

Unfinished business
New Zealand-born dreams
Whakapapa
Some modern poetry from Western Samoa

Unfinished business / New Zealand-born dreams / Whakapapa
/ Some modern poetry from Western Samoa is licensed
under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0
International License.



This publication may be cited as: (2018). Strickson-Pua,
M. Unfinished Business. *Whanake: The Pacific Journal of
Community Development*, 4(1), 55–63.

Founded at Unitec Institute of Technology in 2015

An ePress publication

epress@unitec.ac.nz
www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/

Unitec Institute of Technology
Private Bag 92025, Victoria Street West
Auckland 1142
New Zealand

Unfinished business
New Zealand-born dreams
Whakapapa
Some modern poetry
from Western Samoa

MUAMUA SOFI STRICKSON-PUA

UNFINISHED BUSINESS, 2002
by Rev. Mua Strickson-Pua

FOLAFOLAGA
Declaration verse 1

Prime Minister Helen Clark
expressed these words
*"On behalf of the New Zealand Government,
I wish to offer today a formal apology
to the people of Samoa
for the injustices
arising from the New Zealand
administration of Samoa
in its earlier years,
and to express sorrow
and regret for those injustices."*
Apia Samoa 2002.

Whilst noble were her intentions
New Zealand Samoa historical relations
sadly also speaks of colonisation
racism inequality and injustice
selected history of Palagi New Zealand.

MEAMONI
Reality verse 2

Today on Waiheke island
a first generation New Zealand
born Samoan Chinese
grandfather reflects
stirred on by his Mokopuna
third generation Aotearoa Ngati Hamoa Saina
Cantonese Irish French Palagi English
Whakapapa Gafa
Cheden Ah Yek Strickson-Pua [15yrs]

is "doing" his Dawn Raids assignment
to him it is about collecting data
just doing another assignment
yet for me we lived that reality
which is my story your family history
a chapter of urban Pacific Tala Fa'asolopito
Great grandpa Pua Sofi
was Chairman of Samoan Advisory Council
one of the many community leaders
whose task and role to Tautua
our various Pacific nations' communities
in those difficult times when the government
of the day practised racism against our people
state-funded state-run *Dawn Raids*
of terror fed by ignorance and injustice
scapegoating a vulnerable part of society
for economic downturn and electioneering
knowing they would be powerless
but Moko Cheden your ancestors
were people of Fa'atuatua Faith
were people with a Fa'asamoa, a culture
were migrant ethnic working-class proletariats
already engaging with the host society
becoming worthy New Zealand citizens
who believed
in the Egalitarian Ethos
Tupuga were very proud
of their Labour Party membership
inner-city Auckland was back then
a red mark on the electoral map
an ethnic working-class ghetto
but as a child what an amazing place
at the factory mum worked Palagi

Maori, Indian, Chinese, Dalmatians,
 English, Scots, Dutch, Cook Islanders,
 Niueans, Tongans, Tokelau, Fijians, Catholics
 this was your Great grandmother Vaitulu
 Pua's girlfriends our extended Aiga
 we assumed this was normal the way of the
 world
 at Beresford Street Primary School our ethnic
 profile was brown working class
 at Grey Lynn Park Richmond Bulldogs Rugby
 League Club developing future stars
 at Karangahape Road Thursday late-night
 shopping everybody was there
 at our Aiga Lotu Pacific Islanders Church
 Newton parish the name said it all Praise Atua
 we loved growing up with our families, friends
 and communities
 Ponsonby, Grey Lynn, Herne Bay and
 Kingsland
 our hood.

FA'AMA SHAME DAWN RAIDS
verse 3

You
 line up over there
 with those others
 watching Palagis walking pass
 your in a line with brown people
 Police are asking for passports
 wanting legal identifications
 a slow anger is ignited
 the community meeting with Police
 and Immigration officials at PIC Newton
 fuelled the shock and denials
 telling media that this was not happening

they were telling lies
 while we lived the reality
 Moko Cheden to say we were annoyed
 would be an understatement
 our communities were now being
 targeted by huge Police presence
 with mobile jails to take our people away
 and for some to be deported quickly
 it was not safe to be a brown citizen
 walking around in public without
 identification
 and knowing you would have to answer Police
 questions
 court by media really made the blood boil the
 racial stereotypes and slurs really?
 Moko Cheden our hood was literally on lock-
 down
 knocks at the door with Policemen and dogs
 charging through the homes
 people dragged off to Police stations spending
 hours in the cells to be released
 then this case scenario would be repeated the
 next day again and again
 so yes our people got angry
 yes we did feel discriminated against
 we felt disappointed with Palagis
 who could not understand
 why we felt betrayed and violated
 yet your great grandparents
 challenged us about Faith and Justice
 Moko Cheden I don't want you
 to just collect data for another assignment.

FA'ATUATUAGA HOPE AROHA
verse 4

Moko Cheden
 you challenge
 and inspire me
 to be a better Papa
 it is about relationships
 then we can do the story
 becoming our history
 reclaiming our family
 but Aotearoa society
 Helen Clark's right
 there is a lot of
Unfinished business....

NEW ZEALAND BORN DREAMS
 THREE GENERATIONS OF DREAMS
 by Moko Che, Dad Feleti & Papa Mua

TOLU TUPULAGA
3RD GENERATION

Fast flying shooting star
 changes through the past
 goes onto the future
 never stops forever, Alofa.

Cheden Sofi AhYek Strickson-Pua
6yrs, Grandson & Son

LUA TUPULAGA
2ND GENERATION

With these eyes I have seen the past
 with this mind I see the future
 with these feet I create stability
 with these hands I create change.

Feleti Sofi Strickson-Pua
27yrs, Father & Son

TASI TUPULAGA
1ST GENERATION

Dreams open the door
 freeing our searching spirit
 allowing us to fulfill
 a life of Alofa.

Muamua Sofi Strickson-Pua
54yrs, Grandfather Papa & Father

WHAKAPAPA
by Mokos Wilco, Jayda, Mayer
and poet editor Papa Mua

Verse 1
Wilco, 5yrs

My name is Wilco
Whakapapa is being family
we are doing poetry
Jayda is my cousin
Mayer is my sister
Whakapapa is good for you...

Verse 2
Jayda, 8yrs

Jayda is my name
Whakapapa is peace and family
doing poetry at Home street
with my cousins Wilco and Mayer
we are family
I am Fijian Maori Pakeha
Jayda Elle Pocock
Whakapapa...

Verse 3
Mayer, 11yrs

Dremayer
but everyone knows
me as Mayer
Whakapapa Ah Yek to Strickson-Pua
art to poetry at Home street

spending quality time with family
cool cousin
funny brother
they are never dull
I am a part of this family
this heritage this history
my Whakapapa...

Verse 4
Papa Mua, 59yrs

Muamua Sofi Strickson-Pua
Aiga Purcell Maleala Upolu Samoa
Aiga Pua PapaSataua Savaii Samoa
Aiga Laiman Canton China
Aukalani Tamaki Makaurau
Auckland New Zealand Aotearoa
recording Whakapapa creating Fatusolo
living the "Art of Aiga"
being Aiga Whanau Family
blessed by Atua's Alofa
our Whakapapa....

SOME MODERN POETRY
FROM WESTERN SAMOA
edited by poet Rev. Mua Strickson-Pua

Absolve me
from any charges
of unintentional
plagiarism.

Tate Simi
1992, 'A deeper song'

I scurrilously
respond thinking
there's a poem
here.

Mua Strickson-Pua
2017, 'Homage'

Is good to have me
think of me
for there no one to
think of me but me
my wife and kids.

Eti Sa'aga
1974, 'Me, the labourer'

He is our kin conned into believing
a new era existed in this foreign land
borrowed ideas and westernised views
have created mud pools of confusion
but salved by visions of easy money.

Tautalatasi Malifa
1974, 'Brown pakeha'

Someone's tearing
the leaves away
that hide my nudity
someone's exposing
my heart
to the sun.

Momoe Malietoa Von Reiche
1979, 'My privacy'

Mama and papa grew
poorer and poorer
and my kidnappers grew
richer and richer
I grew whiter and whiter.

Ruperake Petaia
1980, 'Kidnapped'

There are no islands in the sun
only my perceptive daughter asking
'Hey, dad, how come you're a Mister?'

Albert Wendt
1974, 'No islands in the sun just misters'

Sua presentation
A symbol
A mingle of cultures
A mess of ideologies
A lost reality

Fepai Kolia
1982, 'Lost reality'

Notes

Miti: Samoan dream

Tolu: Samoan number three

Tupulaga: Samoan generation, young people, inter-generational

Lua: Samoan number two

Tasi: Samoan number one

Alofa: Samoan love

Tala: story, account of events

Tupulaga poeментарy, intergenerational *tala*, narrative poetry-as-research, provides us with findings, rediscovered and reclaimed possibilities, and new conclusions and reconnections. Our Samoan dictionary provides *toe fai* for reconstruct, while the Tongan dictionary gives *fa'ufa'u fou* for reconstruct, yet the Maori dictionary notes *hanga hou[tia]* for reconstruct. This, from my perspective, highlights the potential contribution of our peoples, our region, our languages, and our old-new literature at this stage and time. I have been traversing the roles of Ngati Hamoa Saina Cantonese Irish French gafa whakapapa creative poet editor to social scientist from Te Moananui a Kiwa or, as previously noted by Professor Albert Wendt, *Fa'a Pasifika*, the Pacific Way, but may I also extend this to include the Pacific Wave metaphor and imagery. [Apologies to Albert: I have chosen the Tongan spelling to show my commitment to the latest regional generic Pacific identification which will be reclaimed reshaped and reconstructed by our future *tupulagas*.] Through *tupulaga* poeментарy we are attempting to capture a moment, an *aiga* doing poetry and covering an important *tikanga fa'avae*. We are also able to reintroduce students, teachers, lecturers, practitioners, and our Samoan communities to other Pasifika nations, *'oloa taua*, treasures, *taonga*, to iconic Samoan pioneer poets who are worthy of our attentions and affections.

Some modern poetry from Western Samoa – after which this collection is named, and from which the 1970s poem-fragments gathered here come – was published by Mana Publications in, Fiji, 1974.

Mua Strickson-Pua is an Aotearoa-born Samoan Chinese poet, short story writer, artist, story-teller, comedian, freestyle rapper, social commentator and ordained Presbyterian PIC minister. Aiga Pua from PapaSataua Savaii, and Purcell from Malaela, Upolu, Samoa. He is married to Linda, father to Ejay and Feleti (of Nesian Mystik fame), Papa to Reuben, Wilco, Jayda, Chloe, Dremayer, Cheden and Jane Filemu. His first collection of poetry, *Matua*, was published by Pohutukawa Press in 2006. *Matua* is the first installment of Strickson-Pua's 'New Zealand born' trilogy to be followed by *Fiapoko: Confessions of a Brown Bourgeoisie* later in 2018, and *Fofoga Samoa 2: New Zealand born calling*.