plays, concerts and publications. Not attached to the university and totally independent of government. Run by a group of writers and artists under the chairmanship of Ulli Beier.


Regular art exhibitions and musical performances. The club had its own theatre company and regular art workshops were conducted by Georgina Beier. It had no official committee or title holders, but was run informally by Duro Lapido, Ulli Beier and Georgina Beier. The venue was Duro Lapido’s family compound, which he put at the club's disposal free of charge.

(Alterations to the compound, the construction of a very simple stage and the adaptation of an old shop to become an art gallery, were carried out with a grant of £200. Mbìri Mbìyo was a shoe-string operation, but it became world famous: The theatre company performed all over Europe, the US and Brasil. Many of the artists emerging from the workshops still have an international reputation.)


A University Institute with a dozen research workers into all aspects of Nigerian culture, the Institute also ran a cultural centre in the town of Ife (the Ori Olokun Centre) which served as theatre, art gallery, and concert venue. It had its own theatre company and staged an annual art workshop and a textile studio, run by Georgina Beier.


Set up by the Government under the National Cultural Council, conducting research into art, music, folklore, history, literature and religion, etc. of the peoples of PNG. The institute staged art exhibitions, concerts and lectures and ran an extensive publications programme.
It set up a comprehensive music archive and published LPs and Music Cassettes as well as running numerous radio series on art, music, and poetry.

5) IWALEWA HAUS, University of Bayreuth, Germany (1981-84, 1989-96)

an institute of the Universiy of Bayreuth set up to study and present non-European cultures throughout Germany and Europe. The Director is not attached to any faculty and runs the institute without a governing committee. He is responsible directly to the Vice Chancellor. The Staff consists of a Director, one research fellow, a half-time secretary and student assistants for limited hours, who assist with computer work, exhibitions, translations, box office at concerts etc. The premises, an eighteenth century building, belong to the city of Bayreuth and are rented by the Bavarian Ministry of Culture for the University. The budget for all activities is ca. 75,000 DM per annum, a pittyfully small sum considering that it has to cover exhibitions, concerts, acquisitions, catalogues, posters, travel, etc. Nevertheless IWALEWA-HAUS mounts between 12 and 15 exhibitions a year on its own premises and almost as many outside Bayreuth. Artists- and musicians-in-residence feature in the activities and there is on average one concert a month, as well as several concerts outside Bayreuth and a now famous annual music festival called "Border Crossings". IWALEWA-HAUS also has an extensive publications programme.

A USP delegation to Bayreuth to have a look at the present institutuion might be useful.

There is no suggestion that USP create an institution modelled on IWALEWA-HAUS, but we believe that

- much of what we have discussed in this report might have more impact once the Bayreuth institute has been seen. IWALEWA HAUS could serve as an example of what can be done, even on a modest budget.

Elements of this set up could well be transferred to an Oceanic situation.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Esekiia Solofa, Prof. Epeli Hau'ofa and Prof. Assela Ravuvu would be most welcome in Bayreuth towards the end of July 1996. They could then open our Tapa and Masi Exhibition and stay on for our big Opera House concert of Multicultural Music on August 10th. We would also try to arrange meetings with the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Programme), and the German Foreign Office in Bonn as well as with various Foundations. Cooperation could also be established between the University of Bayreuth and USP.
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