

12 Dancing Between Islands: Hip Hop and the Samoan Diaspora

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CULTURE MOVES: CALI TO CHRISTCHURCH

Christchurch

Two hands, chilled from the icy wind that sweeps across the square of this little town, a place priding itself on being more English than England; two hands, brown, deft, lifting dark and glossy vinyl onto turntables. The track starts, melodic, haunting. Strings and a woman's operatic soprano. She sounds like African-American coloratura Kathleen Battle, but a look in the liner notes would be fruitless—the sample goes unmarked. After two cycles through the strings, the soprano, the beat drops, but the rhyme dropping with it is not the original. In 1996, long before he was taken under the wing of super-producer Dr. Dre, Los Angeles MC Xzibit released this track as 'Paparazzi' on his album *At the Speed of Life*.

This is not 'Paparazzi,' however. And it is not Xzibit. And this is not Los Angeles. This is Christchurch, Aotearoa/New Zealand and the namesake cathedral rising prominently from the opposite end of the cobblestone square remains the city's most prominent official feature.¹ For the performers and many in the audience at today's outdoor concert—part of the scheduled events at the first ever Aotearoa Hip Hop Summit—this South Island city's other prominent feature is the gangs of racist skinheads rumored to roam the streets. The skinheads are the most salient representative image of a city understood by Aotearoa's largely Maori and Pacific hip hop community as overwhelmingly White and hostile.

Against this backdrop of gray cobblestones, gray skies, gray people, the Indigenous Footsouljahs—four Samoan performers from the capital city of Wellington—ascend the stage. The group is animated, colorful, a brilliant blur of red and 'Carolina blue' and the ever-present camouflage fatigues that echo their militaristic moniker. DJ Raw spins the 'Paparazzi' instrumental while lead lyricist K.O.S.-163 launches into the first verse of their crowd-pleasing anthem 'Always Represent':

Legacy/ Pasifikan styles/ Penetrate the mind
Vigorous blows from the brain/ No denyin'
Inflict the pain to your nervous system ...

Polynesian son causing friction
Perpetrators on the path/ Get evicted
What's the verdict?/ Emancipate the mental
Colonialistic fools got your mind in a shambles
Casualties of imperialism/ Submerge indigenous thoughts into oblivion/
Mind in prison

Fellow MC Flowz joins in the chorus: 'Always represent for my people/ Pacific Islanders on foreign soil/ Style lethal/ Take a look as we enter the next chapter/ Flip the script.'² Back in Wellington, the notebook in which K.O.S.-163 first scrawled these lyrics stands nestled on a shelf in his bedroom, between a book on the U.S. Black Panther Party, a history of the Samoan independence struggle, and Samoan novelist Albert Wendt's classic migration narrative, *Sons For the Return Home*. Amidst these texts on various *movements*, Kosmo's lyrics flow ably, nimbly, but not arbitrarily.

Cali

Some of the older members of Wellington's hip hop community still vividly recall when a teenaged K.O.S.-163, more commonly known as Kosmo, turned up on the scene in the early 1980s, fresh from a stay in Los Angeles County and telling all who would listen about the world of the West Side Piru.³ Skepticism greeted Kosmo's gang talk, but his mastery of a dance form called *popping* left deep impressions. Kosmo learned the dance while staying with 'aiga in the City of Carson, a community which drew large numbers of Samoans relocating from the islands in the 1950s–70s.⁴ As Kosmo discovered, popping and other 'street dance' forms thoroughly saturated the lives of Samoan youth growing up in the late 1970s and early 80s in Carson and neighboring Compton and Long Beach. As he vividly remembers, 'all the coolest cats was poppin' down at [Carson's] Scott Park.'⁵

Many young Samoans growing up in Los Angeles County struggled in school but excelled in athletics and dance. For Samoan males, in particular, physical size and prowess as football players or dancers led to both status and stereotype. As the narrator of a 1978 documentary on the Carson-based Samoan community organization Omai Faatasi states, 'Lots of times, people are afraid of us just because we're physically large.' Adds another Omai Faatasi staff member, 'The only kind of publicity we would get would be negative publicity, except for maybe football. Another stereotype was [as] "dancers." So any time you need a dancer, you just call a Samoan and he'll do a dance for you.'⁶

Reductive stereotypes based on Samoan physicality continue to exert powerful pressure on Samoan communities in the U.S., contributing to a history of overzealous and brutal assaults on Samoan men and women by nervous law enforcement officers.⁷ That street dance fed these stereotypes does not negate the powerful ways it made meaning for Samoan youth.

Recently arrived from the islands and painfully aware of the accents that marked them as 'foreign,' young Samoans in multi-ethnic neighborhoods earned status and respect through mastering the physical vocabularies of dance or sport. For young men, dance skills also helped to attract the young women who were always present either as critical audience or as fellow dancers. As Kosmo recalls, 'All the poppers got the girls.'

In Los Angeles, Samoans are among the practitioners of such street dance forms as popping, locking and, in the San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento, strutting. While female dancers had limited opportunities and scant encouragement to turn their art into a profession, and often remain at the level of neighborhood legend, a handful of male artists built successful professional careers as dancers, or parlayed dance into other opportunities in the music industry.⁸ Among these, Suga Pop remains one of the most enigmatic.

Raised as the eldest son of Pasi Tunupopo, Suga Pop spent his childhood moving between the Samoan island of 'Upolu and the significantly Pacific Islander neighborhood of Newtown in Wellington, New Zealand, before crossing the Pacific to attend Kaimuki High School in Honolulu, Hawai'i. A talented dancer, Suga Pop had already built a local reputation in Hawai'i before moving to Los Angeles in the late 1970s and early 80s heyday of popping. There, on the weight of his hunger and enthusiasm, he began receiving formal instruction in popping from its African-American originators, the Electric Boogaloos. On a subsequent stay in New York, Suga Pop brought along the Boogaloos' popping techniques.⁹ Prior to his arrival, East Coast dancers had attempted to learn the West Coast dance form by mimicking a 1979 televised appearance of the Boogaloos on *Soul Train*—a predicament they shared with countless others around the world who'd also seen the galvanizing broadcast.

While in New York, Suga Pop also expanded his own repertoire, dancing with the legendary Rock Steady Crew and learning the New York street dance form, called breaking, b-boying/b-girling, or breakdancing,¹⁰ which made the Crew famous. Returning to California, Suga Pop cemented his prominent role in the bicoastal cross-fertilization of popular dance. As writer Raegan Kelly recounts, 'In 1980 a young Samoan dancer named SugaPop would move west from the streets of New York to bring breaking to the poplockers of South Central, Venice and Hollywood in Los Angeles.'¹¹

While Suga Pop continues to be a key figure in international street-dance exhibition circuits and also remains active in the U.S. music industry, producing his own and other artists' material, it is the group he formerly managed that has done the most to shape public perceptions of Samoan involvement in hip hop. The Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E., formed around a nucleus of four brothers from Carson, gained their early musical experience playing instruments in their father's church. 'We would get to church early and would be playing P-funk,' recalls member Danny 'Monsta O' Devoux, referring to

the music of Black American funk supergroup Parliament-Funkadelic, 'But as soon as that first car pulled up, we'd switch to 'Amazing Grace.'¹² Attuned to the funk rhythms that permeated their South Bay neighborhood, the Devoux brothers formed the dance crew Blue City Strutters and began performing professionally with their blend of popping, locking, and strutting.

As dancers, the Devoux brothers gained valuable experience in the entertainment industry and began honing one of the most memorable images in Los Angeles hip hop history. While touring Japan as professional dancers in the mid 1980s, the group turned again to making music. Paul 'Gangsta R.I.D.' Devoux began rapping as part of their show, building his microphone skills in front of Japanese audiences eager for live hip hop music and dance. When the Devoux returned to Los Angeles as the Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E., much of their following was built on high-energy live performances that drew upon the brothers' wide-ranging talents. Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E. stage shows featured R.I.D.'s husky-throated rapping, live funk or funk-metal instrumentation from a full band, and the dancing of group leader Ted 'Godfather' Devoux and 'type-man' Donald 'Kobra' Devoux.¹³ Although they've never achieved the mainstream success associated with multi-platinum record sales, the Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E. remain prominent figures in the music industry and are, according to hip hop documentarian Brian Cross, 'synonymous with hip hop in Los Angeles.'¹⁴

Another prominent family of California Samoan performing artists, Jack and Charlie Hisatake ('Hekyll and Jekyll') were influenced by the Electric Boogaloos after moving to Los Angeles from the Bay Area. Utilizing popping techniques to add a harder edge to their strutting style, the Hisatakes built significant and enduring reputations as dancers, performing at clubs and competitions and choreographing and appearing in music videos. They later branched into other aspects of the music industry, singing with an R&B band, Boyz of Paradise, and providing production assistance for other recording artists. In 1999, their cousin Rodney Hisatake formed an independent record label in San Francisco and released a double-disc rap and R&B compilation featuring a variety of U.S.-based Samoan and other Pacific Islander artists along with internationally known African-American rap artists such as Snoop Dogg and Lord Tariq and Peter Gunz.¹⁵

Aoteaoroa

The nearly three decades of Samoan involvement in street dance and rap music in California has significantly impacted Samoan cultural production in other places where Samoans have settled, including New Zealand. During his stay in California in the early 1980s, Indigenous Footsouljah's Kosmo was deeply impressed by the California Samoan dancers he met and observed. He credits the Blue City Strutters, and especially Donald and Danny Devoux, as an original inspiration for his lifelong interest in street dance and eventual move into performing hip hop music.

Like many young Samoans, Kosmo picked up whatever dance styles he could in Carson—a little bit of strutting, a little boogaloo and popping, some tutting. Upon returning to New Zealand, Kosmo's movement vocabulary brought prestige among his peers, many of whom had attempted to learn moves from watching the recently released movie *Beat Street*. '[Kosmo] didn't consider himself any good until he came to New Zealand ... Here they were just doing the basics, [he explains] I knew more.'¹⁶

In 1990, Kosmo, fellow Samoan MC 'Khas the Fieldstyle Orator,' and DJ Rockit V created The Mau, a hip hop group that took its name from the organization that agitated for Samoan independence under both the German and New Zealand colonial administrations. Although the name was Samoa-specific, the decision to invoke Samoan colonial history demonstrates U.S. influences: 'There was a movement of Black consciousness in America at the time [involving such artists as] Paris, Ice Cube, X Clan, Public Enemy ... This was fuel for thought for [Kosmo's] crew whose motto became that of the Mau movement in Samoa—*Samoa Mo Samoa*, Samoa for Samoans.'¹⁷

Later reforming as Rough Opinion, Kosmo and Khas continued to cut-'n'-mix their multinational influences, articulating a diasporic Samoan cultural nationalism by drawing alternately upon their knowledge of Samoan history and the popular narratives of the U.S. Black Power movement circulating at the time in American hip hop. Although Rough Opinion never recorded their material, their potent blend of machete-waving Samoa-centricity, occasional Samoan language rhymes, and U.S. Black Power iconography in live performances were influential on acts that followed.¹⁸ Kosmo, in his late thirties, has remained a dancer, MC, promoter, and youth worker in Wellington for nearly 20 years. With the full-length Footsouljahs album *Puttin' in Work* finally under his belt, Kosmo is, as he glibly puts it, 'H.F.I.C., Head Fob In Charge.'¹⁹

The Two Samoas

That Samoans were present in urban California communities where street dance forms like popping and locking were first practiced, that they found these forms meaningful and actively participated in and contributed to them, and that their embodied knowledges were passed back to the islands of Samoa and out to Aotearoa, necessarily owes to the colonial and neo-colonial interdependencies that have shaped modern Samoan history. The Samoan Islands were divided between the United States and Germany at the close of the nineteenth century; the U.S. desired the deep water port of Pago Pago, on the eastern island of Tutuila, while Germany had significant plantation interests in the larger and more agriculturally productive western islands.²⁰

Today, Tutuila and the eastern Manu'a islands remain an unincorporated territory of the United States. The territory lacks the Organic Act that would confer citizenship on American Samoans, but most American

Samoans appear content with the territory's status: as American nationals, they benefit from U.S. aid and the right to travel freely in the U.S. while retaining traditional custom and indigenous title to most of the land in the territory. Representatives from American Samoa recently lobbied to have the territory removed from the United Nations list of non-self-governing territories, arguing that the people of American Samoa are exercising their right to self-determination by choosing to retain their political relationship with the U.S.²¹

Since the 1950s, thousands of American Samoans have settled in predominantly urban environments in Hawai'i and the continental United States. U.S. military service has played a significant role as a conduit for Samoan migration; Samoan communities in the U.S. grew up first around military installations, but have since branched out significantly to include most major West Coast cities. In California, in particular, Samoans tend to share working-class African-American and Latino neighborhoods, sharing as well the economic and social vulnerabilities of their neighbors.²²

German-governed Samoa transferred to a New Zealand administration in 1914 as a result of World War I. Western Samoa was subsequently governed by New Zealand for nearly 50 years, first under League of Nations mandate and later as a United Nations trusteeship, before achieving independence in 1962. In 1997, Western Samoa chose to change its name to the 'Independent State of Samoa,' or simply 'Samoa.' While Samoa is formally independent, the nation has maintained close political and economic ties with New Zealand. New Zealand's active recruitment of Samoan labor to meet post-World War II demands for industrial manufacturing workers resulted in rapidly expanding Samoan populations in New Zealand in the 1960s and early 70s. As in the U.S., Samoan migrants to New Zealand clustered in predominantly urban environments, and were similarly vulnerable to processes of urban economic restructuring. Many migrants who came for manufacturing work stayed on to eke out a tenuous existence during the global recession of the 1970s.²³ Today, Samoans form the third largest population in New Zealand, after Europeans and the indigenous Maori.

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonial histories continue to link the U.S. with the territory of American Samoa, and New Zealand with the independent nation of Samoa. Constant traffic between the urban centers of New Zealand, the United States, and the two political entities of the Samoan archipelago ensure the continuous circulation of people, commodities, cultural forms, and ideas. American Samoa and independent Samoa are, in a sense, 'out of the way places,'²⁴ but the unique political division of the archipelago and the two entities' respective links to the United States and the British commonwealth circuit, via New Zealand, position them also at an important center—a generative crossroads where people pick and choose from the cultural productions of two expansive empires.

Dancing Between Islands

For many hip hop artists in New Zealand, a small nation of just over 4 million people, the connections between Los Angeles and Wellington, or Auckland, or Christchurch, are not as direct as they are for Kosmo Fa'alogo. A more circuitous route brought locking, popping, breaking, and the music that accompanies these American street dance forms, from California to New Zealand via the islands of Hawai'i and Samoa. For a number of early poppers in New Zealand, new dance styles were learned not on a trip to Los Angeles, but on a trip to Samoa. The islands of Samoa, central both physically and psychically in a diasporic migrant Samoan matrix, were an important early node in transmitting and translating U.S. street dance south to Aotearoa.

Californian street dance forms traveled quickly; as soon as Samoans were locking and popping on the streets of Carson, Compton, and Long Beach, in California, their cousins were mimicking their moves in the public housing complexes of Honolulu and in the homes, garages, and yards of villages all across American Samoa. For dancers traveling to Hawai'i from California, the ubiquitous presence of dance crews in the islands, and their level of skill, came as something of a surprise. For young people traveling from Hawai'i or the continental U.S. to American Samoa, the prevalence of street dance forms across the largely rural main island of Tutuila was even more unexpected.

Numerous are the narratives of young Samoans raised in the continental United States or Hawai'i who, upon relocating to American Samoa when their fathers retired from military service, were shocked to hear the familiar strains of U.S. funk or early hip hop music and see their rural relatives popping and locking with skill and style. Tune Vaouli, a nighttime hip hop DJ with American Samoa radio station KSBS, recalls moving from Hawai'i to the village of Alofaufu on the east side of Tutuila:

We moved down here in '80, and I was used to seein' breakdancers in Hawai'i ... [but] that summer when we moved down, you could tell by my amazement on my face—I walked into my house and I could hear Planet Rock and [see] people poppin'. I was like, 'What the hell?!'²⁵

Christopher Seei, who spent his early childhood moving with his family between Hawai'i and the Los Angeles-area community of Norwalk, relocated to American Samoa with his parents and siblings in 1984. 'When I got there,' he recounts, 'I was quite shocked at the caliber of poppin' that was there. It was pretty much just like any place in the U.S. where kids would do that. It was pretty competitive, just like how I seen it in the Mainland.'²⁶ Vaouli, Seei, and other young people who moved to American Samoa in the early 1980s had their conceptions of global/local, *here* and *there*, profoundly

tweaked when they journeyed to a place they had envisioned as remote, isolated, even backward, only to find that place permeated by the sights and sounds they thought they had left behind. Not only were young people in American Samoa practicing street dance forms like popping, they had organized crews and were actively competing.

The saturation of American Samoa by street dance testifies to the transferability of the dance forms themselves. It testifies, as well, to the active diasporic networks through which Samoans circulate—the circuits through which people and all their embodied knowledge travel. In American Samoa, as in California, the mastery of new dance forms conferred prestige. But in American Samoa, dancing took on an additional valence; popping became a sort of diasporic currency where new dance styles, like new albums, cassettes, or items of clothing, signified a connectedness with the metropolitan communities 'over there.' While not commodities in the strict sense—lacking material form, and slipping in and out of processes of valuation and exchange—dance styles could be, and were, circulated through 'aiga networks.

When *National Geographic* published a 1985 article on contemporary issues in the Samoan Islands (they borrowed from Margaret Mead's famous ethnography to title the piece 'The Two Samoas: Still Coming of Age') the magazine's photo editors emblematically accompanied the article's written juxtaposition of 'tradition' and 'modernity' with two markedly different photographs of Samoan youth. The story's opening image is a two-page spread of a young boy on the island of Savai'i, then Western Samoa, sailing a handmade canoe along the shore. He is smiling, waist-deep in seawater, clad only in a floral wraparound lavalava. Below the picture, the caption reads:

United by culture, Western Samoa and American Samoa are separated by politics. U.S. aid pampers American Samoa, but the lure of the South Pacific emanates more strongly from Western Samoa's Savai'i, where a boy sails a double-hulled canoe reminiscent of those of his Polynesian ancestors. The H.M.S. Pandora sailed to the islands searching for Bounty mutineers, and here Margaret Mead made her famous observations of adolescents.²⁷

The *National Geographic* article appears to make its own pointed observations of Samoan adolescents, moving quickly from the 'lure of the South Pacific' purportedly emanating from this first picture to a quite different depiction of Samoan youth. The very next photograph in the article shows young male dancers in the graffiti-tagged clubhouse of the American Samoan dance crew Famous Original Blood Brothers (a.k.a. Fagatogo Old Blood Brothers, or F.O.B.B.s). The dancers are clad head-to-toe in athletic gear—bandannas or hats on their heads, Adidas jackets or hooded sweatshirts, and Converse or Adidas brand shoes. One hand-lettered poster on the back wall announces the crew name and their dance

specialties, 'breaking' and 'pop[pi]ng,' while a piece of graffiti on an adjacent wall references Carson Samoan dance crew Blue City Strutters (aka the Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E.). The picture is intended to illustrate, as its caption suggests, what happens when 'the Samoan way collides with fa'a America.'²⁸ Juxtaposed with the first photograph, the F.O.B.B. crew popping, locking, and breaking on the linoleum floor of their Fagatogo clubhouse are cast as U.S.-spawned hybrids, a new form of 'inauthentic' native less alluring to *National Geographic's* orientalist readership than their more traditional cousins to the west.

Yet popping and locking didn't stop in the *nu'u* (villages) of American Samoa. A significant aspect of the 'transnational' connectedness of Samoan family networks is the deep ties that link Samoans in American Samoa to relatives in the independent nation of Samoa. However much *National Geographic* might suggest the absolute 'Americanization' of American Samoa and the contrasting conservative traditionalism of independent Samoa, the two political entities maintain a close, if sometimes contentious, relationship.²⁹ The vast majority of American Samoa's 'foreign' migrant population is in fact women and men from independent Samoa, laboring in Pago Pago's two tuna packing plants. A significant percentage of independent Samoa's 'tourists' are American Samoans visiting relatives or simply taking advantage of Apia's rich nightlife and the relative strength of their American dollars. Samoans frequently travel back and forth, visiting family, going to school, fulfilling kinship obligations, or going on shopping or recreational outings. People across the island chain share a common language, Samoan, and, as many researchers have found, a remarkably unified expressed commitment to the *faaSamoa*, a set of customs, practices and ideals symbolizing 'Samoanness' or more generally 'the Samoan way of life.'³⁰

People in Samoa and American Samoa also share new ideas and new information about the peoples, places, and things encountered on the migrant periphery. These connections ensure that the transnational transfers of popular dance and music that filter down from Hawai'i and the continental U.S. do not simply stop in the U.S.-administered territory of American Samoa, but spill into its larger independent western neighbor. What filters to American Samoa from the U.S. filters to Samoa, and filters, in turn, to the Samoan populations dispersed to Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia. Conversely, what filters back to Samoa from New Zealand and Australia makes its way to American Samoa, Hawai'i, and to Samoan communities in the continental U.S. Hip hop dance, the movements of temporally and spatially situated human bodies, is inextricably tied to the movements of history.

Aotearoa Street Dance: 1980–2002

The 2000 Aotearoa Hip Hop Summit in Christchurch featured, among other events, popping competitions for both females and males. The venue was

the Lumiere Theatre, the official Summit site just off Cathedral Square. On the day preceding the outdoor performance by Kosmo and his Indigenous Footsouljahs, Bonnie Tamati ('Phem!'), a young Samoan woman from the Christchurch-based all-female b-girl crew Anonamiss, took part in the female popping competition. Tamati had only been popping and b-girling for two months. She was a bit bashful and her sets were short, but she had strong support both on and off the Lumiere Theatre stage. Two sisters and one cousin joined Tamati at the Summit, a whole family of female hip hop artists undeterred by the pressures of negotiating the still strongly masculine public and private sites of hip hop production. Tamati's older sister, Sara ('SpexOne'), danced earlier in the day as part of the featured battle between Wellington's Time Bandits Crew and Christchurch's Blitz Crew. A cousin, Lili, and another sister, Karoline, performed with Bonnie in Anonamiss's b-girl showcase. As MC 'Ladi6,' Karoline would also perform formally in the Summit's Friday night concert and participate more informally in the various freestyle rhyme battles between local and visiting MCs taking place throughout the week. To round out the Tamati sisters' rich contributions to Aotearoa Hip Hop Summit 2000, Bonnie also completed two pieces on the communal wall officially sanctioned for Summit graffiti writers.

Tamati had significant encouragement going into the popping competition, both from family members and the larger audience. Throughout the week, in fact, participants of both sexes boasted of the support female performers in general were receiving at the Summit; some male participants even suggested, as a point of pride, that this was an aspect that distinguished Aotearoa hip hop communities from their American counterparts. Even with this enthusiastic reception, however, Tamati's nervousness was still apparent. She came out for two short dance sequences before moving quickly to the back of the stage. When she came forward for her third set, however, her style shifted and she was suddenly dancing Samoan *siva*, but slowly, exaggeratedly, alternately tensing and releasing her body to 'pop' each muscle group, reinterpreting the Samoan dance movements through a body tuned to bass-heavy funk. It was Tamati's longest set of the competition; by the time she had dropped to her knees, reminiscent of a *taupou* dancing a *taualuga*, the audience was screaming and pumping their fists with appreciation.³¹

The spontaneous enthusiasm that greeted Tamati's performance likely involved recognition and appreciation for the distinct elements upon which her dancing drew. The audience of hip hop artists and fans, overwhelmingly Polynesian, were uniquely situated to read in her dance sequence both the specific relationship between head, eye, and hand and foot gestures that characterize Samoan *siva* and the exaggerated muscle movements that mark the urban street dance form popping. Over and above that, however, the enthusiastic audience response bespoke recognition and appreciation for the artful way Tamati, contrary to 1985 *National Geographic* logic, brought

those elements together—how the specific bodily relationships of *siva* could be preserved in an apparently contradictory form.

Tamati's artful marriage of apparently divergent dance forms was not without precedent. Fifteen years before Tamati took the stage in Christchurch, a young Samoan dancer in Wellington named Petelo Petelo articulated the links he understood between an imported dance form he called 'bop' and Samoan traditional dance:

Me, I don't know enough about Samoan dance ... there are a lot of kids who are shy of their dance—but I reckon you can get over that shyness through bop. There are close links between islands dance and bop and now that we have broken through the confidence barrier with our bop we're starting to mix island culture in our dance and show off with pride. For a lot of our [dance] team, when we go to Samoan fiasias we actually do our Samoan dance and you won't be shy at all. Your relatives are surprised and afterwards they come up and they're proud. It's been a long time coming but bop is breaking down cultural barriers—people aren't ashamed of who they are, it's something inside you that makes you want to dance, to take your place.³²

Rather than contradicting or opposing traditional forms, street dance was what, according to Petelo, enabled the children of migrants to have the confidence to learn and perform traditional dance at Samoan gatherings.³³ Petelo's reference to 'something inside you that makes you want to dance, to take your place,' locates in dance a potentially inarticulable power to render new conditions of possibility for the dancing body. For Petelo, engaging in one set of movements, 'bop,' among peers in the social environment of the street allowed for the performance of a different set of movements, Samoan *siva*, in the context of a traditional Samoan gathering.

While the change Petelo references is meaningful to him, personally, it is important that his dancing body is one among many. The form of his narrative begins at the level of the individual, 'Me, I don't know enough about Samoan dance,' but quickly moves to locate Petelo in a larger collective of Islander youth. As he acknowledges bop's ability to counter 'shyness,' Petelo's 'I' slips easily to a 'we.' The 'shyness' he references, what people in New Zealand frequently also call 'that old Polynesian shyness,' is not an individual psychological condition but rather a complex weave of psychologically conditioned fears and anxieties. On the one hand, Maori and Pacific Islander families and communities often censure members who give the impression that they are trying to stand out from the group. Samoans, in particular, have a range of expressions for other Samoans who act *fiapoto*, too smart, or *faamaualuga*, too uppity. On the other hand, Pacific Islanders and Maori in New Zealand are constantly aware of a White gaze that marks them as other and inferior, a 'coconut,' 'fob,' 'dirty hori,' or 'bunga.'³⁴ Young people are trapped between being too Polynesian and never Polynesian enough. Thus, what Petelo terms shyness is rather a feeling of vulnerability to

critique from within and without the community that, at its worst, paralyzes expression. Street dance, for Petelo and others, is a means of negotiating out of this paralysis. It is a means of confidently and creatively living out the present in a way necessarily different from both Islander and Maori elders and New Zealand Whites.

On the day of the dance competitions at Aotearoa Hip Hop Summit 2000, Summit co-host Ritchie Mills had opened up the day's activities in the Lumiere Theatre with a recitation of street dance origin stories, briefly narrating the 20-year history of locking, popping, and breaking in Aotearoa New Zealand. Although Mills credited Kosmo for the information he told the audience, his version also significantly echoed the one detailed in Mark Scott's early history of New Zealand street dance, *Street Action Aotearoa*.³⁵ In Scott's text, Petelo Petelo returns to Wellington in the early 1980s from a stay in Samoa with a new dance form he'd been taught by family and friends:

Petelo had just spent a bit of time back in Samoa where the whole island was filled to overflowing with the bop—not too much break, mostly bop. It had trickled down from America where about 40,000 Samoans live, through to American Samoa, and spilled across to Western Samoa where Petelo picked up on the excitement, and plunged into learning a few moves. [He] could hardly wait to show off the dance back home, inject a bit of that excitement into Wellington streets [but at first] it went down like a lead balloon ... But in Auckland and around the country other Samoan kids were doing the same thing—bringing back a few moves, trying them out on homeground.³⁶

Petelo and the other young dancers were most likely trying popping moves (perhaps locking, as well), but they referred to the dance as bop. Mills' year-2000 account, with a self-consciously comic hindsight, elaborated how this modified pronunciation occurred; filtered through numerous Samoan accents, the name of the dance sounded less like *pop* and more like *bop*. When other forms of hip hop dance became wildly popular and widely practiced in New Zealand, primarily by Maori and Pacific Islander youth, the word bop was used as the general term for a range of urban dance forms, including popping, locking, and b-boying/b-girling.

There is another important element to Scott's origin story. Along with the transmission of dance between bodies—continent to island, village to village, island to island—popping, locking, and breaking began to 'arrive' in Aotearoa via movies and music video. Suddenly, according to Scott, movies such as *Flashdance* (which featured a brief performance by members of the Rock Steady Crew), *Breakin'*, and *Beat Street* provided a wider context for the dance styles of individuals like Petelo, who had picked up his moves in Samoa, or Kosmo, who was just then returning from Los Angeles.³⁷

Perhaps the most provocative catalyst referenced by Scott is the imported U.S. television program *That's Incredible*. Given its small population it has historically been more cost efficient for New Zealand television broadcasters

to air a mix of American, Australian, and domestic programming, rather than attempt to entirely substitute domestic programming for slickly produced foreign products. Significant to Scott's narrative is the fact that in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, this mix of imported and domestic television programming featured predominantly White actors, newscasters, talk show hosts, and commentators. Prior to the mid 1980s, shows featuring non-Whites were extremely rare, and domestic programs featuring Maori and Pacific Islanders virtually non-existent. As Scott notes, 'A Polynesian kid watching television in [New Zealand] can be excused for thinking he or she doesn't exist ... Not surprisingly, the television image of Black America is the one the kids identify with and given everything else it's often the only one they pick up from anywhere.'³⁸

Much as with radio, where Maori and Pacific Island youth would wait through hours of EuroAmerican, British or *pakeha* (White New Zealander) artists, fingers hovering over the record-button for that rare Marvin Gaye, Bob Marley or James Brown tune, televised exceptions to the predominantly White norm have had significant impacts on Polynesian youth. Within the structured (lack of) media representation of non-Whites in New Zealand, even the most banal, the most formulaic, the most inane American programming involving people of color has had radically unforeseen effects.

[H]alfway through 1983 and by complete accident, television at long last dished up something positive, alive, exciting that a Polynesian kid here could relate to ... something that said you can do it, go to it, you're incredible. It happened on a Saturday night about 7:30. In amongst all those people wrestling grizzly bears and water-skiing on their heads, the TV programme *That's Incredible* squeezed in a few minutes on some ghetto gangs who were dancing in the streets instead of fighting, were doing the bop. That five minutes out of a lifetime acted like a trigger—for hundreds of kids that Saturday night was the last they would spend staring blankly at the box. The forgotten kids got something at last.³⁹

What Scott's 'forgotten kids' received was not simply an image of brown bodies on their television screen; it was an image of brown bodies engaged in something so mind-blowingly beautiful, so powerful, so catalytic, that it suggested to many Maori and Pacific Island youth alternative possibilities for the organization of their own daily lives. Some had already been dancing, of course, but the mediated American images of street dance granted a compelling legitimacy to their individual efforts. The brief segment of *That's Incredible* emphasized that those Samoans who had picked up a few moves in Samoa were part of a much larger dynamic youth culture. The same connection to the islands that those youth were used to being routinely insulted for was in fact giving them the advantage in what soon proved to be an international youth movement. 'Bop' was a realm where Islanders had legitimacy over and above *pakeha* youth, and legitimacy in relation to

indigenous Maori youth, as well, translating into a potent confidence boost for the children of recent migrants. 'Bop'—American street dance forms such as popping, locking, and breaking—created a space of solace and comfort where Maori and Pacific Islander young people could seemingly fashion their own codes and conditions for acceptance and exercise a limited form of power.

Importantly, this space of refuge was not an absolute or final rejection of what was deemed Maori or Pacific Islands culture or tradition. It is critical to keep in mind Petelo Petelo's testimony to the role of bop in *enabling* his participation in Samoan cultural gatherings amidst a general New Zealand social environment that derided such 'fresh off the boat' behavior. In Petelo's case, the skills mastered in street dance instilled the pride and confidence necessary for him to (re)turn to Samoan *siva*. For many other Maori and Pacific Islander dancers, DJs, MCs, and graffiti artists, elements of cultural nationalism and cultural pride transferred through American hip hop forms frequently prompted a similar turn to local languages, local history, and local regimes of symbolic representation. Simultaneously, the multi-ethnic spaces of bop and hip hop music encouraged ways to think beyond destructive discourses of absolute ethnic difference between indigenous Maori and migrant Islanders, or between migrant communities of Tongans and Samoans, fostering current trends toward pan-Polynesian collaborative work and the counter-fertilization of activist discourses.

In July of 2000, nearly two decades after hip hop dance forms such as popping, locking, and breaking were carried to Aotearoa by both traveling Islanders and traveling television signals, Ritchie Mills circulated his version of these origin stories from the stage at the first annual Aotearoa Hip Hop Summit. These stories, 'forms of individual and collective narrative,' were 'not merely representations disconnected from "real" political life.' Neither were they 'transparent records' of social history.⁴⁰ Collective narrative-making at the Aotearoa Hip Hop Summit intently articulated local connections to global transnational phenomena.

Ritchie Mills' account was a history lesson for the youth in the audience, most of whom were participants of the post-1995 second wave of breaking popularity in New Zealand. Mills mentioned the momentous 1983 broadcast of *That's Incredible*, and he mentioned also the more intimate links Samoans and other Polynesians in the audience had to what otherwise might be construed as wholly American, or more specifically, wholly African-American or Latino, cultural imports. They were linked, through an expansive network of hip hop dance practitioners encompassing New Zealand, Samoa, American Samoa, and Hawai'i, to California Samoan dancers like Jack and Charlie Hisatake and the brothers of the Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E.

Even more specifically, Summit participants were linked to global street dancing legend Suga Pop. Some Summit participants recounted 20-year-old memories at the mention of Suga Pop's name; his history was their history,

as well. Ritchie Mills' account at Aotearoa Hip Hop Summit 2000 didn't simply situate popular street dance forms in the history of Aotearoa or the Pacific Islands, it also situated Pacific Islands and Pacific Islanders in the history of those dance forms. His particular origin story testified to the transnational impact of American popular culture, but Mills also subtly emphasized the *a priori* transnationalisms that continue to contribute to American popular cultures.

Suga Pop

The Indigenous Footsouljahs are two verses into their signature song in Cathedral Square. A bitterly cold gust of wind momentarily catches the 'Paparazzi' instrumental on DJ Raw's turntable; the needle skips, a brief rupture, but the Footsouljahs press on undeterred. Kosmo's lyrics resound off the gray stone square, the gray stone cathedral, the gray stony faces of passersby. His is a 'travel story,' to be sure, linking pasts and futures to narrate a place of continuous arrival in the present. To be an Indigenous Footsouljah, to be a 'Pacific Islander on foreign soil,' is to draw on originary myths of a Samoan homeland alongside contemporary migrant histories, American Black Power rhetoric, Maori sovereignty struggles, and the culture of hip hop. The 'traveling native' performs, quite literally, from the stage in Cathedral Square, articulating indigeneity alongside diaspora over borrowed beats, envisioning possibilities for an alternative world.⁴¹

Resurrection/ Emerge like a volcanic plateau
 Knowledge absorbed within the circle of travel
 Mythical lyrics to enhance the mental/ Invoke legendary myths of old/
 Reminiscing
 Extravaganza/ Catchin' wreck like cyclones
 Tropical Hamos⁴²/ Outriggers on arrival
 Contemplate/ My mind's focused
 Approach revolution/ Panther power/ Check my ten-point platform!
 Words ravel to confuse the mind flow
 Demonstrate indigenous flavors on metallic chrome
 Apparatus of the trade/ Echoes
 Left for dead in my wrath/ Like Arnie, I'll be back

And again, the mantra-like chorus: 'Always represent for my people/ Pacific Islanders on foreign soil/ Style lethal/ Take a look as we enter the next chapter/ Flip the script.'⁴³

Los Angeles, so figuratively and literally connected as a condition of possibility for the Footsouljahs' performance, was not, in the end, implicated in the way 'Represent For My People' was eventually, with the assistance of a Creative New Zealand arts grant, recorded in 2004. International copyright laws and artistic pride preempted the use of Xzibit's 'Paparazzi'

in the official release, so Footsouljahs were faced with the task of composing a backing track equally as evocative but original enough to avoid copyright infringement. Kosmo briefly considered enlisting the legendary Suga Pop to lend production assistance—the two men have been friends for years.

Though Suga Pop did not have a hand in how 'Represent' was finally released, he was present in other ways, even in his absence, at the inaugural Hip Hop Summit in Christchurch. More intimate, even, than their connection to the Hisatakes or the Devoux, the poppers, lockers, b-boys, and b-girls demonstrating their skills all week at the Aotearoa Hip Hop Summit were linked to the infamous Suga Pop, the enigmatic figure whose traveling body, dancing in and out of islands and continents, negotiating all sorts of mythic homelands, connects Samoa, Aotearoa, Hawai'i, Los Angeles, and New York City. Suga Pop is a progenitor, an Islander, a dance legend, and Maori dancer Swerv 1, one of the oldest b-boys in Aotearoa and possibly the first person to do a top-to-bottom graffiti piece on a train in the entire nation of New Zealand, can remember himself being a 'wee bub' in Newtown when Pop used to pass down to him his old skateboard decks.

Though Suga Pop would be the first to assert that 'fame, for us, is not measured by how many videos you've been in,' he 'arrived' in Aotearoa via video as well. He was featured in Topper Carew's dance documentary *Breakin and Entering*, which circulates from home to home in New Zealand via thrice-dubbed bootlegs. He helped choreograph and perform the popping sequences in Michael Jackson's epic *Thriller* video and prominently appears with Janet Jackson (as well as former Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E. member E.K.A.) in the clip for 'That's The Way Love Goes.' Though now based, again, in Los Angeles, Suga Pop continues to arrive in New Zealand; in the physical sense, he makes occasional trips for business and pleasure, maintaining close ties with family and old friends. But Suga Pop also continues to arrive in streams of mediated images and snatches of song, through the dance videos he edits and distributes from his Silverlake home.

Several months before the inaugural Aotearoa Hip Hop Summit, I finally caught up with the legendary Suga Pop at the 2000 B-boy Summit in Los Angeles, one of the premiere annual U.S. events dedicated to showcasing the street dance forms—locking, popping, and b-boying/b-girling—that have since come to be associated with hip hop culture. Suga Pop graciously agreed to an interview, and, seated in his Pasadena hotel room with Electric Boogaloo members Popin' Pete and Skeeter Rabbit between exhibitions, he answered my questions about 'back in the day,' about street dance and his connections to Pacific peoples and places. It was then that Suga Pop told me that, contrary to printed assertions and endlessly spiraling street discourses, he is not of Samoan ancestry. 'Me?' he has since written, 'Well I'm the original "half-breed-outcast"—always have been.'

Suga Pop, one of the first 'Samoan' hip hop stars, discovered that his biological father is not the Samoan man who raised him but a rather different

'Islander'—an itinerant sometimes-musician from St. Kitts, according to one version of the story, AWOL from the U.S. Army and traveling the Pacific with his band. 'At times my opinions may seem a lil' jaded,' Pop writes, '[after continually hearing] "You're not a real Samoan—your daddy's a nigger and your mom is White."⁴⁴ I am reminded now of that passage from George Lipsitz's essay 'Cruising Around the Historical Bloc,' where Lipsitz reveals that the first commercially successful Chicano rock and roller in Los Angeles, L'il Julian Herrera, was in fact a Hungarian Jew raised by a Mexican woman in Boyle Heights.⁴⁵ What does such a revelation mean for the work I attempt here?

I end with Suga Pop precisely because his example provides a curious twist to the larger questions central to my work: what are the stakes of articulating a Samoan hip hop identity? How are such articulations situated within contested discourses of authenticity and fields of power? I end with Suga Pop precisely because it would be too easy to envision this chapter as simply an attempt to argue for the legitimacy of Samoan hip hop production and Samoan hip hop identity vis-à-vis the Black American referents that overwhelmingly determine understandings of hip hop culture. I am not solely concerned with trying to locate Samoans within the contested discourses of hip hop authenticity, or about maintaining the centrality of Blackness as the *only* pole around which Samoan hip hop identity must orbit. Suga Pop reminds me that there are multiple poles, and that they need to be held in tension. I end with the figure of Suga Pop because his example in fact provides the inverse of what many readers would expect this text to be about. Suga Pop; a person of both impeccable hip hop credentials and African ancestry who nevertheless has spent much of his life situating himself and being situated within discourses of what it means to be authentically Samoan. 'I used to really want to *belong*,' Suga Pop says. 'I used to hang with the fellas in Hawai'i, then in California with the Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E.—*shit*, I could speak better Samoan than they could. But I don't care anymore, I'm OK with it.'⁴⁶

In May 2002, nearly two years after the first Aotearoa Hip Hop Summit where his name was so frequently invoked, Suga Pop was brought back to Aotearoa New Zealand to perform in a dance exhibition and teach two workshops on popping and locking. His trip, organized by local dancers and funded by the Wellington City Council, was billed as the triumphant return of a native son. Some of the predominantly Pacific Islander and Maori participants in the workshop learned that Suga Pop was not, in fact, Polynesian, but nobody really cared. They listened in rapt attention as he broke down the history of the dance forms that meant so much to them. They struggled, sweating and grinning, to master his impressive techniques. On the second day of the workshops, a Sunday, one young Samoan man brought him *to'ona'i*, the traditional Samoan Sunday meal. No matter his genealogy, Suga Pop was considered family to them. Suga Pop, 'the original

half-breed outcast,' or perhaps just one of many border crossers, who despite this, or because of it, single-handedly embodies all of the complexity and connectedness and contradiction I seek to write about here.

NOTES

1. Note that the indigenous Maori term for New Zealand is Aotearoa. I use the terms alternately throughout the text.
2. 'Always Represent,' *Puttin' In Work*, 2Much Records 2004.
3. West Side Piru is an old and prominent set of the Los Angeles Blood gang organization.
4. 'Aiga can mean 'family, descent group, or kinship in all its dimensions.' Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa* (Suva, Fiji: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific, 1987), p. vii.
5. SpexOne, 'K.O.S.-163,' *Back2Basics* (September 2001), pp. 22–4.
6. Omai Faatasi, which translates as 'Come together as one,' served the South Bay Samoan community during the 1970s, offering educational outreach, job training, health care information, and agitating for greater social services for Samoans. The organization lost their community center and most of their funding as a result of California State Proposition 13. Visual Communications, *Omai Faatasi: Samoa Mo Samoa* (Los Angeles: 1978).
7. The 1989 beatings of female and male members of the Dole family in Cerritos, CA, the 1991 shooting deaths of the Tualaulelei brothers in Compton, CA, and the 1998 shooting death of Rodney Laulusa in Honolulu, HI, all by active duty law enforcement officials, are notable examples. In all cases, officers made statements after the incident about the physical size of the Samoans they beat or shot. Paul Feldman, 'County Ordered to Pay Extra \$2.3 Million in Brutality Case,' *Los Angeles Times*, November 9, 1995; 'Deputies Used Excessive Force,' *Los Angeles Times*, June 20, 1995; Andrea Ford, 'Police Officer Charged in Two Killings,' *Los Angeles Times*, October 17, 1991; 'Jury Deadlocks in Compton Officer's Manslaughter Trial,' *Los Angeles Times*, May 20, 1992; Andrea Ford and Eric Malnic, 'Ex-Officer to Avoid Retrial in Slayings,' *Los Angeles Times*, June 4, 1992; Ed Rampell, 'Did This Man Have to Die? The Shooting of Rodney "Banks" Laulusa,' *Honolulu Weekly*, February 25–March 3, 1998.
8. Most male dancers I've interviewed will, when pressed, admit that some of the best poppers and/or lockers they've ever seen were female, but very few women have been able to travel or perform street dance professionally. Men typically attribute this to the fact that women have less ambition and/or bear the primary burden of childcare, therefore having less mobility and less desire to be frequently on the road. This projection, by men, of women's desires and motivations is frequently at odds with the stories given by women involved in street dance, who often emphasize gender discrimination and lack of opportunities and encouragement to continue performing.
9. Jorge 'Fabel' Pabón, 'Bicoastal Exchange Program: Breaks Pop the Lock of Cultural Confinement,' *Rap Pages*, Vol. 5, No. 8 (September 1996), p. 43.
10. The term 'b-boy,' or, alternately, 'b-girl,' refers to a male or female breaker. These terms, like many in hip hop, are constantly debated. Some practitioners insist on one term, while others vehemently disagree and insist on another. The terms 'b-boy' and 'b-girl' are said to refer to a 'break-boy' or 'break-girl,' a dancer who performs particular moves within the breaking repertoire. The 'break' in breaking refers to the extended instrumental break between stanzas in the funk or soul records critical to hip hop development. DJs experimented with these breaks, switching between two turntables playing identical or complementary records in order to extend the break indefinitely, and breakers performed to these expertly manipulated sonic subversions.
11. Kelly errs on the date here, as Suga Pop doesn't recall traveling to New York until 1981. Also, the question of Suga Pop's 'Samoan' ancestry will be returned to later in the chapter.

- 'Hip Hop Chicano,' in Brian Cross, *It's Not About a Salary ... Rap, Race and Resistance in Los Angeles* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 70.
12. Jeremy Miller, 'Tribal Scars: Certified OG's on the West Coast, Boo-Yaa T.R.I.B.E. Finally Seem on the Verge. What Took Samoa's First Family So Long?' *Source* (March 2001), pp. 158-61.
 13. DJ Zen, 'Ready to Rock Hard: The Brothers of Boo-Yaa Tribe Come Back Swingin',' *Rap Pages* (April 1993).
 14. Cross, *It's Not About a Salary*, p. 149.
 15. This compilation, *Eyez on the Prize*, was planned as a soundtrack to an independent film of the same name which Rodney Hisatake intended to co-produce. The film was to follow the struggles of four fictional brothers migrating from American Samoa to California, illuminating in particular the hardships of two of the brothers who become enmeshed in illicit drug economies. Due to insufficient funding, the film has not, as yet, been made. It is interesting, given Paul Gilroy's remarks in *Against Race* on the changing category of freedom in Black popular culture, that the *Eyez on the Prize* compilation displays a marked trend towards the representations of the hyper-physical and commoditized body that Gilroy notes (although it substitutes a Samoan body for an African-American one), while retaining the title of a popular documentary series about the U.S. civil rights struggle. Paul Gilroy, *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).
 16. SpexOne, 'K.O.S.-163,' p. 23.
 17. Ibid., p. 24.
 18. One memorable logo used on posters, flyers, T-shirts, and stage backdrops for both Rough Opinion and K.O.S.-163's current group, Indigenous Footsouljahs, features simply the band's name and a stark black-and-white representation of Black Panther Party member Huey Newton holding a machine gun.
 19. A variation of the American Black vernacular expression 'Head Nigga In Charge,' the 'Fob' in this case referring to the sometimes derogatory shorthand for 'Fresh Off the Boat,' a reference to recent Pacific Islander migrants.
 20. J.W. Davidson, *Samoa Mo Samoa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967); Malama Meleisea (ed.), *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa* (Suva, Fiji: University of the South Pacific Press, 1987).
 21. Eni F.H. Faleomavaega, 'Statement Before the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24),' Havana, Cuba; Caribbean Regional Seminar to Review the Political, Economic and Social Conditions in the Small Island Non-Self-Governing Territories, May 23, 2001; Fili Sagapolutele, 'American Samoa is Not a US Colony, Tauese Reiterates,' *Samoa News*, April 12, 2001. Critical voices have emerged to contest the dominant narrative of beneficent American administration of the territory, notably Dan Taulapapa McMullin. See, in particular, McMullin's chapter on American Samoa in the reader *Resistance in Paradise* (Philadelphia: American Friends Service Committee, 1999), pp. 87-107.
 22. Cluny Macpherson, Bradd Shore, and Robert Franco (eds), *New Neighbors: Islanders in Adaptation* (Santa Cruz, CA: Center for South Pacific Studies, 1978).
 23. Paul Spoonley, David Pearson, and Cluny Macpherson (eds), *Nga Take: Ethnic Relations and Racism in Aotearoa/New Zealand* (Palmerston North, NZ: Dunmore Press, 1991).
 24. Anna Tsing, *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).
 25. Tune Vaouli, from tape-recorded interview. Alofa, American Samoa, August 6, 1998.
 26. Christopher Seei, from tape-recorded interview. Honolulu, HI, October 17, 1997.
 27. Robert Booth, 'The Two Samoas: Still Coming of Age,' *National Geographic* (October 1985), pp. 452-73.
 28. Ibid., p. 455. 'Fa'a America' in this case is a play on the term *faaSamoa* intended to denote instead 'the American way.'

29. The contentiousness of the relationship between the governments of America and independent Samoa has deep historical layers, involving, among other things, pre-colonial chiefly hierarchies and present-day economic disparities. In general, there is a great deal of pride on both sides of the political dividing line, which translates into deeply felt concern that the Samoans on the other side of the political boundary might think that 'they,' for whatever reason, are better than 'us.'
30. Robert Franco, *Samoa Perceptions of Work: Moving Up and Moving Around* (New York: AMS Press, 1991); Lowell D. Holmes and Ellen Rhoades Holmes, *Samoa Village Then and Now* (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992); Bradd Shore, 'A Samoan Theory of Action,' Ph.D. Thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago, 1977.
31. The *taupou* is frequently referred to in anthropological literatures as the 'village maiden' or 'ceremonial virgin,' both terms that carry a dense accretion of gendered Western imaginings of Pacific Islands women. Today, the *taupou* is perhaps better understood as the young woman chosen to represent a Samoan village by performing particular duties in ceremonial matters. A *taualuga* is a type of *siva*, or dance, which features the *taupou*, and it is accorded a special place of status in Samoan performing repertoires. In the dispersed and adaptive Samoan communities which have formed in the United States and New Zealand, often a young woman functioning as a *taupou* and dancing a *taualuga* is not representing a village, per se, but another body of Samoans such as a church congregation, a school group, a cultural troupe, etc.
32. Mark Scott, *StreetAction Aotearoa* (Auckland, NZ: Arohanyi Publications, 1985), p. 43.
33. A *fiafia* is a type of Samoan party or cultural gathering usually held to mark a special occasion, especially the arrival or departure of a visiting group. A *fiafia* typically involves a back-and-forth exchange of music and dance performances by the host and visiting group, and can extend for hours into the night.
34. This last slur is perhaps derived from the way Polynesian languages sound to an untrained ear.
35. Kosmo and a number of the other participants at the 2000 Aotearoa Hip Hop Summit actually appear in Scott's 1985 text—a testament to their enduring commitment to hip hop forms.
36. Scott, *StreetAction Aotearoa*, p. 54.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., p. 50.
39. Ibid.
40. Lisa Lowe, 'Work, Immigration, Gender: New Subjects of Cultural Politics,' in Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd (eds), *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 356.
41. My use of the term 'traveling native' borrows from Teresia Teaiwa, 'Between Traveler and Native: The Traveling Native as Performative/Informative Figure,' unpublished paper, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1993.
42. *Hamo* is a common slang term for a Samoan person.
43. 'Always Represent,' *Puttin' In Work*, 2Much Records 2004.
44. Suga Pop, from emailed communication received by author. May 8, 2001.
45. George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place* (London: Verso Press, 1994), p. 142.
46. Suga Pop, from conversation notes. Wellington, NZ, May 15, 2002.