STORIES OF US
Creative & critical reflections on reclaiming the symbol as text in art and education in Oceania

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Marshall (2011): On their spring flight northwards, the birds averaged 63 kilometers per hour and covered around 4800 kilometres in about three days. They made the return trip in around four days.
According to the myth, the god Tāngaloa 'Atulongolongo (in the form of a bird) pecked the first humans (depicted in the story as worms) out of a rotten creeper branch. This correlation with worms, who are literally dwellers in the earth, also recalls the designation of ū'o, commoners', as kau kaifonoa, 'the people who eat place'. The association of worms and earth is further enhanced by reference to the rotten creeper branch, which brings with it images of deterioration and decay, but also of growth as the process of decomposition, facilitated by the worms, enriches the earth and promotes further growth (Francis 2006, p350).

Fa'atuli (like the tuli)

Fa'avae Tuli (feet of the Tuli) is the same design as the Ve'etuli (also feet of the Tuli)

Fa'a' anufe (like the worm) (Pritchard 1994; Ministry of Education Tonga, 2012; www.siapo.com)

E. Vaka'uta, 2006
"Kohai, Koau, mo Momo"
Oil on Canvas

L. E. Vaka'uta, 2006
"Kohai, Koau, mo Momo"
Oil on Canvas
Indigenous Arts as Epistemological Sites
“Whatever we produce must not be a version of our existing reality, which is largely a creation of imperialism; it must be different, and of our own making. We should not forget that human reality is human creation. If we fail to create our own, someone else will do it for us ...”

The challenge is therefore to look carefully at what we have before we dismiss it, to search for meaning and substance within ourselves before going abroad...What matters in the pursuit of indigenous Pacific knowledges is that it survives – and survives because it gives us meaning and belonging. Everything else is clutter


...art gives people soul whether the ‘words’ are painted, carved, sung, spoken, written, filmed or performed. Some words need a brush; others a pen and still others movement, gesture and intonation. Art connects island people to the vast Pacific Ocean and to each other. However, it is their cultures that sustain and help define them and so they need to continue to look towards their cultures while they try and weave useful and fragrant kakala for their journey to the future.

Come!
Take this kakala
Sacred symbol of our oneness
Tie it gently around you
Where it will remain fresh
In the nourishing flow
Only
the sky knows

("LE'O E PEAU: Towards Cultural and Cognitive Democracy in Development in Pacific Islands Communities" Thaman, 2008 p.45)
1angynative (in search of critical mass)