

HISTORY, CULTURE & COLLECTIONS

2017 Humanities Department Lecture Series at Museums Victoria
Wednesday 12 April 2017, 5.30pm – 6.30pm,
refreshments from 5pm

Theatre, Lower Ground Floor, Melbourne Museum, Carlton Gardens



“In the Beginning was the Ocean”: Pacific Cosmogony in Epeli Hau’ofa’s Oceania and Disney’s Moana

Tēvita O. Ka’ili

AAPS Annual Epeli Hau'ofa Lecture

“In the beginning was the ocean” is the opening line of the Tongan creation story. Tongan deep history states that people originated in the *moana* (deep sea), and that *Limu* (seaweed) and *Kele* (sea sediment) are our primordial parents. Epeli’s Hau’ofa’s concept of Oceania revives an ancient cosmogony that begins with the *moana* and frames our advocacy for the ocean.

In this paper, Tēvita O. Ka’ili will navigate Hau’ofa’s Oceania by traversing what has now become a sea of ocean pollution, ocean acidification, rising sea levels, overfishing and deep sea mining. He will also critically examine, from an indigenous Tā-Vā (time-space) theory, the “mining” by extractive corporations, like Disney, of cultural heritage, such as stories, symbols, iconographies, objects, motifs, and deities that are associated with the ocean.



Kalaeokauna’oa (The Bay of the Mollusk), 19 April 2014

Photographer: Tēvita O. Ka’ili

For Oceanians, advocating and protecting our *moana* ancestors, our home, our cultural heritage and marine life reminds us of Hau’ofa’s call for all of us to be “custodians of the ocean”.

Tēvita O. Ka’ili is originally from Nuku’alofa, Tongatapu, with close ancestral ties to Tonga, Sāmoa, Fiji and Rotuma. He is a direct descendant of Tangaloa, Maui and Hina and chair of Department of Cultures & Languages at Brigham Young University Hawai’i. Tēvita completed his PhD in Sociocultural Anthropology at University of Washington (2008), and is a scholar of Indigenous-based Tā-Vā (time-space) theory/philosophy, Indigenous Anthropology, Transnationalism and Globalization, Indigenous Knowledge, Language Revitalization, Pacific Studies and Moana/Oceania. Tēvita is associate editor for the *Pacific Studies* journal and contributor to *The Huffington Post*. His latest volume *Marking Indigeneity: The Tongan Art of Sociospatial Relations* (University of Arizona) will be published in October 2017.

Free entry. Please book to reserve a seat:

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