

Truth, Identity and a Sense of 'Pacifinness'

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Today the Festival of Pacific Arts helps maintain a sense of 'Pacifinness' among island communities: awareness that, although a group of people may reside on tiny atolls far from island neighbors, they are part of a greater Pacific-wide culture. Recognition of a common Pacific identity can be a strong motivating force for individual communities to revive and cherish their own traditional forms of cultural expression.

American Samoan Office for the Tenth
Festival of Pacific Arts (July 2008)

In what is considered to be the Pacific's largest regional cultural gathering, the Festival of Pacific Arts brings together delegations from twenty-seven countries to showcase 'dance, music, literature and storytelling, theatre and cultural practices from canoe making to body arts and weaving'.¹ First held in Suva in 1972, the Festival has since been staged every four years in one of the participating countries on a rotational basis. From its inception, the Festival was intended as a way of protecting traditional indigenous culture and its expressive forms against the perceived threat of globalisation. At the centre of its rationale lie a number of conundrums: questions about tradition, authenticity and identity.

The announced purpose of the most recent gathering, the tenth Festival of Pacific Arts – held in American Samoa in July 2008 – was to help 'maintain a sense of "Pacifinness" among island communities'.² What does 'Pacifinness' mean? As a neologism it has about it a 'sense of constructedness'. It 'gives to airy nothing' (space) 'a local habitation and a name' (place). To take a vast cartographic space and extract from it – or perhaps ascribe to it – certain associative attributes or collective cultural qualities is to take what Melville called 'the heartless immensity of it all' and transform it into a shared, human place. In asserting a fundamental commonality among a region of dispersed Pacific Island countries, the concept of 'Pacifinness' is an attempt to redraw the map, to create a pan-Pacific identity. This collective identity is an illusion, a mask designed to disguise difference, but one that succeeds primarily in deluding its own

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wearers. Similarly, the Festival of Pacific Arts presents an idyllic image of Pacific Island life that obscures the real social problems besetting its member countries.



The Rotuman delegation. The tenth Festival of Pacific Arts, 2008.
Photo: Jason Chute.

The objective reality of separate island countries is a product of what Albert Wendt calls the 'artificial frontiers drawn by the colonial powers' that serve as 'political barriers dividing our countries'. Wendt, perhaps the most influential figure of the South Pacific's 'cultural reawakening in the sixties and seventies',³ calls this condition 'the colonial chill' and describes the artistic activity associated with the first Pacific Arts Festival in 1972 as sign of awakening, a finding 'of our own being'.⁴ So, this imagined 'local habitation', this Pacific imaginary, is a sense of consubstantiality, of community, of place, and its 'name', Pacificness, suggests an accumulation of features that are sensed, felt, intuited, or, possibly, imposed. As a kind of nominalisation, the word suggests the reification and embodiment of a set of non-specified attributes. It is a coinage, and as such, it has about it a sense of commodification – a cultural, material and intellectual ownership – a minting that confers the imprint of authenticity: one that, in announcing proprietary claims, perforce asserts privilege and exclusivity. The problem is epistemological and tautological. Only a Pacific Islander can really know what 'Pacificness' means; it is a self-definition. It is also socially constructed. In spite of the essentialist rhetoric used to generate this

abstraction, the concept – like the supposed authenticity and tradition of the Festival of Pacific Arts itself – is a fabrication.



Mainland Aboriginal people from the Australian delegation.
The tenth Festival of Pacific Arts, 2008. Photo: Jason Chute.

Constitutive rhetoric

The souvenir programme from the first festival states that ‘the history of this vast region has been one of geographical dispersal, of separate cultural development. Now, for the first time, we have come together as representatives of divergent cultures, as members of a single identity – Pacific Islanders.’⁵ The process of ‘calling a collective identity into existence’ is called constitutive rhetoric. The founding moment of the Festival in 1972 and the language subsequently connected with it – including the epigraph to this paper – bear all the hallmarks of a rhetoric that in the process of ‘hailing’ its audience actually creates it. As Maurice Charland says,

[A]s a genre, constitutive rhetoric simultaneously presumes and asserts a fundamental collective identity for its audience, offers a narrative that demonstrates that identity, and issues a call to affirm that identity. This genre warrants action in the name of that common identity and the principles for which it stands.⁶

The process of constituting a collective subject is an ideological effect generated through narrative. In constituting Pacific Islanders as an

identifiable group, the narrative revolves, for example, around the heroic journeys across impossible distances by the early Pacific navigators. This was, for example, the subject of Igelese Ete's *Malaga: The Journey*, a choreographic, choral work produced in New Zealand (2002) and Fiji (2006) that traced these voyages. Narratives such as this involve what Christopher Balme calls the 'mystification of the historical experience: the Pacific is timeless and always in a pre-contact state'.⁷ Expressed through these stories is a romanticised pride in ancestral traditions, in the pan-Pacific creation myths, in the 'struggles and the ordeals' of individuals. All of these become identified with 'community', a term that masks or negates tensions and differences between members of any society.⁸

The assertion of a collective identity that transcends political boundaries is a recurring theme in the promotional literature of the Festival, as the Souvenir Programme from the first Festival in 1972 suggests:

Scattered over the tremendous area of the Pacific Ocean lie many of the loveliest islands in the world; islands of sheer beauty, magnificent alike in the variety of their natural scenery and in the variety of their peoples who, although diverse in appearance and language, share a common heritage. This heritage is one rich in cultural tradition – tradition which flourishes in their hearts and in their hospitality; for they are a joyous and vigorous people.⁹

The programme for the third Festival, in New Caledonia, 1980, exhibits a similar totalising and essentialist rhetoric:

The collective voice of the Pacific will sing out and reverberate widely on this occasion – identifying us clearly as a unit both to the world and to ourselves [...] We are the bows from which the arrows of tomorrow will fly; their flight will depend on the firmness of the bow – the people of the Pacific.¹⁰

The examples can be multiplied. Much of the rhetoric asserts identity, tradition, pride, solidarity, Pacific awareness, community and uniqueness. But one can see that in dissolving boundaries and asserting commonality, other boundaries are being drawn. After the first Festival, Albert Wendt talked about art as a form of resistance, saying,

Our ties transcend barriers of culture, race, petty nationalism, and politics. Our writing is expressing a revolt against the hypocritical/exploitive aspects of our traditional/commercial/and religious hierarchies, colonialism and neo-colonialism, and the

degrading values being imposed from outside and by some elements in our societies.¹¹

The placement of the new boundaries is somewhat uncertain and raises questions about inclusion and exclusion.

Originally, as the South Pacific Festival of the Arts, the focus was on the Polynesian and Melanesian sub-regions. The inclusion of Micronesia came later and with it a name-change to the Festival of Pacific Arts. In her opening speech at the tenth Festival, Linda Petersen – the representative of the Festival’s overall organising body, the South Pacific Commission – outlined the developmental history of the Festival and indirectly provided a sense of its politicisation. While the ‘inaugural festival held in Suva, Fiji, in 1972 was credited with bringing about a cultural re-awakening in the Pacific and was noted ... for its initiation of an artistic revival in the region’, the focus on art is gradually replaced by assertions about pride in Pacific culture, indigenous identity and regional solidarity.¹² By the time of the eighth Festival in New Caledonia, the initial rationale of preserving indigenous cultural expression has given way to ‘a new emphasis on contemporary arts’. The ninth Festival in Palau 2004, ‘the first ever in the Northern Pacific, reinforced solidarity and community with our Northern brothers and sisters and consolidated the dynamism of our Pacific cultures’.¹³



Papua New Guinea delegation. The tenth Festival of Pacific Arts, 2008.

Photo: Jason Chute.

New Zealand was included from the beginning, presumably as a response to its proximity as well as its large Pacific Islander and Māori population. The

artistic importance of the latter, however, was secondary to that of the Auckland Symphony Orchestra, which was included in the first delegation. The balance was rectified with greater indigenous participation at the second Festival, in Rotorua, New Zealand, in 1976, which ‘brought about new insights to Pacific cultures in a New Zealand context’.¹⁴ Australia’s participation was based on its Indigenous demographic, but – even though it hosted the fifth Festival in Townsville in 1988 – Australia was not accorded ‘Pacific’ status. Petersen indicates that the main objective of that version was ‘to maximize cultural exchange between the Australian and Pacific participants and to increase the general public’s awareness and understanding of our indigenous cultures’.¹⁵ For the first Festival, Hawaii was not invited; ‘its culture was assumed to be already lost’;¹⁶ but it must have been found again, because Hawaii has come to all the rest. By the time of the Noumea Festival (2000), it was suggested that ‘since California is home to thousands of Pacific Islanders’, perhaps California would send some delegations in the future.¹⁷ And indeed, at the recently staged Festival in Pago Pago, a delegation of Islanders from San Diego did march in the procession. Eventually, according to the rotation principle, the Festival might actually be staged in California: perhaps at Disneyland where the theme can be ‘it’s a small world after all’. There is already a tune. In the development of the Festival one sees a continual geographic and ideological repositioning, suggesting that in spite of the essentialist rhetoric that surrounds it, the aims of the Festival are contingent and the ‘Pacificness’ it embodies constructed.



Tahiti and Pitcairn Island delegations. The tenth Festival of Pacific Arts, 2008.
Photo: Jason Chute.

On the one hand, the artistic sharing of a festival establishes commonalities; on the other hand, the individual country presentations assert that sense of uniqueness which constitutes a national identity: as a form of intercultural exchange, festivals necessarily involve what Clive Barker calls ‘a choice between global village and a world of differences’.¹⁸ Indeed the country presentations tend to have a sense of distinctive similarity, of being uniquely typical. The participants share their mutual differences, and in so doing assert their respective national identities in a common regional context. That the Festival is intended to celebrate the traditions and culture of indigenous peoples is clear. This includes, of course, the Māori and Indigenous Australian peoples. It also includes those diasporic Islanders from the USA and elsewhere. For the latter, whatever ‘Pacifcness’ might mean, it is connected to the ‘dream of return (*nostos*) to a location perceived to be “home”’.¹⁹ The word *nostos* forms the etymological root for nostalgia, and there is in the phrase ‘a sense of Pacifcness’ a recalling of memory, a restoring of identity and an alleviation of cultural and physical displacement. Albert Wendt uses the Pacific word *Hawaiki*, the mythic place of origin, to describe that sense of belonging:

In our various groping ways, we are all in search of that heaven,
that Hawaiki, where our hearts will find meaning; most of us
never find it, or, at the moment of finding it, fail to recognise it.
At this stage in my life I have found it in Oceania: it is a return
to where I was born, or, put another way, it is a search for where
I was born:

One day I will reach the source again
There at my beginnings
Another peace
Will welcome me.

(from *The River Flows Back* by Kumalau Tawali,
Manus, Papua New Guinea)²⁰

The Festival of Pacific Arts

Much of what is presented at the Festival has nothing to do with what one generally understands by ‘tradition’. Often extracted from larger ceremonies performed for participant-observers in a rural setting, the cultural performances are decontextualised. They are the theatrical bits that travel well; for example, the Fijian *meke*, a synchronised dance form that gives visual expression to a poetic chant. These isolated pieces are in fact what Balme calls ‘metonymic representation’, where the part stands for the whole;

in this case, the extracted element stands for the whole culture. Balme asks how authenticity and incompleteness can co-exist,²¹ he also suggests that ‘staged authenticity’ is oxymoronic.²² The idea of amplification is an example. At the ninth Festival in Palau, main-stage performances were acoustically reinforced, augmented by banks of coloured lights and projected simultaneously on large screens in an arena setting. They were also amplified in another sense: in the Festival setting, these cultural performances exhibit a quality that Fijians call *vakatubu* – a word that means ‘self-raising agent’, like yeast. In other words, they are theatrically exaggerated. At the Festival in Pago Pago, women performing the *seasea*²³ started to incorporate the more theatrical elements from the men’s *meke wesi*.²⁴ This is not traditional. Although there is latitude and flexibility in Fijian ritual which can accommodate modifications resulting ‘from people’s changing experiences, new life-styles, modified beliefs and values’,²⁵ the traditional ceremonial aesthetic, in Fiji at least, is restrained and respectful. The tendency toward heightened performance results in part from a sense of competition, where more subdued cultural performances can be overshadowed by the flashier, crowd-pleasing products from the Cook Islands or Rapa Nui (also known as Easter island).



Cook Island delegation. The tenth Festival of Pacific Arts, 2008.
Photo: Jason Chute.

A report by Marjorie Crocombe on the first Festival in Suva raised concerns that cultural integrity had been sacrificed to technology, and that foreign expertise had simply generated ‘polychrome postcard productions’. She added that ‘arch-traditionalists were disturbed or offended by innovations in some of the performances’ and that some people ‘feel that a performance is authentic only if it has not changed from the pre-contact era’.²⁶ Additionally, there was consternation that the traditional arts and crafts were definitely for sale. By the third Festival in Papua New Guinea, it was suggested that the festival needs ‘to be something greater than just a “variety show”’.²⁷ Over time, the Festival has increasingly included contemporary art and performance. The justification for this is the need to link traditional roots with contemporary experience, an awareness that culture is a living thing and tradition is both constructed and changeable. Most significant has been the need to acknowledge a younger generation whose world view is not rooted in the past. Subsequent versions of the Festival have stressed the idea of an evolving Pacific culture and the need to include ‘contemporary’ art as a way of avoiding the perception of cultural fossilisation. Perhaps the idea of tradition itself, the preservation of which forms the rationale of the Festival, needs redefinition.



Torres Strait Islanders from the Australian delegation.
The tenth Festival of Pacific Arts, 2008. Photo: Jason Chute.

The decontextualisation, theatricalisation and commodification of the Festival raise the obvious question: for whom is it all intended? There are apparently three audiences: the participants; the local audience in the host country; and tourists. The latter have always been a significant minority, which suggests that the locals and the visiting participants who constitute the collective are at risk of turning themselves into tourists consuming a self-reflexive, intercultural, folkloric exhibition. In a limited, and what Patrice Pavis describes as a 'banal' sense, intercultural performance is 'simply the gathering of artists of different nationalities or national practices in a festival', one that tends to 'produce immediately exportable productions' that risk 'reinforcing national stereotypes'.²⁸ To the extent that much of the Festival does indeed involve this kind of work by nationally subsidised contingents, we can see that such 'national stereotypes' are ideological assertions, politically sanctioned by the respective countries.

The perceived public persona of Fiji is pretty much a constitutive rhetorical construct that has more to do with tourist brochures than social reality. Fiji is a multiracial and multicultural society with a huge Indo-Fijian population, a large Chinese minority and significant percentage of *kailoma*, those of mixed race. These sectors of society do not conform to a public image which, for international purposes, is projected as indigenous Fijian. The composition of the Fiji contingent at the ninth Festival in Palau was almost universally Melanesian/Polynesian. Out of eighty-odd performing participants, there were two Indo-Fijians, one Chinese, one part-Chinese and a couple of 'others' – a legal descriptor of those hard to categorise. The politicisation of the contingent's ethnic composition involved excluding certain individuals – actually Fijians! – who were perceived as having the wrong kind of hair; it was too straight, too long, too modern and not traditional enough. If the composition of the national contingent was politicised, so too was the material presented. Much of the programme consisted of indigenous Fijian and Rotuman cultural items; there was no hint of anything from the Indo-Fijian or Chinese cultures.

The Visitors

For the tenth Festival, a new play called *The Visitors* by Fijian playwright Larry Thomas was produced. It depicts a house invasion and the terrorising of an Indo-Fijian couple by two Fijian thugs – a common occurrence in Fiji. In the course of the action the play addresses themes of belonging and identity; in fact, it focuses on a sense of place. Thomas says, '*The Visitors* is about ethnicity and how an individual deals with being in a country where he or she is always feeling apart rather than being a part of it, the heart of the

matter being the question, where does one belong?²⁹ The Fijians denounce the Indo-Fijians as foreigners, asserting their own spiritual connection with and ownership of the land. Their rhetoric alludes to the mythic journeys that brought their ancestors from Africa. The latter, of course, was a fable constructed by the missionaries that has passed into the Fijian cultural consciousness. The Indo-Fijians point to their own historical narrative as indentured labourers whose struggles built the country. The collective identity on both sides of this racial divide is exclusionary; they are also constructed from a sense of difference and expressed through racial stereotyping. The subject of race relations has been a recurring theme in most of the plays from Fiji, including those of Jo Nacola, Vili Hereniko, Raymond Pillai and Sudesh Mishra. In other plays, Thomas himself has addressed the marginality of his own mixed race.



The Visitors, by Larry Thomas; dir. Ian Gaskell.

L to R: Shailesh Lal, Sam Rabukawaqa, Michelle Reddy. Photo: Pritina Vithal.

For the purposes of this article, *The Visitors* is significant on a number of levels. The play actually challenges the ideological underpinnings of the Festival where indigenous identity and solidarity are central to promoting a sense of 'Pacifinness'. To the extent that this identity is exclusionary, the play subverts the notion that to be from, and belong to, a Pacific Island is necessarily to be one of the three sub-regional racial types: Micronesian, Melanesian or Polynesian. In spite of their long history and presence in Fiji, the Indo-Fijian community is conceived of as 'other'. With its unflinching depiction of racially motivated violence, *The Visitors* also undermines the idyllic pretence that Fiji is an island paradise peopled by happy, smiling natives.



The Visitors, by Larry Thomas; dir. Ian Gaskell.
L to R: Michelle Reddy, Apete Marayawa. Photo: Pritina Vithal.

Rather than the usual folkloric exhibition of song and dance that the Festival customarily serves up as both touristic promotion and comforting self-image, the play is a naturalistic presentation of social reality. For the usual coloured

picture postcard, it substitutes an ugly black and white photograph. Sub-themes of marginalisation, intolerance, lawlessness and ethno-nationalism do not showcase Fiji as ‘the way the world should be’, a phrase uttered by Pope John-Paul II in his 1972 visit that quickly became a marketing strategy for the Fiji Visitor’s Bureau. The play does not serve the function of promoting the ‘friendly face of Fiji’, also a marketing strategy used as a pleasing but false mask for a national collective identity. The National Organising Committee for the Fiji Arts Council thought that the play reflected badly on Fiji and that the delegation needed to present a positive national image.³⁰ It took considerable persuasion from both the writer and the director – and the statement that art is a form of truth, not a form of propaganda – to change their minds.³¹



The Visitors, by Larry Thomas; dir. Ian Gaskell.
L to R: Michelle Reddy, Apete Marayawa. Photo: Pritina Vithal.

When performed at the Festival, the production's critical response predictably focused on the play's representation of contemporary social problems and in particular its depiction of race relations:

The Fiji delegation's contribution to the literary art category has caused a stir here with its powerful depiction of underlying ethnic-based suspicion and sentiments of a modern-day Fiji [...] The impact of poverty and unemployment are also addressed in the play but it does not justify the violence; the parity between commercially-dominant Indians and the struggling ordinary Fijian is however expressed succinctly.³²

In the same article, the Director of the Fiji Arts Council is quoted as follows:

It is very important that plays like this are produced, it shows we are thinking about these issues [...] It emphasised the importance of artists in societies; they record and articulate through their work, whatever form it is, the experiences of their respective societies at a given time.³³

The implicit recognition that an arts festival cannot be rooted in the past – that it needs to address contemporary social issues, however unpleasant – is an important acknowledgement of how far the Festival of Pacific Arts has moved from its announced role of preserving indigenous culture. These sentiments are echoed in the official reports by both the Chairman and the Director of the Fiji Arts Council. The former noted that the play 'depicting a home invasion and ethnic relations between Fijian and Indian ... received acclaim for its boldness in presenting the subject matter in a graphic but balanced way'.³⁴ The latter indicated that the play was 'a bold step for Fiji as the piece detailed the increasing [rate of] crime and violence. The exceptional quality and execution of the production showed Fiji leading the way in political art and the importance of having a strong voice through the arts.'³⁵ Nevertheless, just as the play depicts a marginalised section of the Fiji population – the 'visitors' of the title – and interrogates their sense of belonging, when it came to the Festival the production itself did not belong. It was an unwelcome visitor spoiling the party; its sense of 'Pacificness' ran counter to the accepted version.



The Visitors, by Larry Thomas; dir. Ian Gaskell.
L to R: Sam Rabukawaqa and Shailesh Lal. Photo: Pritina Vithal.

Conclusion

The Festival of Pacific Arts was ideologically conceived and rhetorically constructed. It has more to do with cultural and political solidarity than it does with art. Its expressive forms, including performance, tend to assert a common identity, a unity in diversity that is constructed in opposition to the process of globalisation. Central to Kenneth Burke's view of the rhetorical process is identification, the sharing of views through symbolic interchange for either collaborative or competitive ends. Identification can lead to consubstantiation, a way of thinking and acting together, that leads to transcendence.³⁶ All art is rhetorically conceived, its persuasive intent being broadly the creation of community, the transcendence of individualism in favour of 'shared knowledge that marks collective affiliation'. From this standpoint, the 'symbolic inducement' that constitutes the theatrical transaction is indeed one of sharing and, for the period of the Festival at least, a device that forms its diverse audience of participant-observers into a community. But it is a community created in opposition to elsewhere. In its rhetorical generation of consensus, of shared identity, the Festival of Pacific Arts is essentially an exercise in *self*-persuasion.

NOTES

- 1 'Opportunity to Attend the 2008 Festival of Pacific Arts', Online: <http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/the_arts/features/2008_festival_of_pacific_arts> Viewed 7 June 2008.
- 2 'Overview of the Pacific Arts Festival.' Online: <<http://www.pacartsas.com/news/index.htm>> Viewed 7 June 2008.
- 3 Subramani, *South Pacific Literature: From Myth to Fabulation* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, The University of the South Pacific, 1992) 158.
- 4 Albert Wendt, 'Towards a New Oceania', *Mana* 1.1 (January 1976): 58.
- 5 Souvenir Programme of the South Pacific Festival of the Arts, Suva, 1972.
- 6 Maurice Charland, 'Constitutive Rhetoric', in Thomas Sloane, ed., *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 616.
- 7 Christopher Balme, *Pacific Performances: Theatricality and Cross-Cultural Encounter in the South Seas* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) 9.
- 8 Maurice Charland, 'Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois', *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 140.
- 9 Souvenir Programme, South Pacific Festival of the Arts (1972), n.p.
- 10 Souvenir Programme, South Pacific Festival of the Arts (1980), n.p.
- 11 Wendt 59.
- 12 Linda Petersen, 'Address: The Secretariat of the Pacific Community on the Occasion of the Opening of the Tenth Festival of Pacific Arts, 21 July 2008 – Pago Pago, American Samoa'; Larry Thomas, 'Re: Opening Speech', email to the author (2 September 2008).
- 13 Petersen.
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 *Ibid.*
- 16 Neil Okrent, 'Pacific Arts Festival', *Dance Magazine* (March 2001), n.p. Online: <<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/pacific+arts+festival-a070926861>> Viewed 7 June 2008.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 Clive Barker, 'Intercultural Penetration and Exchange', in Patrice Pavis, ed., *The Intercultural Performance Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) 251.
- 19 Sally Mackey and Nicolas Whybrow, 'Taking Place: Some Reflections on Site, Performance and Community', *Research in Drama Education* 12.1 (February 2007): 3.
- 20 Wendt 51.
- 21 Balme 96–7.
- 22 *Ibid* 175.
- 23 The *seasea* is a restrained dance performed with fans.

- 24 The *meke wesi* is an energetic male war dance.
- 25 Asesela Ravuvu, *The Fijian Ethos* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987) 323.
- 26 Marjorie Crocombe, 'The South Pacific Festival of the Arts', *Mana Annual of Creative Writing* (Suva, 1973): 69.
- 27 Moi Avei, 'Cultural Policy of the Festival' (September 1979), Souvenir Programme of the South Pacific Festival of the Arts (1980) 9.
- 28 Patrice Pavis, 'Introduction' in Patrice Pavis, ed., *The Intercultural Performance Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) 5.
- 29 'Play to Showcase at Pacific Arts Festival', *The Fiji Times* (Saturday, 19 July 2008): 14.
- 30 Minutes of the First National Organizing Committee Meeting – Tenth Festival of Pacific Arts, FASANOC Boardroom, Suva, Fiji (5 May 2008):
 DFAC [Director Fiji Arts Council] presented to the Committee a play written by Mr Larry Thomas who was hoping to take it to the festival. After much deliberation the Committee suggested that the play is not right to take for the festival. (Minute 3.2)
- 31 Minutes of the Second National Organizing Committee Meeting – Tenth Festival of Pacific Arts, FASANOC Boardroom, Suva, Fiji (12 May 2008):
 The Chair invited Mr Thomas to brief the Committee on his submission called *The Visitors*. Mr Thomas thanked the committee for giving him the opportunity to brief on his play and informed the committee that his play was written as an expression of his views on the current events here in Fiji. It was not written to discriminate against any race or culture but simply his way as an artist to express himself on what he sees.
 DHC [Director Culture & Heritage] supported Mr Thomas and proposed to the Committee that his play be taken to the festival, Mr Chair agreed saying that it was better to portray reality through performance rather than keeping the reality at home and it was a good way to create dialogue with other countries because the issues raised in this play is happening all over the pacific [sic] and what a better way to create an Artists Forum than to discuss these issues and raise awareness.
 Rev Pene informed the Committee that the play has art & character which is mainly what the festival is all about, the expression of culture & arts and it is where artists present their art based on their emotions. He recommended to the Committee that they endorse the play by Mr Thomas. (Minute 4.1)
- 32 Matelita Ragogo, 'Fiji Actors Attract Attention: Play Hits Race Relations', *The Fiji Times* (Thursday, 31 July 2008): 27.
- 33 *Ibid.*

- 34 Michel Dennis, 'Festival Report' for the National Organizing Committee Meeting – Tenth Festival of Pacific Arts, DCH Boardroom, Suva, Fiji (4 September 2008): 3.
- 35 Director, Fiji Arts Council, 'Report' for the National Organizing Committee Meeting – Tenth Festival of Pacific Arts, DCH Boardroom, Suva, Fiji (4 September 2008): 4.
- 36 R. J. Heath, 'Identification' in Thomas Sloane, ed., *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 377.