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O LE SOGA'IMITI

AN EMBODIMENT OF GOD IN THE SAMOAN MALE BODY

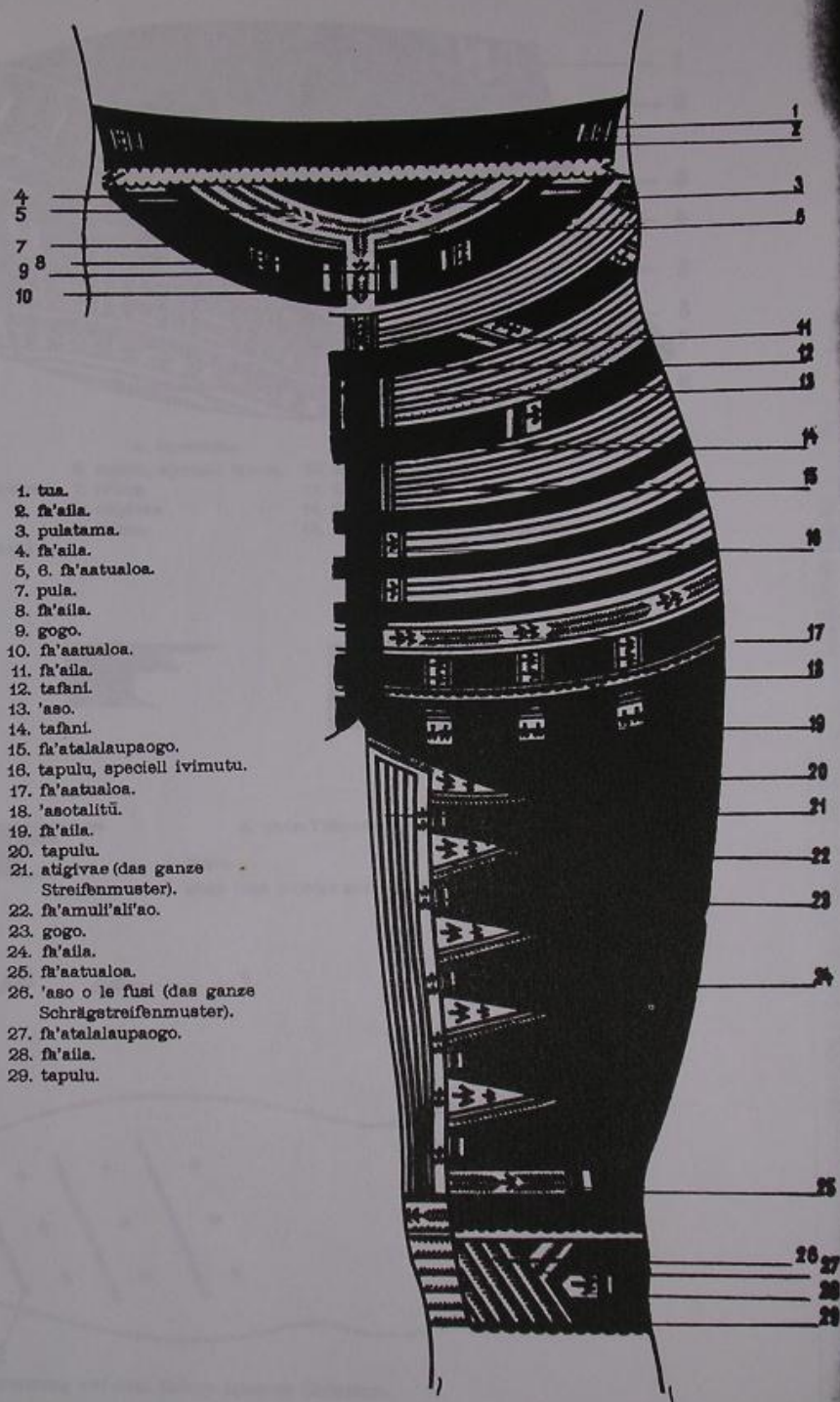
TAVITA MALIKO

PH.D THESIS

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Theology

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1. tua.
2. fa'aia.
3. pulatama.
4. fa'aia.
- 5, 6. fa'aatualoa.
7. pula.
8. fa'aia.
9. gogo.
10. fa'aatualoa.
11. fa'aia.
12. tafani.
13. 'aso.
14. tafani.
15. fa'atalalaupaogo.
16. tapulu, speciell ivimutu.
17. fa'aatualoa.
18. 'asotalitū.
19. fa'aia.
20. tapulu.
21. atigivae (das ganze Streifenmuster).
22. fa'amuli'ali'ao.
23. gogo.
24. fa'aia.
25. fa'aatualoa.
26. 'aso o le fusi (das ganze Schrägstreifenmuster).
27. fa'atalalaupaogo.
28. fa'aia.
29. tapulu.

PROLOGUE

Like many Samoan words which have changed meaning over time or have undergone ‘genealogical’ accidents, deviations, errors or false appraisals (Foucault, 1977), the word *sogā’imiti* originally had an unfavorable and condescending meaning. It meant “children tattooed before they are of suitable age” (Pratt, 1911 [1862], p. 279) or “children tattooed before their majority” (Maia, 2010, p. 347), but Maia adds that the word is synonymous with *seugā’imiti*, which he defines as “a derogatory term for minority or youth.” He also has an entry for the word *sogā’i* which he defines as “premature or unnecessary”; *miti* means thin so the term *soga’imiti* points to the derogatory labeling of a *tama’i sogā’imiti tautala’ititi* (young thin cheeky lad) who has taken up the *tatau* (tattoo) before his appropriate age, which is a rite of passage into adulthood for men. Le Tagaloa (1996a) explains that part of this Samoan traditional ritual of *tatauing* (tattooing) for men in pre-Christian times is their learning about sexual relations with women. The elderly research participants hinted that actual sexual intercourse took place between the *tatau* recipients and women as part of the *tatauing* rite, and this is one reason that younger perspectives are frowned upon and labeled as *soga’imiti*, as they are too young to have community-sanctioned sexual relations with women, hence the term *soga’imiti*.

Both Allardice (1985) and Milner (nd [1966]) defines *soga’imiti* as a “youth recently tattooed;” this is generally the current accepted meaning in contemporary Samoa which now refers to anyone who wears the *tatau*, and this is the meaning taken up in this work. The *tatau* was a youth’s ticket into becoming a member of the village ‘*aumaga* or untitled men who serve the village matai council; it is said that those without a *tatau*, the *pula’ū*, were not allowed to enter the matai council house and were always considered as minors.

The resurgent of *tatau* in the late twentieth century after strong attempts by missionaries to discontinue its practice (Gilson, 1970) has seen *tatau* reclaim its status as a symbol of Samoan identity and pride. An increasing number of young Samoans who were born and live outside Samoa in countries like America, Australia and New Zealand, have taken up the *tatau* as an inscription of identity on their bodies.

This thesis title takes the current meaning of *soga'imiti*, which is, any Samoan man who wears the traditional *tatau*, as a most appropriate and unique identity of Samoan men worldwide. Although the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS) also known as *Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano i Samoa* (EFKS) has not totally repealed its missionary-era rules against *tatau*, *tatau* and *soga'imiti* continue to be celebrated and worn with pride in the contemporary socio-religious life of Samoans. The Catholic Church in Samoa allows only a *soga'imiti* to perform certain roles during religious worship where the *soga'imiti* wears nothing on his upper body but his *tatau*. This acceptance of *tatau* in the Samoan Catholic Church's practical theology reflects mixed beliefs within Samoan cultural and religious circles about the place of *tatau*.

The *tatau* which is an inscribed representation of religio-cultural beliefs and practices on the male body in Samoa, is a visual representation of the embodiment and institution of *Atua* (God) within the Samoan male body, hence its selection as an appropriate term for the title of this thesis. The outline of a half-*tatau* on the previous page represents for this work the essence and richness of what was originally inscribed onto the Samoan male body in the pre-Christian era, has been lost, partly as an effect of the version of Christianity and God that has overlaid the *tatau*. *O le sogā'imiti* is tantamount to saying: *O le tama Samoa—the Samoan male*.

ABSTRACT

Much of the discourse especially the church sermons in my church denomination or at least the ones that I have attended, constructs the body as only a material thing, sinful, bad and evil as opposed to the divinity and purity of the spirit. On the other hand, the body is valued and greatly celebrated in the Samoan culture; this is a vitally important dilemma because while inside Church the body is evil and is to be wrapped and covered, outside it the body is more meaningful when visible and exposed. This thesis was borne out of the need to explore that struggle—one between the sinfulness of bodily and material life, as opposed to the godliness/holiness of spiritual life as reflected in church theological messages on one hand, against a culture that celebrate the body and everything material about it as good and divine, on the other. If, according to Christian theology, humans are created in the image of God, how is it that the body is often ridiculed in Christian theology as sinful and evil?

This study examines the pre-Christian concept *Atua* (God) and the current Christian concept God and how the two are socially constructed, merged or differentiated and embodied through a Samoan male body. The thesis draws upon a number of different sources of “text” including over 600 written works, two short documentary films, and interview with fifteen Samoan men and women that includes two *fa’afafine*. Drawing primarily upon the interview data a number of themes were identified for closer analysis. These themes include the construction of the Samoan male, the construction of the male role of *tautua* (one who serve) and his relation to the family and community, the construction of God as creator and as a Samoan *matai* (chief), and how these socio-theological values and meanings are embodied and help shape the life of the Samoan male.

The findings of this work reveal the social construction of a particular version of God, his message, his work, and his will, and a particular version of the Samoan Christian believer through theological discourse. The social construction and embodiment of the Christian God in theology and practices, is markedly different from those of the pre-Christian *Atua*(s) and belief in deity and spirits which to some degree, many Samoans still hold onto in their embodiment of God.

A *soga'imiti* is symbolic of the ultimate Samoan male: he is brave, fearless, has wisdom and knowledge, the provider and protector of his family, church, village and country. His *tatau* (tattoo) is a literal inscription of his socio-religious identity, beliefs and duties; the motifs of which are visual depiction of his embodied life; this constitute the embodiment of his environment, family and God. *Soga'imiti* is synonymous with embodied cultural pride, beauty, bravery, ability and potentiality. In contemporary Samoa, not all males have a *tatau*, but all males are expected to live the same embodied life and have the same embodied qualities as those of *soga'imiti* described above, to enable them to serve their families and communities. A man without a *tatau* is not a lesser man relative to a *soga'imiti* but the term *soga'imiti* is nevertheless used in this thesis as representative of Samoan male with or without the *tatau*. This thesis is a deconstruction of the embodied life of the Samoan male as seen through the lens of the social construction of cultural and theological discourses.

FA'AFETAI

This dissertation has taken quite some time due mainly to my family obligations, a struggle that has reaffirmed my personal beliefs in the connectedness of my Samoan body to many others who have cheered me on, and shared with me the ups and down of this journey. This is the fruit of many voices that have shaped my life from a humble home to the academic classrooms of world renowned scholars.

An enormous debt of gratitude and respect to my mentor, supervisor and great generous friend Dr Philip Culbertson who invited me to come and live with him at his home in Palm Spring CA, rent-free for ten months so as to escape family interruptions; this great gift enabled me to write the first draft of this work and quickly brought it to its final stages; without that enormous gift of *alofa* this work might not have come to fruition. So Philip, may Tagaloa and God bless you as you wish. I am also grateful to Misatauveve Dr. Melani Anae my co-supervisor for highlighting the richness of the socio-theological insight within our Samoan heritage and to be critical of the printed literature about our native bodies.

Fa'afetai tele to the men and women who have shared their stories in this work, three of whom unfortunately passed away during the course of writing; may you rest in peace like a *soga'imiti*—forever ready. I also acknowledge the inspiring contributions from church ministers, specifically the Samoan theologian the late Rev. Oka Fau'olo, and the scholarship of the Head of State, His highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Tufuga Efi.

I am also very grateful to my parents-in-law, Malolo Alapati and Faumuina Sofaea for their unwavering support, and my family in Long Beach CA; cheers guys! I thank my brothers and sisters too especially Selo for financial and moral support. I thank my wife and friend Sara Mileneta Maliko and my children especially my two older boys Valentino and Nel for grounding me to real life, and my extended family and in laws for their prayers and support. But this thesis is dedicated to my father, Tipa Maliko Vasa who taught me through his body the values of hard work, patience, honesty, and most of all faith in God. It is dedicated also to my mother Latatuli Maliko whose unwavering strength still holds the family together. *Ia faamanuia tele atu le Atua mo outou uma, Fa'afetai.*

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GLOSSARY

‘aumaga	untitled men or literally ‘ava munchers
‘ele’ele	earth, soil, ground, dirt, blood (Pratts)
aiga	family, extended family
ali’i	a sacred chief (as opposed to the tūlāfale, the secular chief); a male.
ali’i-o-aiga	eldest male child or heir
aogā	use, useful, usefulness
atua	god. Atua was a name for the pre-Christian Samoan god(s) and is now used to identify the Christian God.
fa’afāfine	in the manner of a woman, biological men who may identify themselves as female and may or may not dress as female.
fa’alavelave	a hindrance, an impediment; term applied to family events like a funeral, wedding, or any such events where the larger extended family gather together to help financially
fa’alupega	ceremonial address and style of a person, family, village or district. A set of honorific terms or salutations specific to each <i>matai</i> title, family, village or district.
fa’asamoa	the Samoan way of life or culture
fa’amatai	social, cultural and political system governed by the matai or chiefly titles system.
fa’asino	v. to point out, to show, to point to(Pratt, 1911 [1862]); show, point, indicate, direct, refer(Milner, nd [1966]).
fa’asinomaga	place or social origin of a person. Every Samoan is born into a particular family which has particular titles and a particular genealogy and owns particular lands and particular ancestors. All these are constitutive in the term fa’asinomaga.
fa’avae	foundation
fanua	and, placenta, earth, soil, ground, dirt, blood (Pratts)

gafa	lineage, genealogy (Milner). ancestors, descendants, a pedigree (Pratts);
lāuga	speech, orate, oratory, sermon.
mamalu	prestige, dignity, majesty, glory, honour, influence, to be in force (e.g. law)
manuia	blessing, success, successful, win.
mātua	parents
mavaega	parting command, engagement, blessing or promise
ola	Life, alive, give birth, a basket woven from young coconut leaves.
pa'ia	not touched by work, sacred. A term applied to titled chiefs
poto	clever, smart, intelligent, skilled, expert, learned, wise, wisdom, wise man (Allardice, 1985).
sa'ili	search, to look for, to find, to obtain.
sauali'i	a god. respectful term for an <i>aitu</i> (Pratt, 1911)
suli	descendant(s), heir
tama	child, boy, male of any age married or not, a woman's child, a chief
tamā	father
taule'ale'a	untitled man
tautua	n. a servant. v. service, to serve
to'oto'o	the staff or stick used by <i>tulafale</i> during a traditional speech (lauga). It is also a name to refer to talking <i>matai</i> or <i>tulafale</i> .
tofā	opinion, will, wish, or words of an ali'i matai, or a tupu (king), in contrast to that of a tulāfale matai, which is, moe or fa'autaga. Tofā is also the respective or polite word for sleep or sleeping.
Tofā sa'ili	sa'ili is search, to find, look for. Tofā sa'ili refers to the limited understanding or knowledge of a high chief (ali'i) which is always searching for a better or the best answer to a problem.
tofi	v.1. to divide, appoint, assign, position, an inheritance n. tofiga. appointment, inheritance.
tofiga	occupation, profession, position
tuā'ele'ele	origin, anchor, or a place, thing or person that something or a

	person comes from or originates from. The word is made from two different words, tua and ‘ele’ele. Tua, among many other meanings also mean back, at the back, behind, to trust in the protection of; ‘ele’ele is land, soil, mud, dirt, blood.
tulāfale	the talking <i>matai</i> or chief, the orator, or the secular chief as opposed to the sacred one called the ali’i.
usu	to effect sexual or matrimonial union. Successful courtship of a woman by a man (including sexual intercourse). (of a man) Pay one’s court, woo, to press one’s suit to a successful conclusion including sexual intercourse (Milner). To go or come to a place in the early morning. To go to a fono (meeting).
usuga	marriage alliances
usugafa	mo marry into a family.
va	space between; distance; space between two things, places or people. Relationship; relations (between two things or people) (Milner). space, opening. refers to the physical and social space, which can be translated as relationship between people.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

BODY: A DEFINITION

The Oxford English dictionary defines body as the “whole physical structure, including the bones, flesh, and organs, of a person or an animal, whether dead or alive.” This very basic definition excludes any cognitive make up of the body and how it is constituted by social, cultural, political and religious beliefs within which that body lives and dies. This definition no longer holds in theoretical understanding as most theorists now accept the complexity of the body, which means that it is more than just flesh, skin and bones. Synnott (1993) has summarized the way the body has been defined in various ways from the times of Greek philosophy of the eighth century BC, through to the Roman era of the first century, the early Christian teachings and beliefs to various understanding of the body in the present age:

The body has been constructed, and still is, constructed in as many ways as there are individuals; it seems to be all things to all people. Thus the body is defined as good or bad; tomb or temple; machine or garden; cloak or prison; sacred or secular; friend or enemy; cosmic or mystical; one with mind and soul or separate; private or public; personal or the property of the state; clock or car; to varying degrees plastic, bionic, communal; selected from a catalogue or engineered; material or spiritual; a corpse or the self (Synnott, 1993, p. 37).

BODY IN THEORY

Throughout history, the human body had been defined and constructed in all sorts of manner most of which were negative, harmful and divisive against a healthy and holistic view of humanity. In Europe during the age of modernity, strong attempts were made by the state and institutions to exert control over the bodies of their citizens, and it was also a period when the power of religious authority to control and regulate the body was reduced (Shilling, 1993).

The 17th century philosopher Rene Descartes for example, separates body from mind as reflected in his “I think therefore I am” statement, which renders the body as inferior to mind.

O'Neill (1985) discusses the body under the categories of a communicative body, a social body, the body politic, the consumer body and the medical body. Under the communicative body, “our bodies are the very flesh of society” and that “sociability rests upon our reciprocal experience and upon the vulnerability and openness to one another that arises from the kind of communicative life we enjoy as embodied beings” (p. 21). The social body regards social order as not just a cognitive construct or an abstract system of rules and categories to which individuals conform but that “there is an embodied logic of society or an embodied logic of social membership that furnishes the deep communicative structure of public life” (p. 49). The political body is the fundamental structure of political life which “provides the grounds of ultimate appeal in times of deep institutional crisis, of hunger and alienation, when there is need to renew the primary bonds of political authority and social consensus (p. 67-68). The consumer body is “the body that has needs”; the “need for food, drink, clean air, rest, shelter, clothing, a certain standard of public health and safety which are required both to sustain life and to reproduce it in a healthy population whose offspring will have a fair chance of survival” (p. 91).

O'Neill's (1985) medical body highlights

the medicalization of the body as a dramatic part of the pervasive industrialization of the body [through which people are] socialized into bringing every stage of the life cycle—conception, birth, nurturing, sexual conduct, illness, pain, aging, dying—into the administration of bureaucratized centers of professional care which function to achieve the defamilization of the body. [He argues that] the ultimate goal of this process, which is accomplished by medicine, psychoanalysis, law and the politics of women's bioliberation, is to bring all life into the market place by having its origins and extinction governed by state therapeutic administration (1985, p. 120).

Evans (2002) underlines the difference between a body she calls a real body, or an individual human being, and one that is created by fantasies as demonstrated through Shelley's (1999) *Frankenstein* which attempt to replace the 'natural' body with the unnatural. “The

collectively produced fantasies, needs and desires of late capitalism are, as far as the body is concerned, genuinely monstrous, in that they deform, manage and direct the body in ways geared to the needs of the social system rather than human needs” (p. 11).

The Gendered Body

Feminists have tried to develop a precise vocabulary for referring to the body: sex refers to “biological criteria for classification as female or male: chromosomes (XX for females, XY for male), hormones (estrogen for female, testosterone for male), genitalia (clitoris, vagina, and uterus for females; penis and scrotum for male), procreative organs (ovaries and uterus for female, testes for male)” (Lorber & Moore, 2007, p. 4). There are also secondary sex characteristics where testosterone increases muscle size and mass, deepens the voice and accelerates facial and body hair growth in males; estrogen produces breasts and menstruation, widens the pelvis, and increases the amount of body fat in hips, thighs and buttocks in females. Gender on the other hand is a “legal status as a woman or man, usually based on sex assigned at birth, but may be legally changed. Gender status produces patterns of social expectations for bodies, behaviour, emotions, family and work roles” which can “change over time both on individual and social levels” (p. 5).

According to Lorber and Moore (2007)

We live in a deeply gendered society where work, family, and other major areas of life are organized by dividing people into two categories, ‘men’ and ‘women,’ assigning them to different jobs and positions, and socializing them to do the work of their assigned category. The categorization of infants into ‘boys’ and ‘girls’ may originally be based on genitalia, but the systematic allocation of people into gendered positions is done through social processes (p. 2).

These processes are propagated through actions and beliefs which construct the gendered social order, and are maintained by those who benefit from it, as well as those who are shortchanged by the resulting inequalities. Women and men abide by these gendered norms for appropriate feminine and masculine behaviour because their identities and self-esteem are built on meeting social expectations. Many Western societies accept gender inequalities on

the belief that they emerge from the body and this sustains the argument that such body-based 'natural' differences explain why women and men have different roles and positions in society. Culture, the mass media, religions, and knowledge systems like science and medicine construct and reinforce 'natural' explanation of gendered body differences which are recast as natural, physical, universal, transhistorical and as permanent facts. These gendered attributes we call 'manliness' or 'masculinity' and 'womanliness' or 'femininity,' are designed to fit people into adult social roles, such as 'mother,' 'father,' 'nurse,' or 'construction worker' (Lorber & Moore, 2007). The problem with the binary division of gender attributes is that "human beings show a continuum of physiological and behavioral patterns that are not clearly and neatly divided into female and male" (p. 15).

Butler further supports the above feminist views of body stating that there is no sex that is not always already gender and that there is no natural body which preexists culture and discourse, since all bodies are gendered from the beginning of their social existence (1990). As she puts it, "gender is not something one is, but something one does....[Gender] is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort being" (Butler, 1990, p. 91, in Salih, 2004). Butler believes that the body does not produce gender; possessing a penis or a vagina does not entail masculinity or femininity respectively. In fact it is the other way around.

Analysis of bodies has become central in gender issues and debates, especially from feminist writings (Bordo, 1993; Butler, 1993; Lorber & Moore, 2007; Sheldon, 2002) that argue against patriarchal social systems that marginalizes women and bodies other than the heterosexual white male body, in the distribution of resources and power. For instance, Sheldon (2002) highlights the difference in the ways that female and male bodies are usually constructed and understood:

The female body is understood as frail and susceptible to injury and thus an appropriate object of protection....[It is] permeable and penetrable—open to the invasion of foreign substances—and thus volatile, dangerous to itself and to others...and as such in need of (medical) surveillance and supervision....The 'normal' idealized male body is seen as stable, safe, bounded and impermeable. It is not liable

to dysfunction, and hence is not in need of constant medical control. It is strong and invulnerable, not liable to succumb to penetration by foreign bodies such as toxins. It is self-contained, bounded, isolated and inviolate, not connected to other bodies (p. 24).

Most of the feminist writings have embraced social constructionism and have found in the work of Foucault for instance a theoretical framework that explains social constructions of body and the marginalization of women in general. Feminist writers first promulgated the issue of the body as a site of social violence and challenged understandings of the body as biologically given and as a fixed category with a specific nature, an assumption that both Butler (1990, 1993) and Bordo (1993) revoke; they argue that the human body is both culturally and historically specific.

Despite these various attempts to define the body from different theoretical disciplines, there is little agreement or understanding about what the body is. The emergence of the theory of social constructionism presented the body as a socially constructed phenomenon as reflected in Foucault's (1977) body as an 'inscribed surface.'

Some of the major flaws in the way the body had traditionally been defined and theorized in Western theories are that first, it had been defined from a white heterosexual male body, second, it had been analyzed as an individualized entity—a phenomenon that was supposedly contained and complete within the boundaries of the skin and also separate from the mind, and that it is not a natural, fixed and historically universal datum of human societies.

The history of the early Christian Church as well, some of its founding fathers and theology condemned the body as an unnecessary burden to the spirit, and an evil materiality that is bound for sin and destruction (Synnott, 1993). For instance, John Chrysostom (c. 347-407) distinguished between body and soul and the body as relatively unimportant: "The man ought to be praised and admired, not for his dress...not even for his bodily form, but for his soul" (p. 15). Augustine (354-430) held the soul as superior to body while Basil the Great (c. 329-79) claim that 'the soul is as far superior to the body as heaven is above the earth and heavenly things above those of earth; Francis of Assisi (c. 1182-1226) in a letter wrote: "We must hate our bodies with [their] vices and sins." His biographer states that "he used to call

his body Brother Ass for he felt it should be subjected to heavy labour , beaten frequently with whips, and fed with the poorest food” (Synnott, 1993, p. 16).

The Samoan body that I have encountered both as a researcher and as a Samoan, is one that exists in complex and multi-layered relationships or what is expressed in the Samoan concept *va*, which could be called a relational body. A relational body “understands embodiment not as residual to social organizations, but rather understands social organization as being about the reproduction of embodiment” (Frank, 1991, p. 42) since “bodies alone have tasks; social systems provide the context in which these tasks are defined, enacted and evaluated, but social systems themselves have no tasks” (p. 48). For Frank, the body is constituted in the intersection of an equilateral triangle of institutions, discourses and corporeality. Chris Shilling claims that the body has traditionally been a kind of an absent-present in sociology:

Absent in the sense that sociology has rarely focused on the embodied human as an object of importance in its own right...but present in that the very subject matter of sociology is embodied and shaped by the opportunities and constraints that follow from having and being a body....Sociology does examine aspects of embodiment and the consequences of embodiment (Shilling, 1993, pp. 19, 23).

Shilling is also critical of the social constructionist view of the body as a site where social relations and meaning are inscribed, and argues that the body, which has evolved for thousands of years, plays a major part in the formation of social meaning. “The body is not simply constrained by or invested with social relations, but also actually forms a basis for and contributes towards these relations” (Shilling, 1993, p. 13). The naturalistic view is that

The capabilities and constraints of human bodies define individuals, and generate the social, political and economic relations which characterize national and international patterns of living. It follows that inequality in material wealth, legal rights and political power, as well as gender inequalities, are not socially constructed, contingent and reversible, but are given, or at the very least legitimized, by the determining power of the biological body (Shilling, 1993, p. 41).

The social body

Synnott (1993) points out that our bodies and body parts are loaded with

cultural symbolism, public and private, positive and negative, political and economic, sexual, moral and often controversial; and so are the attributes, functions and states of the body, and the senses. Height and weight, eating and drinking...are not simply physical phenomena, they are also social...and our age, gender and colour roles are principal determinants of our lives and our social identities, the focal points of our self-concepts and group-concepts. The body, therefore, is the prime symbol of the self, and the prime determinant of the self...but also of society; it is something we have, yet also what we are; it is both subject and object at the same time; it is individual and personal....The body is both an individual creation, physically and phenomenologically, and a cultural product; it is personal, and also state property (Synnott, 1993, pp. 1-4).

Grierson adds that the disciplining of the social body takes place through implicit compliance to sets of social rules and influences and sees the social body as a cultural formation or an aggregate of formations giving a particular character to a time or place, and also reflecting the normalizing inscriptions of that time and place. Here the focus is on the public domain of public spaces, and the ways image and text can act as forms of bodily inscription, and how this in turn can be considered as an education and normalizing process in the public domain (Grierson, n.d).

So a social body is one that is shaped and inscribed by culture and society at large which then determines how the body acts and behaves in embodied normalizing 'techniques of the body' (Mauss, 1973). These embodied experiences effective determination of self and identity.

Body, self and identity

Kopytoff's analysis of identity establishes that some social identities are culturally defined as having to do with what people 'are' in a fundamental sense, indicating a sense of being (e.g. father woman or priest), what he calls immanent existential identity. Other social identities are culturally perceived as deriving from what people 'do' based on roles such as a physician,

teacher or policeman, what he calls circumstantial existential identities (Kopytoff, 1990, in Anae, 1998, p. 43). Anae posits that

Identity is ‘the art of remembering who our mothers and grandmothers told us we were,’ and how these memories have impacted on our life experiences, and vice versa. Our ethnic identity is thus situated historically, socially, politically, culturally, but more importantly emotionally (Anae, 1998, p. 44).

In a similar vein Synnott indicates that ‘any construction of the body, however, is also a construction of the self as embodied; and, as such, influences not only how the body is treated but also how life is lived’ (1993, p. 37). The relationship among body, self and identity is illuminated in Weiss’ (2002) analysis of the Jewish military occupation which determines the ‘chosen body’ that defines a collective identity. This ‘chosen body’ or ideal body identity is a masculine body which excludes women, disabled bodies, the war-wounded bodies, non-Jewish Israeli bodies, and all other bodies that do not conform to the accepted conscripted-oriented lives of every Jewish young person’s life in the pursuit of such collective ideal body identity or the embodiment of collectivism. The result is that the dominant religious culture provides the conceptual groundwork for kinship, and determines identity matrilineally, erasing individual features of sexuality and ignoring deformed babies and non-conformed bodies. In this example, the physical body shapes identity and a sense of self, relegating the non-conforming bodies as non-bodies or irrelevant selves. Similarly, Seidler points out Christian notions which identify the body with sexuality and the sins of the flesh, temptation and transgression (Seidler, 2003).

McFague on the other hand recaptures the body as the very essence in determining one’s identity and sense of self:

The body is not a discardable garment cloaking the real self or essence of a person (or a pine tree or a chimpanzee); rather, it is the shape or form of who we are. It is how each of us is recognized, responded to, loved, touched, and cared for—as well as oppressed, beaten, raped, mutilated, discarded, and killed. The body is not a minor matter; rather it is the main attraction. It is what pulls us toward (and pushes us away

from) each other; it is erotic in the most profound sense, for it is what attracts or repels. It is bedrock, and, therefore, we ought to pay attention to it before all else (McFague, 1993, p. 16).

Burr (2003) points out that much, though not all of contemporary mainstream psychology and the common-sense understanding that it has encouraged takes for granted the idea that people have individual personality characteristics, that makes each person behave differently from each other. These assumptions underscore the thesis of essentialism that sees things and humans as having their own essence or nature which explains how people behave and do things the way they do.

The shortfall of this ‘personality theory’ is the fact that there is no way of proving or disproving the existence of anyone’s personality and this theory only amounts to ‘circular reasoning’ (Burr, 2003). The person or self in this sense is assumed to be a unified coherent individual made up of elements that are consistent with each other.

Jacobson-Widding (1983) following Mary Douglas (1983), outlines four streams through which identity is often constructed: the cultural, temporal, interactional and the psycho-social construction of identity. Through the cultural construction of identity, “social choices are founded on the specific, moral universe that the person concerned has acquired by being a member of a certain milieu, with its own kind of social structure” (Douglas, 1983, p. 16). What is important for Douglas is to investigate how moral universes are constructed rather than to focus on personal or cultural identity as separate issues. The temporal construction of identity holds “clanship” as the official frame of identity where the self-attributions relating to social roles appear to be determined by consciousness of past events, and that the temporal structure may be expressed in the idiom of cultural events. The interactional constructs identification with a group through face-to-face interaction illustrates how social identity may be signaled by established speech conventions and the negotiation of shared interpretations. The psycho-social identity construction focuses on the interplay of social, psychological and cultural factors which underlines the family in the transmission of cultural patterns from one generation to the next. This last stream reflects the notion of embodiment that connects memory to body (Narvaez, 2006). All four streams are encountered in the Samoan religio-lifeways wherein the moral universe is constituted within its religio-cultural lifeways,

embodied within matai titles which originated in the past, and reconstituted and maintained through traditional oratory and the social structure of *fa'alupega* (formal address).

A Social Constructionist view of Body, Self and Identity

The social constructionist position holds that “whatever personal qualities we may display are a function of the particular cultural, historical and relational circumstances in which we are located” (Burr, 2003). Social Construction in its extreme form would regard all the objects of consciousness including every ‘thing’ we think of or talk about including our identities, our selves, as constructed through language. It “denies us psychological properties such as personality, attitudes and opinions drives and motivations; these things are only present in discourse, an effect of language” (Burr 2003, p. 105). According to Burr, the concept ‘identity’ avoids the essentialist connotations of personality, and is also an implicitly social concept. The point is that whoever is doing the identifying is also conferring identity at the same time. So identity, in that sense is not some inherent nature of the thing being identified, but more to do with the identifier’s purposes. “Our identity is constructed out of the discourses culturally available to us, and which we draw upon in communications with other people. A person’s identity is achieved by a subtle interweaving of many different threads’ or discourses such as the discourse of gender or sexuality” (Burr, 2003, p. 106). She adds that for each of the threads of our identity there are a limited number of discourses available out of which we might fashion ourselves. “Our identity therefore originates not from inside the person, but from the social realm, a realm where people swim in a sea that is invisible to us because it is the very medium of our existence as social beings” (p. 109).

The above view of self and identity is in contrast to a ‘plurality of self’ where identity is a result or product of a multiplicity of ‘positions’ taken up by the subject (Raggatt, 2002). Hermans (2001) stretches this notion of positioning to include internal positioning or the psychological field, where the ‘dialogical self’ is one that is in constant dialogue with itself guided by its moral issues; identity therefore can be determined by this moral and psychological field. However, Raggatt makes the point that “our identities are dispersed in a moral landscape in which there are different versions of the self” (Raggatt, 2002, p. 298) and concludes that “the problem of identity can be approached by assuming a ‘normal’ state of multiplicity in the self” (p. 316).

Hockey and Draper (2005) have raised questions about identity and embodiment that is traditionally defined between the poles of birth and death and points out that bodily indicators that life has started or stopped is highly contingent since the indicators for a pregnant mother before birth includes conception, quickening and foetal visibility through scan technologies. The mother-to-be has an embodied experience (haptic hexis) of the new life in her womb and of her new identity of motherhood, while the father has a disembodied experience of the new life sustained through vision (optic hexis-looking at the scan on screen) mediated by and through the partner's body. In most cases the father needs the professional medical confirmation of pregnancy as a first step towards claiming an identity for his unborn child. Similarly, they underline that an Alzheimer sufferer may be described as biologically alive yet socially dead. In contrast the biologically dead may remain socially alive as ancestors, spirits or ghosts; the body-to-be and the body-that-was, in their parallel invisibility or disembodiment constitute powerful focuses for representation and identity-making. The scan or sonogram provides an image of an otherwise abstract, disembodied conception of the baby, an object of discourse, bringing a future identity into the present. Likewise photographs of the dead animate the remembered social body of the deceased bringing social identity into the present. "Not only is body-based visuality privileged, but also the meanings associated with these representations are negotiated within particular social domain....Social identity is nonetheless claimed via material items and practices which promise or evoke human embodiment" (Hockey & Draper, 2005, p. 51), and identification is therefore a negotiated process, tied to the body—but not limited to the body—framed between the twin moments of its first and last breath (De Veries, 1981). The disembodied identity of spirits of the dead especially in pre-Christian Samoa were very much part of religio-social life, experienced and embodied in the bodies of the living, constituted through rituals and practices (A. L. Refiti, 2005; Tui Atua, 2009; Wendt, 2000).

The contribution of Michel Foucault

Michel Foucault sees the idea of discourse and language as central in the construction of the body. His thesis is that the body occupies a central place in historic and contingent relations of power and knowledge. His genealogical analysis of the body reveals for him that the body is politically shaped by investment and power relations through discourse, by the actions of

governments and institutions that seek to discipline the body in order to render it docile, productive and economically useful. For Foucault, genealogy

does not resemble the evolution of a species and does not map the destiny of a people. On the contrary, to follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations—or conversely, the complete reversals—the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being do not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents (Foucault, 1977, p. 146).

In his *The Birth of the Clinic* Foucault (1973) traces through his genealogical methodology, how new forms of medical knowledge in the late eighteenth century served new social practices, that resulted in the disappearance of the patient's role from diagnosis, enabling the doctors to analyze, read and inscribe the body with new meaning. Foucault reflects upon this new bodily analysis as 'political anatomy' because these new discursive constructions of the body, are not results of some 'random effects' or 'progressive enlightenment,' but are based on particular form of knowledge and mechanisms of power that penetrate and inscribe the body since the eighteenth century.

Foucault is interested in the effects of power on the body and noted that in the European history there was a shift in body-discourse from the body as flesh to the "mindful-body." An example is the change from public punishment like hanging, to the panopticon system of circular prison construction where one overseer in the middle can monitor all prisoners from one central geographical location. This encourages prisoners to examine themselves and exert some form of self-control.

In a similar fashion, the discourse about sex shifted from the body to the mind. In the middle ages, Christian Confession was to do with action, then priests started to inquire about people's intentions. So the questioning changed from what action or sin people committed, to why they did it. This shift from body to mind was accompanied by a change in the object of discourse; as governments showed concern with people's lives and welfare, rather than their death. Foucault's docile and inscribed body has been happily received by feminists who found

in it a way to analyze how patriarchal and heterosexual forms of power and sexuality had been inscribed upon women's bodies.

The body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration. Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body (Foucault, 1977, p. 148).

Foucault's "inscribed body" has sparked a healthy debate and discussions on theories of the body across various disciplines. He believes that the body is constructed and constituted by discourse. This means that the memories, beliefs, and meanings attached to bodies are constructed discursively through language and discourse, and that meanings of body vary throughout history because discourse changes from one historical time period to another as body discourse changed according to governmental, institutional, church knowledge and intention. Judith Butler is critical of Foucault's 'inscribed body' claiming that Foucault contradicts himself on the issue of the inscribed body. She writes,

Although Foucault appears to argue that the body does not exist outside the terms of its cultural inscription, it seems that the very mechanism of 'inscription' implies a power that is necessarily external to the body itself. The critical question that emerges ...[is whether] the 'constructed' or 'inscribed' body have an ontological status apart from that inscription, precisely the claim that Foucault wants to refute (Butler, 1989, p. 603).

She also counters Foucault's 'inscribed body:'

What is clear is that inscription would be neither an act initiated by a reified history nor the performative accomplishment of a master historian who produces history as he writes it. The culturally constructed body would be the result of a diffuse and active structuring of the social field with no magical or ontotheological origins, structuralist

distinctions, or fictions of bodies, subversive or otherwise, ontologically intact before the law (p. 607).

In Foucault's defense, Dudrick (2005) argues that Foucault never claimed that the physiological body is constructed, nor that the body involved in a political field is a passive object. This is because in Dudrick's argument, Foucault implies that the body is in fact two: it comprises the physiological body (the body as 'locus of physiological processes'), and what might be called the intentional body (the body 'directly involved in a political field') where the physiological body is overlaid by another, which, because it is 'non-corporal,' may be called soul. "The soul, then, is 'not a substance,' but 'the element in which are articulated the effects of a certain type of power.' Human is composed of body and soul, where the soul is the body in so far as it is 'directly involved in a political field'" (Dudrick, p. 237). Inscription produces the soul or the intentional body. Disciplines according to Foucault are all those processes which cause bodies to exhibit intentionality.

The powers bestowed by discipline upon the physiological body—i.e., the soul—may lead the body to act in ways contrary to the interests of the person, though in accord with the interests of the forces of discipline. The soul is that in virtue of which the body is a double-agent, one who does our bidding while ready at any moment to serve its benefactor, its master" (Dudrick, 2005, p. 240).

In the final analysis, "[i]nscription is an appropriate metaphor for the workings of disciplinary practices, since the latter cause the physiological body to bear intentionality—i.e., they construct the soul" (Dudrick, p. 244).

Brush (1998) refers to Foucault's 'inscription' as a social or cultural process that makes the body a cultural construction. She refers to it as a 'metaphor of inscription,' and points out that cosmetic surgery literally changes the body and that, changing the body can write cultural values directly onto the body of the 'willing' female subject and quotes Balsamo (1996) that cosmetic surgery *literally* transforms the material body into a sign of culture.

Grosz rejects the idea of a pre-inscriptive or natural blank body that is to be inscribed or written upon, giving the example that a naked European, American, or Asian body is still distinguishable from each other because it “is still marked by its disciplinary history, by its habitual patterns of movement, by the corporeal commitments it has undertaken in the day-to-day life. It is in no sense a natural body, for it is as culturally, racially, sexually, possibly even as class distinctive, as it would be if it were clothed” (Grosz, 1994, p. 142). This notion is echoed by Butler (1990) who says that “there is no recourse to a body that has not always already been interpreted by cultural meanings” (p. 8). In support of this view, Brush (1998) adds that “rejecting the notion of a pre-inscriptive body means that there can be no clear distinction between the body and its inscription; the text *on* the body becomes the text that *is* the body” (p. 29). The text is both written on the body and is the body.

The contribution of Pierre Bourdieu

An important part of Bourdieu’s contribution to body theory is his pioneering analysis of the concepts of capital (in its various forms), social location, habitus, taste and field:

Capital is accumulated labour (in its materialized or its ‘incorporated,’ embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labour (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 46).

Capital is further subdivided into physical, cultural, social, and symbolic capital where the body is seen as a form of physical capital, that which is a possessor of power, status and distinctive symbolic forms which is integral to the accumulation of various resources. Capital includes the value of social networks which Bourdieu showed could be used to produce or reproduce inequality. Cultural or symbolic goods differ from material goods in that one can “consume” them only by apprehending their meaning and that cultural capital (e.g., competencies, skills, qualifications), can also be a source of misrecognition and symbolic violence.

Social capital is a sociological concept used in business, economics, organizational behaviour political science, public health and the social sciences in general to refer to connections within and between social networks. Social capital is:

the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. These relationships may exist only in the practical state, in material and/or symbolic exchanges which help to maintain them. They may also be socially instituted and guaranteed by the application of a common name (the name of a family, a class, or a tribe or of a school, a party, etc.) and by a whole set of instituting acts designed simultaneously to form and inform those who undergo them; in this case, they are more or less really enacted and so maintained and reinforced, in exchanges (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 51).

The community must first get together for social capital to be accumulated and effective to benefit both the individual and the community. Symbolic capital (e.g., prestige, honour, attention) is any species of capital that is perceived through socially inculcated classificatory schemes and Bourdieu sees it as a crucial source of power. Power in the form of symbolic capital is perceived not as power, but as a source of legitimate demands on the services of others, whether material, such as help at harvest time, or symbolic, such as the expression of deference; and it is precisely this perception of misrecognition that makes it effective as a form of power (Brubaker, 1985). Symbolic capital is the power granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition and that symbolic power is based on the possession of symbolic capital. Symbolic power is the power to make groups (groups that are already established and have to be consecrated or those that have yet to be consecrated), the power to consecrate things that are already there (Bourdieu, 1989). When a holder of symbolic capital uses the power this confers against an agent who holds less, and seeks thereby to alter their actions, they exercise ‘symbolic violence,’ which is fundamentally the imposition of categories of thought and perception upon dominated social agents who then take the social order to be just. It is the incorporation of unconscious structures that tend to perpetuate the structures of action of the dominant. The dominated then take their position

to be 'right.' Symbolic violence is in some sense much more powerful than physical violence in that it is embedded in the very modes of action and structures of cognition of individuals, and imposes the spectre of legitimacy of the social order.

Bourdieu emphasizes the body as an unfinished phenomenon which is constantly affected by social, cultural and economic processes, and that they are formed through their participation in social life through the interrelation between an individual's social location, habitus and taste, and where they become imprinted with the marks of social class. Bourdieu argues that social class exerts so much pressure "on the ways people develop their bodies and on the symbolic values attached to particular bodily forms; this is the production of physical capital" (Shilling, 1993, p. 135). The body as a form of physical capital and as bearer of value in society is also a possessor of power, status and distinctive symbolic forms, which is integral to the accumulation of various resources.

Frank points to the power of those who are in positions to define for society what could be regarded as their moral universe. From the viewpoint of this work, the ministers are the ones who do the theologizing for people, they define God and the embodiment of God and there is much power vested in that responsibility.

The capacity of dominant groups to reproduce themselves, and to legitimize this reproduction, depends on their capacity to define what a society holds in distinction. To be dominant is to be able to determine that what a society values as having distinction will be those same qualities which members of that group are able to display, thus reproducing their domination as legitimated distinction (Frank, 1991, p. 66).

The contribution of Mary Douglas

Douglas claims that there are two bodies: the social and physical, and says that the social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived.

The physical experience of the body, always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society. There is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experience so that each reinforces the categories of the other....All the cultural categories in which it is perceived, must correlate closely with the categories in which society is seen in so far as these also draw upon the same culturally processed idea of the body (Douglas, 1970, p. 65).

For Douglas, the body communicates information from the social system where the exchanges which are being communicated constitute the social system itself, of which the body is a part. The body does this “work of communicating by becoming, (a) an image of the total social situation as perceived, (b) the acceptable tender in the exchanges which constitute it” (Douglas, 1971, p. 389) in its role as an image of society where the body’s main scope is to express the relation of the individual to the group. Douglas has developed the idea of the body as a receptor of social meaning and a symbol of society where everything symbolizes the body and the body symbolizes everything else.

In terms of physical embodiment, the body supports the meanings of a spoken communication, body posture, voice and tone for example contribute to the meaning. But the physical body can generate meaning without a word of mouth hence the body is a channel of meaning that communicates information from the social system and the exchanges being communicated constitute the social system (Douglas, 1971).

For Douglas, the body is a metaphor or symbolic medium of society both for order and disorder. This is seen through the way rituals work through the symbolic meaning of the body where opposing dualistic meaning exists such as between the sacred and the profane, purity and danger, risk and taboo (Douglas, 1966). These dualistic categories are thought and expressed through the interplay between the physical and social body (S. J. Williams & Bendelow, 1998). In this sense, the body is at both sides of the equation; it is sacred and profane, pure and danger, order and chaos. Drozdow-St. Christian’s (2002) work confirms that for the Samoan society, order and disorder, sacredness and profanity for example corresponds directly to the notion of space; namely the centre/periphery and front/back oppositions. Any act of profanity is not tolerated at the centre of the village but the degree of

toleration decreases as one travels away from the centre towards the outer boundaries of society. Both he and Duranti (1994) highlight the importance of the front-back physical dimensions of space in Samoan society in the manner that Douglas (1970) points out: “front is more dignified and respect-worthy than the back....The physical body is a microcosm of society, facing the centre of power, contracting and expanding its claims in direct accordance with the increase and relaxation of social pressure” (p. 101). Douglas’s work though is criticised for concentrating on the representational aspect of the body at the expense of issues of lived experiences and embodiment (S. J. Williams & Bendelow, 1998), but for Samoans, that representational space is embodied space as will be described in the following chapters.

Erving Goffman

Goffman’s work on the body is characterized by three main features. First is that the body is a material property of individuals who usually have the ability to control and monitor their bodily performances in order to facilitate social interaction. Second, unlike the Foucauldian body that is constructed by discourse, the meanings attributed to the body according to Goffman are determined by ‘shared vocabularies of body idiom’ which are not under the immediate control of individuals. Third, the body plays an important role in mediating the relationship between people’s self-identity and their social identity (Goffman, 1963; Shilling, 1993). Goffman emphasizes the body as fundamental to human agency.

Chris Shilling (1993) argues “the body is not simply constrained by or invested with social relations, but also actually forms a basis for and contributes towards these relations” (p. 13).

Embodiment

‘What is male embodiment?’ is the title to Macmullan’s (2002) essay where he notes that despite the proliferation of literature on masculinity and male experience in the last decade, none pays serious attention to the role of the male body, in shaping male lived experience. Although the notion of embodiment could be simplified as lived experience, it is not as simple as it sound, since embodiment constitutes complex psychological, metaphysical and physiological issues as seen in the contributions and often conflicting views of various theorists.

The often criticised 17th century Cartesian dualism position where the body is seen as an obstacle that the mind must overcome in search for truth, has been surpassed by later theorists who see the body as a primary factor in determining body experience, or, as Merleau Ponty puts it, “the body is our general medium for having a world” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 146). However, the original phenomenologists’ analysis of the male embodied experience was from data of European, able-bodied, upper-class males which was presented as generic (Macmullan, 2002) even though there are differences of embodied experience in racial, economic and sexual variety. In Narvaez’s analysis of embodiment, he outlines how mental, social and bodily frameworks combine and are utilized by social groups to relate to, and make meaning of time, as in ritual events where the past is brought to the present as society march into the future (Narvaez, 2006). Although this attempt to untangle the issue of embodiment does explain how physiological, psychological and biological aspects actually combine in human body to make it behave and make meaningful decisions and actions appropriate to specific time and social context, but from a social construction perspective, the psychological is discursively constituted within discourse (Burr, 2003). A similar view is proposed by Frank: “what I am calling ‘the body’ is constituted in the intersection of an equilateral triangle the points of which are *institutions, discourses, and corporeality*” (Frank, 1991, pp. 49, emphasis in original) where institution can be the church for example, discourses include the doctrines and acts of that church, and the corporeality of the body poses the question of how much self-punishment and deprivation the body bears and did bear under the confines of church discourses.

Durkheim (1995) talks about effervescent rituality where social actors participates in rituals hence producing and reproducing social meaning, social renewal, cohesion and creativity and that these rituals are highly embodied. One step ahead of this ritualistic embodiment, Mauss’ theory of habitus and techniques of the body shows that social order at every society was practiced daily through the techniques of the body, in simple acts such as eating, resting or walking (Mauss, 1973). These bodily techniques are imitated and learned by a child for example, from people in whom the child has confidence and who have authority over him, and these actions naturally become embodied. “The imitative action which follows contains the psychological element and the biological element. But the whole, the ensemble, is conditioned by the three elements indissolubly mixed together” (p. 74). Hence for Mauss,

embodied action is a combination or a result of learned experiences that has psychological, biological and physical elements.

In this sense all actions carry cultural and social meaning befitting to particular social positions and context. This position of Mauss, anticipating Foucault, “suggests that history and society, social ranks included, were inscribed upon our bodies and were thus daily performed by us” (Narvaez, 2006, p. 54).

THE SAMOAN BODY: SELF, PERSON, AND IDENTITY

Tagata means person or mankind. In his attempt to define the Samoan person and self, Shore (1982) notes that

not only are there in Samoa no terms corresponding to the English ‘personality,’ ‘self’ or ‘character,’ but there is also an absence of the corresponding assumptions about the relation of person to social action....Samoans instead focus on things in their relationships, and the contextual grounding of experience (p. 136).

This is a relational self defined through one’s relationship to ‘the other,’ namely, family and community. Even “the quite intimate and personal preferences which constitute one’s essential distinctiveness as an individual, one’s identity, are largely given in social interaction” (Douglas, 1983, p. 36). The assertion that in Samoa “there is also an absence of the corresponding assumptions about the relation of person to social action” (Shore, 1982, p. 136) is contested in this work, since it is through social action that differentiates relationships within the various statuses of the social structure. For instance, the relational positions *matai* (chief) and *tautua* (one who serve the matai) presupposes the social action or responsibilities of the *tautua* to serve and protect the *matai* at all cost. The *matai* who has the power and authority, in turn gives her/his knowledge and blessing onto the *tautua*, and may appoint the *tautua* to be a *matai*. Personal identity is defined through relationships which are characterized through action.

The concept person can be identified in the naming system like Sa Tufugā—the descent family group that can claim rights to the *matai* title Tufuga. “Names establish relationships more clearly than they suggest personal identity” (Shore, 1982, p. 145). An individual may have more than one matai title name which belong to different families. A family is also called *tino* (body) or part of one’s body. A family member of the Tufuga title can refer to her/his family as her/his Tufuga body (*O lo’u tino fa’a-Tufuga*), and her/his other family with the title Masoe as her/his Masoe body (*O lo’u tino fa’a-Masoe*). Tino also means *itū* (side or part). In this sense, the notion of body or person is identified with one’s connection to family, titles and villages to define Samoan identity. But identification of a total Samoan person is not confined to one’s various ‘sides’ within relationships but also the possession of *uiga* or particular personal qualities.

Uiga which also refers to ‘meaning,’ suggests something close to what psychologists mean by ‘trait.’ *Fa’ali’i* (ill-tempered), *tausua* (good-homored), *loto alofa* (thoughtful, generous), *fia sili* (pretentious)”...but “while different *uiga* may differentiate people from one another, they are used in a way that suggests they are understood primarily as aspects of particular contexts rather than of particular types of people (Shore, 1982, p. 140).

The term *le fetau* (it does not fit) is often used to denote “the lack of fit between action and setting rather to any lack of fit between a particular behaviour and an individual personality type” (Shore, 1982, p. 140). Behaviour is described by *aga* and *amio*, where *aga* is behaviour that denotes the nature of the being or thing in question; Samoans use the term *aga* because their ontological premise is that persons are social role players. *Amio* defines behaviour that comes from within the person but is not seen as tantamount to nature; *amio* has moral rather than ontological connotations (Mageo, 1995).

The Samoan ontological premise about the self is that persons are social actors within a communalistic but hierarchical group. Moral discourse, therefore, supports respectfully playing the role appropriate to one’s assigned rank and encourages people to abjure those personal ambitions likely to interfere with playing this part (Mageo, 1995, p. 291). As Shore points out,

Contrasted with the Greek dicta ‘Know thy self’ or ‘To thine own self be true,’ this saying suggest something of the difference between Occidental and Samoan orientations. Lacking any epistemological bias that would lead them to focus on ‘things in themselves’ or the essential qualities of experience, Samoans instead focus on things in their relationships, and the contextual grounding of experience (Shore 1982, p. 136).

The experience of the Samoan self or the Samoan body is really the experience of social relations. A clue to the Samoan notion of person is found in the popular Samoan saying *teu le va*’ (take care of the relationship). Since the idea of a person in Samoan understanding is expressed in terms of a person’s social relations, it follows that personal identity and the idea of body and the experiences of the body, are all expressed in terms of social relations. The Samoan body is defined in the phrase “the *aiga* [family] is my *tinu* [body], and [my] *tinu* is my *aiga*” (Tofaeono, 2000, p. 33) where *tinu* means both the physiological body and familial connections—that is, connections through the body.

This experience of social relations is tied in with the idea of personal identity as Shore notes:

What may appear as the diffracted quality of such a personal identification in which the essential person appears to be lost within a prism of shifting social relations is a perfectly normal way in which Samoans conceive personal identity [and that] the Samoan emphasis on correct perception of social relations and their requirements goes far beyond a concern for etiquette or tact. It is a moral and epistemological axiom (Shore, 1982, pp. 137-138).

Samoans characterize themselves or others in terms of their specific *itū* (sides) or *pito* (parts) which is the connections people bear to their descent groups, villages or titles. The pre-Christianized Samoan culture did not discredit the body. In fact the body was celebrated as sacred and divine through various rituals and practices. It is said that the contemporary Samoan culture is part and parcel of Christianity and vice versa, but many of Christianity’s teachings and founding beliefs and texts are anti-body, as pointed out by feminist theologians. I will show that the pre-contact Samoan unclothed body was not a naked body and was not viewed with shame; it was celebrated as an essential part of their existence as

both human and divine beings. The body was the very site that pre-Christian Samoans experienced and embodied the divine *Atua* (God), and as divine beings genealogically connected to their *Atua*, they were *Atua*—a connection that Christianity attempted and succeeded in its annihilation, prying away from their bodies its sacredness and demoting it into a secular sinful body. New Christian theological and social constructs were not merely imposed and inscribed upon the body, the body was physically shaped, shamed and turned into a marketplace manhood (Kimmel, 2005) for the services of the new *Atua*. The essence of the Samoan term *Atua* (God) does not equate to the Christian monotheistic notion of God; *Atua* for Samoans refers both to their one creator/progenitor *Atua* Tagaloa, but the same term also refers to their superiors and ancestors who are believed to exist as *aitu* (spirit) (Tcherkézoff, 2004). This confusion or construction created the notion of polytheism which was then imposed upon the Samoan worldview relegating their superiors and ancestors as a belief in polytheism and heathenism; this will be explained further in Chapter Five.

Samoans have particular traditions when people or villages meet. They sit down and talk in their oratory *lauga* formalities where they invoke the spirits of the Gods and elders, they recite their *gafa* (genealogies), their respective *pa'ia* and *fa'alupega* (formal customary form of address unique to each title and village) and acknowledge past achievements of their ancestors which has brought them to the present. This is their same lifeways upon which to embark on the journey into the future. All this is embodied within their language. The language maintains and re-establishes the hierarchical statuses pertaining to each person or title in relation to others, but also enables a re-negotiation of these relationships during the process of the recitation of these *fa'alupega*.

INTRODUCING BODY THEOLOGY

Christian Theology

“Theology may be defined as the study which, through participation in and reflection upon a religious faith, seeks to express the content of this faith in the clearest and most coherent language available” (Macquarrie, 1966, p. 1). Theology participates in faith and speaks from the standpoint of that specific faith. This is the specific faith of a historic community, which means that, theology implies participation in a community.

The phrase ‘through participation in and reflection upon a religious faith’ indicates theology as both continuous with and yet distinct from faith.

Theology is continuous with faith because it participates in faith and speaks from the standpoint of faith. Specific faith expresses itself in theology from the viewpoint of a historic community. Whereas faith is said to be a person’s attitude that can express itself in different fashions such as action or a way of life, theology, as the very name implies, is discourse, and although it is rooted in the total life of faith, aims at verbal expression. Christian theology is also ‘faith seeking understanding (Prokes, 1996).

Faith can be authentic only when it, too, is firmly rooted within the mystery of embodiment.

Body theology

In the words of James Nelson,

The task of body theology is critical reflection on our bodily experience as a fundamental realm of the experience of God....Body theology necessarily begins with the concreteness of our bodily experience, even while it recognizes that this very concreteness is filtered through the interpretive web of meanings that we have come to attach to our bodily life (Nelson, 1992, p. 43).

Body theology is concern not primarily with the “body-object”, but rather the “body-subject”, the embodiment of our consciousness, our bodily sense of how we are in the world. It involves the realities of our flesh and the ways we interpret them, and it also takes into account our bodily connection to the world and our bodily sense of the space and time we are in, and concern with our bodily knowing of the meanings of our relationships (Nelson, 1992).

Similarly, Prokes adds that “theology of the Body can be described as that discipline which reflects upon a faith understanding of the lived body and the material universe. It utilizes what John Macquarrie has called the six factors formative of theology” (Prokes, 1996, p. 26).

The task of a Theology of the Body is to reflect on embodiment and the material universe in light of the perennial bases of Christian faith: the coming of God in the flesh in Jesus Christ and all that he accomplished, revealed and open through his earthly life, death and resurrection as a totally new potential for every human being (Prokes, 1996, p. 32).

Nelson himself acknowledges his indebtedness to Feminist writers and theologians as the real pioneer of body theology who take the body as one of the starting points of their arguments against what Radford Ruether (2002) calls, the “androcentric bias” or the “androcentric fallacy” (Shelley, 1999, p. 220) of Christianity. This masculine Christianity, with much of its values adopted from the patriarchal Greco Hellenistic culture with male gender bias imagery abounding in the bible and statements of faith, continue to alienate women and gay people not just from faith but from culture and society at large.

If any discipline within the Human Sciences and or Art should celebrate the human body it should be Christian Theology, since a foundational statement of that Theology states that “God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1: 27). Instead, Christian Theology as seen in the writings of the revered Early Church Fathers followed the narrow path carved out by the likes of Darwin and Descartes to name a few, who separated the mind from the body which resulted in the various constructions of body not only as mechanical and inferior to mind, but also as evil in relation to mind and or spirit (Synnott, 1993).

Traditional Christian theology, based as it is on dualistic assumption, has always viewed the body as less important and more prone to sin than the mind and or spirit. It is the hope of body theology to put body, mind and emotions back together, after they had been part of the cruel rupture in theology that was caused by patriarchal thinking (Isherwood & Stuart, 1998). Process thought, liberation theology and feminist theology have been most practical in realising this hope for body theology.

Allude to conclusion

When asked how they experience God through their bodies, Samoan participants in this work do not necessarily express themselves in terms of an affective sentient body or a felt body or

their physical bodies, but rather convey their experiences through what they do and how they do things, who they do these for, and the whole reasoning behind the action. Through the ritual of *Afitunu* Samoans celebrated the body of God in and through their bodies. They understood that their experiences and relationship to their fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters were exactly the same way they experienced and related to God. The word *tinu* (body) in Samoan also means family; their bodies were not necessarily any different from the body of God just like one's body was not any different from one's father's or mother's, sister's or a brother's body in relational ties. The body exists and is made meaningful only in relation to family, community and God; the family itself, by virtue of its *matai* (chief) titles, land and language, has a genealogical connection to *Atua* (God) Tagaloa who is manifested through animate forms of human gods, animals and birds, and inanimate objects. These relations bespeak the concept of *Va* (relationships) through which the body embodies God, religion, culture and language in a constant flux of social constructions.

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines a number of theoretical frameworks that inform the study design and interpretation of data and contributes to the overall research by explaining various philosophical positions that have influenced the study. It also clarifies the reason for social construction (SC) and discourse analysis as the choice methodology for this work.

This section first summarizes the fundamental presumptions of SC and how they inform issues of embodiment and the human subject. It then moves on to a review of major philosophical theories which preceded and led to the emergence of social constructionism (SCm) as a practical means of doing research of discourse analysis, and to clarify how discourse analysis as a method, could do justice to the analysis of the socially constructed or embodied human portrayed in the data.

SCm and essentialism are the two major interpretive theories used to describe the body (Nelson, 1992) and most body theorists describe the body from a social constructionist perspective. In SC, language takes centre stage in the construction of events, the world and persons. Like Foucault and the feminist writers who have analyzed the body under social construction framework, I take the same approach precisely because so much of the Samoan culture, and the Samoan body for that matter, is constructed, constituted, legitimized and embodied through her language and titles. According to Aiono-Le Tagaloa, the museum that keeps and safeguards Samoan treasures is her language (Aiono-Le Tagaloa, 1996a). Language constitutes knowledge, power and status that is experienced and embodied. Tui Atua highlights the value of Samoan language in passing on knowledge through the language of *tu'umumusu* (whisper): “During ancient times passing on in-depth religious and cultural knowledge associated with family genealogies, place names, historical figures, including everyday practices, would fall to a select few. Such knowledge gave power and status to these custodians and especially those respected as custodians of district or national histories. The knowledge of this inner circle of custodians was generally uncontested....The overriding

belief was that this knowledge was “God-given; that the origin of all knowledge, all power and status, of all that is successful and good is God-derived and God-oriented” (Tui Atua, 2009, p. 3). It is also a contention of this work that the Samoan male body is ‘inscribed’ (Foucault, 1977) by history, culture and religious beliefs, and constituted within various discourses. This is the reason that the body and the embodiment of God is analyzed through the lens of SC facilitated by discourse analysis.

THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

Social Construction cannot be traced back to a single source but has emerged from the combined influences of a number of North American, British and continental writers dating back more than thirty years, and whose writings are rooted in philosophical developments that began two to three hundred years ago (Burr, 2003). During the mediaeval period, which some date between the 5th century and the beginning of the Renaissance in the 15th century, the church was the sole authority on biblical interpretation, about truth, and about God, an authority that was not granted to the common individual. The Enlightenment, the period that followed which dates from about the mid-eighteenth century, is a time of searching for truth and to understand the true nature of reality through reason and rationality. Science as an authoritative discipline with its claim to truth through empirical practice and investigation was born in the Enlightenment period. Emanuel Kant (1724-1808) encouraged individual knowledge and understanding in the search for truth, over against the truth advocated by the church and God of the previous mediaeval time. He argued that “human knowledge was not based simply on rational receptivity to the data of the world beyond the observer. Rather, the human observer possessed mental processing capacities (or a priori categories of mind) which actively processed and conceptualized the world beyond in a selective manner” (Holton, 1996, p. 41). Kant encouraged individual thinking and understanding and the individual began to replace God and the church in issues of truth and morality.

Social Constuctionism emerged as an opposition to a form of realism embodied in the dominant order of positivism/empiricist science which inhibit the view that scientific claims to knowledge were uncontaminated by culture, history and ideology (Gergen, 1998). The constructionist critique emanated from the history of science and sociology of knowledge and

gained favour and contribution from critical theory, feminism, literary theory, rhetoric, art and many other disciplines and groups.

The phrase Social Constructionism (SCm) was introduced into recent academic debate through Berger and Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966), but Gergen's paper entitled *The Social Constructionist Movement in Modern Psychology* in 1985 introduced mainstream psychology to social constructionism, and advocated that social constructionism replace positivism as a metatheory of psychological knowledge (Hibberd, 2005).

Hibberd defines SCm in general as that which “emphasizes the historicity, the context-dependence, and the socio-linguistically constituted character of all matters involving human activity” (Hibberd, 2005, p. viii), although there is no single description to define SC or the views of constructionists, but they are linked together by a kind of family resemblance where recurrent features are common amongst these writers. These features (among others) include:

a stance against taken-for-granted knowledge'
knowledge is sustained by social process,
knowledge and social action go together,
and the historical and cultural specificity of knowledge (Burr, 2003).

A social constructionist approach emphasizes our active roles as agents, influenced by culture, in structuring our bodily realities. It recognizes that the concepts and categories we use to describe and define our experience vary considerably in their meanings over time and among different cultures and subcultures. Further, it holds that the persistence of a particular interpretation of something depends not only on its correspondence to the reality being described, but at least as much on the usefulness of the concept, often its usefulness in social influence, power, and control.

SCm enables an unconstrained and unlimited outlook whereby if some thing, event or process is social in origin, it is not given or established by nature, so there is nothing fixed or inevitable about it. “Social groups can, then, choose to replace old conventions, theories, ideologies, practices and bodies of knowledge with new ones” (Hibberd, 2005, pp. 3-4);

hence, social constructs are contingent upon respective historical, cultural and geographical locations.

Social Constructionists generally agree that theories and knowledge have been assembled or constructed (brought into existence) by communities of scientists (Gergen, 1999; Potter, 2004; Shotter, 1998) who

carry or embody social and linguistic conventions, histories, social forces, particular interests, etc. These factors could all have been different; there is no inevitability about them. Therefore, the theories and knowledge we have today could be different and, more radically, there is no reason why our current *conceptions* of theory and knowledge cannot be transformed....Theories, knowledge and facts in psychology are socially constructed and, this being so, they are constituted, via the discourse of psychologists, by social processes, conventions and milieu (Hibberd, 2005, p. 3).

This perspective recognizes cognitive categories such as perception, memory, motivation, emotion, learning, social behaviour etc. not as properties in a person's head, but are grounded in discourse. It also asserts that discourse is central to the constitution of at least social reality (e.g. Gergen, 1994; Harre, 1993; Potter, 1996; Shotter, 1993). The focus of SC is not upon some objective reality but upon the multiplicity of all possible meanings with which our worlds become invested (Burr, 1998).

A critical stance against taken-for-granted knowledge.

SC encourages a critical reflection upon taken-for-granted knowledge about the world, people, or any other phenomena that presume the true nature of the world or people. It invites us to challenge such knowledge, which is often accepted as conventional and as unbiased objective observation of our surrounding because such knowledge is socially constructed. Berger and Luckmann's main argument is that reality is socially constructed and that the sociology of knowledge must analyze the process in which this occurs. For them,

The sociology of knowledge must concern itself with whatever passes for 'knowledge' in a society, regardless of the ultimate validity or invalidity (by whatever criteria) of such 'knowledge'....[T]he sociology of knowledge must concern itself with everything that passes for 'knowledge' in society...with what people 'know' as 'reality' in their everyday, non- or pre-theoretical lives. In other words, commonsense 'knowledge' rather than 'ideas' must be the central focus for the sociology of knowledge. It is precisely this 'knowledge' that constitutes the fabric of meanings without which no society could exist. The sociology of knowledge, therefore, must concern itself with the social construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, pp. 3; 14-15).

SC offers the view that the way that we have divided up things in the world and label them, does not mean that there is anything in the nature of such things that qualify them to be labelled one way and not another. Burr gives an example that just because some music is 'classical' and some is 'pop' does not mean that there is something in the nature of the music itself that qualifies categories to be divided up in that particular way. The more common and problematic example concerning humans is that of gender and sex. SC encourages us to question whether the divisions 'man' and 'woman' mean two naturally occurring different types of human beings, or are they just labels we have constructed for these two types? The fact is that there is much uncertainty existing within the grey area between these two labels, as seen in sex reassignment surgery and the debate on how to define people as male or female. This debate was recently highlighted by the case of Caster Semenya, the South African teenage girl who won the World 800m at the 2009 Olympics, but was then suspected and accused of being a man, but later vindicated after much publicity and many humiliating gender tests. This means that these seemingly natural categories 'man' and 'woman' may be bound up with gender and according to Burr,

The whole categories of personhood, that is all the things it means to be a man or a woman, have been built upon them through discourse. Social constructionism would suggest that we might equally well, and just as absurdly, have divided people up into tall and short, or those with ear lobes and those without (Burr, 2003, p. 3).

For instance, in Kessler and McKenna's (1978) research on the social construction of gender, they propose to break down the taken-for-granted assumption that there are two genders when they found that the referents for the terms man and woman were obscured. This opens the possibilities for alternative means for understanding gender differences or abandoning such distinctions outright.

Knowledge is sustained by social process

The social constructionist argument is that our knowledge of the world and ways of understanding it is not derived from some essential nature or hidden structure of the world, but is constructed by people in their everyday interactions. It is through such daily interactions between people in the course of social life that our versions of knowledge become fabricated (Burr, 2003). People are constantly engaged in interactions with each other through various forms of social actions, especially through language, and it is through such interactions that shared versions of knowledge are constructed. As opposed to most traditional psychology and sociology that offer explanations in terms of structures or some models like those of memory offered by Freud, for example, explanations offered by SC are more often in terms of the dynamics of social interaction; hence, the emphasis is more on process than structures.

The aim of social inquiry is removed from questions about the nature of people or society towards a consideration of how certain phenomena or forms of knowledge are achieved by people in interaction. Knowledge is therefore seen not as something that a person has or doesn't have, but as something that people do together (Burr, 2003, p. 9).

SC argues against the existence of some inert structure(s) or entities that supposedly underline some personality traits, models of memory or economic structures for example, but emphasize that what are regarded as reality and knowledge are socially constructed through personal interactions and the processes through which these occurs. According to Gergen,

The terms in which the world is understood are social artifacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people” where “the process of understanding is not automatically driven by the forces of nature, but is a result of an active, cooperative enterprise of persons in relationship. In this light, inquiry is invited into the historical and cultural bases of various forms of world construction (Gergen, 1985, p. 267).

Knowledge and social action go together

Burr’s (1998) useful analysis of the realism/relativism debate underlines some critical points for and against SC in respect to realism and other philosophical forms of knowledge acquisition. Collier’s (1998) realist perspective points out that consciousness or experience, or his preferred concepts language or practice, is not an entity that can be understood in its own right, but only in so far as they open up reality for us. He states:

Consciousness is always consciousness of something....Experience is always an encounter with what existed before the experience and is to a degree known to us as a result of the experience. We make no sense of the concept experience except as that in which reality, in some degree, given to us....[E]xperience can never be a thing which we can inspect as it is in itself, independently of the reality that is given through it. And this ‘aboutness’ is characteristic too of practice and of language....Language can only be learnt by reference to reality. That indicates that there are other, prior means of access to reality. Not only is there no other privileged means to access to reality, language is not even the first runner (Collier, 1998, p. 48).

In this view, there is a mutual relationship between language and reality, since reality can only be explained through language and that language and practice cannot exist of their own rights without reference to reality. “Language can only be learnt by reference to reality” (Collier, p. 48).

In a similar but somewhat reversed realist position, Brown and Pujol with Beryl Curt (1998) assert that what is real is what is manifested. As opposed to Collier’s realist view that reality

is not contingent and pre-dates experience and language that describes it, this one asserts that subjectivity, consciousness and experience constitute the real, and are the products of a structure lying prior to or behind them. But according to Burr (1998), that structure is language, which is contingent and is historically and culturally local, and dependent upon human practice.

Potter (1987), arguing from a relativist position, counters that the problem with the realist position of a reality apart from language is that as soon as you begin to describe such a reality, you enter into the discursive realm where that reality become a *representation* of events. This means that even if there were such a reality outside language and discourse, it cannot be described unless we offer an account of it, which means transforming it into a discursive event. However, according to Collier (1998), our discursive descriptions of the world derive from the nature of reality itself since there is certainly a material reality—there is a material body for example, from which derive our descriptions of it; our language describes reality. Collier also questions the privileged position of language in relation to reality and proposes that our practical encounters with the world pre-date language and are a more reliable route to understanding the nature of reality.

According to Burr (1998), one of the reasons for the problems between realist/relativist positions is that reality has at least three different meanings, so arguments are not always premised on the same assumptions. These three dimensions of reality are:

Reality (truth) versus falsehood

Reality (materiality) versus illusion.

Reality (essence) versus construction

The problem then for social constructionists is that the reality (essence)-construction dimension gets mapped on to the other two so that SC is often seen as also implying illusion or falsehood where things can be seen as either real or merely constructed. In total, Burr takes up a position that espouses aspects of realism and relativism, which is that social practice, social structure and discourse sustain each other and are only separable analytically.

I think that the way out of this problem is to transcend these three misleading dichotomies so that we can talk of things being at one and the same time socially constructed *and* real....Our concepts and knowledges must in the end be inseparable from practices and structures, the material conditions of everyday life (and this will include bodily conditions as well as economic ones and conditions of power) (Burr, 1998, p. 23).

SCm is most tolerant to all kinds of knowledge, the processes by which they are attained, constructed and practiced, but each construction invites a particular kind of action from human beings. This is where SC is often accused of advocating an ‘anything goes’ form of knowledge but with little practical implications for society. On this note, Willig (1998) identifies the general reluctance of social analysts to move beyond deconstruction to make recommendations for improved (social, political, and/or psychological) practice except (Parker, Georgaca, Harper, MacLaughlin, & Stowell-Smith, 1995), but to the credit of SCm, it exposes all possible forms of power relations inherent within discursive practices that need attending to.

Historical And Cultural Specificity of Knowledge

SC holds that the categories and concepts we use by which we understand the world are historically and culturally specific. For instance, the way that Western civilization of the sixteenth and seventeenth century constructed and understood the human body is vastly different from their understanding of the body today. When missionaries arrived in the Pacific in the early nineteenth century, they found that those Pacific cultures had a different understanding of body altogether.

This means that all ways of understanding are historically and culturally relative. Not only are they specific to particular cultures and periods of history, they are seen as products of that culture and history, and are dependent upon the particular social and economic arrangements prevailing in that culture at the time. The particular forms of knowledge that abound in any culture are therefore artefacts of it, and we should not assume that our ways of understanding are necessarily any better, in terms of being any nearer the truth, than other ways (Burr, 2003, p. 4).

Since all forms of knowledge are historically and culturally specific, psychology and social psychology's claim to discovering some inherent nature or truth about people is rejected, and attention must be directed to social practices and social life by which these are created.

Anti-Essentialism

Brody sums up the basic idea behind essentialism:

the basic idea behind the claim that there is a distinction between the properties that an object has essentially and the properties that an object has accidentally" is that "on the one hand, there are some properties that an object must have; if the object didn't have them, it wouldn't exist at all. These are the properties that an object has essentially. On the other hand, there are some properties that an object has but that it might not have. The possession of these properties is not necessary for the object's existence. These are the properties that an object has accidentally (Brody, 1980, p. 84).

The theory of essentialism asserts that there are some inherent essential properties to the world and people as foundational for their existence is rejected by SC. Branches of traditional psychology such as behaviorism and psychoanalysis are based on the idea that there are some 'essential' pre-given 'content' to the person, but this is rejected in SC because of its fundamental thesis that the social world and people are a product of social processes. Hence, there can be no essential nature or underlying structure to the world and or people that makes them who or what they are. The problem with the essentialist theory from the point of view of SC is that "essentialism traps people inside personalities and identities that are limiting for them, and are sometimes pathologised by psychology, which then becomes an even more oppressive practice" (Burr, 2003, p. 6).

Questioning Realism

The search for truth—the truth about people, about human nature and society—has been one of the vital driving forces of social science in its historical development, and this search for

truth often aligns knowledge with some claim to truth and reality. Following Williams and Bendelow (1998), Hallett points out a definition of knowledge:

I shall be concerned, only with what I shall call *propositional* knowledge, knowledge whose paradigmatic expression in language-users is the confident assertion of truths, and where the claim that it is knowledge that is being expressed involves as a necessary condition that what is asserted is true (Hallett, 1991, p. 64).

Social Construction rejects the claim that our knowledge is a direct perception of reality because in SC, there can be no such thing as an objective fact. All knowledge is derived from looking at an object from a particular way or perspective at the expense of others, and in the service of some interests over others (Burr, 2003).

POSTMODERNISM

The 1950s is considered to be the final days of the pre-modern era (Storkey, 2000), which is characterized by fixed order, fixed roles, and fixed explanations, and is reinforced by accepted tradition (Goux, 1990) and is also referred to as the age of faith. At its heart lies essentialism, the idea that a certain essence defines the centre of our identity as human beings, and as men and women. Certain gender attitudes became normalized and these defined reality. Pre-modernism used terms such as natural, biological, and God-given, to justify ideas. For instance, there was no difference between sex and gender, as all was decided by sex. The idea that there were cultural reasons for the way men and women functioned was not seriously considered.

The modern era, also known as modernism, which superseded the pre-modern, is synonymous with the Enlightenment or the Age of Reason (originating about 1650 to 1700) and is known in the Western philosophical tradition as a phase in cultural history which employs knowledge and reason, generally accompanied by the rejection of 'faith' in the institutional religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It was a cultural movement of intellectuals in 18th century Europe that sought to mobilize the power of reason in order to reform society and advance knowledge. It promoted some versions of scientific rationality,

intellectual interchange, universalism and the pursuit of progress. It opposed superstition, intolerance and abuses in church and state. The search for truth was based on the idea that there are hidden structures of the world that could be discovered. Such viewpoints materialized in the work of people like the psychologist Freud, who published works on the structures of the unconscious, and Karl Marx, who explained social phenomena in terms of the underlying economic structures.

[Modernists were] optimistic that by using the universal values of science, reason and logic, they could get rid of all the myths and holy ideas that kept humanity from progressing. They felt this would eventually free humanity from misery, religion, superstition, all irrational behaviour, and unfounded belief. Humanity would thus progress to a state of freedom, happiness and progress (Powell, 1998, p. 9).

Modernism claimed the superiority of high culture (the culture of an elite such as the aristocracy or intelligentsia, but also defined as a repository of a broad cultural knowledge, as a way of transcending the class system) over and against popular culture (also known as low culture of, the less well-educated, barbarians, Philistines or the masses) (Tuchman, 1989) and an “affirmation of a centered if not unified subject, its faith in the power of the highly rational, conscious mind and its belief in the unequivocal ability of human beings to shape the future in the interest of a better world” (Giroux, 1997, p. 115). It proposed rigid assumptions which defined knowledge, ways of knowing, and truth from a particular perspective, at the expense of other forms of knowing or truth. Individual and collective identity was viewed through an understanding of historical memory as a linear process, where the human subject becomes the ultimate source of meaning and action, and a notion of geographical and cultural territoriality is constructed in a hierarchy of domination and subordination marked by a center and margin legitimated through the civilizing knowledge/power of a privileged Eurocentric culture (Aronowitz, 1987-1988).

The all-consuming metadiscourses and grand narratives of modernism were called into question and rendered problematic by a tradition of critical reflection known as postmodernism. There is no consensus on what postmodernism is or when it started, but it is an intellectual movement which came out, not from the social sciences, but through art, architecture, literature and cultural studies (Storkey, 2000). It recognizes the fluidity of

relationships, the plurality of cultures, the diversity of people groups, the dethroning of the West and western ideology, and the relativism of meanings. It encouraged the capacity to negotiate our own identity without needing someone else to define for us who we are, since “tradition, language and concepts have all, for too long, been formed within a male-dominant framework” (p. 43). In the search for knowledge, reality and truth, the postmodern perspective is that social and cultural reality, and the social sciences themselves are linguistic constructions. For Brown (1994), the way forward in doing research to counter the ideological character of realism is through the rhetorical model, so that in postmodernism,

Norms are not viewed merely as objective products, but also as symbolic processes that are inherently persuasive. Humans enact truth and justice not merely by rational legislation, but also by rhetorical performance. In this view, standards for knowledge and conduct are not based on some extra-linguistic rationality, because rationality itself is demystified and reconstituted as a historical construction and deployment by human rhetors (R. H. Brown, 1994, p. 25).

The postmodern metaphor posits that structures and consciousness, as well as public and private worlds, are seen as practical, historical accomplishments, brought about through everyday communicative action, through poetic and political struggles over the nature and meaning of the real (Brulle, 1993). Postmodernism rejects the idea that the world can be understood in terms of some grand theories, or that social change can be achieved through changing some underlying social structures; it is, though, open to all possibility of theory and outlook of a multiplicity of context-dependent ways of life. Social construction is one means of eliciting the multiplicity of truth and knowledge from a postmodernist view point.

The Influence of Structuralism

Structuralism is a theoretical paradigm that emphasizes the world and people as having underlying structures, and those certain basic structures or systems, govern and explain any object of study, be it the human body, the human mind, society, language, or any object of study. It means that elements of culture must be understood in terms of their relationship to a larger, overarching system or structure. In other words, structuralism posits that discrete cultural elements are not explanatory in and of themselves, but rather form part of a

meaningful system and are best understood with respect to their location within (and relationship to) the structure as a whole. It rejected the concept of human freedom and choice and focused instead on the way that human experience, and thus behavior, is determined by various structures. Another defining factor of structuralism is the ‘decentering of the subject,’ or the dethroning of the human being from the centre of social analysis. The ideological view of the human individual as a unified, coherent subject who is in control of his behaviour and who is the ultimate origin of meaning and social structure is discarded as a myth. The individual no longer occupies the central focus for the study of humanity; instead, the individual is only an element or a part of the whole or the totality that is humanity.

Gibson (1984) identifies six main assumptions that define structuralism: First is the notion of wholeness—that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts such that society is more than the individuals who comprise it and language is more than the words contained in a dictionary, and that structure determines behaviour and not the components of a system of structure. Second is the supposition that reality lies not in things but in the relationships between them. The meaning of a word can only be understood within the totality of language. Likewise, an individual can be understood and gain meaning and significance from the context in which it is embedded. Third is the idea of ‘decentering the subject,’ where the human individual loses his/her place as the centre or the measure of all things; just as the word must give way to language, so the individual must give way to society. The fourth characteristic is self-regulation, such that “the whole, the system, is held to maintain itself, to make for closure, to govern its elements such that they change, if required to do so, to ensure the preservation of the totality” (p. 10). The fifth characteristic is the *snapshot* method, where the study of language, society, or the human mind is best conducted by examining the relationship of parts at a particular moment, rather than studying its development over time. Here, history takes the back seat to current relationships. The last supposition is transformation and change where structures are subject to change according to the laws of the system.

Structuralism is not only applied within literary theory, but also exists within the philosophy of science, anthropology and in sociology. According to Alison Assiter (2009) there are four common ideas regarding structuralism that form an intellectual trend. First, the structure is what determines the position of each element of a whole. Second, structuralists believe that

every system has a structure. Third, structuralists are interested in structural laws that deal with coexistence rather than changes. And finally, structures are the real things that lie beneath the surface or the appearance of meaning.

The origins of structuralism though can be attributed to the work of Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistics. Against the common sense view that the meaning of a word refers to an object, Saussure instead emphasized the relationship between words within the 'totality' of language. He highlighted the difference between language (*langue*) and speech (*parole*) where there is the supremacy of the totality that is language, over speech. Gibson explains:

Language is not simply the total of words that exist, such as might be found in a dictionary; rather, it is a system, a whole, a body of rules independent of any speaker, historically given, upon which speakers are forced to draw. It is a system of relationships between elements, and any element (a word, an utterance, parole) is defined by its position in language as a whole. Langue, then, a system of rules, makes parole possible (Gibson, 1984, p. 15).

The relationship here is between a 'part' and the 'whole.' A single word, spoken or written, is only a part of the whole structure that is language. With reference to a game of football, scoring a try is an event which can only be appreciated or understood through the whole structure that is football. An appreciation and understanding of the game is comprised within that structure or 'whole' which is football, which encloses, contains, motivates and explains the actions of the individual players.

For Saussure, language is a system of signs, and he distinguishes between the *signifier* (the word, letter, or sound) and the *signified* (the idea or meaning conveyed). When talking about a dog, for example, both the *signifier* (word) and *signified* (idea or mental concept) do not refer to the object or the animal that we see.

Meaning comes not from reference to an object but from the position of a word in relation to other words. Meaning, for Saussure is arbitrary and derives from the

system of *langue*, from its formal relationships and rules, and not from its relationship to an outside, independent world (Gibson, 1984).

For instance, the signifier (the word dog) does not determine the meaning of the signified (mental concept or idea of dog), neither does the mental idea determines the meaning of the word—the relationship is arbitrary. That is, meaning is derived from the relationships of signs; the sign cup, can be meaningful and understood from its difference from and contrast to other signs like spoon, table and so on. That is, meaning does not depend on reference to the world or even ideas; otherwise, “terms would have exact equivalents from one language to another, but since translation is so often a quest for approximations, meaning must depend on difference, not on reference to things or concepts” (Belsey, 2002, p. 13). In other words, “language does not reflect a pre-existing social reality, but constitutes and brings a framework to that reality for us. It is the structure of language, the system of signifiers and signified and their meanings as constituted in the differences between them, which carves up our conceptual space for us” (Burr, 2003, p. 52).

The arbitrariness of the signified—signifier relationship does not imply accident or randomness, but points to the fact that any word (signifier) can be used to refer to a concept (signified), as long as convention allows both to arrive at an accepted meaning that everyone uses. This arbitrary relationship also means that the concepts (signified—the mental idea) are arbitrary.

We have divided up our world into things we have called ‘dogs’, ‘pig’, ‘marriage’, ‘intelligence’ and so on, and these divisions are arbitrary. It is quite possible that in some cultures separate concepts for ‘dog’ and ‘cat’ do not exist. In English-speaking cultures we have the words ‘sheep’ and ‘mutton’, and they refer to different concepts, but in French there is only one word, ‘mouton’ (Burr, 2003, p. 51).

Saussure is saying that we have divided up our world into arbitrary categories with the aid of language and that the world could have been divided into different categories from the ones we currently use. This means that every culture explains the universe in its own unique ‘system’ of language, and because a language has divided the universe according to its own

system different from other 'systems' of languages, it follows that our understanding of the world can only be seen through our own arbitrary systems and its corresponding unique categories of dividing up things or people. For Saussure, "language has neither ideas nor sounds that existed before the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonic differences that have issued from the system" (Belsey, 2002, p. 12). Meaning for Saussure does not depend on reference to the world or even ideas; it resides in the sign and nowhere else.

Claude Lévi-Strauss analyzed 'structures' in his volume *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1969) through an examination of kinship system, and demonstrated how different social organizations were different permutations of a few basic kinship structures. He argued that all societies have rules about who can marry whom, so that members are divided into two categories of prohibited partners and possible ones. Here, marriage constitutes a fundamental form of exchange, and this exchange is 'reciprocity' as a way of overcoming hostility where hostility means communication, alliance, integration or society itself. He wanted to find the common element of all cultures, traceable ultimately to universal structures embedded deep in the human mind. Lévi-Strauss's work failed in his quest "for Eternal Man, that fantasy figure of bourgeois ideology, the single, continuous hero of history masquerading as nature" (Belsey, 2002, p. 42).

Both structuralism and post-structuralism agree that, first, language is the prime site for the construction of the person, where one's experience, identity, and personality are all effects of language. "This means that we can only represent our experiences to ourselves and to others by using the concepts embedded in our language, so that our thoughts, our feelings and how we represent our behaviour are all pre-packaged by language" (Burr, 2003, p. 53). Second, they both share a sense of anti-humanism, where humanism refers to assumptions about human beings as persons who are unified, coherent and rational agents (essentialism) who are the authors of their own experiences and meanings.

Post-Structuralism

It is problematic to provide a unifying definition for post-structuralism (J. Williams, 2005) but it can be identified by a number of characteristics and can be thought of as an extension instead of a rejection of structuralism. Poststructuralists do not define the limit as something knowable, or it would become another core. Poststructuralism is a "thorough disruption of

our secure sense of meaning and reference in language, of our understanding of our senses and of the arts, of our understanding of identity, of our sense of history and of its role in the present, and of our understanding of language as something free of the work of the unconscious” (J. Williams, p. 3). From the viewpoint of this work, poststructuralism is taken as one of various postmodern theoretical perspectives. Another contribution of poststructuralism is the reinsertion of the subject into the field of play (Boyne, 1996).

[Poststructuralism has the] power to resist and work against settled truths and oppositions. It can help in struggles against discrimination on basis of sex or gender, against inclusions and exclusions on the basis of race, background, class or wealth. It guards against the sometimes overt, sometimes hidden, violence of established values such as an established morality, an artistic cannon or fixed legal framework....This does not mean that it denies them; rather, it works within them for the better (J. Williams, 2005, pp. 3-4).

The insistence of both structuralism and poststructuralism on language as the fount of the meaning of experience has moved the psychological centre of gravity out of the individual person into the social realm.

This means that if we are looking for explanations of the social world, either in terms of what individual people do and feel or in terms of groups, classes or societies, we should not look inside the individual, but out into the linguistic space in which they move with other people (Burr, 2003).

Poststructuralism’s departure from structuralism is based on the view that meaning is never fixed, that it changes over time and is contingent upon context and culture, and varies from person to person. This means that any given sign is open to an infinite number of meanings and construction.

For the perspective of this work, poststructuralism is consistent with the social constructionist view of language, which is contingent on context, history, and both the sender and receiver (Potter, 1996).

Deconstruction

“Deconstruction refers to attempts to take apart texts and see how they are constructed in such a way as to present particular images of people and their actions” and it “can be thought of as taking several different forms” (Burr, 1995, p. 164). The concept of deconstruction owes its origin to the work of Derrida (1976) who refuted the structuralists’ stance on binary opposition and assumptions about identity. In Derrida’s sense, deconstruction means looking at texts in such a way to reveal their hidden or internal contradictions. He points out that Western culture is based on binary oppositions, where one side of this opposition is always favoured over the other, for instance masculinity takes precedence over femininity, nature over culture. For Derrida, the meaning of masculinity always depends on the trace or the absence of that which is not masculinity (e.g. femininity). This is what he calls (in French) *différance*, which is neither a word nor a concept, but points to the aspects of difference and deferral.

Différance means that when we are talking about dogs, for example, we are always simultaneously and implicitly also referring to what is not dog, perhaps cat or horse etc.—that is, all that ‘differs’ or is absent from the term dog. These absences (e.g., cat and horse) are repressed and the way to reveal their action in language is through deconstruction—the taking apart of texts to show how its construction depends upon the unstated absence. This means that

The identity of something is given by that which it is not, that which is absent from it [so that] for Derrida, meaning is always both dependent upon a signifier’s difference from other signifiers and constantly deferred from one signifier to another in an endless chain (Burr, 1995, p. 106).

The meaning of a word always depends on the *trace* or the absence so that there cannot be a neatly drawn line of opposition between the two. It is not that presence and absence are opposites, not that there is either presence or absence, but rather that there is an inevitable defining of the one through the other; there is both presence and absence (Sampson, 1989). “Meaning, Derrida concludes, is always the effect of the *trace*, paradoxically, of the other in the selfsame” (Belsey, 2002, pp. 83, emphasis in original). In this Derridian view, “the

person's identity lies in their relation to others, and is not an identity to be found inside the person" (Burr, 1995, p. 109); this is synonymous with the Samoan notion of self which is always determined in terms of relationship to others (Shore, 1982). The founding ideology of structuralism in binary opposition is discounted through Derrida's analysis of *différance* which both describes and performs the way in which any single meaning of a concept or text arises only by the effacement of other possible meanings, which are themselves only deferred, left over, for their possible activation in other contexts.

The Author's Death

Roland Barthes' landmark essay *The Death of the Author* (1977) demonstrates that an author is not simply a person but a socially and historically constituted subject. Following Marx's crucial insight that it is history that makes man, and not, as Hegel supposed that man makes history, Barthes emphasizes that an author does not exist prior to or outside of language. In other words, it is writing that makes an author and not *vice versa*. An author implies limitation of meaning in a text and to secure it with a final signified, but to refuse author is to refuse to arrest meaning, to finally "refuse God and his hypostases, reason, science, the law" (p. 146). The key to a text is not to be found in its 'origin but in its 'destination' and "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author" (p. 147). For him, a text (writing) is to be traversed, not penetrated, because meaning is not constituted by the writer's (what he calls the scriptor) text but by the reader. Every reading of a text adds new meaning so that anyone can bring new meaning into the text; meaning-making is our task, not the scriptor's.

THE SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE, TRUTH, IDENTITY AND MEANING

I have summarized the philosophical suppositions of the pre-modern period, modernism, postmodernism, structuralism and post-structuralism as groundwork from which social construction has emerged. These theoretical standpoints attempt to analyze and describe how knowledge is perceived and how we determine truth and identity and to make meaning of our lives in society. The pre-modern era or the age of faith conceived of knowledge and authority as emanating from God as the only truth and source of meaning as explicated by religious communities like Christianity. Such stance was rejected by the modernist movement, as

highlighted by Nietzsche's article implicating the 'death of God' where the notion of God was rejected as no longer a viable source of any absolute moral principles. Essentialism's foundation on reason, progress, rationality and dependence on grand narratives of scientific discourse as source for knowledge was rejected in the new age of postmodernism.

Postmodernism which succeeded modernism hypothesized the individual subject as a unified conscious mind having the power to shape the future with knowledge defined from a particular perspective at the expense of other forms of knowledge. Postmodernism proposed that social and cultural reality together with social sciences could be explained through a rhetorical model of which SC had a particular impact in describing reality as an effect of discourses where human and bodies were an effect of discourse. Postmodernism is often used interchangeably with poststructuralism to question the essence or structures that could presumably explain people and society as constituting certain essences or structures that defined them, such as Sassure's insistence on language as a structure, but this was seen problematic because his arbitrary signifier-signified relationship created meaning out of non-meaning (Gibson, 1984). It also alienates language from its users and undermines agency, responsibility, and disregards historical variables and it cannot explain change and growth but merely a single snapshot situation. Looking up the meaning of a word (signifier) in a dictionary gives you other signifiers in an endless chain and one never arrives at a signified which is not another signifier in itself (Sarup, 1988).

Instead of finding meaning in binary oppositions and the logic of either/or, which privileges one over the other proposed in structuralism, Derrida's deconstruction posits instead a logic of both/and, where the identity and meaning of a word, object or individual always presupposes what it is not (the trace), defining one through the other as part of the selfsame, so that the meaning and truth of a concept always differs and deferred by the signifier. That means there is no authority to define meaning, identity or truth, although meanings are lived; for instance, democracy is invoked to justify wars (Belsey, 2002). This underlines the rejection of binary oppositions and allows for a multiplicity of identities, and ways of knowing, and the possibility for choice and responsibility for change.

Barthes (1977) emphasizes the role of the reader in making meaning where "a text consists of multiple writings, issuing from several cultures and entering into dialogues with each other,

into parody, into contestation” (Barthes, 1977, p. 147), and the reader is the site where this multiplicity is collected. This view opens the possibility for different knowledge, identity, truth and meaning-making. From the SCm point of view, meaning is constituted within discourse and knowledge is sustained by social process (Hibberd, 2005). According to Belsey (2002), “if meaning is a matter of social convention, it concerns and involves all of us” (p. 88).

Although structuralism and post-structuralism had different views about identity, meaning and truth, they both acknowledge the critical role of language (instead of essence or structure) in determining our notions of identity and meaning, so as to understand human and society and how we make meaning of our lives, so as to make changes for a better future. From the perspective of language and discourse, SCm is considered a viable methodology for undertaking this research in determining how people are socially constructed, and how they embody meaning and moral values in their lives as people of God.

Social Constructionism and language

SCm argues that the world and people as we perceive it is socially constructed through personal interaction in everyday life. Much of these personal interactions are constituted through language and that language; instead of simply describing the world, both constructs the world and has real consequences. In other words, much of the experience that constitutes us as a people is socially constructed, and language is at the heart of this construction process. According to Shweder and Miller (1985), we label ourselves with discursive categories like male or female that have become naturalized. “All these categories have been picked out for description and representation, and the mere mention of the label brings to mind the appropriate forms of life. Distant contexts are made available to us by means of our language” (p. 67). In this sense, “nature is a product of art and discourse” (Goodman, 1968, p. 33). Social constructionists regard discourse as central to the constitution and construction of at least social reality (e.g. Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Gergen, 2001; Harre, 1993; Potter, 1996, 2004; Shotter, 1993, 1998). A social construction of reality is construction of bodies with their embodied experiences.

I have summarized the philosophical and ideological landscape out of which emerged Social Constructionism, and I have outlined the reason that Social Construction (SC) is chosen as the lens through which this study is undertaken. I will now expand on the reason for this choice of methodology, underlining the theoretical underpinnings of the type of discourse analysis chosen for data analysis and interpretation under the umbrella of SC.

CHAPTER THREE

FROM SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION TO DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

WHAT IS DISCOURSE?

For discursive psychologists, discourse refers to an instance of situated language use like in a conversation, spoken interaction and also written texts of all kinds. From a deconstructionist or what Burr calls macro social constructionism, the meaning of discourse extends beyond immediate context in which language is used. Here, the emphasis is on the way that forms of language available to us set limits upon, or at least strongly channel, not only what we can think and say, but also what we can do or what can be done to us. Discourse in this sense incorporates not just language but practice too.

Phillips and Hardy (2002) commenting upon their work, write:

This book is about discourse. More specifically, it is about the power of incomplete, ambiguous, and contradictory discourses to produce a social reality that we experience as solid and real....Without discourse, there is no solid reality, and without understanding discourse, we cannot understand our reality, our experience, or ourselves (p. 1-2).

Discourse generally refers to actual practices of talking and writing (Woodilla, 1998) or practices which form the objects of which they speak (Foucault, 1972). Phillips and Hardy (2002), following Parker (1992), define discourse as specifically referring to “an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception that brings an object into being” (p. 3). Candlin adds:

Discourse is a means of talking and writing about and acting upon worlds, a means which both constructs and is constructed by a set of social practices within these worlds, and in so doing both reproduces and constructs afresh particular social-

discursive practices, constrained or encouraged by more macro movements in the overarching social formation (Candlin, 1997, p. viii).

For Burr (2003),

A discourse refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events. It refers to a particular picture that is painted of an event, person or class of persons, a particular way of representing it in a certain light...surrounding any one object, event, person etc. there may be a variety of different discourses, each with a different story to tell about the object in question, a different way of representing it to the world...Each discourse claims to say what the object really is, that is, claims to be the truth (p. 64-65).

Gee (1999) expands this definition and distinguishes between Discourse (with a capital D) and discourse (with a small d) where discourse (with a small d) is how language is used 'on site' to enact activities and identities. But activities and identities are rarely ever enacted through language alone. For instance when a gang member warn another gang member off his territory, it is not enough just to get the words right, though that is crucial. It is necessary, as well, to get one's body, clothes, gestures, actions, interactions, ways with things, symbols, tools, technologies (be they guns or graphs), and values, attitudes, beliefs, and emotions 'right,' as well, and all at the 'right' places and times. "When 'little d' discourse (language-in-use) is melded integrally with non language stuff to enact specific identities and activities, then I say that 'big D' Discourses are involved" (Gee, 1999, pp. 6-7). Gee continues:

When you 'pull off' being a culturally-specific sort of 'everyday' person, a 'regular' at the local bar, a certain type of African-American or Greek-Australian...a teacher or a student of a certain sort, or any of a great many other 'ways of being in the world,' you use language and 'other stuff'—ways of acting, interacting, feeling, believing, valuing, together with other people and with various sorts of characteristic objects, symbols, tools, and technologies—to recognize yourself and others as meaning and meaningful in certain ways. In turn, you produce, reproduce, sustain, and transform a

given ‘form of life’ or Discourse. All life for all of us is just a patchwork of thoughts, words, objects, events, actions, and interactions in Discourses (Gee, 1999, p. 7).

Discourse is viewed as consisting of groups of related statements which cohere in some way to produce both meanings and effects in the real world. This is the idea of discourse as having force or as being productive. The various and sometimes contradictory ways of speaking about a topic or issue come together—that is ‘cohere’—to build up a picture or representation of the issue or topic. This certain representation is ‘productive’ in the sense that they have power outcomes or effects that then define and establish certain truths and normality over other discourses (Carabine, 2001, p. 268). In the same manner Foucault regards discourses as productive in that ‘they produce the objects of which they speak’ (Foucault, 1972, p. 49).

Discourses are also fluid and often opportunistic, at one and the same time, drawing upon existing discourses about an issue whilst utilizing, interacting with, and being mediated by other dominant discourses (about, for example, family, gender, etc.) to produce potent and new ways of conceptualizing the issue or topic. In so doing, discourses ‘hook’ into normative ideas and common sense notions, say, about sexuality (that heterosexuality is natural and normal, that homosexuality is abnormal and deviant), morality or motherhood. This produces shortcut paths into ideas which convey messages about, for example, ‘good’ and ‘bad’ (mothering, sexualities, etc.), morality and immorality (behaviors and relationships), and acceptable and inappropriate behaviors. “These representations or ways of speaking not only convey meanings about the topic, they also have material effects” (Carabine, 2001, p. 269). Gee adds that a

[D]iscourse refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events. It refers to a particular picture that is painted of an event, person or class of persons, a particular way of representing it in a certain light. If...a multitude of alternative versions of events are potentially available through language, this means that, surrounding any one object, event, person etc. there may be a variety of different discourses, each with a different story to tell about the object in question, a different way of representing it to the world (Gee, 1999, p. 64).

Discourses serve to construct the phenomena of our world for us each portraying the object as having a very different nature from the next. “Each discourse claims to say what the object really is, that is, claims to be the truth. These claims to truth and knowledge are important issues, and lie at the heart of discussions of identity, power and change” (Burr, 2003, p. 65).

Gee includes thoughts and beliefs in the domain of discourse but as Burr (2003) points out, thoughts and belief, like opinion and attitude, would be completely opposed to a social constructionist view. Attitudes and opinions are essentialist concepts of the ‘personality’ kind which alludes to some essential structures that resides in a person’s head. “The presence of a positive or negative attitude is inferred from what a person says, but the attitude itself is a hypothetical structure which cannot itself be directly observed. Such essences have no place in a social constructionist understanding of the person, and have no status as explanations of the things people say” (Burr, 2003, p. 65).

Text

Text traditionally refers to a piece of written language such as a poem or novel for example (Harding, 2005), but from the perspective of discourse analysis, discourses are embodied and enacted in a variety of texts (Phillips & Hardy, 2002), where a text is a discursive ‘unit’ and a material manifestation of discourse (Chalaby, 1996), or “can be conceived of as materially durable products of linguistic actions” (Wodak, 2001, p. 66). For Parker (1989), texts are “delimited tissues of meaning which may be written, spoken or reproduced in *any form* that can be given an interpretive gloss” (p. 57). A text may take a variety of forms such as written texts, spoken words, pictures, symbols, artefacts, etc., (Grant, Keenoy, & Oswick, 1998). Texts are not individually meaningful but only through their interconnection with other texts, the different discourses on which they draw, and the nature of their reproduction, dissemination, and consumption that they are made meaningful. Discourse analysis explores how texts are made meaningful through these processes and also how they contribute to the constitution of social reality by *making* meaning (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). According to Denzin (1995),

A text is any printed, visual, oral or auditory production that is available for reading, viewing or hearing (for example, an article, a film, a painting, a song). Readers create

texts as they interpret and interact with them. The meaning of a text is always indeterminate, open-ended and interactional. Deconstruction is the analysis of texts (p. 52).

Discourse and Language

When social scientist studied language, it was usually concentrated on the descriptive function of language, or how language transmits information about an object for instance. But Austin (1962) highlighted another function of language; that words in any language actually do things. There is a practical side to language because it does entail action. “I now sentence you to five years in prison” entails devastating action and results in major changes in the life of a new prisoner. Language also has a constructing effect because it does construct or create a particular kind of person. A rapist is a bad person to be avoided and unwanted in any community while a kind and loving person can be a desirable good neighbor. As pointed out above, discourse is central to the constitution of at least social reality. Lemke describes the active role of discourse:

The role of discourse in society is active; it not only reconfirms and re-enacts existing social relationships and patterns of behaviour, it also renegotiates social relationships and introduces new meanings and new behaviours....[Discourse also] functions ideologically in society to support and legitimate the exercise of power, and to naturalize unjust social relations, making them seem the inevitable consequence of common sense necessity (Lemke, 1995, p. 20).

Gee recognizes that language and ‘other stuff’ build and rebuild our worlds and that language-in-action is always and everywhere an active building process. He summarizes six things or area of ‘reality’ that are built or constructed every time we speak or write:

The meaning and value of aspects of the material world: I enter a plain, square room, and speak and act in a certain way (e.g. like someone about to run a meeting), and, low and behold, where I sit becomes the front of the room.

Activities: We talk and act in one way and we are engaged in formally opening a meeting; we talk and act in another way and we are engaged in “chit–chat” before the official start of the meeting.

Identities and relationships: I talk and act in one way one moment and I am speaking and acting as “chair” of the committee; the next moment I speak and talk in a different way and I am speaking and acting as one peer/colleague speaking to another.

Politics (the distribution of social goods): I talk and act in such a way that a visibly angry male in a committee meeting is “standing his ground on principle,” but a visibly angry female is “hysterical.

Connections: I talk and act so as to make what I am saying here and now in this committee meeting about whether we should admit more minority students connected to (or, on the other hand, not connected to or relevant to) what I said last week about my fears of losing my job given the new government’s turn to the right.

Semiotics (what and how different symbol systems and different forms of knowledge “count”): I talk and act so as to make the knowledge and language of lawyers relevant (privileged), or not, over “everyday language” or over non-lawyerly academic language in our committee discussion of facilitating the admission of more minority students (1999, p. 12).

Gee uses the term ‘social language’ to refer to the role of language in Discourses, remembering that Discourse involve more than just language, where social languages are what we learn and what we speak. Any particular utterance can have a number of meanings, but as social players in society, we, being emerged in society with knowledge of its social conversations, we all hit on only one (and the same one) of the various possible meanings of an utterance because we know which particular meaning is *relevant*. This relevance is deeply tied to context, point of view, and culture. One knows what counts for a group of people or culture as relevant, by being privy to certain ‘social conversations’ that people in that particular culture, time and place, have had. This means that even if there were a hundred possible meanings to a particular utterance, we all arrive at one particular meaning for that utterance because we have all been part of the ongoing discussion or *conversation* in our society from which the utterance emerged, and which gives it the most relevant meaning.

Knowledge, Power, Truth

If discourses regulate our knowledge of the world and our common understanding of things and events, and if these shared understanding inform our shared practices then it is obvious that there is an intimate relationship between discourse, knowledge and power (Burr, 2003). For Foucault (1972), knowledge is always bound up with power where power is seen not as something that some people have or not have, but as an effect of discourse. This means that the power to act in particular ways, to claim resources, to control or be controlled depends upon the knowledges currently prevailing in a society. For instance, in the context of the Samoan church, the supposed theological knowledge of church ministers, gives them the power to define the ‘will of God,’ in accordance with what is deemed ‘acceptable’ social practices and the way people should live their lives. “To define the world or a person in such a way that allows you to do the things you want is to exercise power” (Burr, 2003, p. 68). Foucault’s examination of the panopticon prison system in the nineteenth century Europe recognized a shift from sovereign power to disciplinary power, which is a more effective means of controlling populations; this has parallels with the Christian God’s infinite knowledge, monitored by the police and church officials through the law and theological discourses.

Discourses are historically variable ways of specifying knowledge and truths, whereby knowledge is socially constructed and produced by effects of power and spoken of in terms of truth. Foucault argues that power is constituted through discourses. Thus, power is important in the construction of knowledge and what counts as knowledge (Carabine, 2001). Social psychology regard “the categories of cognition, motivation, emotion, learning, social behaviour, etc. to be discursive, and discourse to be central to the constitution of social reality. All human activity is said to be socio-linguistically constituted” (Hibberd, 2005, pp. x, 2).

Social Construction and Discourse Analysis

Social construction holds that if some thing, event or process is social in origin, it is not given or established by nature; a person is socially constructed through discourse, where discourse is central to social construction, and that language is central to discourse. Potter (1996) points out that construction as a metaphor works on two levels. The first is the idea that descriptions

and accounts construct the world, or at least versions of the world, the second is the idea that these descriptions and accounts are themselves constructed.

Reality enters into human practices by way of the categories and descriptions that are part of those practices. The world is not ready categorized by God or nature as we are all forced to accept. It is *constituted* in one way or another as people talk it, write it and argue it (Potter, 1996, p. 98).

This means that from the constructionist viewpoint, the world and people are constructed through discourse, and discourse analysis is one way through which we come to understand how the world is constructed.

Discourses themselves are not confined to language but also non-language stuff (Gee, 1999); they are not produced without context (Fairclough, 1997) and discourses do not possess meaning (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). “Discourses as linguistic social practices can be seen as constituting non-discursive and discursive social practices and, at the same time, as being constituted by them” (Wodak, 2001, p. 66). It is on this view of discourse that Phillips and Hardy take a three-dimensional approach of discourse analysis (DA) which connects texts to discourse, locating them in a historical and social context, by which they refer to as the particular actors, relationships, and practices that characterize the situation under study. This approach relates to the fact that DA represents a methodology—not just a method—that embodies a strong social constructivist view of the social world (Gergen, 1999) where discourse analytic approaches share an interest in the constructive effects of language and are a reflexive—as well as an interpretive—style of analysis. “In this regard, discourse analysis does not simply comprise a set of techniques for conducting structured, qualitative investigations of texts; it also involves a set of assumptions concerning the constructive effects of language” (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 5).

Phillips and Hardy (2002) describe DA as a methodology rather than just a method, that is, an epistemology that explains how we know the social world, as well as a set of methods for studying it, hence they differentiate DA from other qualitative methods such as ethnography, ethnomethodology, conversation analysis and narrative analysis. Wood and Kroger (2000) reiterate this point that DA is more than just a method for analysis:

The methods are sometimes called discourse analysis, but discourse analysis as we view it is not only about method; it is also a perspective on the nature of language and its relationship to the central issues of the social sciences. More specifically, we see discourse analysis as a related collection of approaches to discourse, approaches that entail not only practices of data collection and analysis, but also a set of metatheoretical and theoretical assumptions and a body of research claims and studies. Data collection and analysis are a vital part of discourse analysis, but they do not, in themselves, constitute the whole of discourse analysis (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. x).

Whereas other qualitative methods look at understanding the social world and the meaning it has for people in it, DA takes this further in identifying how these meanings are discursively constructed and maintained, hence, “the emphasis in DA is on what talk is doing and achieving” (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 5), and in ascertaining the constructive effects of discourse through the structured and systemic study of texts (Hardy, 2001). Potter (1996, 2004), though, cautions against what Michael Mulkay calls ‘vassalage,’ a situation where the sociological conclusions became parasitic upon the claims of a dominant group of participants. The researcher in this sense becomes the vassal or servant of this group.

VARIETY OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Like social construction, DA is a broad perspective that is inclusive of different approaches and standpoints, and different researches emphasize specific perspectives or a combination of approaches. The various approaches to DA “are united by a common attention to the significance and structuring effects of language, and are associated with interpretive and reflexive styles of analysis” (Burman & Parker, 1993, p. 3). These different approaches are not incompatible; they simply reflect the different concerns of people working essentially under a ‘social constructionist’ umbrella (Burr, 1995). Here I outline some of the common approaches to DA that I find appropriate to this study, and to delineate how these approaches are categorized differently by researchers, and how they overlap in their use.

Some who study discourse draw from the traditions of structuralism and poststructuralism especially those interested in issues of identity, selfhood, personal and social change and power relations (e.g. Parker, 1992; Weedon, 1987). Others draw on the performative qualities of discourse, that is, what people are doing with their talk or writing, what they are trying to achieve. They focus on how accounts are constructed and bring about effects for the speaker or writer, or upon what rhetorical devices are used by people and how they are employed. These draw on the essential variability of meaning in language, and also informed by speech act theory, conversation analysis and ethnomethodology. They are not particularly concerned with issues of selfhood, subjectivity or power, and therefore reject the use of psychoanalysis (or any other brand of traditional psychology) in their accounts (Burr, 1995).

Burr (2003) discusses four kinds of research used by social constructionists: conversation analysis (CA), discursive psychology (DP), interpretive repertoires (IR), and Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA). Characteristics of one type of discourse analysis may also be found in another type. For her, the differences between these approaches lie more with the kind of questions they are trying to answer and in the theoretical assumptions underlying these questions than in the form that the data gathering and analysis takes in practice, hence she talks about ‘approaches to research’ rather than ‘research methods’ as there is much overlap among them. DP and FDA emphasize the role of language in the construction of social reality so are both critical of cognitivism. The two types have different concerns and so focus on different aspects of language and analysis. FDA and DP are selected as appropriate to this study and are discussed below.

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

FDA was influenced by the writing of Foucault and other post-structuralist writers who were interested in the role of language in the constitution of social and psychological life. It focuses upon *what kind* of objects and subjects are constructed through discourses and *what kinds* of ways-of-being these objects and subjects make available to people. It is concerned with discursive resources available to people and the ways that discourse constructs subjectivity, selfhood and power relations and therefore it asks a particular kind of question (e.g., what is it like to be positioned as ‘asylum seeker’ and what kinds of actions and experiences are compatible with such position) (Willig, 2001, p. 91).

“Foucauldian Discourse Analysis is concerned with language and its role in the constitution of social and psychological life...[where discourses construct objects and subject positions]; they facilitate and limit, enable and constrain what can be said, by whom, where and when” (Willig, 2001, p. 107). It also focuses upon the availability of ‘discursive resources’ within a culture—something like a discursive economy—and its implication for those who live within it. Subject positioning then, place people in particular categories like a ‘patient’ for example, and the role of discourse here have implications in wider processes of legitimation and power and pays attention to the relationship between discourses and institutions where discourses are understood as bound up with institutional practices or ways of organizing, regulating and administering social life. Dominant discourses privilege and legitimate those versions of social reality which legitimate existing power relations and social structures. In this approach there is a strong call for scrutiny of the relationship between language and power to expose power inequalities and ideology. Beside language, FDA is also concern with the practices that are implicated in discourse and about the material conditions and social structures that form the context of these practices (Willig, 2001).

FDA also takes a critical approach on the historical perspective of discourses, and analyses how discourses have changed over time on particular discursive objects, and what power relations and social structures influenced such a change in discourse. Foucault undertook this approach in his multi volume *The History of Sexuality* (1990) highlighting the ‘genealogical’ view of history (Foucault, 1977) that underlines how discourses and social constructs like sexuality or homosexuality changed over time; from this genealogical view of history emerged new knowledge, what he calls archaeology of knowledge (Foucault, 1972). Foucault calls this approach to history, genealogy. Bell (1993) explains that

Genealogy does not seek to record the progress and continuity of societies. It avoids the search for depth, avoids the search for what ‘really happened’ underneath historical events, and locates its analysis instead on the surface, on the details; it is ‘meticulous and patiently documentary (p. 46).

Through genealogy, Foucault sought to trace the development of knowledges and their power effects in order to reveal something about the nature of power/knowledge in modern society.

It is concerned to map those strategies, relations and practices of power in which knowledges are embedded and connected (Carabine, 2001).

Burr includes critical discourse analysis and deconstructionism under the umbrella of FDA (Burr, 2003) which draws on the work of Foucault and Derrida. “Deconstructionism emphasizes the constructive power of language as a system of signs rather than the constructive work of the individual person. It is concerned with how the human subject becomes constructed through the structures of language and through ideology” (Burr, 2003, p. 17) where the central concept is the text. Deconstructionism is an example of social constructionism and it focuses on the historical and cultural specificity of knowledge and the possibility of social action and power. According to Foucault, knowledge is always associated with power and our discursive representations of the world entail particular kinds of power relation, which also opens the possibility for us to challenge these relations.

Discursive psychology (DP)

“Discursive Psychology is centered on questions about identity and subjectivity. Its primary concern is about how people construct versions of themselves, how they build defensible identities, how they represent versions of themselves and events as factual and how they legitimate their actions” (Burr, 2003, p. 163); these are also some of the concerns of FDA so they overlap in focus. DP shares the anti essentialism of social constructionism and denies that language is a representation or a route to cognitions such as attitudes, beliefs, emotions and memories. It does not deny the existence of these cognitions but are taken instead as things that people do rather than something they have. DP is concern with how people use linguistic skills to build specific accounts of events, that is, the performative function of language, and how these have powerful implications for people interacting.

DP was inspired by ethnomethodology and conversation analysis and their interest is in the negotiating of meaning in local interaction in everyday contexts. Its primary concern is with *how* people *use* discursive resources in order to achieve interpersonal objectives in social interaction. That is, it is concerned with ‘discourse practices’ where the focus is on what people do with language, emphasizing the performative qualities of discourse. The appropriate kind of question that DP asks would be, how participants use language in order to

negotiate and manage social interactions, in order to achieve interpersonal objectives like disclaiming an undesirable social identity, justifying an action, or attribute blame or praise (Willig, 2001).

Some conceptual tools developed to help analysis include 'category entitlement,' stake, interest management and the way descriptions are used (Burr, 2003, p. 163; Potter, 1996, p. 105ff; Willig, 2001, p. 91). 'Category entitlement' refers to the way that speakers justify their actions or behaviour due to the category they have placed themselves in, such as 'patient,' *matai* (chief) or minister. "Knowledge is culturally and normatively linked to categories of actors in a variety of different ways. Certain categories of actors are treated as entitled to know particular sorts of things, and their reports and descriptions may thus be given special credence" (Potter, 1996, p. 114). 'Stake' and 'interest' refers to the way speakers, in their accounts, orient themselves to the possible spin put on events by those with something to gain or lose by the account. Rhetorical organization of accounts is constructed so as to undermine other potential alternatives and as defenses against objections or blame.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Phillips and Ravasi (1998, in Phillips & Hardy, 2002, pp. 19-29) categorize between two theoretical dimensions in discourse analysis: First, text versus context. Second, the degree to which power dynamics form the focus of research (more critical studies), versus studies that focus more on processes of social construction that constitute social reality (more constructivist studies). Between these two poles there is a choice between the *constructivist* approach which is a fine grained exploration of the way a particular social reality has been constructed, and the *critical* approach, which focus more on the dynamics of power, knowledge, and ideology that surround discursive processes.

Critical studies are largely due to the influence of Foucault and mostly explore the disciplinary effects of discourse and the relationship between power and knowledge. Yet even within the Foucauldian approach itself, there are a variety of approaches in research. Some researchers reject the constructionist claim that there is nothing outside text or discourse (Derrida, 1976) and they reclaim the stance that social structures can empower or disempower actors. Others focus on the ability of actors who use discourse to affect certain

outcomes; still others focus on the constructive effects of discourse than power and politics. The two broad approaches abovementioned are further categorized into four main discourse analytical approaches: Social linguistic analysis, interpretive structuralism, critical discourse analysis and critical linguistic analysis. I shall summarize the last two (critical discourse analysis and critical linguistic analysis) (Phillips & Hardy, 2002) as they are well-suited to this study.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) focuses on the role of discursive activity in constituting and sustaining unequal power relations highlighting the privileging of particular discourses over others and constituting concepts, objects and subject positions that presuppose the Foucauldian tradition. Critical linguistic analysis also focuses on individual texts, but with a strong interest in the dynamics of power that surround the text. According to Fairclough (2003),

Critical social research begins from questions such as these: how do existing societies provide people with possibilities and resources for rich and fulfilling lives, how on the other hand do they deny people these possibilities and resources? What is it about existing societies that produces poverty, deprivation, misery, and insecurity in people's lives? What possibilities are there for social change which would reduce these problems and enhance the quality of the lives of human beings? The aim of critical social research is better understanding of how societies work and produce both beneficial and detrimental effects, and of how the detrimental effects can be mitigated if not eliminated (p. 202).

van Dijk (2008) summarizes some of the requirements that needs to be satisfied for CDA to meet its aims:

- Has to be better than other research in order to be accepted;
- It focuses primarily on *social problems* and political issues, rather than on current paradigms and fashions;
- Empirically adequate critical analysis of social problems is usually *multidisciplinary*;

- Rather than merely *describe* discourse structures, it tries to explain them in terms of properties of social interaction and especially social structure;
- More specifically, CDA focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of *power* and *dominance* in society.

Following Fairclough and Wodak (1997), similar to Fairclough (2003, p. 209), van Dijk (2008, p. 86) summarizes the main characteristics of CDA:

- CDA addresses social problems.
- Power relations are discursive.
- Discourse constitutes society and culture.
- Discourse does ideological work.
- Discourse is historical.
- The link between text and society is mediated.
- Discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory.
- Discourse is a form of social action.

CDA endeavors to make explicit power relationships which are frequently hidden, and thereby to derive results which are of practical relevance (Meyer, 2001). CDA view all discourses as historical and therefore can only be understood in terms of their context, where context is implicit to extralinguistic factors such as culture, society and ideology, hence it is open to the broadest range of factors that exert an influence on texts, and procedures used in analysis of discourse is a hermeneutic process; hermeneutic here means “the method of grasping and producing meaning relations” (Meyer, 2001, p. 16) and permits the use of interdiscursivity and use of other texts.

DOING DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Parker’s (1992) ten criteria as guide to discourse analysis underpins the theoretical approach of data analysis in the following chapters and is outlined here.

1. The first criterion is the notion that a discourse is realised in texts where texts are delimited tissues of meaning reproduced in any form that can be given an interpretative gloss.
2. The second criterion is that a discourse is about objects and there are at least two layer of objectification in the study of discourse. First, objects are constituted in discourse; the simple reference to something gives that object a reality.
3. The third states that a discourse contains subjects where people are assigned subject position such as patient from which they are expected to do certain things or behave in a certain way.
4. Fourth criterion is that a discourse is a coherent system of meanings much like Gee's discourse (with a big D and a small d) that constitutes linguistic and non-linguistic stuff.
5. Fifth criterion is that a discourse refers to other discourses, so an object or subject position can be constructed one way by a certain discourse, and supported or challenged by another.
6. Sixth criterion is that a discourse reflects on its own way of speaking. There will be contradictions and inconsistency in discourse and the role of the analyst is to identify these and articulate them into a coherent pattern; the reflexivity of a discourse is found at points which will probably be found in other texts.
7. The seventh measure is that a discourse is historically located and this is synonymous with the Foucauldian genealogical view of history where discourses changes over time and with different institutions.
8. The eighth criterion is that discourses support institutions like church or school. The analyst must locate what institution is privileged and which is undermined in discourse.
9. The ninth criterion states that discourses reproduce power relations and bespeak the Foucauldian view of discourse where certain groups or institutions define reality, knowledge or truth granting power to certain groups or persons at the expense of others.
10. Tenth and last one is that discourses have ideological effect.

These analytical criteria have much overlap with other approaches like Foucauldian Discourse Analysis summarized by Willig (2001, pp. 109-112).

- I. The first step is to identify ‘discursive constructions’ or discursive objects and how they are constructed; discursive objects selected for analysis depends on the research question.
- II. The second step focuses on how discursive objects are variously constructed within a wide range of discourses.
- III. Third step concerns with the ‘action orientation’ of the discursive objects where it is necessary to know what is gained from constructing the object in a particular way.
- IV. Step four looks at the concept of ‘positioning’ where discourses assign subject position to persons that in turn situate them within the structure of rights and duties.
- V. The fifth stage looks at ‘practices’ where the relationship between discourse and practice is identified; the aim here is to analyze how discursive constructions and subject positions in discourses close down or open up opportunities for action.
- VI. The last stage of analysis is concern with the relationship between discourse and ‘subjectivity.’ The concern here is with what can be felt, thought and experienced from within various subject positions.

As can be seen from the analytical criteria from different theoretical approaches outlined above, there is much overlap in their strategic approach to analysis, and all of these will be accommodated in this work. Potter (Potter, 1996) refers to one of the analysis tool as ‘the dilemma of stake’ because a dilemma exists whereby anything that a person (or group) says or does may be discounted as a product of stake or interest. The assumption here is that people treat each other as if what others say or do always has some underlying interests, desires, ambitions and stake in some versions of what the world is like. “Interests are a participant’s concern and that is how they enter analysis” (p. 110).

Interest management, another analysis tool, includes the use of descriptions to manage issues of interest, and this can result in uneven or bias description of an event or person where one is described as strong, the other weak in accordance with the intended interest of the describer. The role of analysis is not to decide on the truthfulness or falsity of claims and descriptions,

but to explore the practices through which stake is established and discounted. Another analytical tool is how descriptions are used and a notable feature of descriptions is its role in categorization.

A description formulates some object or event as something; it constitutes it as a thing, and a thing with specific qualities. The description presents something as good or bad, big or small, more violent or less violent, although often with more subtle options. Another common role of descriptions is to present some action as routine or, conversely, exceptional (Potter, 1996, p. 111).

Burman and Parker point out three common ‘reference points’ in discourse analytical research in psychology which are not coherent, unitary theoretical positions or types of method, but are rather clusters of writers and example researches that emphasize these reference points which are: repertoires and dilemmas, conversation and the making of sense, and structure and subject. Research done under repertoires and dilemmas see the phenomenon of personality and attitude as a function of talk and as variable as talk. Questionnaire and interview responses are not tapping something outside language (or inside the head); “interview responses are viewed as discursive practices and nothing more” (Burman & Parker, 1993, p. 4). Conversation and the making of sense contest the ideology of fixed ideas and see identity as negotiated through talk. Typical questions asked in this tradition are ‘What problems are presupposed by the statements made here?’ And ‘What are the solutions that are being posed to those problems?’ so the analysis is organized around these questions. ‘Structure and subject’ is synonymous with post- structuralism which include a number of approaches that is suspicious of claims to reveal a world outside language and claims that we can experience any aspect of ourselves as outside language (Burman & Parker, 1993).

Characteristics of CDA outlined by van Dijk (2008) is followed closely in analytical procedures but a definitive list of such analytical linguistic devices cannot be given since their selection mainly depends on the specific research question (Meyer, 2001). CDA also constitutes both *macro* and *micro*-level discourse. Language use, discourse, verbal interaction and communication belong to the micro level of the social order. Power, dominance and equality between social groups are typically terms that belong to a macro level of analysis

and van Dijk (2008) proposes an analytical approach that can bridge these two levels to arrive at a more unified form of critical analysis:

- *Members-groups*: Language users engage in discourse as members of (several) social groups, organizations, or institutions; and conversely, groups thus may act ‘by’ their members.
- *Actions-process*: Social acts of individual actors are thus constituent part of group actions and social processes, such as legislation, newsmaking, or the reproduction of racism.
- *Context-social structure*: Situations of discursive interaction are similarly part or constitutive of social structure; for example, a press conference may be a typical practice of organizations and media institutions. That is, ‘local’ and more ‘global’ contexts are closely related, and both exercise constraints on discourse.

Analysis of ‘local meanings’ is also part of CDA where the many forms of implicit or indirect meanings such as implications, presuppositions, allusions, vagueness, omissions and polarizations are accounted for (Meyer, 2001).

REFLEXIVITY

Reflexivity can mean a number of different things but it is referred to in at least four different ways (Burr, 2003): First it refers to the way that the theory re-constitutes the role of respondents, their relationship to the researcher and the status of their accounts (p. 156). This bespeaks the equal status within discourse analysis, of the researcher and respondents, and the accounts offered by each. The researcher must always be aware of the hierarchical relationship where the researcher may be perceived by the respondent as the expert, or the researcher assume that higher position with respect to the respondent. According to Tofaeono (2000), Samoan respondents tend to say what they perceive the interviewer wants them to say, hence they construct the relationship between researcher and themselves and their accounts are therefore constructions of this relationship with respect to the issue discussed. I have therefore selected respondents who are either older than myself, or those considered

more knowledgeable than myself in the discourse of culture or religious theological matters, and the social status and structure they themselves occupy in society. In Samoan lifeways, beside cultural and religious status, respect is always paid by a younger person to older ones. The respondent in this respect is considered to be in the position of expert with respect to the interviewer in an attempt to eliminate the ‘illusion of the democratization of the research relationship’ (Marks, 1993; Parker & Burman, 1993).

Second, it is used to draw attention to the fact that when someone gives an account of an event, that account is simultaneously a description of the event and part of the event because of the constituting nature of talk. This is the social constructionist stance that “descriptions are not just *about* something; that is, they are not merely representing some facets of the world, they are also involved in that world in some practical way” (Potter, 1996, p. 47). Put another way, “talk has the property of being both *about* actions, events and situations, and at the same time part of those things” (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 182). Within this constructionist framework, neither the researcher’s analysis nor the respondent’s account can be perceived as the only way the text can be interpreted and held as the only truth.

Thirdly, reflexivity posits that “social constructionism itself is not exempt from the critical stance it brings to bear on other theories...and therefore must recognize itself as just as much as social construction as other ways of accounting” (Burr, 2003, p. 157).

Lastly, reflexivity refers to the issue of explicitly acknowledging the personal and political values and perspective informing the research. The researcher’s history and biography, and the respondent’s experience and social location which give a particular context to their respective accounts must be acknowledged (Burr, 2003). Inclusion of background information of the respondent could be seen problematic since this is a sort of construction of the respondent by the researcher, but this criticism is overruled by the fact that the respondent’s account is a construction of her/his social location and context.

How do Samoans construct meaning through bodily experience? One primary assumption is the recognition that language is a major force or building block through which people construct their bodies (Austin, 1962; Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 2003), and it is through language that these constructions are negotiated and maintained as part of daily life

(Gee, 1999; Potter, 2004; Shotter, 1998). The hierarchy of the Samoan social structure is constituted and maintained through language as witnessed by the various publications on *fa'alupega* (honorific ceremonial address) (e.g. Kitona & Tauiliili, 1985; Kramer, 1994), which gives *matai* title names their relational place on the hierarchy of status at various levels of family, village, district and the nation as a whole. These *matai* titles constitute people's identities and presuppose belonging to specific land and a share of resources. So a Samoan name (*matai* title) is not an abstract idea or a cognitive label, but has real physical and consequential results that actually places a body or person at a specific place, and not another, hence the choice for social construction and discourse analysis as an appropriate methodology to analyze the embodiment of God and constituting socio-religious values.

Discourse Analysis is not without its weaknesses as a theoretical tool. Both Burr (2003) and Willig (2001) have echoed some of these weaknesses: With regard to discursive psychology, there is the absence of a concern with subjectivity, self awareness, thought, intentions and a sense of life history. There is also the question of emotional investment, and why individuals work hard to claim or resist certain attributions in their accounts, and why it is impossible for some to say 'I love you' or 'I'm sorry.' Nevertheless, Discourse Analysis is accommodated as the primary method of analysis because the actual *matai* title for example, denotes the physical, social and spiritual place of the title holders and their families within the relational space. When a name (*matai* title), which is a linguistic label, represents the totality of existence in the Samoan religio-cultural lifeways, then from a social constructionist point of view, the Samoan religio-cultural *fa'asamoa* is socially constructed.

Shore has noted that for Samoans, there are "no terms corresponding to the English 'personality,' 'self' or 'character' and there is also an absence of the corresponding assumptions about the relation of person to social action. A clue to the Samoan notion of person is found in the popular Samoan saying *teu le va* (take care of the relationship)" (Shore, 1982, p. 136). They characterize themselves in terms of their *itu* (sides) or *pito* (parts), descent connections, and these connections are referred to as their *tinu* (body). In other words, the Samoan self is not absent but is constituted in relationships and expressed in terms of social relations and embedded within the richness of language and discourse, hence Social Construction is an appropriate method for analyzing meaning-making of the body (Austin, 1962).

In this chapter, I have described discourse and its discursive effects in terms of social construction, and how to analyze discourse as discursive practices that constructs the world and people as subjects. The FDA is a wide post-structuralist perspective that is inclusive of deconstructionism, critical discourse analysis and arguably, discursive psychology. These are the theoretical approaches selected as appropriate for this study to analyze how people are socially constructed as subjects of God, and how they construct identity and selfhood and embody such constructions in their daily lives and practices. These approaches will determine what discourse(s) are dominant in the creation of subject positions and what power relations are at play within these discourses and practices. There are a variety of specific perspective and style of analysis to each of the selected approaches, but I have generally highlighted their main strategies deemed suitable to the research question, which is how God and the concepts of God are constructed and embodied on the Samoan male body.

In terms of a theoretical basis for methodology, I have taken the view of Wood and Kroger: “With respect to methodology, we do not propose a simple combination of approaches, but a strategy of drawing upon resources— notions, techniques, devices, and strategies from different perspectives as appropriate to the specific project at hand” (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 25). With the theoretical basis of research described I shall now move onto how the study was undertaken.

CHAPTER FOUR

UNDERTAKING THE STUDY

The theoretical and philosophical issues concerning methodology have been discussed in the previous two chapters, but in this chapter the practical side of data and resource gathering, transcription, and analysis is described.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

This project was officially registered on 01/04/2006 with four goals to be achieved by the end of the provisional year: (1) ethics approval for the oral interviews, (2) a completed first draft of the literature review, (3) a draft of the methodological section, and (4) a presentation of the completed proposal to a School of Theology postgraduate seminar. The Human Subjects Ethics application was approved in February 2007 and the completed proposal was presented to a School of Theology seminar in March 2007. The study was approved in April 2007 after satisfactory completion of the provisional year goals.

DATA COLLECTION

This work strives to understand people's experiences of their bodies, so it has been undertaken using qualitative research methods and as such, it is interested in the "meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things" (Berg, 2004)—in this case, the Samoan male body. Data collection therefore, is not distinct from theoretical orientations. Rather, data are intricately associated with the motivation for choosing a given subject, the conduct of the study, and ultimately the analysis. The meanings that people attach to their experience and the objects and events that make up these experiences are not accidental or unconnected. Both the experiences and the events surrounding them are essential to the construction of meanings. To understand behaviour, one must first understand the definitions, the meanings, and the processes by which they have been created. Human behaviour does not occur on the basis of predetermined lockstep

responses to preset events or situations. Rather, human behaviour is an ongoing and negotiated interpretation of objects, events, and situations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

My methodology is not a cultural one that is commonly used in research on Samoan culture because I wanted to analyze how culture is actually constituted and maintained through discourses, especially church discourses from which people make meaning in their lives in relation to God. I wanted to analyze these discursive constructions as actual practices and not just words and sounds because this is where people are influenced in their theological constructions of their holistic relationships to God and the other—the ‘other’ being an inclusive term here that includes family, community, strangers, and the spiritual world of past ancestors and nature.

The bulk of the data is from personal interviews since the aim was to find out how people construct identity and an embodied self as a person of God. Published materials, especially from early missionary writings, are a good source for exploring how the Christian God and the Samoan *Atua* (God) were constructed, compared, and/or contrasted. Church sermons are a taste of how people and God are discursively constructed from the standpoint of theologians and church officials. The two videos used are (one) a recording of a ritual performance, and (two) a collection of interviews concerning particular pressing issues in modern Samoa.

Personal Interview

THE RESPONDENTS

Interviewees consisted of seven male *matai*, three of whom were over 55 years of age and 4 of whom were over 65; 4 lived in New Zealand, 2 lived in the USA, and one in Samoa. Two women were selected, both over the age of 65; one was married to a *matai*, the other was the wife of a retired church minister. Two *fa’afafine* were selected, both 40 years young and holding *matai* titles; one lived and worked in Samoa, the other lived and worked in Fiji. Of the two untitled young men (*taulele’a*), one was a 45-year-young married man who lives in Samoa caring for his aged parents, the other a 38-year-young man who lives in New Zealand. Two church ministers were also included, both of whom live in Samoa; one is a current minister, the other is retired. Altogether, fifteen respondents agreed to be interviewed; this number is considered to generate more than enough data for the study. “Ten interviews might

provide as much valid information as several hundred responses to a structured opinion poll...small samples or a few interviews are generally quite adequate for investigating an interesting and practically important range of phenomena” (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 161).

Sadly, three participants passed away during the course of writing but their stories survive in this study.

SELECTION PROCESS

Respondents were contacted through my involvement with the church, although they did not all attend one particular church denomination, and all identified themselves with a Christian church. The two church ministers were from the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS), better known as Ekalesia Fa’apopotoga Kerisiano i Samoa (EFKS), which comprise a total of seven EFKS respondents. Three were from the Catholic Church, one from the Samoan Assembly of God, one from the Bahai faith, and three were Methodists.

This group is not perceived to be representative of Samoan churches or the population as a whole, although they arguably fit that category. They were selected as professionals in their own field and were considered to possess a wealth of experience in cultural and religious matters. For instance, two were university lecturers; one was a principal for a highly regarded Samoan Theological College (Malua) for fifteen years and was the chairman for the EFKS for many years, one has published numerous articles on Samoa and is the current Samoan Head of State (Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese), one is the current president of the Samoan Fa’afafine Association and the Secretary for Samoan Women’s Affairs, and others hold very respectable jobs and *matai* titles. Two people who were approached declined to participate and one *fa’afafine* who wanted to participate pulled out before the interview due to the disapproval of that person’s partner.

CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION

In Samoan lifeways, an older or more senior person is considered to be more knowledgeable and wiser than a younger one, simply by having more life experiences. For instance, the *matai* titles Tuato and Tuitolova’a in Sala’ilua are known formally in ceremonial address as

Igoa Matua—senior name. “This reference to seniority or being old contrasts the status between someone who is *matua* against one who is *la’ititi* (young), and all the presumed qualities attached to it—inexperience, do not know much, should listen (to the *matua*) instead of talking” (Shore, 1982, p. 9). Of the fifteen interviewees, only four were younger than the interviewer and three of them held senior positions in their respective vocations, so in terms of age, market-value job status or power differential, ninety-three percent of the respondents were not threatened or intimidated by the humble and relatively younger, inexperienced student interviewer. Respondents were selected from people considered to be deeply immersed in the socio-religious Samoan culture.

Senior *matai* and church minister respondents are also perceived as keepers of traditions and interpreters of biblical theology respectively, and thus very knowledgeable on the issues of Samoan identity, selfhood and Godly matters. A Samoan person takes up different roles at various life stages, so that older participants would have more experience and knowledge about self and identity construction, and this is the knowledge and experience I wanted to investigate. More young men in the 25-30 year age group were contacted, but once interviewing started, I realized that this age group was more susceptible to saying what they thought I wanted to hear (Tofaeono, 2000) rather than giving their honest opinion; only one respondent could possibly fit this criterion, but was given the benefit of the doubt. All Samoans come from particular families with a particular *fa’asinomaga* and have a Samoan religio-cultural identity (Anae, 1998; Shore, 1982). In that sense, any such Samoan would have been an ideal participant in this research.

THE PARTICIPANTS’ CONSENT, ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The initial contact with all participants was a face-to-face encounter that I initiated; this is more culturally appropriate and preferred rather than a telephone call. In this first meeting I introduced myself and then verbally explained my research and intention, and the prospective respondent was invited to ask questions. After this initial meeting the respondent was given an Information Sheet to read in his/her own time. During the second meeting, the respondents were required to give their consent or to decline. If agreed, a Consent Form was signed, together with the provision of a pseudonym by the respondent, and other details such as age, name and/or *matai* title, occupation and contact information were recorded. Four participants read the Information Sheet, signed the Consent Form and agreed to be interviewed on the

spot in the very first meeting, and I obliged. With respect to their age, educational background and wealth of cultural and theological knowledge, they knew their material well and required only a few minutes to reflect on the topic and research questions before they started talking.

Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the research up until March 2008, at which time writing was planned to start. They were assured of the anonymity of their identity in the study. Two respondents could easily be identified due to their prominent statuses in the Samoan political and religious society; another two specifically wanted to use their real names instead of a pseudonym. Apart from these four, pseudonyms are used for all other participants in the transcriptions and in all subsequent writings and discussions with my supervisors.

At the request of one participant, the interview was conducted at my home with only him and me present; all other interviews were conducted at the respondents' homes. All interview data were transcribed and translated by me so that no one else had access to any of these materials, and the interview tapes were locked away in a secure place. All of this information has been clearly explained to participants.

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

The interviews were conducted over eight and a half months, from December 2007 to mid-August 2008. Nine interviews were conducted in Samoa and six in Auckland. Interviews were held at sites decided by the participants, which usually were their residential homes, except for the two conducted at my home in Auckland at the respondents' request. Participants were given a choice to speak in a language they were most comfortable with. Six participants spoke entirely in Samoan, the other nine spoke in a mixture of English and Samoan. Each interview lasted between two and three hours, and was held over a coffee to create an informal atmosphere and to help put respondents feel at ease for a free and open conversation. Before the actual interview, biographical data such as age, occupation, and family relations were gathered and recorded; this often led the conversation to other topics, such as people or topics that both the respondent and I were familiar with and it set the tone for a free-flowing conversation.

After the first interview, I proceeded to transcribe and translate the data from Samoan to English, and I realized that my probing during the interview took the conversation in an entirely different direction from what the respondent was talking about. I thought I was imposing what I thought was more important over against that of the respondent, so I refrained from intervening, but instead made a small note of my questions to be asked at the end. This allowed the respondent to continue on his or her line of thought, while my probing was not lost.

Since an Information Sheet and a Guide Topics for Interview sheet were given to participants before the interview, they had a fair idea of the general topics to be discussed. These topics were not in the form of a questionnaire but only a guide, unstructured and open-ended (Appendix A), designed to enable the display of variability, with the understanding that any view or opinion expressed about issues being discussed is only one of the many possible versions of understanding that issue (Wood & Kroger, 2000). The question guide conformed to that explained by Terkel: “There were questions, of course. But they were casual in nature...the kind you would ask while having a drink with someone; the kind he would ask you....In short, it was a conversation. In time, the sluice gates of dammed up hurts and dreams were open” (Terkel, 1972, p. xxv). Respondents were asked to discuss any topic they wanted in no particular order, but I made sure that most, if not all of the topics were discussed.

Discourse analysis interviewing encourages participants to speak fully, which means encouraging them to display the variability which is a major feature of discourse. Despite minimal intervention on my part, an ‘active’ interview was pursued in which interviewer and interviewee were viewed as equal partners in constructing meaning and the interviewer was deeply and unavoidably implicated in creating meanings that ostensibly resided within the respondents (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004). “The leading question should not be whether or not interview procedures contaminate data, but how the interview generates useful information about the phenomena of interest” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004, p. 157).

Written material sources

At least 700 publications were read during the course of this study, including books, articles, newspapers, poems, and conference papers, some of which were not yet published. Not all of these materials were analyzed but in some way they all were useful in shaping my thinking process and this work. Newspaper articles were especially useful in that they raised current issues in socio-religious discourse.

MYTHS AND LEGENDS

The missionary-published writings of early-nineteenth-century Samoa (e.g. Fraser, 1892, 1896, 1897; Turner, 1884, 1984) provide much of the recorded mythological stories. These stories are still very meaningful in the current socio-religious lives of Samoans and are a good source of how missionaries constructed Samoans, Samoan *Atua*(s) (God), and their socio-religio beliefs in *Atua*. These myths and legends are invoked in the *alaga'upu* (proverbial saying), which is part of everyday language use, both in formal and informal settings. Much of the *alaga'upu* are born out of these mythological and legendary events of the distant past, and linguistically, are a rich source of material or building blocks (Gee, 1999) that socially construct people, *Atua*, and/or the Samoan world.

In traditional communities of the past, stories played a central role in the lives of the people. It was through story that the timeless elements of life were transmitted...Traditional stories also followed a timeless and universal pattern. This pattern can be represented as birth, death, rebirth; separation, initiation, return, or simply, beginning, middle, resolution. The basic pattern of conflict followed by resolution, or crisis followed by victory, is a way that stories continually remind us that difficulties can be overcome. Today, the stories we are told of our lives are also guided by the same pattern and enduring elements....The events of our lives seem to be made up of beginnings, conflicts and resolutions with many repetitions of this pattern (Atkinson, 1998, p, 2-3).

Other Resources

In addition to personal interviews, three church sermons, all by EFKS ministers in New Zealand, were selected to explore how the body is constructed in theological discourse. These sermons were recorded during religious services; ministers who delivered them were consulted beforehand but I did not reveal which sermon was to be recorded, although that was done afterward with their respective blessing and consent. When participants were asked what part of a worship service is most important for them, the consensus was the sermon; it is the message that they look forward to every Sunday. These messages or sermons are considered to be the Word of God, and these construct God and the worshipper in relation to God and the world, so are very important for this study.

Two DVD audio-visual recordings were obtained; both are sold to the public in Samoa and in Samoan shops in New Zealand. One is the performance of a ritual called *Afitunu*; the other was put together by a group of Samoan journalists ("Tatu'u le Paogo ae fa'asao le Laga'ali," 2010) after the tsunami that affected Samoa in 2009. *Afitunu* is used due to its relevance to the discourse of pre-Christian Samoan body; the other is a discussion of current issues and ancient beliefs in the afterlife and the perplexity concerning the concept of *aitu* (spirits). *Aitu* and the pre-Christian spiritual world of Samoans have been constructed in a rather demonized way by early missionaries and the term is still puzzling for many Samoans. This video updates the debate between Christianity and the ancient Samoan religious beliefs that co-exist today, almost two hundred years after the missionaries arrived.

Afitunu is performed by the village of Salelesu, usually as a funeral rite or for a member of the Samoan *aiga tupu* (royal families). This video is a product of the Tiapapata Art Centre in Samoa and it captures the performance of a pre-Christian ritual which tells the story of the sexual organs and their unique place in pre-Christian beliefs about their function and the relation between human and *Atua* (God). This one of a very few ancient rituals that have survived the onslaught of Christianity; it is utilized here to trace the 'genealogical' construction of how the actual physical body was treated, valued, and socially constructed in the pre-European era compared to the present age.

The other ritual, *tatau* or tattooing, is one from which I drew the name this thesis. Once a young male is tattooed, he is then called a *soga'imiti*. It is appropriate to explain this ritual

because it provides the foundational and cultural base upon which the male body can be culturally meaningful. If anything can highlight what a Samoan male body looks like, or differentiate it from any other body in the world, it is the wearing of the *tatau*—that is, becoming a *soga’imiti*. *Afitunu* and the *tatau* (tattooing) are incorporated because they bespeak the Samoan male body.

Transcription and Analysis

Most of the original data was in the Samoan language and this was entered into the NVivo 8 software available from Auckland University, to assist the coding and arrangement of the material into headings and sub-headings. Samoan data was used throughout the coding and re-coding process to preserve the originality of data up to the point of writing, when the data was presented side-by-side with my translation. It is arguable that my translation is in itself a construction of the original text, hence the decision to provide the original Samoan text with the translation, which I have endeavored to make as close as I could to the meaning that I believe is intended in the Samoan text. A key to the transcription is provided in Appendix B.

Before entering a manuscript into NVivo, I had to rearrange the whole text into the shape at it appears in the final writing alongside the translation. The material was rearranged into a line numbering format to assist the analytical writing so that I could refer to something in a particular line; this was a long and tedious process, but undertaken for easier reading of the final work without compromising the original text. NVivo saved much time and work as it enables easier cutting and pasting of data into general larger nodes or headings such as people, Gods and spirits, and culture. These were then coded into tree nodes or smaller sub-headings such as *matai* (chief), non-*matai*, ministers, or parents. The software made it possible to see whether a certain segment of a transcript has already been coded, and under what sub-heading, and I was able to make a judgment where a text should fit.

With the presumption that the Samoan body and self are both relational (Tamasese, Peteru, & Waldegrave, 1997) and socio-religious (Anae, 1998; Meleisea, 1987a; A. Refiti, 2010; Tagaloa, 2011; Tofaeono, 2000; Tui Atua, 1994), I identified the following themes from the data:

- 1) The construction of the Samoan self and identity
- 2) The embodied socio-religious values
- 3) The construction of the Samoan male body
- 4) The construction of the will of God
- 5) The construction of the person as a subject of God

The interview was geared toward exploring these themes from the perspective of the participants.

The data arranged under sub-headings were cut from within the NVivo programme and pasted in Word under the appropriate sub-heading and printed off for further reading. These texts were then further reduced to the required length, then pasted into the suitable place in the write-up, and this is where they were then translated into English alongside the Samoan text. This has taken up much space, but the integrity of the translation was not to be compromised and had to be visible. From a social constructionist viewpoint, my translation can be taken as one of many possible meanings; however, as a Samoan, I believe I have arrived at the same meaning intended in the participants' original account.

Conclusion

This chapter describes the audit trail and the process of data collection, transcription, and analysis, based on the theoretical underpinnings of the previous chapter. It was not possible to analyze every bit of detail of the available data but all the materials gathered were utilized in some way.

CHAPTER FIVE

O LE TUA'ELE'ELE O LE TINO: THE ORIGIN OF THE BODY

This chapter traces the Samoan pre-Christian understanding of the notion of Atua, which is the translation for God, and the construction by missionaries of their understanding of Samoan God and gods. The missionary writings are the earliest recorded resources of Samoan religious practices, and mostly have been repeated uncritically by many writers on Samoa. I shall refer to Tagaloa, the Samoan creator/progenitor also known as Tagaloalagi or Tagaloa-fa'atutupu-nu'u as *Atua* or God with a capital *G*, and Tagaloa's manifestations as *atua* or god(s) with a lower case *g*.

The Samoan worldview is that God is the *Tuā'ele'ele* (origin) of the body; *tuā'ele'ele* is derived from the two terms *tua* and *'ele'ele* where *tua* means back, the back, background, to depend upon or continuous support. *'Ele'ele* is blood, soil, ground, earth or land; *tuā'ele'ele* is a discursive construct in the sense that a tree needs earth and soil for stability, security, and as the origin and continuous supply of nutrients for growth and sustenance of life. In the same manner *Atua* (God) is the *tuā'ele'ele* or living origin and sustenance of the body and life; it bespeaks the Samoan worldview of the direct blood connection between human, the cosmos and their *tuā'ele'ele* or creator/progenitor Tagaloa. In this understanding, an individual is a relational body connected to the environment, to other people, to the spiritual world of ancestors and to their *Atua* Tagaloa.

ATUA: GOD

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines God as: “1 (in Christianity and other monotheistic religions) the creator and ruler of the universe; the supreme being. 2 (god) a superhuman being or spirit worshipped as having power over nature or human fortunes; a deity. An image of a god; an idol. 3 a greatly admired or influential person” (Soanes & Stevenson, 2008). This wide definition accepts that anything and anybody to be a God; a God can be a supreme being, a spirit, an idol or a person and the term can be used as a common noun. This is the fundamental essence of the Samoan worldview, that the monotheistic Tagaloa is the

creator/progenitor of human and the cosmos, a view greatly distorted by the introduction of the generalizing Western concept of polytheism. Samoans may have worshipped many *atua*, but again their concept of *atua* is only approximated in their English translations which have largely eschewed the Samoan meaning of these beliefs and practices.

Monotheism in Christianity

Christianity is a monotheistic belief in one God, who is described in Trinity of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This God in the New Testament (NT) is known as God through Jesus Christ and that:

One does not find in the NT the Trinitarian paradox of the coexistence of the Father, Son, and Spirit within a divine unity, the mystery of the three in one, yet one does find there the data that serve as the foundation of this later dogmatic formulation (Bassler, 1992).

Scullion also points out that

Polytheism and forms of idolatry became virtually official both in the North (2 Kgs 17:7-18) and in the South (2 Kgs 18:4—the bronze serpent; 2 Kgs 21:1-66—Manasseh). God who had brought the people out of Egypt, had been pushed aside. The idols of the majority had, on the popular level, prevailed over the one true God of the minority [and] It is Deutero-Isaiah who expresses most clearly that Israel's God is one and unique, in short, monotheism in the strict sense (Scullion, 1992).

Biblical evidence points to a number of gods that were worshipped in the Old Testament (OT) but all these gods became mere idols or false gods compared to Yahweh the Lord of Hosts (Isaiah 44: 6-17). In the Hellenistic world within which Christianity was born, a multitude of Greek gods such as Zeus, Themis, Apollo and Athene etc. were worshipped (Freyne, 1980), but the point to note from Scullion's view of polytheism is that "God...had been pushed side" to be replaced by "idols." In such idol worship, the displaced God does not exist. This is the point of difference with the Samoan view of God and gods. From the Samoan perspective, there is also one creator God Tagaloa, who is given the name *Atua*

(translated into English as God), but the same name *atua* is used for *Atua* Tagaloa's manifestations on earth among humans. Tagaloa does not get pushed aside or displaced by the existence of Tagaloa's manifestations, also called *atua*, whom the Godhead Tagaloa created.

In this world of polytheism, the Christian belief in a monotheistic creator of the universe constructs all other gods as idols or false gods and positions them on the wrong side of a mutually exclusive arrangement of true or false, divine or human as typical of a 'Western' construction (Tcherkézoff, 2004, p. 110). The Christian context sees polytheism as a belief in many Gods, where the term God implies the *creator* and sustainer of the universe; this is blasphemous in Christianity and hence, polytheism is regarded as synonymous with idolatry, paganism and belief in false gods.

SAMOAN PRE-CHRISTIAN BELIEF IN ATUA AND ATUA

Samoan Creation Stories

The creation story partly reproduced in this work was originally published by the missionary John Fraser (Fraser, 1892). I have provided both the original Samoan and its English translation for easy referencing. The second popular creation story titled *O le Solo o le Va* (Fraser, 1897) will only be referred to. These stories have other versions (Herman, 1970; Holmes & Holmes, 1992; Kramer, 1994; Sauoaiga, 1991; Stair, 1896; Turner, 1984) with the same message of a monotheistic creator/progenitor *Atua*, who is the creator of their universe, and is their supreme ancestor to whom their genealogy can be traced. These varied versions are accepted by Samoans themselves, as reflected in the saying: *E tala lasi Samoa*—Samoa has many versions of every story. They were selected for their completeness and popularity to explicate how the notion of *Atua* and/or God was constructed both by missionaries and Samoans of the early nineteenth century.

Many contemporary Samoans, like their pre-Christian ancestors, do not consider their creation stories as myths in the sense of untrue stories, so I shall refer to them as creation stories instead of myths. Despite the many different versions of the Samoan creation stories, the underlying worldview is that the single creator/progenitor Tagaloa, also known as

Tagaloa-lagi or Tagaloa-fa'atpunu'u, created the world and people who are Tagaloa's direct descendants.

Aiono (2003) points out that two forms of cosmogony accounts exist in Samoan creation stories: the evolutionary or genealogical, and the creative. The creative type is where a superhuman figure creates the world and the universe and everything in it by word or deed, while the genealogical one is similar to something like, the sun and the moon begot the stars. Both the genealogical and the creative accounts can be found in literature and in oral traditional understanding, as seen in the opinion of two different writers: Tui Atua (personal interview) is adamant that the Samoan mythological *Atua* is “*ole Atua usu gafa e le o se Atua fau tagata*” (Samoan *Atua* is a progenitor, not a creator), but Aiono (2003) believes that the cosmogony account of Samoan creation is mainly of the creative type. In the oral traditions, it is the genealogical account that is recited and is referred to more often by *tulafale* (orators) in their oratory *lauga* (traditional speech). I will show that both the genealogical and the creative forms of cosmogony accounts are interwoven in the Samoan creation stories, and this is because the essence of these stories are not ‘how’ the people and their environment was created, but ‘who’ created them and ‘how’; that is, how the creator or progenitor *Atua* relates to the created and creation. In other words, the relationship or connectedness (*Va*) of *Atua* to creation, which includes the cosmos, nature and people, and the belief in people as direct descendants of *Atua*, is the paramount theme highlighted in these creation stories.

A CREATION STORY

- 1 The god Tagaloa dwelt in the Expanse;
- 2 he made all things;
- 3 he alone was [there]; not any sky,
- 4 not any country;
- 5 he only went to and fro in the Expanse;
- 6 there was also no sea, and no earth;
- 7 but, at the place where he stood there grew up a rock.
- 8 Tagaloafa'a-tutupu-nu'u was his name;
- 9 all things were about to be made, by him,
- 10 for all things were not yet made; the sky was not made nor anything else;
- 11 but there grew up a Rock on which he stood.

12 Then Tagaloa said to the Rock,
 13 ‘Be thou split up.’ Then was brought forth Papa-taoto;
 14 after that, Papa-sosolo; then Papa-lau-a'au; then Papa-'ano-'ano;
 15 then Papa-'ele; then Papa-tu;
 16 then Papa-'amu-'amu and his children. []
 20 Then the Earth was brought forth (that is the parent of all the people in the world),
 21 and the Sea was brought forth. []
 26 All the rocks in like manner called him blessed.
 27 Then Tagaloa turned to the right side, and the Fresh-water sprang up.
 28 Then Tagaloa spake again to the Rock, and the Sky was produced.
 29 He spake again to the Rock and Tui-te'e-lagi was brought forth;
 30 then came forth Ilu, ‘Immensity,’ and came Mamao, ‘Space,’ (that was a woman);
 31 then came Niua.
 32 Tagaloa spake again to the Rock; then Lua'o, a boy, came forth.
 33 Tagaloa spake again to the Rock, and Lua-vai, a girl, came forth.
 34 Tagaloa appointed these two to the Sā-tua-lagi.
 35 Then Tagaloa spoke again, and Aoa-lālā, a boy was born,
 36 and [next] Gao-gao-le-tai, a girl;
 37 then came Man;
 46 and it was called Fatu-ma-le-'Ele-'ele,
 47 as a couple, Fatu the man, and 'Ele-'ele, the woman.
 63 (The masoa and the teve were the first plants that grew, and other plants came
 afterwards).
 64 Then the sky remained up above, the sight reached it []

The Production of the Nine Heavens.

69 and this couple was ordained by Tagaloa to produce the ‘Eye of Sky,’ [the Sun].
 70 Again Immensity and Space brought forth Le-Lagi;
 71 that is the Second Heavens;
 72 for Tui-te'e-lagi went forth to prop it up and the sky became double;
 73 and Immensity and Space remained there, and they peopled the sky.
 74 Then again Lagi brought forth,
 75 and Tui-te'e-lagi went fourth and propped it up;

76 that was the Third Heavens; that was peopled by Immensity and Space.
 77 Then Lagi bore again; that was the Fourth Heavens.
 78 Tui-te'e-lagi went forth to prop it up;
 79 that heaven also was peopled by Ilu and Mamao.
 80 Then Lagi bore again; that was the Fifth Heavens.
 81 Then went forth Tui-te'e-lagi to prop it up;
 82 that heaven also was peopled by Ilu and Mamao.
 83 Lagi brought forth again; that was the Sixth Heavens.
 84 And Tui-te'e-lagi went and propped it up;
 85 that heaven was peopled by Ilu and Mamao
 86 Then Lagi bore again; that was the Seventh Heavens.
 87 And Tui-te 'e-lagi went forth and propped it up;
 88 that heaven was peopled by Ilu and Mamao.
 89 Then Lagi again brought forth; that was called the Eighth Heavens.
 90 Tui-te'e-lagi went to prop up that heaven;
 91 and that heaven was peopled by Ilu and Mamao.
 92 Then again Lagi brought forth; that was the Ninth Heavens;
 93 and it was propped up by Tui-te'e-lagi;
 94 and that heaven was peopled by Ilu and Mamao;
 95 Then ended the productiveness of Ilu and Mamao;
 96 it reached to the Ninth Heavens.

The Production of other Gods,

97 Then Tagaloa sat [still];
 98 he is well known as Tagaloa-fa'atutupu-nu'u;
 99 then he created Tagaloa-lē-fuli, []
 100 and Tagaloa-asiasinu'u,
 101 and Tagaloa-tolo-nu'u,
 102 and Tagaloa-sāváli,
 103 and Tuli also,
 104 and Logonoa.
 105 Then said Tagaloa, the creator, to Tagaloa-lē-fuli,
 106 'Come here; be thou chief in the heavens.'

107 Then Tagaloa, 'the immoveable,' was chief in the heavens.
 108 Then Tagaloa, the creator, said to Tagaloa-sāvāli, 'the messenger,'
 109 'Come here; be thou ambassador in all the heavens,
 110 beginning from the Eighth Heavens down to the First Heavens,
 111 to tell them all to gather together in the Ninth Heavens,
 112 where Tagaloa, the immoveable, is chief. []
 115 —'Let those two boys go down below to be chiefs over the offspring of Fatu and
 'Ele'ele.' []
 156 But to the end of the names of the two boys
 157 was attached the name of Tagaloa-lē-fuli who is king ('tupu') of the Ninth Heavens;
 158 hence the [Samoan] kings ('tupu') were named 'Tui o Manu'a-tele ma Samoa atoa.' []
 171 these groups were made to spring up;
 172 then he went off to cause the group of Fiji to grow up;
 173 but the space between seemed so far off that he could not walk it;
 174 then he stood there and turned his face to the Sky,
 175 [praying] to Tagaloa, the creator, and Tagaloa, the immoveable; Tagaloa-sāvali;
 176 Tagaloa looked down to Tagaloa, the messenger;
 177 and he made the Tongan group spring up; then that land sprang up.
 178 Then he turns his face to this Manu'a;
 179 and looks up to the heavens, for he is unable to move about; []
 182 Then Tagaloa, the messenger, went back to the heavens, and said
 183 —'We have (now) got countries, the Eastern group and the Fiji group,
 184 and the Tongan group, and Savai'i.'
 185 Then, as all these lands were grown up,
 186 Tagaloa, the creator, went down in a black cloud to look at the countries,
 187 and he delighted in them; and he said, 'It is good;' []
 195 These two people came from the heavens from among the children of Tagaloa. []
 203 these two were the people of Tagaloa. []
 216 then he stood and faced the sky, as if he were making a prayer; then []
 223 And Tagaloa, the creator, said, 'Come now, go you with the Peopling-vine;
 224 take it and place it outside in the sun;
 225 leave it there to bring forth;
 226 when you see it has brought forth, tell me.'

227 Then he took it and placed it in Salēaau-mua, a council-ground,
 228 which is now called the Malae-of-the-sun.
 229 Then Tagaloa, the messenger, was walking to and fro;
 230 and he visited the place where the Fua was;
 231 he went there and it had brought forth.
 232 Then he went back again to tell Tagaloa, the creator,
 233 that the Fua had brought forth.
 234 Then Tagaloa, the creator, first went down; [commanded]
 235 he went to it; he looked, and it had brought forth something like worms;
 236 wonderful was the multitude of worms;
 237 then Tagaloa, the creator, shredded them into strips,
 238 and fashioned them into members, so that the head, and the face,
 239 and the hands, and the legs were distinguishable;
 240 the body was now complete, like a man's body;
 241 he gave them heart and spirit;
 242 four persons grew up; so this land was peopled;
 243 there grew up Tele and Upólu, which are the children of the Fua;
 244 Tutu and Ila, that is a pair; these are the children of Fua;
 245 four persons,
 246 Tele and Upólu, Tutu and Ila. Tele and Upólu were placed to people the land
 of Upolu-tele;
 247 but Tutu and Ila, they two were to people the land now called Tutuila.
 248 Fua, the son of Tagaloa, that came down from heaven, had two names,
 249 Fua-tagata and Fua-sā; he peopled the two flat lands.
 250 Then Tagaloa gave his parting command thus;
 251 'Always show respect to Manu'a;
 252 if any one does not, he will be overtaken by calamity;
 253 but let each one do as he likes with his own lands.'
 254 [Here] the story of the creation of Sāmoa finishes with this parting command,
 255 which was given at Malae-lā (Fraser, 1892).

Tagaloa the Supreme Creator/Progenitor

Fraser claims that the name Tagaloa was originally Tanga-la, but later lengthened to Tagaloa (Fraser, 1892, p. 167). This is an incorrect analysis since *la* means sun and Tanga-la makes no sense. The name Tagaloa is made of two words *taga* (bag, sack or pocket), and *loa* which means long, long time since, ancient, or old without showing signs of age or growth (Pratt, 1911 [1862]). The name is symbolic of the limited and restricted human understanding of the full essence of the creator/progenitor, the full discernment of which is *confined* only within the realm (bag) of the creator Tagaloa alone who is unbounded by human comprehension and conception. This creator is ancient, “unlimited” (Tcherkézoff, 2004, p. 116) and immeasurable (long) by the mortal human. The name Tagaloa therefore is a discursive construction of human finitude in terms of understanding and knowledge of *Atua* with respect to the *va* (relationship) between human and *Atua*.

Tagaloa is assigned the title *Atua* (God, line 1) whereas Fraser’s so called ‘other gods’ (lines 97-104) are not given the same title; they are only given different names (Tagaloa-lē-fuli, Tagaloa-asiasi-nu’u, Tagaloa-tolo-nu’u, Tagaloa-sāvali etc.) with the prefix Tagaloa. This mirrors the cultural practice that when someone is selected to be the family *matai* (chief), he/she then takes up the family founder/ancestral name as a title, and prefixes it to their first name (Tcherkézoff, 2000)—e.g., Lē-fuli becomes Tagaloa-lē-fuli as the new title and identity. The new *matai* is a descendant of the ancestor/founder in the same manner that Fraser’s ‘other gods’ are descendants of Tagaloa; the prefix Tagaloa presupposes their *atua* or divine aspects while the suffixes (Asiasi-nu’u, Tolo-nu’u or Sāvali) emphasizes their roles and responsibilities to the community.

Tagaloa-le-fuli (line 99) can be understood from the viewpoint of Samoan social relations: *le fuli* is immovable (*le* ‘not,’ *fuli*, to turn over, to capsize). Again the Tagaloa and Le-fuli relationship mirrors that of the two kinds of *matai*; the sacred *ali’i* and the secular *tūlāfale* where the *tūlāfale* is the orator or speaker for the *ali’i*. While “the *tūlāfale* must work hard to acquire a knowledge of Samoan lore...the *ali’i*, sitting back and looking dignified, receives the tokens and gestures of respect” (Gilson, 1970, p. 24). Tagaloa-le-fuli was asked by Tagaloa-fa’atutupu-nu’u to come up and be the *ali’i* (chief) and looks dignified in heaven (line 106). Tagaloa-le-fuli here plays the part of *ali’i* while Tagaloa-sāvali that of the *tūlāfale* in a hierarchical order where in Samoa “social differentiation is always conceptualized as the

local replication of divine/human relationship” (Tcherkézoff, 2004, p. 120). *Sāvali* in Tagaloa-sāvali (line 102) means both messenger and message and this is a feature of Samoan pre-Christian society where each village has a particular messenger with a particular name who is sent out with messages to neighbouring villages. These messengers are highly respected and are not assaulted while delivering or bringing back new messages, even in times of war. The messenger reflects the function of the secular *tūlāfale* (orator) in relation to the sacred *ali’i* where the *tūlāfale*’s “responsibility is to do for or on behalf of the *ali’i* things which the *ali’i* may not do but which, none the less, need to be done” (Gilson, 1970, p. 24). Tagaloa-sāvali looks up to the sky or heaven (lines 174, 179, 216) in a symbolic act of prayer or confirmation from the one and only creator *Atua* Tagaloa-fa’atutupu-nu’u. Le-fuli, Tolo-nu’u and Sāvali were created by Tagaloa and are embodiments or manifestations of *Atua* Tagaloa by virtue of name, roles and responsibilities. In the same manner Samoan *matai* are *atua* by virtue of being descendants of the ancestor/founder, whose name or title is conferred upon the new incumbent, which can be traced genealogically to the creator *Atua* Tagaloa.

Tchekezoff (2000, 2004, 2008) is the first to critically analyse the Samoan social and religious worldview from the time of the first Western and missionary contact, using an ethnohistorical methodology which involves a critical re-reading of the European and early missionary narratives, and looking at both the early and the contemporary ethnographic accounts for clarification and confirmation. Here I summarize his findings of the term *Atua*, a key term that is, more often than not, significantly misconstrued when translated as God.

Tcherkézoff (2004) observes that Western assumptions categorize people and God through mutually exclusive alternatives or the binary logic of ‘either/or’, as in man or beast; divine or human; civilized or savage; black or white; good or bad; from their ‘world’ or from ‘another world.’ Polynesians, on the other hand, see through the lens of integration and of the relationship between a whole and its different parts. He writes:

Western observers have difficulty understanding this. For them, this other reality must be analysed as a ‘religious’ or ‘political’ supplement added on to the individual....Our Western observers ask themselves: ‘human or divine?’ But this question was meaningless in pre-Christian Polynesia and often it still is meaningless. We talk about ‘descending’ from our ancestors, but, for us, the ancestor is like his descendant: he is,

was, an individual. But the Polynesian view was completely different: The Polynesians considered that the God [*Atua*] is to the chief (and to all men), and the ancestor is to his descendants (Tcherkézoff, 2004, p. 136).

The translation of *Atua* into God is problematic when the latter entails monotheism while the former represents a number of entities in the Samoan cosmogony. Early Europeans and missionaries were regarded by Polynesians as *atua* (god) entities, but as Tcherkézoff notes,

This translates, admittedly a little too rapidly, as: they took them for gods....It is our vocabulary ('god' versus 'man') that creates a false impression of discontinuity where there is in fact none at all, as well as a false impression of identity in the notion of 'god', since Polynesians did and do discriminate the invisible [A]*tua* and all its visible and partial bodies and images (2004, pp. 127-128).

In contrast to the Christian 'monotheistic creator,' the Samoan term *Atua* not only defines the monotheistic creator/progenitor Tagaloa, but the same term also applies to all of Tagaloa's manifestations in the spiritual, animate or inanimate form. This confusion arises when *Atua* is directly translated as God (Pratt, 1911 [1862]) when God as assumed in Christianity, means the one and only God, the creator of heaven and earth, but as Tcherkézoff explains, in Samoa, *atua* (god) is

every person or thing presenting a mysterious aspect and to which one attributes the productive power of *mana*—has no more to do with the Western-Christian notion of 'divine' than it has to do with the gods of India or South East Asia. But we still need to use the word 'god' for Lono, Kū, Tangaroa, and so on as there is not another more appropriate term (Tcherkézoff, 2004, p. 115).

The term *Atua* constitutes for Samoans a plurality of spiritual and human forms of deities and superiors; it constitutes not only a monotheistic belief in the supreme creator Tagaloa who created the universe as explicated in the creation stories, but *atua* also identifies all manifestations of Tagaloa which includes "local gods, ancestors, spirits like ghosts, sprites and goblins and so on" (Tcherkézoff, 2004, p. 112). This generic title *Atua* neither reduce

Tagaloa to the status of the creator's manifestations, who are also Tagaloa's descendants or children, nor promotes the manifestations to the status of the creator. "A God was an invisible whole and every visible manifestation of this God was a partial form of that whole. A chief was thus a partial form of that whole" (p. 110). Tchekézoff points out that *atua* or god was widely used to mean every person or thing presenting a mysterious aspect, and to which one attributes the productive power of *mana*, and that "*matai* (chiefs) can be called *o atua o lalo nei* (gods from here below), while God (previously the pre-Christian gods, now 'The Father,' *O le Tamā*) is 'the God' (*O le Atua*), with no other specification" (p. 126). Chiefs were divine manifestations or visible forms here below of the source of light-and-of-life situation in the sky or *lagi* (heaven) who is the creator Tagaloa. In *Pratt's grammar and dictionary of the Samoan language* (1911 [1862]), his entry for the word *usu* (which he defines as "to go to a fono" [council meeting]), his illustrative sentence is: "*Ua usu le fono, ua potopoto Atua*" can be translated as: "the council is taking place, the gods have gathered." It would have been a common part of the daily discourse in Pratt's time in Samoa in the mid 19th century to refer to a *matai* council as a gathering of *atua* (gods) as village "superiors" and law makers. That meaning has disappeared with the arrival of Christianity which proposed that there can be only one God. This new imposed knowledge did a number of things to the local Samoan worldview. The term *Atua*, from a linguistic viewpoint, identified both the creator *Atua* (Tagaloa) and Tagaloa's human manifestations (the *atua*); this is no accident since the Samoan perspective is that humans are direct descendants of Tagaloa as told in its creation stories.

Within one family or village, there can be at least ten or more people, or father-and-sons both with the same *matai* (chief) title name. *Matai* with the same title means they are from the same family and it bespeaks common ancestry and blood or familial relations. The same logic is constituted within the *Atua-atua* relation to denote blood ties between *Atua/atua*, the sacred/secular, creator/created, and the divine/human relationship; they are one and inseparable. The introduction of Christian monotheism separated and severed this god/human relationship situated on the body especially when the term *atua* was removed from the human since in Christianity, there is but one *Atua*—one God. Missionaries often referred to Samoans as people in "their heathen state" (e.g. Stair, 1897, p. 178). Since some Samoans were called *atua* by virtue of being regarded 'superiors' in their families and communities, the label *atua* had to be dislodged from the heathen human since the English terms God and heathenism, are

at opposite sides of the Western binary opposition and do not mix. From a social construction viewpoint, this is the opposite of the Foucauldian “inscription”—it is the snatching and skinning of the body from its divine bondage with its embodied *Atua*, and relegating it to the world, apart from God. Even the early explorers in the Pacific, like Captain Cook in Hawaii in 1778, were regarded as a partial manifestation of the local god Lono (Tcherkézoff, 2004).

Early Europeans in Polynesia were taken for superhuman beings—there is no doubt about it—but as envoys and representatives, in a rather new form, of the great creator (often the god in question was Tangaroa). The newness of the form was no obstacle: Tangaroa (literally ‘the Unlimited’) had unlimited powers of innovation. The newcomers were neither gods nor ancestors properly speaking, then, but a partial form of these higher powers (Tcherkézoff, 2004, p. 116).

The Creation Story states that there is only one creator God Tagaloa: “He alone was there” (line 3, p. 86), this fact gets lost when Tagaloa is constructed as one of the gods in phrases like: “primitive gods, the chief place is assigned to Tagaloa” (Stair, 1896, p. 34) which is a common missionary construction (Fraser, 1892; Gilson, 1970, p. 78; Stair, 1896; Turner, 1884, 1984).

O le Atua Usu Gafa—The Genealogical Atua

According to Gilson, “the Samoans are among the few Polynesian peoples who considered themselves to have originated in the islands where the Europeans found them. In their view, Tagaloa, the principal deity, created the islands, and from him were descended the founders of the most ancient human lineages, villages and political institutions” (1970, pp. 39-40). Meleisea adds that “*matai* titles are of two kinds; *ali'i* and *tulāfale*. *Ali'i* titles were those which traced their sacred origins through genealogies which begin with Tagaloa-a-lagi, the creator, and linked to major aristocratic lineages” (1987b, p. 8). Tcherkézoff explains that the Samoan concept *atua* or god can be understood through the hierarchical social system central to Samoan social order where

social differentiation is always conceptualized as the local replication of divine/human relationship. In this sense, every person who is superior to me is an ancestor-god to me, a source of light, a source of life. But this does not imply any kind of mysticism or theory about a superhuman substance found in the body of the chiefs....According to this way of thinking, the gods are ancestor-gods: the first ancestors are always ‘children’ of the gods and they acquire their powers; the chiefs personify these gods and ancestors, they are said to ‘incarnate’ them (Tcherkézoff, 2004, p. 120).

The Samoan social structure of the pre-Christian era as missionaries found it is of a hierarchical social structure which is maintained and recited through its *fa’alupega*—a constitutional summarized version of the *matai* (chief) titles. The *fa’alupega* is also a genealogical record of families who can trace their origin to God Tagaloa and Tagaloa’s first descendants (Holmes & Holmes, 1992; Kramer, 1994). Tcherkézoff accurately portrays this Samoan hierarchical logic as a system that explains the continuity between gods and men where every human being is part of the divine where “the relationship superior/inferior was always a question of status, within an inclusive hierarchy (holism), and not of stratification where difference arises from quantitative comparisons between individuals of their relative amounts of power, wealth and so on” (2004, p. 119).

In Tcherkézoff’s analysis, light is synonymous with the divine and chiefs and people of high status: “The dependant finds a way to participate in life (the world of ‘light’, Ao) solely through his relationship to the chief: he is then illuminated. For him, the chief is therefore a source of life. The same goes for the chief in relation to the gods” (Tcherkézoff, 2004, p. 120). God is the source of light/life for the chief, who is the source of light/life for dependants.

The creation story underlines the sexual aspect of humanity and the process of being born (*fanau*) because it is only through sexual intercourse that the genealogy of Tagaloa is continued in history. Note that after the creation of a boy and a girl (35-36), the next to be born is *tagata*—a person (line 37). *Tagata* is translated as man in the English version. The intended meaning constructed in the Samoan story is that a union of man and woman (as in boy and girl) results in the birth of a person and this is the genealogical creational story of Samoa. The newly born is a person, not a mere child, because that person already has a

fa'asinomaga that is constituted within his genealogy—a genealogy that has his *Atua* as the *tuā'ele'ele* or origin. The same meaning is intended in lines 46-47, where *Fatu* is the name of the husband and 'Ele'ele the woman. *Fatu* means heart or seed, and 'ele'ele is earth, soil, ground, or blood. These specific names convey the idea that the man is the seed or provider of the seed that is planted in the ground (woman) for it to grow. The importance of genealogy is again highlighted through metaphorical sexual relations between male and female, because this is how people define their identity and relationships to *Atua*, human, and all other forms of creation. This positions humans as direct descendants of their *Atua* Tagaloa-fa'a-tutupu-nu'u. The aspect of direct descent is constructed throughout the story via the use of terms like *fanau* (used 47 times, e.g., line 20) and by the direct references to people as descendants of Tagaloa from heaven (lines 195, 203, 248).

The Samoan holistic view of cosmology which underscores the continuum between human, the cosmos and *Atua* is intensified in its creation stories, where humans and the cosmos are descendants of the creator/progenitor Tagaloa through one genealogical descent line. This consanguinity (sharing the same blood) entails lineal ties to parents and a succession of grandparents and great-grandparents, and ties to cousins and other blood relatives who also descend from the same ancestors (Morgan, 1997). A common past and origin implies a common present of descent groups and kinship systems and this “underscores the indispensability of common ancestors as the social cement holding their descendants together, as is quite evident in family reunions as well as traditional ancestor worship” (Zerubavel, 2003, p. 63).

Figure 1: The continuum of the hierarchy between Atua and human

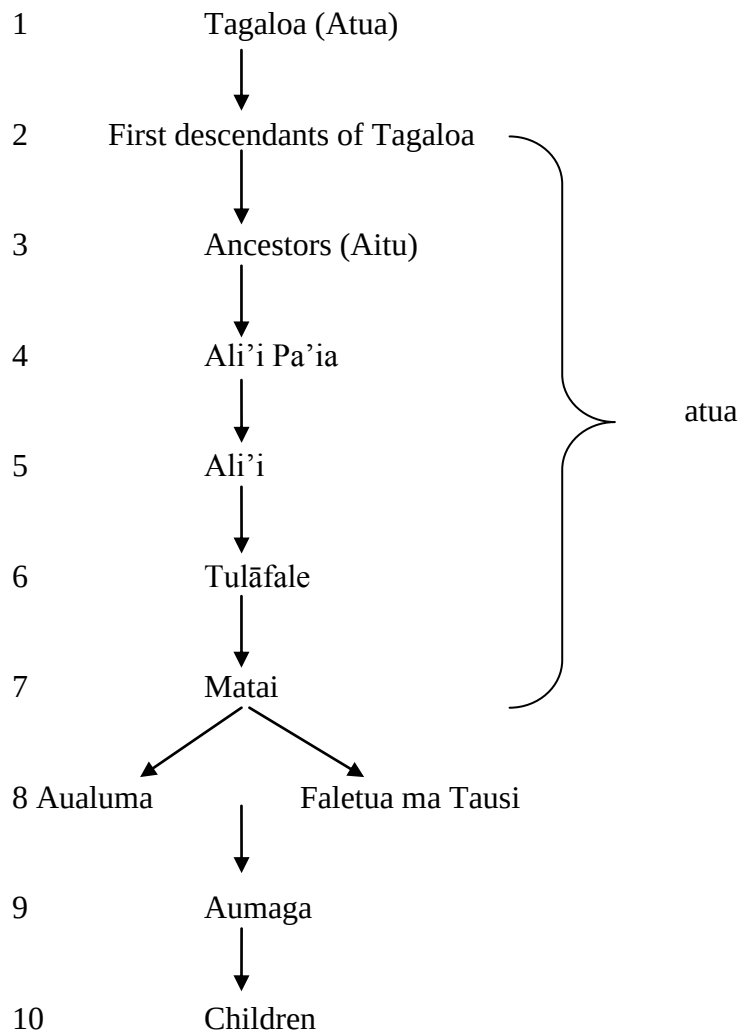


Figure 1 above is a representation of the hierarchical continuum from God to humanity where Tagaloa is at the summit. The term *atua* (levels 2-7) will be further described in this chapter to mean anyone who is a superior within a family or community, and the term applies to human leaders and disembodied spiritual ancestors. This hierarchy is reflected in the different levels of heaven, from the first heaven, to the second heaven, all the way to the ninth heaven as spelled out in the creation story (pp. 87-88, lines 69-96).

Both the creational and the genealogical accounts of creation are presented within the first creation story. The words “he made all things” (line 2), “Tagaloa said to the rock” (line 6), and “Tagaloa spoke again” (line 21) represent a creational cosmogonic account of creation where things come into existence at the word or command of the creator (see Brueggemann,

1982). On the other hand, the genealogical cosmogonic account of creation is also constructed through the utilization of personified terms. When Tagaloa commanded the rock to split (lines 12-13), the resulting offspring was Papata'oto. The English version translates the result of this command as “then was brought forth” (line 13), but the original Samoan version has the word *fanau* which means being born or to give birth (occurs 37 times), or children (nine times). Tagaloa's command (line 13) resulted in the *Papa* (rock) giving birth (*fanau*) to seven different kinds of *papa* (lines 13-16) and the same term (*fanau*) is used to denote the birth of the earth (line 20), the sea (line 21), the sky (line 28), etc., and this genealogical construction continues (lines 29-36) until the eventual birth of *tagata* (a human being or humankind, mistranslated as man, line 37). The command underlines the creational account of creation while personified terms like *fanau* and *tupu* (to grow, spring up; line 27) bespeak the genealogical. *Fanau* presupposes blood ties which connects human and the rest of creation (e.g., earth and sky) with the creator and progenitor, so the *Atua* (God) Tagaloa is not an other-worldly deity but a fundamental part of the holistic worldview where *Atua*, human and the universe are components of one continuum, where *Atua* Tagaloa is the creator/progenitor of all.

This genealogical connection of people to *Atua* as direct descendants is not a belief system of the pre-Christian era alone; it is encoded not only in discursive practices but also in actual belief of many contemporary Samoans. Although many do not recite and/or recall the two creation stories in detail as outlined in this work, they only refer to them in its shortest possible form: *na usu papa iā 'ele'ele fa'asolo mai ai se'ia maua le tagata*—rock married earth and begot a succession [of descendants] until human was born. One participant, Tupua, sum up the Samoan body genealogy:

1		<i>O le lotu a Samoa</i>
		The Samoan religion
2		<i>E fa'apenā e so'oso'o uma ā</i>
		Like everything, is inter-connected
3		<i>O le masina o le la</i>
		The moon [and] the sun
4		<i>Pei e fa'asolosolo mai ā lea</i>
		Its like then it progresses from there
5		<i>A e va'ai fo'i la i mea o cosmologies ma o latou fa'avasegaga</i>

		So if we look at the cosmologies and their arrangement
6		<i>O le mea na e āfuaafua mai ai ia</i>
		That is where the beginning of
7		<i>le lalolagi ma le ola lea tatou te i ai nei, a</i>
		The world and the life that we are in, eh
8		<i>Fa'asolosolo mai ai, ā</i>
		[it] progresses from there, eh
9		<i>O lona uiga la a e talanoa i le tino, a</i>
		That means that if you talk about the body, eh
10		<i>E te le mafai na e, na e fultua i le mea e āfua mai ai le tino, a</i>
		You cannot turn your back on that from where the body originates, eh.
12		<i>Lea la i le mau lea fa'asamoa, ia ta'atia ia le mau a isi tagata</i>
		So that in the Samoan worldview, well [lets] just leave other people's view
13		<i>O lona uiga e te va'ai i le gafa la</i>
		That means you have to look at the genealogy where
14		<i>Usu papa ia 'ele'ele usu</i>
		Rock marries earth []
36		<i>Ae toe fo'i mai ā i la'u tala lea le ā le tino</i>
		But coming back to what I said about the body
37		<i>Auā lona uiga o le fa'amatalaga lea o mea e</i>
		Because that means this is the explanation of where
38		<i>E āfua mai ai le tino</i>
		the body originates from
39		<i>E le mafai la na e tu'ua le tino i le</i>
		So you cannot give the body to
40		<i>Tagata a ia ma lona, po'o lona mātua</i>
		A person, eh, or his/her, parents
41		<i>Afai e te mana'o e talatala ia, i 'upu o'o o'o ia le tino</i>
		If you want to explain the body by [using] really profound words,
42		<i>e tataua na e fa'amatala le gafa</i>
		You must explain the genealogy as
43		<i>pei o le mau lea a Samoa</i>
		As this is the Samoan worldview.
44		<i>Fa'asolosolo atu sei o'o i</i>
		It progresses from there until [it] reaches
45		<i>E le gata i le amataga ae se'i o'o i lona iuga. Ahhhm</i>
		Not only the beginning but until it reaches the end [].
173		<i>O le mau a le, a Samoa latou ia</i>

		The Samoan view is,
174		<i>O le Atua, e le se Atua fau tagata o le Atua usu gafa</i>
		God is, not a God creator but a God progenitor.
175		<i>Telē la le eseesea o le atua a, a Epelu ma le atua o le mau a Samoa</i>
		There is a big difference between the Hebrew God and the God of the Samoan view
176		<i>Leaga o le Atua lea o Epelu e pei o se mea mata'utia foi lele o la e fa'amalumalu mai ia</i>
		Because the God of the Hebrews is like something fearful whose omnipresence lingers [above us].
177		<i>E fuā to'atama'i</i>
		[He] is jealous [and] angry.
178		<i>Ia ae o le Atua Samoa ia na usu gafa</i>
		But the Samoan God did pro-create [through genealogy].
179		<i>Ia na fa'asolo mai lea o lona gafa tau mai</i>
		Then [his] genealogy progresses from there to arrive to this.
180		<i>Lona uiga o a'u o le isi sulī o le Atua, e le 'ese a'u ma le Atua, a</i>
		That means I am another descendant of God, I am no different from God eh.
181		<i>O le molimau ola o o a'u o le atua, o o lo'u itusā, a</i>
		The living proof that I am god, are my sacred parts, eh.
182		<i>A e, mafai e le Atua ona 'ave le ola o le tagata</i>
		God can take the life of a human
183		<i>A e mafai e a'u na fau le, le, tagata i lo'u itusā, a</i>
		But I can create a human through my sacred parts.
184		<i>Lona uiga la i mo mea lea e fai atu nei</i>
		That means as in these things [rituals] being performed
185		<i>A o'o la i mea ia a fai mo mea lea</i>
		When it comes to these ritualistic performances,
186		<i>O la e fa'alalā atu</i>
		It is being claimed
187		<i>"Leai le Atua o a'u o le isi ou sulī, a"</i>
		"No God I am one of your descendants, eh."
188		<i>Pei o lea la e, lea la o a'u o le pine fa'amau o lenā sulī</i>
		So that is, so that I am proof of [being] such a descendant.

The word *lotu* (line 1) in the Samoan Bible is a translation from the English version (NRSV) of the word church (Gal.1:13) and religion (James 1:26, 27); religion is also translated as *tapua'iga* (Acts 26:5) and worship as *tapua'i* (Acts 24:11). Pratt (1911 [1862]) states that *lotu*

is “a Tongan word meaning prayer” and that it also means “to turn from heathenism”. Christianity came to Samoa via Tonga and *lotu* defined the new Christian Church institution with all its constitution and organization. The Samoan pre-Christian worship was not such a formal or organised religion or *lotu*, but a *tapua’iga*. The use of *lotu* in the text places the Samoan pre-Christian worship into the same context as the Christian church and authenticates it as equivalent to the Christian religion. This enables the respondent to describe this Samoan *lotu* in its pre-Christian context, although the essence of *tapua’iga* (worship)—where everything is interconnected, for example the sun, moon, human and *Atua* are interconnected (line 1), and people as blood descendants of *Atua* Tagaloa—disagrees with the creation account of Christianity where God is independent of creation.

The appeal to the sun and moon and the use of the English term ‘cosmologies’ (line 5) reflects an empiricist repertoire (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), where scientific experimental data are given both chronological and logical authority, where the empirical data are construed as coming first and forming the foundation of the theory about Samoan religion, which is placed within the scientific discourse of the cosmologies, to warrant it as legitimate and having a scientific concrete foundation. After establishing this foundation, the speaker then uses logical explanation to ‘connect’ (line 2) ‘the Samoan worldview’ (line 12) of religion to a natural ‘progression’ (line 8) of genealogy from the cosmologies to the existence of humans. The text endorses pre-Christian creation stories but framed within the Christian religion discourse.

Elsewhere in the interview, the speaker refers to everything created, even animals and inanimate objects, as possessing a ‘godly side.’ The personification (godly side) of the cosmologies and objects allows for a logical progression of genealogy from inanimate objects (e.g., rocks) to humans, and is made easier by the use of the conjunction ‘because’ (line 37) and the infinitive verbs ‘starting’, ‘beginning’ (line 6, 45), and conceived (line 10). This logical explanation of a seemingly natural human genealogy is amplified by the use of the explanatory phrase ‘that means’ (line 9, 13, 37, 180, 184); this creates a naturally simple explanation for this Samoan worldview of religion where the Samoan *Atua* is genealogically connected to the human within the discourse of biological descendants underlined by the sacred sexual parts (line 181), which is the ‘living proof’ (line 188) of this whole genealogy. The living proof of the empiricist data is the concrete evidence of the flesh and blood human

who is not just a descendant but a god himself (line 181). Considering the contemporary meaning of Atua as God, the Christian monotheistic God, this construction elevates the self from a position of a mere mortal to a godly being.

The elderly Samoan *matai* are considered keepers of old traditions and are often referred to as *o ē e fa'afaileleina upu o le atunu'u*—those who nurture the words of the nation. *Fa'afaileleina* is from the root *failele*—a mother who has recently given birth to a child and it underlines her nursing qualities, so the elders have the power not only to compose (give birth) but define meaning and value of aspects of the material world, identities, relationships and life itself (Gee, 1999). The origin of the Samoan body (line 10) can only be understood by knowing its genealogy (lines 13, 42), but even then, that genealogy cannot be deciphered without an understanding of *upu o'oo'o* (profound words, line 41). This is a challenge against the critics of elders (who hold the power as guardians of genealogy and who understand profound words), facilitated by the employment of the 'conditional clause': "if you want...you must" (lines 41-42), which sounds like 'if you dare'; this defense mechanism constructs critics of pre-Christian beliefs as people who lack the essential knowledge of genealogy and of profound/deep words required to understand the origin of the Samoan body. The construction of knowledge about the origin of human is that it would best be left to the elders who have this knowledge of genealogy; it could not be explained or understood by the common person, especially because that when you attempt it, you must tell it from the 'beginning to the end' (line 45). It is quite impossible to recite a genealogy that spans at least two thousand years (Tu'u'u, 2002, p. 9) from Tagaloa to people of the twenty-first century; the text only recites its most common diminished version: *usu papa ia 'ele'ele*—rock married earth' (line 14); this then aligns the argument of creation to the theme that God is not a creator god but a genealogical one (line 173-174). The speaker is removed from ownership of this un-Christian view by constructing it as a Samoan worldview (lines 12, 43, 173) instead of a personal one.

The text promotes the Samoan *Atua* 'the God of the Samoan' (line 175), by contrasting it with the God of Christianity, who is framed as 'God of the Hebrews.' The use of 'Hebrew' allows for the indirect attribution of negative aspects (e.g., 'jealousy' and 'anger') to the Christian God who is the same God of the Hebrews. This deflects accusation from the speaker of being unchristian, especially because the Samoan constitutional emblem is *E*

fa'avae i le Atua Samoa—Samoa is founded on God (the Christian God). The word *but* (Line 178) introduces and contrasts the Samoan *Atua*; it is a concession marker “which signals that the concessionary material is finished and that what comes next is in opposition to what has been said previously” (Wood & Kroger, 2000, p. 40). That is, the Samoan *Atua* is neither angry nor jealous, but one who pro-creates.

The genealogical connection is of paramount importance in Samoan socio-political life; these are formed through blood or marriage relations and through political alliances forged during pre-Christian wars, and are re-enacted in oratory by the recitation of *fa'alupega* (respective address) and various rituals. One participant Tupua, talks about two different ancient rituals performed by two different villages: one called Afitunu celebrates sexuality, the other imitates the life and behaviour of dogs.

815 Its equation. That life and death you know, are one
 816 The ultimate purpose of the rituals *i mea ia* [in these practices] is equation []
 825 The God from whom originates the life of a person
 826 [The same] God from whom originates the life of a dog
 827 But since a person
 828 has been given more gifts from God,
 829 His/her incessant duty, is to protect the life of a dog [and] the life of a tree [].
 833 The life of the tree and the life of the dog is a gift from God.
 834 So as to accomplish a balance of things []
 836 People should acknowledge their incessant responsibilities to their environment,
 837 And to know
 838 The boundary between him/her and these things []
 840 And to know
 841 The beginning of things. There is no difference between the one from whom a dog's
 life originates,
 842 And the one from whom his/her life originates [].
 845 It's a question of equation and affinity []
 858 What is emphasized, eh
 859 Are these messages []
 862 And that you should love and be respective of

863 If you have been given more endowments
 864 That means you likewise have many responsibilities
 865 To protect the life of your environment []
 867 Because all of you, [are] things created by God

This text summarizes the reason for the inclusion of the cosmos, the environment and other life forms in Samoan genealogy highlighted in the creation story discussed above. The essence of rituals is equation and affinity (lines 815-6; 845) where human life (line 825) is comparable to the life of a dog (line 826, 841), a tree (829), and the environment as they are all equally created by God (line 867). The specific use of these English terminologies (equation and affinity) in a conversation held in Samoan constructs the rituals as having a valid explanation within the scientific discourse of foreign knowledge. The term *Atua* is ambiguous since it applies both to pre-Christian deities and the Christian God; while the rituals presuppose the Samoan pre-Christian *Atua* (lines 825-6; 828; 867), the ambiguity of *Atua* strongly implies the Christian God, and shifts the responsibility from the speaker to listener, in deciding which *Atua* (Tagaloa or the Christian God) is implied. This construction bespeak the death of the author (Barthes, 1977) where meaning resides not with the author of the text but with the reader. This validates the ritual within the Christian discourse and enables the speaker to celebrate both his traditional theology and Christian heritage.

The equal (equation) status of human, animals and the environment is constructed through poetic language: “the God...the life of a person, God...the life of a dog” (lines 825-6); “the one...a dog’s life, the one...his/her life” (lines 841-2), and an extreme case formulation (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) “no difference” (line 841), where human, animals, and the environment are equally created by the same *Atua*. The objectification of human as one of the created *things* (line 867) brings human to an equal status as the rest of creation, but this equality is undermined when human identity is privileged (given *more* gifts, line 828, 863) by comparison to ‘the Other’ (Derrida, 1981) and establishes a hierarchical relationship with regard to other perceived identities (Butler, 1993), but more endowments requires more responsibilities on the part of human to provide care for creation and to achieve balance. The text describes a certain ritual that celebrates and imitates the life and actions of dogs, and this is used to authenticate the Samoan creation story where human, animals, the environment and universe, are all descendants of *Atua*.

It can be deduced from the above analysis that although people still hold onto their pre-Christian beliefs in *Atua*, there is subtle effort to conceal these beliefs within the framework of Christian discourse by using the common term *Atua* which refer both to Tagaloa and the Christian God. There text also reveals personal deflection of personal ownership of these beliefs by framing them as the general public view. This may have something to do with the strength of Christianity which now defines religious beliefs while the pre-Christian Tagaloa exist only in discourse.

Samoa Wars

A discussion of wars is necessary since this is one of the times that people consult their own respective ancestors, their *atua* and *aitu*, a practice that led to missionaries constructing a specific category of ‘war gods,’ one that did not exist in the Samoan cosmogony as such. The Samoan historical pre-Christian and post-Christian wars and conflicts have helped shape not only its socio-political landscape but also its religious and spiritual beliefs. A good example of this is constituted within the *fa’alupega*, which is a summarised version of the hierarchical political structure of local villages and Samoa as a whole with respect to *matai* titles. Many of the important honorific addresses in Samoa’s *fa’alupega* (Kramer, 1994) were titles that originated from some wars and political conflicts between villages, districts and or families. A case in point is the paramount *matai* title Malietoa which originated after a battle between Samoans and Tongans and in which many important titles were taken or obtained as battle trophies (Kramer, 1994, p. 13). “In war, a battle was as much between rival gods as between rival warriors. The more victories, the more land, the more followers, the more leaning slabs” (Luomala, 1986), so there was a vitally important practical need to go to war in defense of families, land and titles because the losing side would be viciously annihilated along with all their houses, properties, land, plantations and all subsistence crops and trees as means of survival; the men would be killed, women would be taken (Meleisea, 1987a, p. 25). George Brown (1908) who was a Samoan Wesleyan missionary between 1860 and 1874, witnessed three wars between his adopted village Satupa’itea Savai’i and the villages of Tufu and Palauli. After his attempts to stop the battle failed, the fight ensued:

The women scattered in groups on the verandas and the outhouses, offering up most earnest prayers to God. Poor creatures! They wept sore and we wept with them. Many did not want to fight but could not stand aloof and see their people killed. In the end about ten men from each side were killed and many more wounded....It was a ghastly sight to see men lying in that gloomy bush, headless and mutilated (G. Brown, 1908, p. 43).

Mr. Brown had to plead with the attackers not to burn the houses which remained, or destroy the trees on the beach which they consented to, and gave to him the heads of those they had already taken. Other Samoan wars of the nineteenth century literally wiped out the district of Aana (Meleisea, 1987b) as recorded by Pritchard:

After a fight, the heads of the slain enemies are paraded in the presence of the assembled chiefs and people when the individual heroes are thanked and their personal prowess and daring publicly acknowledged. The excitement of the successful warrior is intense as he passes before the chiefs with his bleeding trophy, capering in the most fantastic evolutions, with blackened face and oiled body, throwing his club high into the air and catching it behind his back...sometimes himself carrying his enemy's head, sometimes dancing around a comrade who carries it for him; all the while shouting in the loudest voice, OU TE MAU TAGATA—I HAVE MY MAN. To a young Samoan, this is the realization of his highest ambition (Meleisea, 1987b, pp. 26, quoted from Pritchard, 1866, P. 57).

These battles are brutal and devastating, so when these wars take place all attempts are made to ensure victory because a loss entails devastating effects not just for human lives but also for the land and all means of subsistence living as an aftermath. Important titles, alliances, and land are also lost and gained in these wars. Literally, in wars, a family or group's identity could cease immediately and both the living and the dead are implicated in them, since generational family genealogies could end abruptly.

The brave battle warriors and leaders became local heroes and superiors regarded as *atua* who possessed special *aitu* or spiritual powers; many were believed to be *itulua* (*aitu tagata*, both human and spirit) (Kramer, 1994, p. 396) and after death their *aitu* or spirit were still

consulted especially in times of war since they remained with their families and or communities in their non-human *aitu* form (Meleisea, 1987a). Even their war clubs would have been kept as relics and as a reminder of the victorious past and to give hope for a brighter and successful future.

MISSIONARY CONSTRUCTION OF ATUA

George Pratt's Samoan Dictionary, originally published in 1862, has an entry for *atua* as: "a god, and is synonymous with *aitu*, and also God" (p. 39). Although there is no explanation of the difference and the presence of the two terms ('a god' and 'God') in his entry, it appears that Pratt acknowledged the difference between *the Atua* and *an atua* in Samoan understanding as described by Tcherkézoff (2004) about the creator (*Atua*) and the *Atua's* visual manifestations (*atua*); or that he takes God to be the Christian God and god as a term for all Samoan deities. Stair (1896), on the other hand, describes several classes or orders of spiritual beings recognized in Samoan belief, which includes *Atua*, deified spirits of chiefs and *aitu*; these classes or orders can be appropriately illustrated through the Samoan holistic and inclusive hierarchical social structure (Tcherkézoff, 2004) where the continuum of *Atua*, *atua*, and human makes a meaningful existence through interdependence. Stair defines *Atua* as follows:

The *Atua*, or original gods, are described as dwelling in the *langi*, or heavens, and were considered the progenitors of the other deities, and are stated to have formed the earth and its inhabitants. These original gods were not represented by any priests or temples, neither were they invoked like their descendants. Of the primitive gods, the chief place is assigned to Tagaloa, or, as he is sometimes called, Tagaloa-lagi, i.e., Tagaloa of the skies. He was always spoken of as the principal god, the creator of the world, and progenitor of the other gods and mankind. In one tradition, that gives an account of the formation of the earth and men, mention is made of other divinities or helpers—Tagaloa-tosi, also styled Ngai-tosi....These two helpers are introduced as being sent by Tagaloa to complete the formation of the bodies of the first two of mankind and to impart life to them (1896, p. 34).

Stair describes Tagaloa's position as "the principal god, the creator of the world, and progenitor of the other gods and mankind" which is exactly the belief of Samoans, but he glosses over this information by constructing Tagaloa as one of the "original gods, the progenitors of the other deities." That is, Tagaloa is one of many such creators although neither he nor his compatriot Turner mentions any other such creator/progenitor here or in anywhere else in their writings. This construction imports and promotes other non-existent so called "original gods" onto the same superior status of creator/progenitor occupied only by Tagaloa from the Samoan perspective, as depicted in the creation story outlined above. This construction then validates the notion of polytheism imposed onto the Samoan view of *Atua*. The "other deities" like Tagaloa-tosi refer to Tagaloa's manifestations like Tagaloa-sāvali mentioned in the creation story analysed above. The lack of discrimination between Tagaloa and the manifestations propagates the myth of polytheism in the sense that the creator/progenitor Tagaloa is of the same status as other *atua*.

Turner (1884) also distinguishes between 'superior gods,' which includes war and village gods of which he lists at least forty three, and at least twenty one 'inferior gods' that includes household gods; the term gods is used interchangeably with *aitu*. Again, the simple translation of *Atua* as god, and in the plural, constructs a polytheistic belief where the creator Tagaloa is indistinguishable from Tagaloa's manifestations. In an earlier work Turner (1984) translates *atua* as god and uses it interchangeably with *aitu*, imaginary deities, and idols under the sub-heading 'mythological traditions' of a 'heathen nation' that "abounds in obscenities and absurdities," as "a heap of rubbish" (p. 244). He claims that some parts of these Samoan mythological traditions are constructed as 'curious' coincidences comparable to the tales of 'modern' and ancient 'civilized' nations or a corroboration of scripture history. In this construction, the Samoan belief in *Atua* is authenticated within the discourse or tale of modern and civilized Western nations. The indiscriminate lumping together of the concepts god, *aitu*, imaginary deities and idols constructs the Samoan view and people in negative connotations as a mythological imagination of uncivilized heathens, in contrast to civilized European nations who have the Bible, from which the heathens may have borrowed their imaginary myths. This stance contradicts his contemporary Fraser, who, speaking about one particular version of the Samoan creation stories, states:

I quite believe that this Story of Creation is genuine, and in no degree coloured by infiltrations from Europe...And there were no Samoan bibles then; nor could any of the natives read English. Anyone who knows the Samoans will find it impossible to believe that such men of honour as were the old chiefs Fofu and Taunu'u who communicated this Solo, occupying, as they did, so prominent positions in these islands, would allow their sacred records to be corrupted by intermixture from abroad, or would recite this song as genuine when they knew it to be corrupt or borrowed. Such a thing would have been considered a disgrace to all (Fraser, 1897, p. 19).

Another missionary, Barradale, takes these negative and condescending constructions or misconceptions up another notch:

In the olden days the Samoans were heathen. They knew nothing about the true God, or about 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild.' They worshipped the spirits of dead chiefs, and birds and fish and tree, and even things that had no life, such as the war clubs of famous warriors. Each family had its own particular god, who was believed to take care of all the members of the family. They supposed these gods lived inside different animals. One family thought its special god lived inside a shark; so that family would never kill a shark, for fear they should kill their god. Another thought its god lived in a bird, and so they would never shoot that particular kind of bird. Another family supposed theirs was inside a stone...They were very superstitious too, and were afraid of all sorts of evil spirits. They used to think, and some do even now, that bodily pain was caused by these *aitu*, or evil spirits (Barradale, 1907, p. 49).

The line about gods who were believed to 'take care' of all the members of the family is a negative construction of the god-human relationship from a Western presumption that such a relationship does not exist so that gods are not able to provide care for people. But as far as Samoans are concerned, there is no need to have a god or a belief in a god, if that god was unreachable and incapable of providing care and security for the people. This is exactly how Samoans viewed their ancestors and past war heroes, not so much as Gods or creators like the Christian God or Tagaloa, but as spiritual members or *atua* of families and communities who are always present within and among them and visually represented by a fish, a tree or a bird.

In pre-Christian Samoa, if someone is lost at sea or in battle and the body is not recovered, they would go to the place where the victim was last seen. There they lay down a fine mat or a *siapo* (traditional cloth); the first insect, bird or sea creature that crawls onto the *siapo*, they wrap it up and give it proper burial with the belief that the creature is the embodied spirit of the dead. This is the origin of many of the various *atua* (gods) revered within families and communities; a fish, a bird or a stone can be the embodiment of the family member who has died in the flesh but exist in spirit, the *aitu*. Samoans believe that past ancestors live among them in the spirit and are called upon in times of need just like they were consulted in the body. The multitude of *atua* encountered by missionaries is because each family and community called upon their own respective ancestors, their *atua*; they were *atua*, but not *Atua*—as descendants of *Atua* they too were *atua*. The use of the same term *Atua* for the creator Tagaloa and *Atua*'s manifestaions is based on the belief that *Atua* and *atua* are one. In terms of the genealogical account of creation, human (*atua*) is a direct descendant of *Atua*, but in the creational account, human *atua* is a creation of *Atua*; either way, *Atua* and *atua* are one by the same token that “my father and I are one” John 10:30. The human *atua* is a direct descendant of *Atua*—humans are manifestations of *Atua*. If pre-Christian Samoans can be accused of polytheism—that is, the worship [They *tapua*’i not worship] of many gods, then they are guilty. If on the other hand accused of worship of many Gods, they are innocent.

Turner describes one village god name Turia:

This was the name of a god in Savai’i by whose help a district once fought and conquered against fearful odds....He was also supposed to come with his share of food for the entertainment of strangers, and add a pig to the number prepared by the people. If six were laid down, the guests found, when they separated the heap of dainties they had received, that there would be seven instead of six. The trick of adding secretly a pig was carried on by some of the priesthood, and, in the eyes of the credulous multitude, added vastly to the wonder-working power of Turia (Turner, 1884, p. 62).

Turner’s attribution of this god to a non-specific village in the large island of Savai’i frees the author from any critical examination of his text since he could be referring to any of the more than two hundred villages on the island. The misspelling of the name Turia with an ‘r’ which

is extremely rare in Samoan names adds to the mystification of this god. The common name Tulia (with an l) exists in the village of Asau in Savai'i where villagers still speak of a guardian ancestor named Masoe Tulia, where Masoe is an *ali'i matai* (chief) and a founding ancestor of Asau, as is in its genealogy (Kramer, 1994, p. 130). This Masoe Tulia was once a renowned leader and warrior in wars, who was a village *matai*, an elder who was consulted for his wisdom and strength in his lifetime, a natural practice which continued after his death in his existence as an *aitu* and *atua* (god). Turner alleges that Tulia's food contributions were a 'secret' manipulation by the priesthood, which contrasts with "he was also supposed to come with his share of food"; the construction mocks the villagers and their discourse of god as a superstitious lie and a god that does not really exist. God is constructed within the discourse of "entertainment" of guests which he refers to as: "At these night-dances all kinds of obscenity in looks, language, and gesture prevail" (Turner, 1984, p. 211). According to Tupa'i Fiamatai, the current *pulenu'u* (a local *matai* who is the official village representative to the government) of Asau, an extra food contribution from Masoe Tulia is still a current occurrence in their village today in the 21st century.

Both Nafanua and Masoe Tulia, like many other *atua*, are accounted for in their community genealogies and blood connections. They were both leaders and would have been venerated by their local communities in life and afterlife. Savea si'u-leo, another listed god or *aitu* (Turner, 1884), is the father of Nafanua, while Tamafaigā, another *aitu* (Stair, 1896), was a fearsome war leader of Manono whose murder resulted in the Aana wars that was still being fought when Christianity's John Williams arrived in 1830 (Gilson, 1970, p. 70). Missionaries reported that after his death, Tamafaiga was venerated and even worshipped along with his relics as if he were a deity. As leader he was an *atua* and *aitu*, "or perhaps more correctly, the chosen instrument of the deities, a wielder of great *mana* in human affairs" (Gilson, p. 71). The gods in the Samoan pantheon were as expendable as humans; an *atua*, *aitu* or war god was as good as his/her last battle. Like Nafanua, some of these *atua* and *aitu* survived in legends, others disappeared and were replaced with more effective or more recent ones. This understanding is seen in the stories like *O le Taua o Aitu*—The Wars of gods or *Aitu* (Charlot, 1988) where a group of *aitu* of the Islands of Upolu and Savai'i took turns in defeating each other. Wars were necessary in pre-Christian Samoa for the security and survival of communities, and through these wars fearsome warriors and leaders were needed. As leaders

they were *atua* and manifestations of *Atua*; in death they remained venerated in their spiritual existence and were still consulted as guardian spirits, *aitu* or *atua* in times of need.

Most of the contemporary Samoan writers for example, simply follow on after the early missionaries' lead, for instance; Meleisea (1987a) merely rephrases the missionary view published almost a hundred years earlier:

Samoans were not monotheists (worshippers of one god) but polytheists (worshippers of many gods). They also believed that the powers of gods and spirits (of their ancestors) influenced human activities....There were two main categories of gods: those gods of non-human origin, *Atua*, and those of human origin, *Aitu* (p. 35).

Meleisea has fallen into the same argument propagated by missionaries where *Atua* (of non-human origin) is presented in the plural, when in fact there is only one creator Tagaloa. The use of the term 'origin' here is misleading too since it implies the gods of human origin were created by human or born of human, and are called *aitu*—the implicit meaning constructed in the text is that *Atua* (God) is the same as *atua* (god) when in fact *atua* are the manifestations of *Atua* in animate and inanimate form. As opposed to God, gods do not and cannot create heaven and earth. Samoans believed in one creator/progenitor of human and the universe; in that sense they were monotheist, they just believed that this creator Tagaloa dwells among them and is manifested to them in various forms.

THE PRE-CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF AITU

According to Aiono-Le Tagaloa (Aiono-Le Tagaloa, 2003), the Samoan inner person is divided into three parts: the *ola*, *aitu* and the *mauli*, where *aitu* is the creative and cheeky part of the inner being of the person and, like the *mauli*, does not die; *aitu* is part of the living person and continues to exist when the body dies and Le Tagaloa argues that the missionaries introduced the idea that *aitu* is a phenomenon that comes into existence when the body dies, when *ola* (being able to breathe or being alive) ceases.

Aitu means both spirit and *atua* (Pratt, 1911 [1862]); it means *atua* in the sense conveyed by Tcherkézoff (2004) as a superior. Ancient Samoans were regarded as dual people who were both human and *aitu* or spirit (*aitu tagata*); as superiors and leaders they are *atua* (gods) and as spirits they are *aitu* as well. After death, the *aitu* or spiritual part of a person survives and that *aitu* continues to be part of the family and community, and their statuses as *atua* in life do not change in death. “Samoans did not believe that their dead ceased to exist at the time of their death and as a result, ancestral spirits, *aitu*, were worshipped” (Meleisea, 1987a, p. 36).

Fono ma Aitu: A Meeting with Ancestral Spirits

Fono-ma-aitu is literally a meeting with *aitu*; it is a council meeting held between the ruling chiefs of a village and their ancestral *aitu*, as in Sa'anapu village, who still carry out this ancient practice. According to Anapu 'Aiali'i (“Tatu'u le Paogo ae fa'asao le Laga'ali,” 2010) of Sa'anapu, no *tulafale* (orator) attends this meeting but only *ali'i*, specifically the five titles referred to as o Alo o le Sa'o, plus Tuigamala who is called o le Ma'opū o le Tui Aana and himself. These seven participants represent the rest of the village. The meeting takes place between midnight and around 4:00 am in the morning, and during the meeting they talk in *tu'umumusū* (whispers) in the dark; there is no light allowed. This meeting only takes place when there are grave or extremely harsh sins committed within the village, like a murder or something of a similar nature. Maulolo Tavita Amosa explains the essence of the fono-ma-aitu:

According to my father, in fono-ma-aitu, the village leaders, or the village elders (*to'i'ina*), are praying, to their gods who are their *aitu* or the *agaga* (spirit), of their ancestors. To bring them assistance, to whisper into the spirits (or souls) of the village elders about what proper decision is to be undertaken. But since the arrival of the Good News (Christianity) and that the Good News (Christianity) has become powerful, those practices are slowly disappearing because Samoa have all become one under the God of the Good News (Christians) (“

The text constructs the older generation as having a better affiliation with the spiritual world of ancestors, who were always consulted for better decision making and management of village affairs. This appeal to the older generation authenticates and sustains this ancient practice but also enables him to disown this unchristian practice; this highlights the friction

between his traditional belief and the Christian theology about *aitu* and the dead. In Amosa's view, *aitu* are not evil spirits or ghosts as they have been made out to be, but an essential part of society who promptly offer advice; they are relied upon as superior counselors. The generational hierarchy here is the same as the hierarchy of knowledge: Amosa's generation relies upon the knowledge of the generation before him about the *aitu* issue, and his father's generation who would be the village 'leaders,' 'elders' and authority, seek guidance through prayer from the generation before them, who are the ones who have died but exist as *atua* (gods) *aitu*, *agaga* (spirit) and *tua'ā* (ancestors). The present participle "are slowly disappearing" constructs this practice as something that still exists and is valid; both the traditional and Christian beliefs are sustained and co-exist with the acknowledgement that it is only the growing strength of Christianity that restricts ancient beliefs and practices like *fono-ma-aitu*.

According to Fuimaono Fereti, Lotofaga is another village that still practices *fono-ma-aitu* and is also called *o le fonu pa'ia* (the sacred meeting); in Lotofaga there are only four attendees: Fiamē, Tupuola, Seigafo, and Sāmatauā. He continues:

During this whole night, when some foods in the form of coconut are distributed, they are given to all these four candidates, and also to all the [house] posts that are [seemingly] unoccupied. Then the blinds are lowered and the meeting begins, for the whole night. Such sacred meetings are usually held when they decide to bestow the title Salevalasi. That is, the title Makā'afa in Amaile and Le Agapapa, eh. For example...They first have the sacred meeting. This is the same thing as a meeting with *aitu*. Like I said, those coconuts that were given, How would it be known [proven] that *aitu* did participate in the meeting from the coconuts that were put under all those other posts, eh. In the morning, after the meeting, then those coconuts are gathered. When they are gathered up and they are finished [have been drunk], or they were spilled (during the night) or whatever, that means the *aitu* did participate because they have drunk their coconuts. This is proof that *aitu* did participate in the meeting. The leaders and elders have had a meeting with the *aitu*. They met with the *aitu*. Now that the morning has come, and coconuts are gathered, and have been drunk (*kaumafa*), that means, a decision is reached that a title shall be bestowed at Amaile and Le Agapapa ("

The title Makā'afa [Matā'afa] is a *tamaaiga* (royal or paramount) title so the discourse of respected paramount titles is used to legitimize the practice of *fono-ma-aitu* or the meeting between human and spirit as something practiced by Samoans and especially by the Samoan elite. It is also a *fono pa'ia* (sacred meeting); *pa'ia* (sacred) is often used in Christian discourse to refer to the Christian God—it constructs this practice as something as sacred and holy as Christian undertakings with God and conceives this unusual meeting as a religious event so there is nothing unnatural or unchristian about it. *Kaumafa* is the respective word for eating and drinking; its use here positions *aitu* as respective chiefs or elders to whom this term often applies. The ‘coconut-drinking’ scenario functions as proof and confirmation of the actual participation of spiritual *aitu* in the meeting since the coconuts ‘have been drunk’ and ‘spilled’; the absence of any unused coconuts strengthens this construction.

The four human participants—Fiamē, Tupuola, Seigafo, and Sāmatauā—are all important noble matai titles and “titles are symbolic capital...where the noble is not just someone known and recognized by all and by an official universal tribunal”...but also a “title is a kind of legal rule of social perception,” a “being-perceived guaranteed as a right. It is symbolic capital in an institutionalized, legal (and no longer merely legitimate) form” (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 733). Framing the practice of *fono-ma-aitu* in the discourse of noble titles legitimizes its sacredness and guarantees its right of practice.

Missionary Construction of Aitu

Pratt (1911 [1862]) defines *aitu* as a spirit, a god, and as synonymous with *atua*. Stair (1896) classifies as “descendants of the original gods, or rather all deities whose aid was invoked, or whose vengeance might be denounced by the various orders of the priesthood. Of this class of deities, some were supposed to inhabit Pulotu, [a place he calls] ‘the Samoan Elysium’, others held sway in the Fafā, or Hades” (p. 35). For Stair, the general term *aitu* comprised war-gods, family gods, as well as the tutelar deities of the various trades and employments; two *aitu* mentioned are Savea-se'u[si'u]-leo and Nafanua. Turner (1984) holds *aitu* to be some tutelary or protecting god, and also speaks of *aitu langi* or gods of heaven as gods who have fallen from the heavens at the call of a blind man to protect his son from a cannibal chief (Turner, 1884), and also speaks of *aitu fale* (house) or gods of the house.

These constructions of *aitu* all point to some disembodied spirit, god, deity or war god, but as Aiono-Le Tagaloa (Aiono-Le Tagaloa, 2003) points out, *aitu* is the inner being of the person and does not die; *aitu* is part of the living person and continues to exist when the body dies. Although missionary construction of *aitu* conforms to the Samoan perspective of ancestors as *atua* and *aitu*, it nevertheless confines it to an existence after death, and this is where Aiono-Le Tagaloa believes that it was missionaries who introduced the idea that *aitu* is a phenomenon that comes into existence when the body dies.

Today, *aitu* has evolved into a new and somewhat confused and negative meaning like ‘ghost or evil spirit’ (Maiai, 2010) and demon (Kramer, 1994, pp. 565-566) but does not mean *atua* or god anymore. Tcherkézoff proposes that this change in meaning for *aitu* is post-missionary and it now stands for everything that is supernatural and which is not God, “but in the pre-contact era and for some time after, all the *atua* and all the *aitu* formed a continuum” (Tcherkézoff, 2004).

Missionaries would have naturally rejected the *aitu* as a suitable term for spirit as it serves two purposes: It cements the position of ancestors as the dead who remain dead and buried, and it removes them from the label of *atua*, because in Christianity there is only one *Atua* (God). *Aitu* or spirits of ancestors have become synonymous with evil spirits in contemporary Samoa. The biblical terms evil spirit, devil or demon did not exist in the Samoan worldview and vocabulary because ancestor spirits (*aitu*) were not regarded as *leaga* (bad or evil), since these spirits were consulted for guidance in daily life. The linguist Pratt, one of the earliest Samoan missionaries, does not have an entry for these terms in his Samoan dictionary originally published in 1862 (1911), but which were imposed with the new theology onto the Samoan psyche through biblical translation and theological exposition. In the Samoan Bible there now exist direct transliteration of these terms: evil spirit is *agaga leaga* (bad spirit), ghost is *aitu* (Matt. 14: 26), demon is *temoni*, devil is *tevolo*.

Nafanua is one of the many war gods or *aitu* listed by missionaries (Stair, 1896; Turner, 1884); her genealogy (Kramer, 1994, pp. 133-136; Sauoaiga, 1991) presents her as a human, who, after her death, lived in Pulotu, “the Samoan Elysium” (Stair, 1896, p. 38) from where she emerged to avenge the suffering of her local people in a battle that marked the beginning

of her legend as a mighty war leader. Sauoaiga who traces his genealogy to Nafanua rejects the missionary construction of his ancestor as *aitu*, probably because *aitu* now means evil spirit and demon.

Contemporary Construction/Confusion on Aitu in Contemporary Samoa

The term devil is often spoken of in its transliteration *tevolo* but is directly transliterated into the Samoan bible as *tiapolo* from the Greek *διάβολος* (Matt. 4: 1; Rev. 12: 9; 20: 2). Demon (Mark 5) is transliterated as *temoni* from the Greek *δαιμων*. Unclean or evil spirits (Mk. 3: 30; 9: 25) is translated as *agaga leaga* where *agaga* means soul, spirit, ghost, psyche, existence, life (Maiai, 2010), thought or disembodied spirit (Pratt, 1911 [1862]). *Leaga* means bad and *agaga leaga* simply means a bad spirit. The newly introduced Christian theological notion of *bad spirits* relegated most of the Samoan spirits and its spiritual world, especially the concept *aitu*, to the bad side of the dualistic theology of good versus bad, divine versus human or light versus dark. In contemporary Samoa, ancestors are now referred to as *tua'ā ua mavae* (ancestors who have passed on) while *aitu* has become a confused terminology synonymous with the Christian evil spirits and translated 'ghost' in the Samoan bible (Matt. 14: 26).

Nafanua the renowned warrior god is listed as an *aitu* (Stair, 1896), but Sauoaiga (1991) who claims to be a descendant of Nafanua, strongly rejects this label for his ancestor, probably because *aitu* is now the equivalent of evil spirits. He states: “*E le moni, ma le fa'aaloalo ia tala e fa'aapea o Nafanua o se aitu... e moni lava e laititi lona itu tau-tagata, ae malosi tele ona itu faasauali'i*—Statements claiming that Nafanua is an *aitu* are untrue and disrespectful...but it is true that [as a dual being] her *sauali'i* side was stronger than her human side” (Sauoaiga, 1991). So when Pratt says that *sauali'i* is a respectful term for an *aitu*, it is because *sauali'i* is concerned with the human while *aitu* with spirit; in Christianity there is but one spirit—the Holy Spirit—so the spirit of the dead is made synonymous with evil, ghosts, demons and everything that is not God. This is the reason for the rejection of the label *aitu* by Sauoaiga and many contemporary Samoans to refer to their ancestors. *Aitu* as ancestor spirits feature prominently in pre-Christian warfare where local communities fought for supremacy and defense of their identities.

In the wake of the tsunami that devastated Samoa in 2009, where at least 200 people died, numerous stories circulated in the Samoan media about the presence of ‘*aitu*,’ or spirits of the dead victims especially from the villages from which most victims died. Voices of the dead were allegedly heard crying and screaming from the affected areas at night; these were assumed to be voices of the *aitu*. In contrast to a clear understanding of *aitu* as ancestor spirits or spirits of relatives as it was in the pre-Christian era, most people were confused and could not clearly define what *aitu* means, because they could not quite place this concept within the context and dominant discourse of contemporary Christian Samoa which constructs *aitu* as the equivalent of evil spirits and demons. This brought the issue of *aitu* to the forefront of national discussions, and led to a group of media commentators interviewing people who have experienced, or allegedly experienced firsthand their encounters with *aitu*, together with theological insight from some church ministers, in a video recording called (‘Tatu’u le Paogo ae fa’asao le Laga’ali, 2010).

O AITU O LE SUNAMI: THE AITU (SPIRITS) OF THE TSUNAMI

This video recording ("Tatu'u le Paogo ae fa'asao le Laga'ali," 2010) is arranged into four topics which are all connected to beliefs and an understanding or misunderstanding of *aitu* and of the dead. The first of the four topics is titled: *O Aitu o le Sunami*—The Aitu of the Tsunami. The uncertainty of contemporary Samoans about the concept or identity of *aitu* is reflected in the video host’s introductory comments:

This programme starts off with some of the stories that have gripped the nation at present. The Aitu of the Tsunami, what is the truth? The nation is stirred because of the stories that have been circulating. They have been publicized in newspapers and through some radio stations in Samoa, and in every corner of the country. And some of those who have died in the tsunami have been blamed. There is no intention to judge the truth or untruth, but these reports or informal stories as has been mentioned by some people have been investigated thoroughly for their truthfulness. The aim is that this programme should not offend those who have been affected by this calamity. We pray that the investigation of The Aitu of the Tsunami, may be a healing, to calm the thoughts and belief, that are uncertain and confounded. Cut down the Paogo and Salvage the Laga’ali, to examine in detail the truth about many of these issues,

especially the beliefs that still raise questions for our nation ("Tatu'u le Paogo ae fa'asao le Laga'ali," 2010).

The repetitive use of 'truth' underlines the uncertainty about the identity of *aitu*; who or what is *aitu*, are they evil spirits, do they do evil things, what do they look like, are deceased relatives *aitu* or not? The title of this topic, *Aitu of the Tsunami*, directly implicates the dead tsunami victims as the *aitu* responsible for the unexplained nocturnal activities and noises, but people and relatives of the dead are reluctant to label their loved ones as *aitu*.

None of the interviewees said they actually saw an *aitu*; the common response was: "I don't believe in *aitu* but," and then they proceed to tell their strange experiences:

Suddenly, we were surprised with other men, [smiling] We were made frightened by the old man, this old man who had died a long time ago. Well I was not afraid the only thing, [I thought] if I give in and have an attitude like being afraid, it would intensify it [the fear] ("Tatu'u le Paogo ae fa'asao le Laga'ali," 2010)

Asked if something was said between them and this dead man, he said no. "The man was just standing there then he just vanished." The word *fa'afefe* (made frightened) means the deceased deliberately attempted to frighten them although he did not do anything except reveal himself. The attempt to frighten constructs the dead as an enemy whose appearance serves no useful purpose other than to frighten the living. The group of young men were supposed to be afraid simply because this was an *aitu*, an evil spirit and demon capable of doing harm to the living.

As opposed to the friendly relationship between the living and the dead in pre-Christian times, the dead are now feared as the unknown enemy. This is a general belief about *aitu* in contemporary Samoa as reflected in the interviewer's next question: "Did you swear at him?" to which the respondent just smiled and said no. Many people just swear loudly supposedly at *aitu* when they *lagona* (feel) in their bodily experience that a *aitu* is in the vicinity, but as in this case, there is a difference between swearing at an empty space and to an actual person standing there, despite the fact that they knew he was already dead. After all, in Samoan

fa'aaloalo (respect), any elder or person older than one is respected and swearing to a living *matai* (chief) is punishable with a heavy punishment. Although he could be labelled as *aitu* for being identified as already dead, he still belonged to a family and has living relatives, a reason for not being sworn at and is a measure of respect—assaulting the dead is assaulting his/her living family.

One owner-taxi driver told of being asked by a woman and her daughter in town to be taken to a rural village, to the area that was mostly affected by the tsunami. The woman and her daughter sat in the rear seats and as they got closer to their destination, he discovered that the pair had vanished. The driver never refers to the pair as *aitu*, but uses the term *le fafige* (the woman) eight times, and once as *le tina* (the mother) then says: “I do not know what this means or what these things mean, but it was real; I saw it and experienced it.” The refusal to associate his vanished passengers with *aitu* underlines the dilemma between Christianity, which continuously denies the existence of *aitu*, and the Samoan worldview that still upholds the presence of the dead among the living.

Another man visited the memorial-burial-grounds for many of those buried there were from his rural village Lalomanu. He said as he drove up to the site, one side of the gate was closed, the other barely allowed his car through. At the graves he talked to the dead (i.e., to the graves) whom he referred to as *gai kagaka* (beloved people), *gai kigā* (beloved mothers), *gai fagau* (beloved children), *gai kuafāfige* (beloved sisters), *ma ē fo'i e pele* (and those who are much loved). This is what he said to the dead (i.e., the graves):

I have heard that, people say that you have wandered, you have walked. Do not walk because that makes people dislike you. Sleep properly. [I] believe that none of you is wandering around, well, but people still talk and that cannot be avoided. But I am leaving now, I think I might come back on Saturday...To bring you flowers, and to visit you again ("Tatu'u le Paogo ae fa'asao le Laga'ali," 2010).

When he finished he hopped into his car and as he approached the gate on his way out he saw that both sides of the gate were now widely opened squarely, as if someone had opened them for him. Without attributing the open gate to *aitu* action, his story implies that it was. The use of the terms ‘wander’ and ‘walk’ is a trace (Derrida, 1976) of the Christian perspective that

the dead are ‘asleep’ and are not supposed to have the ability to move around, a view that disagrees with the Samoan experience like that of the taxi driver.

‘Wander’ and ‘walk’ entail the notion of an aimless time-wasting walk that serves no purpose; in contrast, the appearance or presence of *aitu* in pre-Christian times was for services to the community. The phrase “I believe that none of you is roaming around” is a refutation of the possible Christian accusation that his beloved people (sisters and people from his village) wander at night as *aitu*. However, talking to the dead or to graves is acknowledgement that the dead are listening and can comprehend his talk; this practice conforms to pre-Christian beliefs that are still prevalent in contemporary Samoa, but violates Christian belief that such practice is idolatry. Later he attempts to distance himself from the blame of believing in *aitu* when he said “*e le kalikogu sesi i gi aiku, ia ae*—no one believes in *aitu*, but...” This disclaimer positions himself as a good Christian but upholds his belief that he could still communicate with the dead who understand his talk. Maulolo states:

When a person dies, eh, there is that belief that his mauli and his *aitu* still lives. Before the arrival of Christianity, Samoa worshipped their Atua Tagaloalagi. That is stated in, like, in the writings of the missionary George Turner and those people, those *atua* which are manifested in different things like birds and things like that. But there are different opinions of people about that ("Tatu'u le Paogo ae fa'asao le Laga'ali," 2010).

This respondent uses three terms to talk about *aitu*: *mauli*, *aitu* and *atua*. Turner’s writings are used here as authority to support his view on the history of pre-Christian Samoa except that Turner does not endorse the view that *aitu* survives death. Turner’s ‘category entitlement’ (Potter, 1996) or knowledgeable authority about Samoa’s pre-Christian history is also employed to rebuff possible accusation on Maulolo’s behalf for continuing to endorse such un-Christian beliefs. “Different opinion” functions not to deny the authenticity of pre-Christian belief in *aitu* and their existence after death.

Theologizing Aitu

The conflict between Christian and Samoan beliefs was also acknowledged by two church ministers; one denied the existence of *aitu*, saying it exists only in children’s discourse when

they try to frighten off other children. Later he was absolutely sure: “*E ou te le talitonu e i ai ni aitu. Na o mea o agaga e leaga. Ioe, ga o agaga leaga a ae leai gi aiku. Ua uma ga fa’ato’ilalo e Keliso le kiāpolo, i lona mana fa’a-Atua*—I do not believe there are *aitu*. Only evil spirits. Yes, only evil spirits but no *aitu*. Christ has already defeated the devil, by his Godly *mana* (power)”. In this construction, evil spirit is the same thing as the devil which Christ has defeated, but his denial of the existence of *aitu* means that the crying voices in the night belong to evil spirits, not *aitu*. The authority figure of Christ authenticates his theological construction that *aitu* do not exist but evil spirits do. He has dodged the question asked of him (Do you believe in the existence of *aitu*?). By allowing Christ to defeat the devil, he maintains the power of the Christian God while evading the *aitu* question because *aitu* in these stories is a trace of (dead) relatives.

Similarly, another minister used the same vocabulary which he does not define when asked about *aitu*:

Our hearts do not believe these [stories], but there are bad [evil] spirits. We do not believe that these people rule the world, that is, the bad spirits, the *aitu* do not rule the world, no. No, it is ruled by God, whom we believe in. But [I/we] do not want to dismiss Samoan beliefs, because it is the very [beliefs] that our people grew up in. But that is the thing: the reliance upon those things must be kept under the gospel. If some thing [spirit] is screaming and if people are crying, let’s pray to God for his power which is greater than the power of these demons because if these are not our people who have died but some other demons that have come and pretend to cry like that, well, we don’t know (“Tatu’u le Paogo ae fa’asao le Laga’ali,” 2010)

Like the previous text, this one makes a valiant attempt to deny the existence of *aitu* (“Our hearts do not believe these [stories], but there are bad [evil] spirits”) since it is naturally expected for Christian ministers to make such a stand. However, there is no denying the multiplicity of witnesses who have seen or heard non-human nocturnal activities (“the crying voices in the night”) attributed to the dead or spiritual beings. These beings are supposed to be the tsunami victims who are relatives of the living. The reluctance to label dead relatives as *aitu* can be understood since the true meaning of *aitu* had been demonized as ghost or evil spirits, effectively demonizing the dead, and families are reluctant to accept such label for

their loved ones. The “crying” voices in the night are “not our people” but attributed to “bad spirits” (*agaga leaga*), “demons,” “*aitu*” and some other “people.” The text acknowledges the pre-Christian belief in the existence of the dead among the living (“do not want to dismiss Samoan beliefs”), but it also reveals the antagonistic and often competing relationship between Christianity and pre-Christian belief and practices (“pray to God for his power which is ‘greater’ than the power of these demons”).

To return to the theme of this chapter about the origin of the body, one respondent describes Atua as the origin of the body, but the term *Atua* is used in such a way not only to mean the Samoan *Atua* Tagaloa, but also to authenticate this belief within Christian discourse. Interviewer is I; respondent is R:

- 31 *O le 'upu ā lea ou ke fa'akāuaiga e a'u,*
The very word that is emphasized by me,
- 32 *Oga o le kigo, e i ai loga kuā'ele'ele.*
Because the body has an origin
- 33 I *Kuā'ele'ele? Le ā le uiga o legā upu?*
Origin? (Kuā'ele'ele) What does that word mean?
- 34 R *E i ai oga kua.*
It has a back[ground].
- 35 *Loga uiga e i ai loga kupu'aga. Ma loga pogai.*
That means it has an origin. And source.
- 36 *Ia oga o lea ua kakou ua fa'a-kelisiagoiga kakou,*
Well it is because now we have been Christianized,
- 37 *o le kakou gā ā lea e i ai, o le kuā'ele'ele ā ia o le kigo, o le Akua.*
[But] our very own [beliefs] as they still are, is that the very origin of the body is Atua
(i.e., God) eh.
- 38 Like I said that Samoans in the ancient days were worshipping Atua, eh.
- 39 They had a belief that there are Atua.
- 40 *E mulimuli gei ā o'o aku le Akua lea kau ke ka'ua gei o le Akua o kagaka kelisiago,*
Only later that God whom we now call the God of the Christian people arrived,
- 41 *ao Samoa ā ia ua leva ga. O ō lakou ā la ga kuā'ele'ele.*
but Samoa had long since had. Those [Atua] are their very own origin.
- 42 Because it was said that rock married (usu) earth ('ele'ele),
- 43 then was born Pai and Lafai and it continued from there until they had, [they] had
humans.

44 *Loga uiga la e i ai le, so'o se kigo ā la o se kama Samoa, e i ai loga kuā'ele'ele.*
That means there is a, every single body of a Samoan male, has its origin.

Tuā'ele'ele (line 31) is not a word used in the Samoan everyday language let alone in literature, but is one of those typical terms that the old keepers of ancient traditions and stories are well versed with. Its deliberate use constructs the speaker as one of those wise men who knows the old religion and traditions and is a qualified commentator to Samoan theological issues from a cultural perspective.

The Christian God is indirectly acknowledged by the use of 'Christianized' (line 36) but is still left out as a creator or origin of the body. An absolute negation of the involvement of this Christian God in this creation act would cause an uproar in the Samoan Christian community, so the speaker only acknowledges God indirectly by the use of 'been Christianized' (line 36) and at the same time includes himself in that circle of Christianity and the Christian God, by the use of the inclusive 'we' to identify himself as one of the Christians. This enables him to deflect possible accusation of being either a pagan or an atheist while upholding his traditional religious beliefs. A good Samoan is a Christian Samoan so the speaker is aware that a good *matai* must not exclude the Christian God altogether as origin of the body. The acknowledgement of God also highlights his awareness of the great importance of Christianity and the Christian God both for him and the Christianized Samoan culture today.

The speaker's knowledge and his belief in the *Atua's* creation act as that origin of the body, are not a mere description of ancient stories or things of the past, but are beliefs that he presently embraces and embodies, as seen in the use of the present tense (line 37) to describe the implied belief as current or "as they still are."

The inclusive term *Atua* identifies both the Samoan pre-Christian creator and the present Christian God. *Atua* is referred to as origin of the body (line 37), as deity (line 38) and as an object of worship (line 39). Although he is talking about the Samoan *Atua* in these three sentences he does not specify this; this allows for him a kind of osmotic effect whereby the unspecified '*Atua*' is dual identification of two different deities (Christian God and Tagaloa) by a single title *Atua* enables the identification of pre-Christian Samoan belief with the Christian discourse of God. He is able to discuss the two different deities independently of the other without the danger of being accused of believing in one at the expense of the other,

or being accused of paganism. The speaker only specified the Christian God (line 40) to underscore the point that this God was a late arrival. “*Mulimuli*” and “*gei*” means ‘later’ and ‘now’ respectively; it constructs the Christian God as a late and very recent newcomer who brought nothing for the people; the early Samoans were ‘already there,’ so to speak. In this construction, the Christian God and Christianity had nothing to do with the contemporary beliefs of present-day Samoans in a deity. In this participant’s formulation of *Atua* and God, God has not replaced or superseded *Atua* but are both allowed to exist in equal relevance but in separate spheres of existence. As a Christian he upholds the belief in God but as a Samoan *matai* he also upholds those beliefs in the *Atua*.

In the rest of the quote above, the participant drives home several messages, one of which is that the *tuā’ele’ele* (origin) of the Samoan body (pre-Christian and contemporary) is the Samoan *Atua* Tagaloa and that pre-Christian Samoans were not atheists or pagans because they believed in the existence of *Atua* and they worshipped *Atua*.

- 151 *o le kigo ā o le kama Samoa e i ai loga kuā’ele’ele. E i ai loga pogai.*
The very body of a Samoan male has an origin. Its has an origin.
- 152 *Le mea ga āfua mai ai ga, ia, lae la e sa’o.*
where it originates from, so it is correct [or true]
- 153 *Auā a kakou fua foi ā e pei o le kala i le foafoaga,*
Because if we compare like the [biblical] story of creation,
- 154 *o le mea ā lea ga amaka ga fau mai ai le kagaka, o le ‘ele’ele, a.*
The very thing that was used to create a person, is earth, eh.
- 155 *Ia a fesili o ai la le kuā’ele’ele o le ‘ele’ele lea ga faia le kagaka, ia o le kali ā o le Akua.*
Well if we ask the question: who is the origin of the soil that was used to make
human, the very [only] answer is God
- 156 *Pei la e fa’apegā so’u kalikoguga, e ‘ave aga’i i le mea la o lo’o i ai le kalikoguga o kagaka Samoa,*
So my belief is like that, it [belief] leans toward where the belief of Samoan people is
- 157 *o la ā sa, sa feusua’i ā le papa ma le ‘ele’ele, ia oga ko’ā maua lea o le kagaka.*
It was that, the rock and the earth intermarried, then eventually a human was formed
- 158 *Lae la e pei e kau, ō fa’akasi ā ma le, ma le kalikoguga o le ‘au o le, pei o le kala a le, a Le Kusi Pa’ia.*
So its like, [it] goes together with, with the belief of, the, of, as in the biblical story.
- 159 *Ia ou ke le o’o ke le a’u i legā mea o le Kusi Pa’ia auā laga e le, e leai so’u mamalama kelei ai,*
Well I don’t go too far into that kind of thing, the Bible, because I do not, I do not

have much understanding about it

160 *ae pei 'ou ke kalagoa ā a'u ia i, mea ia kau, o le agagu'u.*

But I [can] only talk about things, these things about, the culture.

The earth ('*ele'ele*) plays no small part in this construction because it is the very object that becomes the common denominator both in the Samoan creation story and in the biblical account. The Bible is a book of authority itself and its creation story is usually identified by the term *foafoaga* (line 153), a noun form of *fofoa*, to hatch. This term itself is not neutral in this construction but it elevates the authority of the Bible. This speaker who previously undermined the Christian God as a 'late comer' here elevates the Bible because he needs to elevate the Samoan story to that same status.

"*Ele'ele* (earth) is part of the compound word *tuā'ele'ele*, which is the cultural concept he uses to describe the origin of the Samoan body. This same word is employed to describe the biblical creation story (line 154) so by employing this common denominator as a grammatical device he has effectively created an alliance of the two stories. This opens the possibility for comparing (line 153), instead of contrasting, the two stories or the respective deities of the two stories as he did before (lines 40-41, in previous text). This comparison further authenticates the Samoan version, with each complementing the other; the two stories now have no differences but have so much in common: the earth (or soil, '*ele'ele* line 154) and God. All that was left of this argument was to fireproof it and that comes in line 155. Anyone who had any doubt about the authenticity of the Samoan account of creation better ask the 'question' (line 155) because there is only one 'answer': God (line 155). The emphatic particle *ā* (line 155, *kali ā o le Akua*—the only answer is God) emphasizes God (*Atua*) but this ambiguous title *Atua* is given to both the Samoan *Atua* and the Christian God. The ambiguity warrants the Samoan *Atua* as being the same as the Christian God. The emphatic presentation of God as the answer eliminates any possible question, as well as freeing the speaker from scrutiny. In the end, the justification being constructed does not apply to the origin of humans alone but to the whole of creation. The authentication of the Samoan creation story is now complete and all he has to do now is to quote his Samoan story, which he does in line 157. Most Samoans who refer to their traditional version of creation can only recite more or less the same lines quoted (line 157) by this participant.

After arguing on behalf of the cultural creation story, the participant abstains from claiming full responsibility for it, but positions himself simply as a follower of the general belief of ‘Samoan people’ (line 156) to repel possible accusation of himself as being a believer in ancient unchristian beliefs. These beliefs are further substantiated by collaboration with the authority of the Bible (line 158).

CONCLUSION

I have analyzed the concept of *Atua*, *atua*, and *aitu* and how these concepts were understood in pre-Christian times and their meanings in contemporary Samoa. The Christian belief is that God created humans and everything else; the Samoan pre-Christian worldview is that the Creator Tagaloa, also known as Tagaloalagi or Tagaloa-fa’atutupu-nu’u, likewise created humans and everything else, but that humans are direct descendants of the creator progenitor as in family genealogies, which will be further analyzed in the next chapter. The Christian discourse has demonized the Samoan view about ancestors as *aitu*, whom Samoans still believe to exist among them, and there is now confusion about the true meaning of the term *aitu*. Despite years of Christianization, many Samoans still uphold pre-Christian beliefs, if not practices of *Atua* and ancestors, and maintain the *Atua*-human relation where humans are direct descendants of *Atua* who is the origin of the body as constituted in often-recited *fa’alupega*.

The name *atua* did denote for the pre-Christian Samoan body a very intimate connection with *Atua*. The human body was understood in the Samoan religio-cultural *fa’asamoa* as an embodied *Atua*. Once the term *Atua* was reserved for the Christian God alone, the human body was dispossessed of its sense of an embodied God. This rift between God and human laid the foundation for a new kind of theology that propagate the suffering God and not the loving God.

CHAPTER SIX

O LE FA'ASINOMAGA O LE TINO: THE PLACE OF THE BODY IN THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I have analyzed the construction of the origin of the Samoan body and in this chapter I move on to the construction of each body and its respective place within the social structure.

Fa'asinomaga is a compound word from two words: *fa'asino* means point, to point out, to point to, to show, indicate, direct, or refer, and the suffix *maga* only functions to turn the verb *fa'asino* into a noun. One's *fa'asinomaga* means the physical place or land that one comes from, or where one was born, or where one's parents, family or ancestors originate from. It also means *tofi* (belongings), which are not just material belongings but also social and cultural belongings where land can belong to a person by virtue of a person's belonging to a family. *Fa'asinomaga* locates each and every Samoan person within the complex interwoven web of family genealogical connections, and each person may belong to various *fa'asinomaga* through both the matrilineal and the patrilineal descent lines of not just parents, but also grandparents of succeeding generations of the past, present and future. *Fa'asinomaga* therefore constitutes *aiga* (family), certain *matai* titles, and particular land pertaining to that family and title. Every Samoan has a *fa'asinomaga* and that means that everyone is a *suli* (descendant) of at least one *aiga*, and is entitled to family titles and land, and that her or his children and grandchildren will inherit the same *fa'asinomaga*. *Fa'asinomaga* bespeaks of right, and so even a young child or newly born Samoan who is born anywhere in the world outside Samoa has rights to family titles by being part of a family or *fa'asinomaga*.

Although Aiono-Le Tagaloa (1997) does not define *fa'asinomaga*, she does however point out that there are three main *poutu toa* (main posts or foundational parts) that constitute Samoan *fa'asinomaga*: the first is *igoa matai* (*matai* titles) from which every person is a *suli*.

The second is *'ele'ele ma fanua* (land) and the third is the *gagana* (language). According to Aiono, when these three come together then we have *saofa'iga* (sitting or gathering of *matai*), which is the equivalent of politics. *Fa'amatai*, or the social, cultural and political system governed by the *matai* titles system, is the most appropriate form of governance for the Samoan people.

Figure 2: The relational place of the body in the social structure.

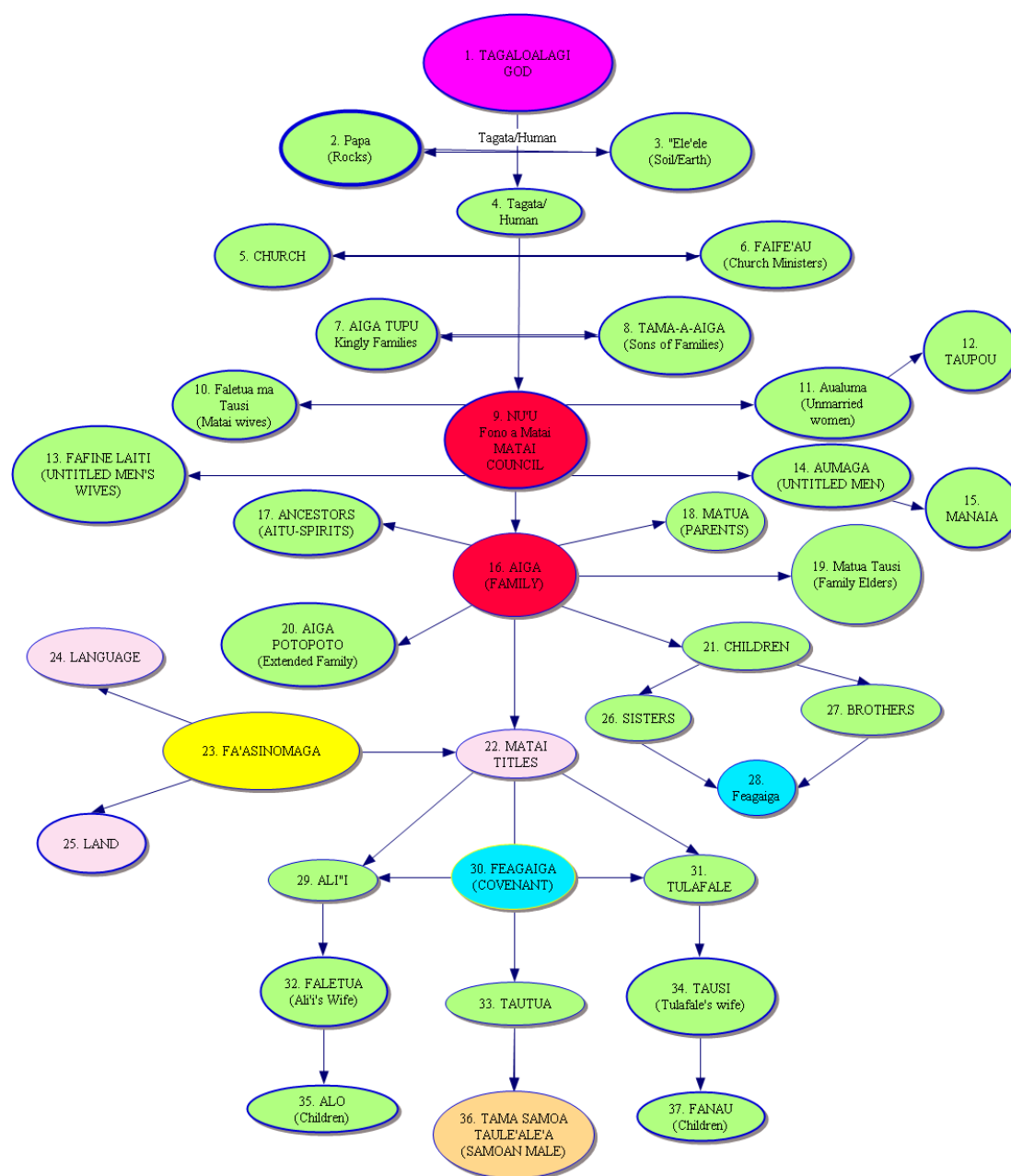
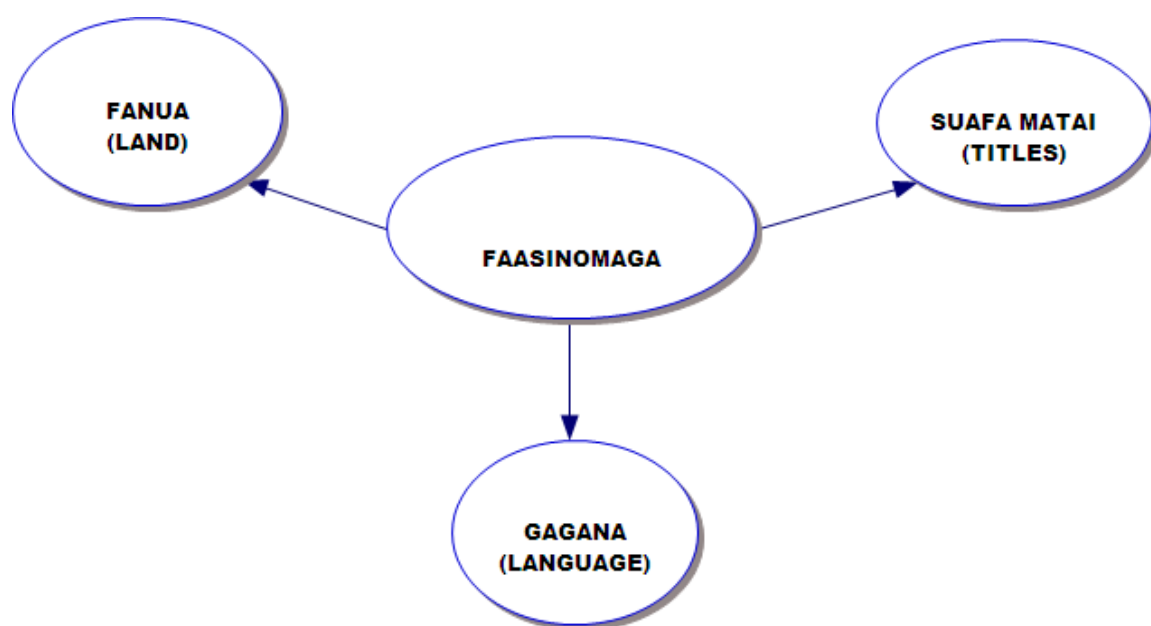


Figure 1 outlines the Samoan body positioned in a relational space within the community in terms of connection to *Atua* or God, people, the community and the land. An individual is directly connected to the creator *Atua* Tagaloa from whom humans are directly descended, but that position is now mostly taken up by the Christian God, although Tagaloa is neither rejected nor subsumed. The diagram is arranged hierarchically but Samoan hierarchy is an inclusive and holistic one, not one of stratification where differences arise from quantitative comparisons between individuals of their relative amount of power, wealth and so on (Tcherkézoff, 2004). This relational connection bespeaks the concept of *va* (relationship) which emphasizes interdependence, and implies mutuality and unilaterality. Each individual within the social structure has a social role which serves the system as a whole. At the bottom of this social arrangement is the *taule'ale'a*, or untitled male (no. 36), who performs most of the roles of *tautua* or service which the *matai*, family, community and the church depend upon. The interdependence of members of society upon each other is reflected in Tcherkézoff's (2004) analogy of light, where at different times and contexts, some members act as the source of light, and others are illuminated by that light. In Tcherkézoff's analogy, God is considered the source of light and the human is illuminated by that light. In the same way, the sacred sister can be the source of light that illuminates her brother, or the sacred *ali'i* as the light source illuminates the secular *tūlāfale* and all other family members in a *feagaiga* relationship.

The Samoan male (no. 36), for example, is related in some way to everyone else (nos. 1-35, 37) in the diagram. He may be the *tautua* (one who serves) for his family and all the titles within that family (no. 22, 29, 31), but he is also the protector and provider for the whole family, which includes the extended family (no. 20), and as a family member he belongs to this particular *fa'asinomaga* (no. 23) and is entitled to its land (no. 25) and titles (no. 22). Through genealogy the Samoan male (no. 36) is related to certain *matai* titles which are located within villages (no. 9) and such village may be related to one or more of the paramount titles and families (no. 7-8). Each village has one or more churches and ministers (no. 5-6) and everyone is believed to have descended from Tagaloalagi, the creator/progenitor, although this belief mostly exists in the discursive practices of orators, and the Christian God is now the creator according to contemporary theological and Church discourse.

Fa'asinomaga is literally the location of the body within its social, cultural, political and religious location where personal identity and a sense of self can only find meaning in relational ties within the web of *fa'asinomaga*. According to Aiono, *fa'asinomaga* has three main parts: land, language and *matai* titles, as in Figure 2 below, but it is more correctly represented in a more holistic fashion as in Figure 1 above, where a more holistic view of social space is outlined.

Figure 3: Components of Fa'asinomaga



The representational diagrams of *fa'asinomaga* in Figures 1 and 2 above highlight the *taule'ale'a* or untitled man at the bottom of the hierarchy; this *taule'ale'a* performs his *tautua* on behalf of his *aiga*, *aiga potopoto*, his parents, his village, church and all that is connected to him. Although not yet a *matai*, a *taule'ale'a* performs his duties in the understanding that serving his parents, family and community is also serving God and that he will not be a *tautua* all his life; his time will come to rise upwards in the hierarchy by progression in age and *tautua* (service).

LAND

Land is one of the three main parts of *fa'asinomaga* (Aiono-Le Tagaloa, 1997) and that “land was intricately associated with titles and therefore any interference associated with it had direct implications for the very core of the Samoan traditionally-based system of power and authority” (Meleisea, 1987b, p. 21). Every *matai* title, especially the *ali'i* titles, have land associated with these titles. For example, most of the *ali'i* titles have a *tulaga-maota* or specific places of residence and these places have specific names for specific titles. For instance, in the village of Asau, there are two important *ali'i* titles (among others) and these are Tufuga and Masoe, and there are many people who hold these titles. The residential place for the Tufuga title is Lopamaua, while that for Masoe is Falepaū. There is a saying, *e maota tau'ave Samoa*, that Samoans take their residential places with them. This means that if someone with the title Tufuga comes and lives in New Zealand, for example, his or her residence in New Zealand is also called Lopamaua.

This strong land–title bondage is evident by the numerous court cases in the Land and Titles Court (Vaai, 1999), since the loss of a title in a court dispute follows a loss of land, and this loss affects not just an individual title contender but the whole family. Family in this sense is extended family which could mean hundreds of people

The portioning of land according to pre-contact traditions still holds in contemporary Samoa. For instance, in legend and genealogy, Pili (Kramer, 1994, p. 26), who is a descendant of Tui Manu'a and Tagaloa, had three sons—Tua, Ana, and Tuamasaga. Each of the sons was given a piece of land that still remains as the main districts on the island Upolu, namely the district of Atua (from Tua), Aana (from Ana), and Tuamasaga. Each district constitutes villages which has their own local hierarchical social structure of matai titles, which are connected to paramount titles in a larger family circle. A dispute over a certain matai title and land brings all the people connected to that title into the discussion or court case, which often resulted in wars in pre-Christian time. In this sense, every Samoan body embodies certain titles and land even though only one representative of the whole family may be conferred with the actual title.

LANGUAGE AND MATAI TITLES

O le tama a le manu e fafaga i fuga o la'au, a o le tama a le tagata e fafaga i upu ma tala.
A bird's young is fed with tree fruit and nectar but a human young is fed with words and stories.

The Samoan saying above underscores the importance and value that Samoans put into their language. Every parent would try to teach their children the Samoan way of life. There are two ways of saying something in Samoan; one is through the chiefly language, the other in non-chiefly language. Learning the language is crucial in learning cultural norms and acceptable or unacceptable behaviour. This means not just knowing what to say but when to say it. Aiono (1996a) points out that Samoa may not have had ancient museums or libraries to keep its ancient treasures, but there was always its *Fale'ula o Fatua'iupu* (oral traditions), which were its museum, its library and school where its treasures have been kept.

Fa'alupega: The Constitution of Social Structure within Titles

The Samoan language cannot be separated from the *matai* title system, because language not only describes, but also constructs and maintains the social structure that it describes. This can be seen clearly, among other things, through the constitution of *fa'alupega*, which is the ceremonial address or set of honorific terms or salutations specific to each *matai* title, family, village or district. *Fa'alupega* is the noun form of *fa'alupu*, which means “to compliment, to call out the names and titles of chiefs and villages” (Pratt, 1911 [1862], p. 96); this ceremonial greeting “encapsulates, in a few phrases, the origin and rank of each constituent title of the *nu'u* (village) and the order of precedence and ranking in the *fono* [council]. There are *fa'alupega* for individual titles, for groups of titles (as in the case of orator groups), for the *nu'u* or local polity, for districts and for the nation” (Meleisea, 1987b, p. 2). There are many versions of *fa'alupega* now available in print which were first recorded by missionaries in the 19th century but had always been passed on in the oral tradition. An example, the *fa'alupega* of the village of Asau in Kitonga and Tau'ili'ili (1985) is reproduced here:

O FA'ALUPEGA O ASAU: FA'ALUPEGA OF THE VILLAGE OF ASAU

1	<i>Tulouna a le Aiga o Mavaega</i>	Greetings to the Mavaega family
2	<i>Tulouna a le Aiga Sa Moeleoi</i>	Greetings to the Moeleoi family
3	<i>Tulouna a Tufuga ma Masoe</i>	Greetings to Tufuga ma Masoe
4	<i>Tulouna a le Falefā o Usoali'i</i>	Greetings to the four Ali'i
5	<i>Tulouna a le Ma'opū</i>	Greetings to the Ma'opū
6	<i>Tulouna a Sa Lilomaiaava</i>	Greetings to the Lilomaiaava family
7	<i>Tulouna oe Salāfai Faigā</i>	Greetings to you Salāfai Faigā
8	<i>Tulouna a le Falefia ma le Si'u o le fanua</i>	Greetings to Falefia ma le Si'u o le fanua
9	<i>Tulouna a oe le Vaisigano</i>	Greetings to you the Vaisigano

The above *fa'alupega* reveals not only the hierarchical social structure of the village but also its familial and political connections. The three families referred to in lines 1-2; 6; 10-11; 15 are some of the few *Aiga Tupu* (kingly families) of Samoa that constitute many different villages, so Asau is part of these larger nationwide families. These are some of Asau's familial and political connections to all those other villages that belong to these larger paramount titles and families. The reference to the Ma'opū (lines 5, 14) refers to the title Tupua, which is one of the four current *Tama-a-Aiga* (kings or sons of families) or paramount titles of Samoa; the Tupua title is held by the current Head of State. Actually there are nine *Tama-a-Aiga* titles listed by Kitona and Tau'ili'ili (1985) but only four seem to hold the same nationwide status of recognition. The *fa'alupega* of Asau is an example of the hierarchical status of local villages and how they are connected to other villages and to the larger *aiga tupu* and paramount titles. Since *matai* are family representatives, the *fa'alupega* is an address not just for title bearers, but for the village as a whole.

Most village *fa'alupega* follows such a hierarchical arrangement where *ali'i* titles are usually addressed before the *tulafale*. The *fa'alupega* of the village Asau is a cultural discursive document that is recited at every opportunity at the local or national level; this *fa'alupega* is arranged hierarchically from the village's national connection to higher titles and kingly families at the top of the hierarchy (lines 1-2) to the *ali'i* titles within the village (lines 3-4) down to the *tūlāfale* (orators, lines 7-9). This *fa'alupega* must be memorized by every *tūlāfale* (orator) in Samoa because this is how people communicate with each other. For instance, even a non-*matai* or a teenager from Asau would always be referred to by the same

fa'alupega as if he/she was a *matai* because the *fa'alupega* is the discursive summary of the *pa'ia ma mamalu* (sacredness and dignity) of the village and people as a whole. Although the *fa'alupega* specifically refers to *matai* names, it is nevertheless a representative document for all those who refer to this village as their *fa'asinomaga* and is inclusive of all villagers of all ages and for both sexes. Tcherkézoff explains:

In Samoa, every person belongs to a 'family' (*aiga*) and often to several, and each *aiga* is something like a culture group, defined around the preservation of one or several ancestral names. There is therefore no such thing as a person who is not linked to at least one *matai* name, and when we see that reference to the place occupied by this name guides all personal interaction, it becomes clear that we are dealing with the most inclusive system of belonging (Tcherkézoff, 2008, p. 256).

The family is a symbolic 'circle' where no one is left out, and all members as one group reproduce themselves around the preservation of a name, which is connected with land. Such a sacred family name is usually the name of the founding ancestor who is connected to the progenitor Atua Tagaloa, the pinnacle of the *matai* system. The village level is nothing other than a circle of *aiga* or a circle of *matai* names, where a family always lives with other families. Like an *aiga* who can expel a family member or take back its family title in the event of serious misconduct, a village can do the same to any family in the circle.

Every Samoan belongs to a sacred circle at every level. Outside the circle he ceases to exist. The individual does not exist if he has no 'family circle' (the literal translation of *aiga potopoto*) to belong to. The family (his place of origin) does not exist if it is not inscribed at the territorial level in a village circle (*nu'u, nu'u o matai*). If this kind of belonging is not in place, the individual cannot sit down in a house because every house represents a circle of belonging; in this event, he is without a house, which is inconceivable in the Samoan culture; he must be able to sit down, and know what post to lean against when his family meets, the two being synonymous: when a person 'belongs', he knows at what 'place' in the circle he belongs. The same is true at the village level: the *matai* of a family could not sit down with other *matai*; he would not

know what post to sit against when the circle of the matai (nuu o matai) met to decide village affairs (Tcherkézoff, 2008, p. 259).

Belonging to a family also gives individuals an automatic connection to a village, and every single Samoan belongs to at least one family and village by virtue of progenitive matrilineal and patrilineal connections. This specific notion of belonging is constituted in the concept of *fa'asinomaga* and, as stated by Tcherkézoff, no Samoan is without a 'circle' to belong to, or without a *fa'asinomaga*. This is the same principle by which the nation as a whole is connected through paramount *matai* titles and geographical locations as summarized in the nation's *fa'alupega*.

Fa'alupega o Samoa: Samoa's Fa'alupega

Most good *tūlāfale* know the *fa'alupega* of every single village of Samoa because this is the most basic knowledge required of every *tūlāfale* which they are expected to recite at a moment's notice. When one addresses Samoa as a whole, one spells out the *fa'alupega* for the whole of Samoa, summarized here according to Kitiona and Tau'ili'ili (1985):

O FA'ALUPEGA O SAMOA: FA'ALUPEGA OF SAMOA

- 1 *Tulouna a Tupu o Samoa*
Greetings to the kings of Samoa
- 2 *Tulouna a Aiga ma a latou Tama, Tama ma o latou Aiga*
Greetings to the Aiga and their Tama, and Tama and their Aiga
- 3 *Tulouna a Tumua ma Pule*
Greetings to Tumua and Pule
- 4 *Tulouna Ituaui ma Alataua*
Greetings to Ituaui and Alataua
- 5 *Tulouna Aiga-i le-Tai ma le Va'a-o-Fonoti*
Greetings to Aiga-i le-Tai and Va'a-o-Fonoti
- 6 *Tulouna a le Faletolu ma to'oto'o o le Fale'ula*
Greetings to Faletolu and To'oto'o o le Fale'ula
- 7 *Tulouna a le Tapua'iga*
Greetings to the Tapua'iga

The *fa'alupega* above is essentially a summary of Samoa as a whole, which acknowledges the important larger *aiga* (families) and their respective *tama* (title holders), who are also known as *tupu* (kings) (lines 1-2). *Tama* literally means son, child, or offspring, but here it means the one who holds a paramount title as a representative of paramount families. These *tupu* are also known as *Tama-a-Aiga*, or sons or offspring of (many) families, and they are the embodiment of the *aiga* and the *aiga* title, like the titles Tui Atua or Tui Aana; these titles are manifestations and embodiments of the prestigious status and divine connection of many *aiga* (families) to the *Atua* and to each other. Pratt (1911 [1862]) defines *Tama-a-Aiga* as “a person of large family connections” or “to have many family connections” and the term is also translated as “Royal Son” (Freeman, 1964). *Aiga ma a latou Tama* means (specific) *aiga* (families) and their respective royal sons, and vice versa. The reference highlights the importance of not only the *Aiga* (family), but also the title bearer. The word *tama* can also mean child or descendant and does not exclude women since it was a woman (Salamasina) who first held all four of the highest titles, collectively called the *tafa'ifā* (literally, four titles).

The group called *Tumua* (line 3) refers to a group of *tulafale* (orators) in the villages of Leulumoega, Lufilufi, and Afega (Kitiona & Tauiliili, 1985), although Kramer's account states that the village of Afega is not a *Tumua*, but is known instead as *Laumua* (1994, p. 19). According to Meleisea, *Tumua* came into existence in about the sixteenth century following the era of Tongan domination, which lasted between 600-1000 AD (Meleisea, 1987a, p. 203) and the role of *Tumua* was to confer the titles Tui A'ana and Tui Atua and to protect and serve these titles. “Prior to the Tongan era, these two titles were passed down in *aiga* but following a major war, control of these titles passed to this group of orators called *Tumua*” (Meleisea, 1987b, p. 15).

The group called *Pule* (line 3) refers to six different orator groups in six different villages on the island of Savai'i. *Tulafale* representatives from *Pule* (in Savai'i) and *Tumua* (in Upolu) usually take precedence in a *fa'atau*, or formal traditional consultation, when *tulafale* consult with each other, to find a representative speaker in public gatherings. This means that through the discursive practices of *lauga*, or public speeches and negotiations where *fa'alupega* are recited, nation-wide status and rank are constantly revived, negotiated and reconfirmed

The *Aiga-i le-Tai* (line 5) is acknowledgement of the Islands of Manono, Apolima and the village of Mulifanua as part of the *aiga* of the Malietoa title. *Va'a-o-Fonoti* (the ship of Fonoti, line 5) refers to the villages of Faleapuna and Fagaloa; this title was given by king Fonoti (while Fonoti held the titles Tui Aana and Tui Atua) to these two villages after they fought bravely on his behalf during Fonoti's wars against his rivals for the titles and power (Kramer, 1994, p. 16). The Faletolu and *To'oto'o o le Fale'ula* refers to the eastern Islands of Tutuila and Manu'a or American Samoa.

Ituau, as in *Ituau* and *Alataua* (line 4), refers to the village of Malie in Faleata; the word *Ituau* literally means 'war side' while *Alataua* means the 'war path,' and refers to the district of Safata, which constitutes nine villages. The brothers Tuna and Fata who led the rebellion that ended the era of the Tongan rule in Samoa (Kramer, 1994, p. 13), and from which originated the title Malietoa, were duly rewarded for their bravery by their father Leatiogie's *tofiga* (decree or appointment). Through this *tofiga* they were assigned the significant titles *Ituau* and *Alataua*, not only to commemorate their achievements on the battlefields but also so that they continue to stand as a protectorate to their newly acquired *malō* (government) whereby their older brother Savea became a *tupu* (king), and the very first bearer of the newly acquired Malietoa title (Henry, 1980, p. 32). Of the two brothers, Tuna stayed in Faleata and his residence was called *Alataua*, while Fata went and live in Safata with his residence referred to as *Ituau* (line 4). *Ituau* and *Alataua* are not *matai* titles *per se* but signify the geographical location and jurisdiction of these orator groups.

Today the orators from these geographic areas are known by these titles *Ituau* and *Alataua*, which means that their responsibilities as orators are that in time of war, they were to continue to organize themselves as the war side and war path for their *tupu* Malietoa and its government.

Some of the most important Samoan titles, such as the title Malietoa, originated from wars, and in turn other important political divisions or orator group *fa'alupega* like *Ituau* and *Alataua* were created from these wars. Important groups of *tulafale* (orators) also now have the power to confer these titles. According to Meleisea (1987a), before the birth of Salamasina's father Tamalelagi, the Tuiā'ana and Tuiātua titles belonged to families. But during Tamalelagi's lifetime the titles were taken by groups of *tulāfale* (orators) who

thereafter decided who should hold these titles. It was at this time that the famous orator groups *Tūmua* and *Pule* began.

The kingly families in the *fa'alupega* are related to a number of different villages all over Samoa, and many villages are related to, or are members of more than one of these larger paramount families. This means that all of Samoa is interconnected through these overlapping *aiga* ties, which are revived and presupposed in traditional speeches by the invocation of *fa'alupega*.

Aiga Tupu o Samoa: Kings and Paramount Titles of Samoa

The paramount titles of Samoa are referred to as *ao* (head) or *pāpā* and these titles refer to specific geographic locations or districts as the respective places of their familial connection and/or authority. For instance, the titles *Tui Atua* is in the district of Atua, *Tui Aana* in the district of Aana, *Gatōa'itele* at Afega in Tuamasaga, and *Vaetamasoali'i* in Safata are *pāpā* titles for those respective districts. The titles *Tui Atua* and *Tui Aana* originated from the children of Pili, son of the *Atua* Tagaloalagi. The other two *pāpā* titles (*Gatōa'itele* and *Vaetamasoali'i*) originated from the ancestors of Salamasina who once held all four *pāpā* titles. Wars broke out among the descendants of these titles at different periods in history when each faction fought for the title. Representatives of the Tonumaipe'a family on the island of Savai'i came in support of some of these warring factions and won these battles, and as the spoils of war, took all the four *pāpā* titles with them to Nafanua in Savai'i. This is why Nafanua is regarded as a war god, since she was very influential in the wars for the four paramount titles. All four paramount titles were returned to a female relative of Nafanua, Levalasi, who in turn conferred them onto her adopted daughter Salamasina. The interweaving web of the genealogical inter-connections of these paramount titles is well documented (Duranti, 1981; Kitona & Tauiliili, 1985; Meleisea, 1987a; Sauoaiga, 1991; Tu'u'u, 2001, 2002) and has resulted in these titles being connected more or less to the whole of Samoa, where the Tupua and the Malietoa families are usually known as *aiga tetele* (the larger families). Many *ali'i* and *tulafale* titles originated from various connections to these paramount titles. There are similar paramount titles on the island of Savai'i, but “in the 19th century, foreign settlers in Samoa pushed for the establishment of a monarchy as the basis of a newly created Samoan central government, the people of Savai'i supported one or other of

the three Upolu titles—Mālietoa, *Tui Atua* and *Tui Aana* for the position of king” (So'o, 2007, p. 3) and gradually the paramount titles on the island of Savai'i lost much of the status associated with their titles through the elevation of the titles on the island of Upolu (i.e. *Tui Atua*, *Tui Aana* and Malietoa) to superior status, as is the case today. The Samoan *atua* (Nafanua) played a part in the history and discourse of these paramount titles.

The chiefly titles of ancient Samoa varied greatly in rank, ranging from those of insignificant *matai* to august titles such as Tui Manu'a in the easternmost islands and Tui Atua, Tui A'ana and Malietoa in the west, titles which were of culminating religious and political importance....The holders of the highest titles in ancient Samoa were called *ali'i pa'ia*, or sacred chiefs, and in the political life of the islands they occupied positions of paramount importance. Each of the great chiefs was connected by descent and history with a number of different villages and districts, and in warfare and manifold other activities the people of these places identified closely with their principal *ali'i pa'ia*, holding him in veneration and regarding themselves as his 'aiga (Freeman, 1964, p. 559).

The table below summarizes *Tama-a-Aiga* (sons of families) or the kingly titles (Kitiona & Tauiliili, 1985).

TAMA-A-AIGA: KINGLY OR PARAMOUNT TITLES

	Tama-a-Aiga (or Tupu)	Tama-a-Aiga or Tupu Today:
1	Fonoti	Tupua Tamasese
2	Muagututi'a	Tui Atua
3	Tuimaleali'ifano	Tui Aana
4	Tupua	Malietoa
5	Mata'afa	
6	Tuia'ana Tamalelagi	
7	Malietoa	
8	Tonumaife'a	
9	Tamasese	

According to Kitiona and Tau'il'ili (1985), in old Samoa there were nine notable *Tama-a-Aiga* as per Table above. Other titles, such as Lilomaiaava and Tagaloa, could be added to this list of nine families and there could have been even more, but through the course of history some of these important titles have become less important although they still exist and are still in use.

As seen above, the important Samoan *aiga* (families) and their paramount titles embodied by their *tama* or royal sons are recognized in the Samoan culture through the *fa'alupega*. The thirteen families (Table 3 below) listed by Kitiona and Tau'il'ili (1985, pp. 8-9) under the heading *Aiga tupu o Samoa* (kingly families of Samoa) are the *aiga* from which the *Tupu* or *Tama-a-Aiga* come from. Each of these *aiga* are connected or have familial connections to various villages of Samoa, and some villages are connected to more than one of these notable *aiga*, or these *aiga* are related to multiple villages throughout the country.

O AIGA TUPU O SAMOA: THE KINGLY FAMILIES OF SAMOA

	Aiga Tupu (Kingly Families)	Associated villages
1	Aiga Salevalasi	Lotofaga, Apia, Tanugamanono, 'Iva, Lona,
2	Aiga Sa Tuala	Amoa-i-Sisifo, Lealatele, Sale'aula, Fasito'outa, Nofoali'i Satapuala, Lefaga, Falese'ela, Feleasi'u
3	Aiga Taulagi	Faga, Sa'asa'ai, Fasito'otai, Falese'ela
4	Aiga Tauaana	Falelatai
5	Aiga Sa Tunumafono	Safata (a district of nine villages),
6	Aiga Sa Fenunuivao	Falealili (a district), Falefâ, Uafato
7	Aiga Sa Tago	Aufaga, Samusu, Amaile
8	Aiga Sa Amituana'i	Solosolo, Lalomanu, Apia, Vailele, Saleimoa, Vai'afai, Safune-i-Taoa, Vaisala, Auala, Falealupo, Samata,
9	Aiga Sa Peseta	Matautu, Sato'alepai, Sale'aula, Samauga,
10	Aiga Sa Malietoa	Malie, Sapapâli'i, Sasina,
11	Aiga Samoelei	Asau, Neiafu, Falelima, Tufutafoe, Satupa'itea, Sagone, Vaipu'a,

12	Aiga o Mavaega	Faleata, Faleasi'u, Samauga, Aopo, Sasina, Asau, Sataua,
13	Aiga Tofiga	Safotulafai,

As seen from Table 3 above, these important *aiga* constitute villages from the islands of Upolu and Savai'i. Although not all villages are represented in these thirteen *aiga* above, there are still connections between those other villages not represented in this table and these thirteen *aiga*. Those other villages may be represented in other ways, as spelled out in the *fa'alupega*. For instance, three *aiga*—namely, the Aiga o Mavaega, Aiga Sa Fenunuivao and Aiga Satuala—came together to confer the title Tupua Tamasese upon the current Head of State, Tupua Tamasese Efi. All villages associated with these *aiga* regard Tupua as their *tama* (royal son), hence the saying in the *fa'alupega*, *O Aiga ma a latou tama* (families and their sons). Likewise, the title Malietoa is associated with more than one of these *aiga*. This is how the whole of Samoa can be seen as interconnected, as explained by Meleisea. “These titles and the orator groups of Samoa are like a fishing net, the strings of which link together all the families, the villages and districts of Samoa” (1987a, p. 32).

I have illustrated how Samoa is connected through these important titles which originated from historical past events and there are hundreds other *matai* titles pertaining to various families and villages. Through *matai* titles, the whole of Samoa is connected through belonging and/or association to these important titles. Members of a large extended family are likewise connected by association to family title(s) so any individual can pinpoint her/his place within an *aiga*, a village and district, and to larger *aiga* and paramount titles and to other villages all over Samoa. Various versions of Samoan creation stories underline the human genealogy that originates from Tagaloa (e.g., Kramer, 1994, pp. 24-27, 115). This wide web of overlapping layers of familial and title connections sustain each individual as a relational and an interdependent being within a web of social relations, where the immediate and local group is the *aiga*. Every *aiga* has specific *matai* title(s), belong to a village(s), and possesses particular land which has names and all these are of divine origin and constitution; this is known as *fa'asinomaga* and every Samoan belong to a *fa'asinomaga*. At the very basic structure of the title or *matai* system is the family *matai*.

O LE MATAI: A CHIEF

The original meaning and usage of the word *matai* in Samoa was someone who “was the best in his specialized activity, not necessarily a titled chief” (Tcherkézoff, 2000, p. 155). In pre-Christian times, there was a more pronounced hierarchy in the village and district levels concerning titles, where at the top there were *ali'i pa'ia* (like Tui Atua), under that rank there were *ali'i*, and further down were *tulāfale*, “but *matai* were only heads of families without titles” (Tcherkézoff, 2000, pp. 162-163). *Ali'i pa'ia*, who are also referred to as *Tama-a-Aiga* or *tupu*, are respected over a wider range of villages and districts, where they form genealogical and/or political connections.

The word *matai tufuga* (chief builder), for example, refers only to the architect and chief builder who directs all facets of a building project; it means both *matai* as an expert and as a leader or supervisor. Meleisea (1987a) adds that the “term *matai* comes from ‘*mata i ai*’ literally meaning ‘all eyes to,’ which has the connotation of ‘being set apart’ or consecrated”(p. 7). These meanings fit in well with another word, *mata'i*, with an apostrophe, which means to gaze at something or someone or to keep watch over. Considering the Samoan civil wars of the nineteenth and prior centuries (G. Brown, 1908; Meleisea, 1987b; Watson, 1918), every *aiga* had a practical need to have someone to look up to for leadership, guidance and protection, and the original meaning of *matai* as ‘the best,’ gradually evolved into meaning someone who is a family leader and who holds a family title. Today the word *matai* now signifies an *ali'i* or *tulāfale* with a *matai* title, who has authority (*pule*) to manage family resources, represent the *aiga* in village *fono* (meetings) and direct the daily work and affairs of the *aiga*. According to Shore (1982), “the *matai* is empowered through possession of the title, and has authority over lands and people” (p. 59). The titles themselves usually originated from names of founding ancestors or some notable events in the legendary past, or usually from some battles that the family or village engaged in, or derived from the deeds, actions or words of the paramount or founding family ancestor. According to Tcherkézoff, the meaning of *matai* evolved from a family leader without a title to the meaning it has today, which now defines all kinds of chiefs with titles, of which there are two kinds: *ali'i* and *tulafale*. This was due largely to

historical conflicts and dealings with the European settlers and, later, colonizers and administrators. It produces a kind of general levelling of the old hierarchies in relation to a new centralized power and to the idea of a Parliament where representatives of various villages could sit. Gradually, it became less pertinent that a representative was an *ali'i* or *tulāfale* (Tcherkézoff, 2000, p. 177).

Ali'i or Tamāāli'i and Tulāfale

Matai titles are of two kinds: *ali'i* and *tulafale*. *Ali'i* is the more sacred *matai*, who embodies the prestige of the family, and the *tulafale* is the more secular one who is the orator or talking *matai*. Tcherkézoff explain:

Other chiefs designated as *ali'i*, were the political and ritual heads of extended kin networks and, sometimes, of large territories, known as *itūmālō*, consisting of numerous villages and resulting from a *mālō* 'victory' in war. It seems that the *ali'i* who had authority on a large scale was referred to as *ali'i pa'ia* 'sacred chief.' This meant that his title (the founding name of his 'aiga) had come to be considered by a great number of other families as 'sacred': founded by the first gods, blessed by numerous victories which had revealed the mana 'supernatural power' attached to this name, etc. This chief was not the "king" of vast territories and probably did not have full authority (*pule*) on all the lands of the *itūmālō*. He was still, like other family heads, the trustee for the sole land of his *aiga*. But, unlike other chiefs, he was the sacred centre of vast alliances between his village and other villages. (Tcherkézoff, 2000, p. 153)

The relationship between the *ali'i* and *tulāfale* reflects that of the creator Tagaloa-fa'atutupu-nu'u (shortened as Tagaloa) and Tagaloa's manifestations Tagaloa-le-fuli (Tagaloa the immovable) and Tagaloa-sāvali (Tagaloa the messenger/ambassador). In the Creation Story (Chapter five), Tagaloa asked Tagaloa-le-fuli: "*sau ia inā e ali'i i le lagi*—come and be thou chief in heaven" (lines 105-107), and Tagaloa- sāvali was asked: "*sau ia ina e alu ma tausavali i lagi uma...e tala'i ifo*—come here; be thou ambassador to all the heavens...to tell them..." (lines 109-111). The name 'immovable' characterizes the function of the sacred *ali'i*

who sits still as chief in heaven, as contrasted with the mobile Tagaloa-sāvali who, true to his name (*sāvali* means message or messenger), is asked to be the messenger in all heavens. The original English translation does not reflect the intensity of the directive and instruction to move: “*sau ia ina e alu ma tausavali*” should be properly translated as “come now and go and visit all...” *Tausavali* implies not one but many trips to a number of destinations (all the heavens). The moving–immovable relationship of the two manifestations reflects exactly that of the sacred *ali’i* and the secular *tulāfale*.

In a village council or *fono*, the *tulāfale* sit at the *talāluma* (front) and toward the back of the house, while the *ali’i* sit at the *matuātala* (sides). The *tulāfale* make speeches to open the meeting and discuss issues; the *ali’i* are expected not to talk too often unless it is necessary or until asked directly, but once they speak, it usually signals not only the end of a discussion but also that their opinion stands as final. The words, thoughts and opinions of the *tulāfale* are called *moe* (also, *fa’autaga*) which is the common word for sleep, but for the *ali’i* is *tofā*—the polite word for sleep. During a traditional ‘ava ceremony the *ali’i* drink first before the *tulāfale*; each *ali’i* has a specific *igoa ipu*, or ‘ava-drinking title, which is different from their *matai* titles. The *tulāfale*’s ‘ava are called by their *matai* titles. Each *ali’i* has a specific name for their fine mats, while *tulāfale* do not have a specific name for theirs. *Ali’i* wives are called *faletua* or *masiofo*, and *tausi* for a *tulāfale*. There is a specific name for a village’s ‘aumaga (group of untitled men), and *aualuma* (unmarried women), who are referred to as the *ali’i*’s *aumaga* or *aualuma*. The *ali’i* residential place is *maota*, and *laoa* for a *tulāfale*. There are also different names for the occasion when they are bestowed *matai* titles. When they die, specific traditional rituals and prohibitions are observed for *ali’i* but not for a *tulāfale*; the spirit of *ali’i* go to Luāloto ali’i, but the *tulāfale* go to Luāloto taufanua with the rest of the common people (Kramer, 1994, p. 24).

The *ali’i*–*tulāfale* relationship designates *feagaiga*, a term that derives from *feagai*, which means “to be opposite to each other, to correspond or dwell together cordially, to be on good terms; as a chief with his people, or a minister with his flock” (Pratt, 1911 [1862], p. 139). Pratt defined *feagaiga* in 1862 as “an established relationship between different parties, as between brothers and sisters and their children or between chiefs and their *tulāfale*.” A second definition is “an agreement, a covenant” but he notes that this second definition was “a lately adopted meaning” (p. 139). Milner’s dictionary (nd [1966]), published almost a

century later, takes up Pratt's second "lately adopted meaning" as his first, and while Pratt emphasizes the notion of the relationship inherent in the term *feagaiga*, Milner's arrangement suggests that this lately adopted meaning (covenant) has become the principal meaning (Schoeffel, 1995), most likely derived from the biblical 'covenant.' The parties to a *feagaiga* relationship as defined by Pratt and Milner as outlined in Schoeffel (1995, pp. 86-87) are:

FEAGAIGA: THE SACRED–SECULAR RELATIONSHIP

Sacred	Secular
Sister	Brother
Tamafafine (sororal descent line)	Tamatane (fraternal descent line)
Ali'i (chiefs)	Tulāfale (orators, heads of families)
Congregational Pastor	Congregation

According to Schoeffel,

Fundamental to the relationship between the parties to a *feagaiga* is the idea that secular actions require moral or spiritual support...A contrast is drawn between sacred power or moral authority and secular authority and action, in which the sanctity attributed to one party lends dignity and legitimacy to the actions of the other. The supernatural authority possessed by the 'sacred' party, on one hand, sanctions and controls; on the other hand, it dignifies and lends blessing to the actions of the secular party. The term *feagaiga* encapsulates the idealized principles of order in Samoan society at all levels of organization. The dignity and honour (*mamalu*) of a group or its representative is acknowledged through behaviour that is referred to in Samoa as *fa'aaloalo* (respect and deference). The qualities of dignity, honour, respect and deference are considered to be the fundamental ingredients of the social order (1995, pp. 86-87).

As described by Schoeffel, the values embodied in the *feagaiga* concept are not confined to the parties mentioned above, but encapsulate the lives of all Samoans in general, where the action and *fa'aaloalo*, etc., of those in the secular or lower status in the hierarchy are for the *tautua* (service) of the sacred ones from whom they receive blessing. *Ali'i* is used to translate

lord and God in the Samoan Bible, which further highlights the sacred–secular distinction of human relationships which emulates the sacred divine and secular human.

Tagaloa, the First Matai

According to Gilson (1970), “The Samoans are among the few Polynesian peoples who considered themselves to have originated in the islands where the Europeans found them. In their view, Tagaloa, the principal deity, created the islands, and from him were descended the founders of the most ancient human lineages, villages and political institutions” (pp. 39-40). Meleisea (1987a) also adds: “*Matai* titles are of two kinds; *ali'i* and *tulafale*. *Ali'i* titles were those which traced sacred origins through genealogies which begin with Tagaloa-a-lagi, the creator, and linked to major aristocratic lineages” (p. 8). This is the general belief of Samoans as clearly underlined by the creation story used in this work (Fraser, 1892, 1897), which also have other versions (Herman, 1970, p. 2; Holmes & Holmes, 1992, p. 15). Another version tells of Pili, son of Tagaloalagi, who came from the heavens (Herman, 1970; Meleisea, 1987b) and went from Manu'a to the length of Samoa, eventually dividing the island of Upolu among his descendants, naming these traditional districts by his children's names, and those names survive to this day. The transition of Pili from being the son of the *Atua* Tagaloa to becoming the first *matai* has also many variations in Samoan oral traditions; others believe that it was the *Atua* Tagaloa who became the first *matai* and the *matai* system is derived from the first *matai* who is the divine creator *Atua* Tagaloalagi. Since the term *Atua* implies both the traditional Tagaloa and the Christian God, the origin of the all-embracing *matai* system and life itself is now attributed to both.

The country is not founded on ‘strength’, but on ‘God’, according to the national motto and the Constitution; and here God is the pinnacle of the *matai* system, both its origin and its reference, the Christian God having taken over the role once played by Tagaloa, the demiurge of Western Polynesia (Tcherkézoff, 2008, p. 254).

When participant Tuli was asked about the relation of his body to God, he pointed to the Samoan creation story as the basis of his belief in the origin of humanity.

474 Yes, because there is not one Kagaloa. There was, There is only one God

- Kagaloa. But there is not one Kagaloa
- 475 Oh, alright
- 476 *E 'ese'ese uma ā Kagaloa. Ia, e i ai Kagaloa ga e ka'u o Akua fekalai.*
All these Kagaloa are different. And, there are those Kagaloa called talking
[speech-making] Gods
- 477 *E i ai foi Kagaloa sa ka'u o Akua o le sami.*
There are also Kagaloa that were called Gods of the sea
- 478 *Ia e i ai foi Kagaloa sa ka'u o Akua o folauga,*
There are also Kagaloa that were called Gods of voyages
- 479 *ma Akua o femalagaā'iga []*
And Gods of travel [journeying]
- 481 *Ae 'ese'ese uma ā Akua ae pei o le igoa ā ga sa fai o Kagaloa*
All these *Atua* (gods) are different but that was the one name used was Kagaloa
- 482 *ia sa i ai foi le Kagaloa e ka'u o Kagaloālagi.*
There was also a Kagaloa that is called Kagaloālagi
- 483 *Ia sa i ai foi le Kagaloa lea e ka'u o le Kagaloa a Āopo. E i ai ā le Kagaloa a Āopo lakou,*
There was also a Kagaloa that is called the Kagaloa of [the village] Āopo. Āopo have their own Kagaloa
- 486 *ia ga o'o loa lea 'iga ua ua fa'asolo āge ua, ua le koe 'avea ma Akua,*
Then eventually [they] became, ceased to be a god,
- 487 *ia ae o le ulua'i makai ā lea a Samoa, a,*
But instead this [Kagaloa] is the very first Samoan chief [*makai*], eh
- 488 *ia, o lea la e i ai le kalikoguga lea o Samoa,*
So, that is why there is that belief of Samoa,
- 489 *sa aveia ia, makai ma, ma Akua i ga aso, Iga ua, ua makai Kagaloa, ua aveia Kagaloa ma makai.*
That chiefs, were, gods in those days, when, Kagaloa was chief, when Kagaloa became a chief.

The extreme case formulation (Wood & Kroger, 2000), 'only one God' (*e kasi ā le Akua*, line 474), constructs a monotheistic belief in one *Atua*; this both deflects any accusation of polytheism and also puts the cultural Tagaloa belief in a favourable comparison with the monotheistic Christian God. The persuasive orientation towards Tagaloa is facilitated by the concession making in line 474, where the statement is made that there is not one Tagaloa; he then concludes that statement with the strong assertion, marked by the use of the emphatic particle *ā* (*e kasi ā le Akua*, only [or absolutely] one God), that there is only one *Atua* Tagaloa, and then reprising the original statement that there is not one Tagaloa. This kind of construction is less liable to challenges and refutation (Wood & Kroger, 2000); it

characterizes the Tagaloa discourse as a monotheistic belief in one *Atua* and elevates Tagaloa to the same status as the monotheistic Christian God. The multiplicity of *Atua* (gods) is nevertheless declared in line 481 and is a contrast to the previous monotheistic claim.

The temporal markers ‘there was,’ ‘there is,’ as indicative of both the past and present tenses, are unusually built into various sentences (lines 474, 477-478, 481-483). A strong indication of the significance of the tenses is illustrated in line 474 where the second half of the sentence started with the past tense ‘there was,’ then abruptly ends there, and then restarts with a switch to the present tense ‘there is,’ effectively positioning the *Atua* [T] Kagaloa in the present tense as one who is most important in the present time, not an irrelevant mythological figure of the past. This past–present tension leads up to the point where Tagaloa’s reign as a god ceased but eventually became the first Samoan *matai* (lines 486-488); this is where the core of the construction lies—that Tagaloa’s transition of status from *Atua* to *matai* is the foundation of the ‘present’ *matai* system, a system or institution that is constituted within the general “belief of Samoa,” where the belief is constructed in the present tense (‘there is that belief,’ line 488). The use of the present tense here warrants Tagaloa belief as logical, acceptable, and as a valid and legitimate part of contemporary traditional beliefs.

The past tense, however, is highlighted twice in the first half of the next line (‘the chiefs were,’ ‘in those days,’ line 489) to mark the assertion that *matai* in general were themselves gods. There is potential uproar in this age of social and sexual equality if such equation of *matai* with God is rejuvenated at the expense of women, so the speaker rejects ownership of this equation by assigning it solely to the past (in those days), but still retains the larger part of his construction that the *matai* system is divinely sanctioned by Tagaloa, the first *matai*, and that this is the consensual belief of Samoans in general.

Choosing a Matai

A *matai* is selected by his/her family and it is the *matai* who represents the whole family before the village, but the village can decide not to accept a family’s selected representative, showing their displeasure by not attending (*e le usu le nu’u*) the cultural ceremony for the bestowal of *matai* title.

The proverb, “*O le ala i le pule o le tautua*—the way to authority is through service,” indicates that, ideally, a *matai* is one who had performed the duty of *tautua* to the previous *matai(s)* and the *aiga*, the *nu’u* (village) and the village church before he/she becomes a *matai*: it means one becomes a *matai* not by accident but through hard work and service throughout one’s life. It is not unusual for a *matai* who is head of the family to bestow the title on someone who is an adopted son or family member, instead of his own biological *suli* (descendants), because the incumbent has performed the *tautua* to the *matai*’s satisfaction. Malietoa La’auli and Tupua Fuiavailili are examples of adopted sons being given these paramount titles instead of their biological *suli*, Fuaoleto’elau and Fepulea’i respectively (Tavale, 1999, p. 469).

When choosing a *matai*, the whole *aiga* would be called to assemble together at the *fanua* or land of their *fa’asinomaga* to decide on who should be given the family title. This process is referred to as *sa’ili se tasi e tausia le aiga*—finding someone to look after the family. *Tausia* is from the root word *tausi*, meaning to nurse, to nurture or to take care of, and it reflects the idea that the bestowal of a title is not just a privilege or power for the incumbent, but entails much obligation on the part of the *matai* for keeping the family in good stead. Shore explains:

Succession to Samoan *matai* status is neither clearly through achievement nor through ascribed status. Rather, a chief is selected by consensus of the assembled members of the descent group following what are often protracted discussion and debate. Instead of employing a single ‘rule’ for succession, Samoans characteristically maintain a number of different, often conflicting, norms for selecting a chief, and employ them as alternatives or in combination. The actual choice of a chief, then, becomes a result of complex negotiations and a successor can rarely be predicted on the basis of abstract norms alone....Not limited to conferring *matai* status on an eldest child of the former title holder, or even on a direct blood descendant, the decent group can place power and responsibility in the hands of the ablest members of the group and bring into the fold those talented or wealthy members who may threaten to become alienated from the *matai* system and its authority (Shore, 1982, p. 65).

According to Gilson (1970), “any male heir was eligible, so that personal qualities, including leadership in war, and the exigencies of marriage and other forms of alliance were of great

importance in determining who was best suited for a title” (p. 59). These positions are still acknowledged today, but they really need to come under some family agreement and consensus as Shore (1982) acknowledged. Seloti (2007) adds that besides *tautua* and blood connections as criteria for selection, “formal education and work experience are now included as variables in the selection process” but family consensus must be reached (p. 97).

At other times, the out-going or elderly *matai* appoints his/her successor; this is called a *mavaega* or *tofiga*. In the genealogy of the *tupu* (kings) of Samoa, there are a number of such *mavaega* where an outsider is decreed to succeed over against the *suli* (biological descendants). In one particular *mavaega*, king Galumalemana, who had already had eight children from four different *usuga*, decreed that the unborn child in the womb of his latest wife, Sauimalae, was to succeed him as the next king (Tu'u'u, 2001, pp. 278-279). Although these *mavaega* and *tofiga* were generally observed by all, wars nevertheless broke out, because many other *suli* also vied for the same titles. The constitution of *mavaega* presupposes the power, authority and blessing in the hands of parents and or title holders since they have the authority to appoint a successor. To be sure, all of the criteria above mentioned come into consideration when choosing a *matai*; those who are presently living on the family land (the family *fa'asinomaga*) and have been doing *tautua* for the village on behalf of the *aiga* have a strong claim to titles, while others prefer someone who is well versed with the culture and discursive traditions and genealogical connections of family, village and the nation, claiming that this is an ideal person to ‘*tausia le aiga*’ (look after the family).

The Matai's Authority and Responsibilities

The power and authority of local villages are called *O le Pule a Ali'i ma Faipule*—The Authority of Chiefs and Law-makers. *Pule* means “a command, to command, an order, to order, to decide with authority” (Pratt, 1911 [1862], p. 257) and also to apportion things, such as food. According to Shore (1982), “the power of the chief lies not so much in the personal qualities of the holder (though these can significantly affect the title's power and dignity), but rather in the title itself; a name confers power on its holder” (p. 59). The “name” that confers power is the *matai* title and “titles are symbolic capital” (Bourdieu, 1985, p. 733), where symbolic capital (e.g., prestige, honour, attention) is any species of capital that is perceived

through socially inculcated classificatory schemes and it is a crucial source of power. Power in the form of symbolic capital is perceived not as power, but as a source of legitimate demands on the services of others, whether material, such as help at harvest time, or symbolic, such as the expression of deference; and it is precisely this perception of misrecognition that makes it effective as a form of power (Brubaker, 1985).

The *matai*'s authority cannot be isolated from his/her responsibilities to *tausi le aiga* (care for the family). *Tausi* means to take care of, to nurse, to observe or to keep, but it also means a lot more than that. The phrase *tausi lau fanau* (take care of or nurture your children) does not mean to just look after or keep watch over your children; it means to feed, wash, protect, teach, and love your children. A *matai* therefore is not an authoritarian figure who owns the land and resources, but one who *tausi* the family, as in a child–parent relationship. In the words of Fiu, a participant in this research, the *matai*'s duty is

to look after things...looking after family properties because as we know we are different from many other countries like in this country [New Zealand], the government has authority over the land and things like that. But for Samoa, all those things are under the *matai*'s authority. The word authority (*pule*) has been over emphasized but the way it used to be, it was the *matai*'s overseeing [of things]. Yes, all properties of the family were under the supervision of the *matai*.

In the above text, the *matai* is presented almost as a part-time care giver whose time will eventually end, and the responsibility of caring for family treasures will pass on to a successor. A *matai*'s first and foremost duties are to care for and protect family “*mea kokigo*” (properties). *Tino* means body or *aiga* (family). *Mea kokigo* or *mea totino* literally means things or properties pertaining to the *tino* (body), or things that belong to the family body, so even land and titles are associated with the body and are embodied not just by the title bearer but by the whole family; properties and treasures refer to family land, its *matai* titles and all that belongs to the collective family under particular title(s). These treasures are referred to as *measina* or *tofi*, and are fiercely protected because they can easily be stolen by another family or persons through cunning manipulation of family *gafa* (genealogy) (Vaai, 1999). The general view from the research participants was that the *matai* is the *ta'ita'i* (leader), the *tamā* (father), and the *pule* (authority) for the family. Fiu explains:

- 393 *Ioe ia e sa'o a legā mea. Auā pei o le kalikoguga ā ia o le kakou soifuaga
fa'asamoa,*
Yes that is true. Because the very principle of our Samoan way of life,
- 394 *E kasi ā le mea e sau ai le fa'akoguga, o kagaka uma.*
There is only one place that instructions come from for everyone
- 396 *E sau i le fale kele.*
It comes from the big [main] house
- 397 *Auā o le agagu'u Samoa, a o'o i le po, i le afiafi, uma loa mea ai, ia,*
Because in the Samoan culture, when night falls, in the evening, after the
meals, then,
- 398 *auā e ga o le ko'eiga ā ma le lo'omakua e i le fale kele.*
Because only the old man and the old lady would be in the main house
- 399 *Ia uma loa fai loa le mea ai i kua e i ai uma ā, ia.*
After the meal at the back where everyone would be present, then,
- 400 *Se'i vagagā gi keige e ave ā le mea 'ai i le fale o keige auā e i ai ā le fale o
keige o kama'ika'i.*
Except the ladies the ladies' food would be served to the ladies' house because
there is a separate house for the ladies
- 401 *E uma loa la i le afiafi ua uma kalisuaga o le afiafi, sau loa lea o le
kaule'ale'a, e gofo mai kua o le, i le kalā kua.*
After the evening meals, the untitled man would come [into the main house],
and sits himself at the back of the house
- 402 *Ae fai aku i ai le fa'akokuga o le, a le makai mo lesi aso.*
And the matai would give him the instructions for the [next] day []
- 404 *Ia e pei fo'i lele loga uiga ga e, e le fa'apea o se pule, a,*
Like you know it is not an authority
- 405 *auā e pei ā' o i i le fale kele, e alaku uma ai ā fa'akoguga o mea uma.*
Because like it is the main house from where all instructions for everything
comes from
- 406 *O le uiga la pei foi oga ka kalagoa i le mea o le kua'oi, auā o ga mea uma,*
So the meaning as we've talked about the boundary, because all those things
- 407 *E i ai ā le aso, e le koe gofo ai i kua i i, ae gofo aku i luma i i e fai aku le mea
lea i*
There will come the day, when [the untitled man] would not be sitting here [at the back] any
more, but sits at the front to dispatch these [instructions].

The inclusive possessive personal pronoun—"our" way of life—legitimises this practice as a founding principle or belief of Samoan culture, and incorporates the interviewer into the speakers' version of the Samoan way of life as truthful and inclusive of all Samoans. This

prohibits attempts for any alternative version of the Samoan way of life. In such a life, there is only one person and place where instructions are issued, and that is from the *fale tele*—big or main house—which indicates that the houses at the back are smaller or minor metaphorically and in actual size. The *koe'iga* (old man) and *lo'omakua* (old lady) represent respect, knowledge and authority in Samoan culture and they underline the lower rank of the untitled man and all who are at the back houses. Hierarchy is defined by the duality: front–back, old–young, and big versus small; the subject position of authority is with the one who speaks and gives instructions, while the untitled man who sits at the back receives instructions. Power is at the “front” “big” “main” house and with old age; powerlessness is with the small back houses of the younger generation. The power differential is balanced by the reminder that “there will come the day” (line 407) when the powerless eventually receive the authority to give instructions. In this sense, power is with the *matai* system, not with an individual, although individuals hold power but only during their tenure at the *matai* title; the untitled man will assume that power when his time comes to continue the cycle. This is an unfinished body (Shilling, 1993): the body who sits at the back will some day sit at the front assuming power. In contrast to the shame of old age in some cultures, the terms *toea'ina* and *lo'omatua* in Samoan discourse demand respect because old age bespeaks seniority and superiority in terms of experience and knowledge, as in the saying *Fa'alogo Mulimai iā Muamai*—s/he who came later must listen to s/he who came first.

O le Matai Lelei: A Good Matai

Soa's experience was that when he became a *matai*, he experienced being treated differently.

782 Though its true that sometime I'm disrespectful and go to the front and say
 783 “Oh in church you are a matai by being a deacon” and things like that
 784 But I still know that I would never go and sit at the front at
 785 At times when we sit down in our gatherings like we always do in church functions
 786 I could not go and sit where Fonoti and those people sit, like [I can] this time.
 787 This time its different
 788 When I do come when we come like we did when we went to Samoa recently
 789 Now they pay [me] respect and politely address you. Like that is the change that you
 [experience]

- 790 When you sit at the place where you sit you are comfortable it is not regarded as
 791 *Ua kaukalaikiki kele la o la ua, a*
 As being very cheeky that now, eh
 792 Like that is the change that I have experienced from where I was [as a non-matai]
 793 Like what I was like as an untitled man I was uncontrollable
 794 But this time, it is difficult because I am not going by myself anymore
 795 *Lea ua ka kau'avea lesi fo'i o suafo kāua i le aiga mea fo'i fa'a'apega i le a,*
 Now I am carrying one of the important titles of the family and things like that in eh,
 796 *Maikau mai fa'a'apea: "Sole, se le kagaka la" kai pei la sa'u kala fa'aka'ika'iga,*
 [Because people are] watching and [could] say: "Hey that person" like as an example,
 797 *Pei o si koe'iga lea o lea la'a le ka'u akua le igoa gei ke'i ua*
 Like that old man who I won't mention the name in case
 798 *Se ka mafaufau fo'i lea o kagaka lae avaku i ai fa'aaloaloga oga o mea fa'a'apega*
 I would think that that kind of person are being respected because of things like that
 [being matai]
 799 *A o mea lae sau ai le fofoga makuā le*
 But what comes out of the [his] mouth really doesn't
 800 *Pei o mea la ga fo'i kulaga e kakau ga e mafaufau lelei e i ai ā le kaimi e*
 Like that is the kind of thing that you must think hard about that there will be time to
 801 *Ae ua faigakā la ga e koe faia oga e ke mafaufau i le mea lea e ke gofo ma oe, a.*
 But it is now hard for you to do because you're thinking about what you hold, eh.

The subject position of *matai* bowdlerizes the bearer's personality and actions because the "watching" public (line 796) judges that a *matai* should behave like one. A new *matai* "carries" not only the family name but all that is constituted within it—a *matai* is never alone but an embodiment of family, traditions and God. These are the values embodied by a sacred *matai* as opposed to an "uncontrollable" (796) secular non-*matai*. Lines 782-83 reflect church discourses that deacons, a religious title, are often regarded as *matai* in terms of decision making and denotes the utilization of the *matai* system within church structure. Regarding a deacon as *matai* (line 783) implies that a deacon should also assume the superior status of *matai* to justify a deacon's sitting together with *matais*, like the *matai* title Fonoti (line 786). As a non-title man the speaker did not feel comfortable sitting together with *matais* like Fonoti (785-786) but after he became a *matai*, he felt more comfortable sitting with other *matai* (790). Here, "the body is not simply constrained by or invested with social relations, but also actually forms a basis for and contributes towards these relations" (Shilling, 1993, p. 13).

Another church minister repeated what another *matai* said, that in the old days, a *matai* was also the *atua* (god) of the *aiga*. These two participants claim that this belief is still applicable to the *matai* of today, especially noticing that as a *tautua*, “what you do for the *matai* is also the same thing you do for God. We refer to the Christian God as *our matai i le lagi* (*matai* in heaven), and in the same sense we have our *matai* here on earth.” The cultural imagery of a *tautua* whose duty it is to serve the *matai* makes a smoother transition for the theological language used by ministers urging parishioners, who are constructed as *tautua*, to serve God the heavenly *matai* and His church.

Every family has one or more *matai* and the presence of *matai* in the family is symbolic of service, security and status. Reverend Amosa explains:

- 44 *Tu'u atu fo'i la i le tulaga fa'amatai ma le, ma le tino o le matai, a*
 So in the context of chiefly system and, the body of the chief, eh
- 45 *Ia ua i ai foi le tulaga o le o le ta'ita'i, a*
 [He/she] has the position of leadership, eh
- 46 *o le fa'aaogāina o le tino, a va'aia le tino o le matai po'o le tino o le tamā o*
 le aiga i se mea, a
 the using of the body, when the body of the chief or the body of the father of the
 family is seen anywhere, eh
- 47 *o i'inā e aga'i i ai le puipuiga fo'i a, a le aiga, a*
 That is where the family's protection will be directed towards, eh
- 48 *a leai a le va'aia le tino o le matai i le aiga*
 When there is no when the body of the chief is not seen in the family
- 49 *e foliga mai fo'i ua lamatia le saogalemū o lea aiga, a*
 It's like the safety of the family is also threatened, eh
- 50 *le puipuiga fo'i o, o meatotino o tofi ma fanua ma eleele o suafa matai,*
 [In] the protection of, properties and land [and] chiefly titles,
- 51 *e e va'aia ā le tino o le matai, a*
 when the body of the chief is seen, eh
- 52 *e le fuaina fo'i, e 'ave se*
 There is no requirement to
- 53 *se 'eseesega fa'apea o se matai e tino u'au'a pe tino masoa e tu'u i ai le, a*
 to differentiate between a chief with muscular and strong body to be given the [title]
- 54 *leai o le, o le ā lava le tino*
 No whatever kind of body
- 55 *o le ā lava le tino o le matai o le*
 Whatever body the chief has is

56 *ia a o se mea ā e vaaia ai lona tino o le mea taua lena mo le aiga, a*
But wherever his/her body is seen that is the important thing for the family, eh

Three subject positions assigned to the *matai* are leader (line 45); father, someone to be protected (lines 46-47); and one who offers protection (lines 48-50); the father figure presupposes the *matai* as male who are privileged over female as natural ‘leaders’. The concept of *matai* is constructed within the context of family, where both *matai* and family are dependent on each other for safety; the *matai*’s role is to protect the family treasure (*meatotino*, line 50) of land and titles but he is also protected by the family everywhere he goes (line 47). The *matai* and father embodies the family *pa’ia* (sacredness) and *mamalu* (dignity) and everything about the family, so that a threat to the safety of the *matai* is also a threat to the family (line 49) and this implies another role, that of *tautua* who performs the role of *tautua toto* (service through blood). In this form of *tautua*, the person who performs this service readily sheds his blood on behalf of the *matai* and family, and it is usually the *taulele’a* (untitled men) that performs this task. Shore reported that when one *matai* killed another, the victim’s eldest son attacked the murderer with a machete and nearly killed him, then voluntarily handed himself over to the police.

He was treated not as a criminal but sympathetically by both villagers and constables, and as a sort of hero within his own family and by the other untitled men. Although he had clearly broken government law, Galu had acted admirably according to custom, and his actions were privately praised by those close to the family (Shore, 1981, p. 24).

This can be interpreted as an act of *tautua toto* (service through blood), where young men are supposed to defend their parents, family and village at all costs, and especially to avenge the death or integrity of parents and family.

A physical muscular body is not necessarily a desirable quality (lines 52-56) for a *matai*, since his duties do not require physical strength; the *matai*’s body here is a symbolic body, one that has symbolic power or “the power to make things with words” where symbolic power depends on the possession of symbolic capital, and on the degree to which the vision proposed is founded on reality (Bourdieu, 1989). Since symbolic power and symbolic capital,

things like his *matai* title and cultural knowledge, are embodied by the *matai* for the family, an imposing physique is unnecessary. The only ‘important thing for the family’ (line 56) is to be able to see their *matai*; that is, a family must always have a *matai* not just as leader, but also as their representative to the village council, who fights to protect their properties of land and titles.

Why are there more men than women matai

In 1952 when I was about 14 years old, I saw with my own eyes the very organized and dignified manner in which the affairs of my village Saoluafata were conducted. Once Tagaloa or Sagapolutele, the highest ranked matai of the village, spoke everyone paid attention. No-one would utter back a word. Instead everyone responded promptly. Today, on the other hand, it is a very different story. I do not see the full extent of the *fa’amatai* practiced any more in that dignity traditionally associated with such high-ranking titles sadly is not there any more. Some young women now hold matai titles which is something of which our ancestors would never have approved (Saifoloi, 2007, p. 27).

This participant’s construction of the ‘full extent of a dignified manner of *fa’amatai*’ constituted two highest-ranking *matai* speaking and everyone responding promptly without a complaint. This is the “organized and dignified manner” by which village affairs were conducted; although it sounds undemocratic that only two voices makes decisions for the village, according to the text, it is the organized and therefore proper way to do things. In this proper way of organization, women are not supposed to hold *matai* titles, which the “ancestors would never have approved of.” The ancestors and the past are celebrated as the better and proper way of *fa’amatai* than the present; women should never be allowed to have titles in this construction, especially when women are constructed as ‘young,’ which implies inexperience or not being old enough or not knowing enough to be a *matai*. Men here are more qualified than women to be *matai* and leaders, and the old are certainly better than the young; the past is preferable to the present. Another participant was more specific about the roles of men and women in relation to *matai* titles.

125 *E le mafai ga, oga o lea ua fou i le gei vaikaimi, ia le solo'ai o kama'ika'i i, i suafoa.*

Suafa makai.

It cannot be, because it is a new thing nowadays, that women are succeeding titles.

Matai titles. []

127 *A o Samoa ā ia, pe ulumakua ā le keige, a o le kama ā o le suli. O le gafa legā o le fale.*

But for Samoa alone, even if a female is the very eldest, the male is always the descendant. He is the genealogy (*gafa*) of the house.

128 *E fa'asolo i le, e fa'asolo i le laiga. Foi lele o le suafa.*

To succeed the, succeed the line. You know for the title.

129 *Auā fo'i laga o le mo le keige e mafai ga alu e gofo kage.*

Because a girl [female sibling] can go and live at her husband's family.

130 *Ia ma a gofo kage loa fo'i ua,*

And plus when [she] gets married then,

131 *ao le kama ā ia, o le kama Samoa ā ia, o ia ā e, o le gafa o le fale.*

But for a male himself, for a Samoan male, he is [always] the, the genealogy of the house.

132 *po'o fea la le mea e fealua'i ai le kama, a la ua iloa loga fa'asigomaga.*

So wherever the male roams, but his *fa'asinomaga* is already known.

133 *Le mea e gofo ai, a. Ia pe fealua'i aku ā i'igei [NZ], ia auā e fa'apegā le uiga o le soifuaga.*

[that is,] where he lives. Even if he roams around here [New Zealand], because that is how life is.

134 *Po'o lea ā e fealua'i aku i'igei Guu Sila le kama, ia a o le Maliekoa ga a, kaeao.*

It is possible that a male is roaming around here in New Zealand, but that is the Malietoa for tomorrow.

135 *Ia po'o le Kupua ga kaeao, a.*

Or that could be the Tupua for tomorrow, eh

136 *Fo'i ga pei o le fa'asologa ga fo'i lele, so'o se maoka ā ia o Samoa ua i ai ā loga gafa, a ua i ai ā le gafa o legā fale.*

Like that is the way of [title] succession, every house (*maota*) in Samoa already has its genealogy, that house already has a genealogy.

This participant claimed that for women to take up *matai* titles is something 'new' (line 125), which implies that women never had *matai* titles before, which is not exactly correct, because later he easily recited the genealogy of kingly families in which women took up paramount titles. This text is constructed to elevate men or males over females concerning succession to titles. He has employed the emphatic particle *ā*, which is used three times in line 127 and

eleven times in the text, to emphasize his points; an emphatic particle usually follows directly after the verb or noun it emphasizes. The emphatic particle (*ā*) follows the term *ulumakua*—eldest (*ulumakua ā*) is translated ‘very’; it emphasises the aspect of ‘eldest’ or first-born which is an important Samoan concept and value (Tui Atua, 1994). The construction frames the concept of eldest child (or *ali’i o aiga*) as meaningful for males but not for females. The third use of the emphatic particle in line 127 is translated ‘always’; the emphatic particle is placed on *kama* (*kama ā*—the male) to put further emphasis on the male as both *the* descendant and genealogy. In contrast to the female, the male here is both the descendant and the genealogy of the house. House, descendants and genealogy are the most important parts of the Samoan sense of belonging, and females are excluded in this construction.

The female is presented as a *gofo kage*; this is a derogative term which means a woman who marries into a family and is living with her husband at the husband’s family. A female can only be called a lady (*tama’ita’i*) at her own home; even if she is married; at her husband’s family she is a woman (*fafine*) and a *gofo kage*. Although a male can also live at his wife’s family, the female leaving her family is highlighted (lines 129-130) to justify not giving her the family title. This notion of leaving the family is different for the male since wherever he roams, “his” *fa’asinomaga* is already known (line 132) and therefore secure. Although the female also belong to the same *fa’asinomaga*, she is positioned as an outsider because the *fa’asonomaga* is constructed as belonging to the male (“his”). *Fa’asinomaga* here is employed as a representative repertoire (Burr, 2003) to authenticate men’s claim to the right of *matai* at the expense of women. The term *fealua’i* (roam) also means live or reside, and a seemingly normal male roaming around in New Zealand could be the next-in-line to the paramount title Malietoa or the title Tupua (lines 134-135). So the male is allowed to live outside the family while he is still entitled to family titles while the female is not. Everything that the male could do the female could not, and that is just ‘how life is’ (line 133).

In the concept of *feagaiga* between the sacred sister and her secular brother (Schoeffel, 1995), it is the brother who is supposed to respect and serve his sister but that is not reflected in this text. The point about the sister’s role as ‘*gofo kage*,’ or virilocality, is similar to the social role that many women took up in pre-Christian time. Schoeffel (1995) explains:

Although women could be great aristocrats by virtue of their genealogies, titles were firmly linked to land and polity, and were seldom (if ever) conferred upon women. The reason was that, ideally, a chief's sister married out and would reside with the aiga of her husband (at least for the duration of the union), thus creating a useful connection for her brother. Even after such aristocratic unions ended, the wife was considered, in a sense, bound to her husband, and the possibility of her resuming a relationship with him always existed (Schoeffel, 1995, p. 93).

The sister's having 'married out' creates a useful connection for her *matai* brother, which is a good thing for the family at large. In this sense, the male and female play different roles, but they serve the same purpose; the male becomes the *matai*, and the female establishes social and political connections. Both roles cater for the one family so the wellbeing of the family is constructed as more important than individual status or roles.

Simanu recognized that "the unwritten law in Samoa concerning who should be bestowed with *matai* was that women did not become *matai*. Rather, women became wives of *matai*; or remain as *aualuma*, the strength and frontline of the village" (Simanu, 2007, p. 85). Though there are no rules against women becoming *matai*, some men do not accept women as their equal even if they accept them as *matai*. Simanu explains:

In the old days, a woman was not expected to deliver oratory outdoors. She could not hold the staff and whisk and belt forth oratory. However, I feel that this attitude should change since female *matai* are also capable of making lauga. Once at a funeral I stood outside on the malae (village green) with fue and to'oto'o ready to speak. The mālō toga or fine mat distributor from the paolo tried to stop me by challenging the right of women to orate during important occasions. He said he had read many books including the bible and nowhere in these readings did he find any instruction that women could deliver speeches. I did not pull back or feel intimidated. I told him that he had read the wrong books and that he should keep quiet and listen while I established our *faiā* or connection. He quietly returned to his seat while I employed the protocol of the fue and to'oto'o (Simanu, 2007, p. 89).

More and more women take up titles nowadays compared to the 19th century, when missionaries arrived, but hardly any of these women *matai* stands outside with a staff and whisk making a speech the way Simanu talks about. Not that all male *matais* are capable of performing such speeches either, and this may have been threatening to the masculinity of Simanu's male counterpart. The male's appeal to the authority of the Bible denotes the contemporary notion that Christianity and the Bible legitimize and authorize many aspects of the culture, and it underlines some of the presumed sexism of biblical teaching. In the wars of the past centuries men were needed to fight, from which leaders were established in local communities and the "*matai*" naturally became leaders. In the absence of war, men still want to maintain that status above women and use representative repertoires and the Bible to legitimize and maintain this privileged position.

O LE LAUGA FA'ASAMOA: SAMOAN ORATORY

Lauga is a formal speech which can be delivered in a council meeting or a gathering in a house or outside in the *malae* (open field); the Christian-induced meaning is 'sermon.' As indicated earlier, one role of the *tulāfale* is to speak on behalf of the ali'i, the family, village or district, etc. In a public *lauga*, the *tulāfale* debate among themselves (*fa'atau*) to find a representative speaker and these debates become heated. In *lauga tulāfales* would recite their respective connections to mythological figures or events of the distant past, especially to Tagaloa and Pili or any of the paramount chiefs. The *lauga* discourse recites *fa'alupega* and this discursive practice re-enacts and maintains hierarchical statuses.

There is a debate about parts of a lauga; some say there originally were just four parts, but others say there are now seven or even eight (Amosa, 1999). The main parts are:

- 1 Ava (hint at the order of ava distribution)
- 2 Fa'afetai (thanksgiving)
- 3 Pa'ia ma mamalu (fa'alupega of those present)
- 4 Taeao (important past events)
- 5 A'ano o le aso (reason for the gathering)
- 6 Faiā (genealogical connection)
- 7 Tuvaoga/Folasaga (introduction)

These parts of the *lauga* can be arranged differently by Samoan orators in their delivery and some omit some of the above parts altogether according to the occasion. The Ava (part 1) part of the *lauga* names the *ava* and outlines their history, hinting at the order of *ava* distribution. *Pai'a ma mamalu* (part 3) is a recitation of the *fa'alupega* of all who are present and this is a discursive re-enactment of the hierarchical structure and status quo. Part four recalls important past events and usually refers to the past as the “days of darkness” to distinguish it from the present “days of light” enabled by the guiding hand of God. The past also recalls the origin of the *matai* system and *legitimises* its continuity. Part six reiterates the importance of genealogical connections and reaffirms bonds that originated with ancestors and their achievements.

Each *lauga* performance is a re-enactment and re-affirmation of the social structure and subject positions as *matai*, *ali'i*, *tulāfale*, *taule'ale'a*, and all other clearly-defined social positions within the system. These positions, their relative statuses and meaning, responsibilities and roles are re-emphasized and embodied. *Lauga* is not just an oratory speech but a construction of an embodied worldview.

O LE SAOFA'IGA: BODY IN SPACE

The term *saofa'iga* derives from *saofa'i*, to sit, and it denotes a circle of chiefs sitting in pre-determined positions in a circle according to status as they do in a *fono* (council) and *ava* ceremony. In such setting, the sacred higher-status *ali'i* sit at the *tala* (sides) and the secular *tulafale* at the front. The back is occupied by *taulele'a* (untitled men) who distribute the *ava*. If the house is full, the *taulele'a* move out of the house after they play their part in the *ava* ceremony; their place taken by other *tulāfale*. The front/back translates into high/low status of the *tulafale*.

There is a close relationship between the spatial organization in a *fono* and the temporal organization of the event. The kava ceremony...clearly exploits sequential structure and hence compliments the political map of the day drawn on the house

floor with seating arrangements. As with other kinds of boundary markers, various aspects of the kava ceremony index some of the qualities of the ensuing activity and act as both reminders and cues for participants to the kind of interaction they are likely to have, the expectations they should legitimately hold, and the kind of power structure assumed for the occasion (Duranti, 1994, p. 72).

Seating positions denote structured space occupied by bodies made meaningful by virtue of the hierarchy of *matai* titles in a *saofa'iga*. The *saofa'iga* is the governing body of the polity which makes decisions on all matters concerning people's lives. According to Aiono-Le Tagaloa (1996a), the three parts of the *saofa'iga* in pre-Christian times were *Tama'ita'i* (unmarried ladies), *Aumaga* (untitled men), and *matai* (chiefs), but the contemporary *saofa'iga* has five parts, with the addition of *Faletua* ma *tausi* (wives of *matai*) and *Fanau lalovaoa* (children). Each of these groups has specific roles and protocols but the superior authority lies with the *matai* council. The status of each individual *matai* determines the status of his respective daughters, wives and children within their own respective groups, so the hierarchical structure in the *matai* council determines the social structure of every individual in the village. The values and practices inherent in the social structure denote the foundation of the *matai* system and life itself, as Ioane (Io) explains:

522 Io *O Samoa ā ia, a*
For Samoa alone, eh

523 *A, la ua uma ga ka'oko le gafa. Ua ka'ko le kagaka e gofo ai i le maoka,*
Eh, the genealogy is already laid out. The person who resides in the maoka is
already known,

524 I *um*

525 Io *Ia ma ē kausia le maoka, ma le lauga e puipuia le maoka. ua uma a ga.*
Mea ga kau ke va'ai i ai,
And those who will care for the maoka, and the lauga which protects the
maoka, That's why we can see that

526 *E makuā sa'o ā le kalikoguga ia auā o Samoa ā' ia, o mea la e fa'avae ai, o*
measiga mai le Akua.
The belief is really right and proper because for Samoa itself, cultural practices
and protocols which form the foundation are gifts from God

527 *E i ai laga agagu'u, o laga gagaga, o loga si'omaga, ia ma oga 'ele'ele oga*
papa, mea uma a.

These include its culture, its language, its environment, and its land, its rocks
[and] everything

Maoka (line 523) is the residence of the *ali'i* and, in this text, genealogy determines who succeeds titles and their privileges. The authority of God functions to legitimize the system as right and divinely sanctioned, and guards against possible criticism of any power differential and inequality between women and men.

The Samoan social structure is constituted within *fa'asinomaga* through practices such as sitting positions, property (e.g., land ownership and *tautua* services) and language (e.g., *matai* titles, etc.) and this outline of the social structure is reflected in the proverbial saying *O Samoa ua 'uma ona tofi*—Samoa has already been divided. This division constitutes all aspects of social life and each and every individual finds oneself a place within that social structure. Duranti (1990, 1992) demonstrates that space within the circle, even empty space, is meaningful space which denotes power and authority in the Samoan context. Foucault's (1980) notion of power as a diffused, heterogeneous and productive phenomenon, though criticized by McNay (1991) as "one-sided" (p. 134), is arguably demonstrated in the Samoan concept of *saofa'iga* and *fa'asinomaga*, where power, although subject to abuse by individuals, is nevertheless distributed within the social structure.

In this text, culture and the *fa'asamoa* which define the social hierarchical structure is praised as gifts from God (line 526); these gifts (*measiga*) are the foundation (*fa'avae*) of which define "everything" (527) including language. God is used here to authenticate cultural and traditional practices as divinely constituted and sanctioned.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TAMA TANE SAMOA: SAMOAN MASCULINITY—SHAPING THE SAMOAN MALE BODY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter traces the social construction of the Samoan male body from the pre-contact era to the present, paying attention to the time of conception, birth and nursing from early life to old age. It is argued that social and religious values learnt and inscribed onto the body during a lifetime are embodied.

Tama, as in the chapter heading, means “a child, boy, a woman’s offspring of either sex and of any age, a chief” (Pratt, 1911 [1862], p. 318) or “male” (Milner, nd [1966], p. 239). *Tane* on the other hand means “a man, a male or husband” (Pratt, 1911 [1862], p. 319). *Tamatane* is “a boy, the son of a woman, young men” (Pratt), or “descendants of a man (having special duties to his sister’s descendants)” (Milner, nd [1966], p. 239). The most recently published Samoan dictionary by a Samoan (Maiai, 2010) defines *tamatane* in addition to the above meanings as “male offspring, masculinity” (p. 385). Milner’s illustration entry for *tamatane* is telling: “*O le faiva o tamatane o le tau*—the duty of the *tamatane* is to bear arms” (Milner, nd [1966], p. 239); *tau* literally means to fight in battle.

Samoan masculinity does not conform to the “hegemonic variety of masculinity to which women and others (young, effeminate, or homosexual men) are subordinated (Hanke, 1992, p. 190), specifically the type where

bodybuilders pursue a hypermasculine self-identity...where they aspire to the body type known as ‘muscular mesomorphy,’ which is characterized by a well-developed chest and arm muscles and wide shoulders tapering down to a narrow waist. The mesomorphic form is tied to cultural views of masculinity which dictate that men be powerful, strong, competent and in control of their environment (Wieggers, 1998).

Although Samoan masculinity also identifies with being powerful, strong, competent and in control, it does not identify with the individualistic hypermasculine form mentioned above. Instead, it identifies with the roles and responsibilities of the body—responsibilities for one’s family, village and church; it is a non-individualistic form of masculinity where duties and responsibilities are of immense importance. Duties entail action and repeated action defines gender, according to Butler (1990): “Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being” (p. 44).

The Samoan body discourse moves from marriage to the birth of children and their eventual marriage, and constitutes religion, family, village, and national connections.

BUILDING THE SAMOAN MALE BODY

O le Faletautū o Ali’i: Wooing Towards Marriage

Multiple marriages were done because of the requirement of genealogy, but not due to love affairs between men and women, as it is in today’s weddings. There was a need to have many children to build up families, especially in times of war. If there was a requirement to connect family genealogy to those of higher families, then attempts were made to marry into that family. If a family genealogy needed to be extended like roots of a tree, then there would be multiple marriages [by one person]. Because when genealogy grows like that, family strength and dignity is intensified (Sunia, 2002, p. 109, author’s translation).

Multiple marriages in the past, which Turner (1884) refers to as polygamy, were not necessarily a personal desire for many wives, but were necessary to raise a family profile (Sunia, 2002). Turner acknowledges that it was rare to find a chief with more than two wives living with him at the same time, although his other wives who had moved back to live with their original families were still his wives. With the constant threat of war in pre-Christian Samoa and during the 19th and early 20th century (Meleisea, 1987b), these multiple marriages had a real political purpose.

One function of *tulāfale* was to organize *faletautū* or *aumoega*, a custom where *tulāfale* go on travel or courting parties in search of a suitable wife for their *ali'i*. The “aim was to spread his family connections through marriage far and wide throughout Samoa so as to increase the dignity and fame of the title” (Meleisea, 1987a, p. 33). The Samoan phrase for this endeavour is *Ina ia tau tupu le gafa* (so that the genealogy be connected to that of a *tupu*). Samoa’s recorded civil wars tell the stories of district leaders, or *tupu*, seeking assistance from their relatives through these marriage connections. The practice of *Faletautū* involves not just a few *matai* but whole villages and communities as described in literature (Kramer, 1994; Soanes & Stevenson, 2008). *Fale tautū o ali'i* is also called *fale fuafua* or *fale na si'i* (Sunia, 2002); *fale* is house, *fuafua* is to plan, and *si'i* is to lift, to take or carry. A male child born from such union is called *o le tama o le fuafuataga*—the child of careful planning.

The Ritual of Afitunu

Afitunu is one of the few rituals that has survived the onslaught of Christianity which prohibited and effectively wiped out so many traditional rituals with its arrival. *Afitunu* is utilized here to shed some light on the pre-Christian Samoan worldview about sexuality, the sexual organs and sexual fluids, which are the very objects or body parts that are prominent in the resulting social reproduction of families and society.

At the end of 2008, His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Tufuga Taisi Efi was officially appointed by Parliament as Samoa’s head of state; this was marked by a number of cultural rituals, political protocols and religious services. *Afitunu* was performed as part of these ceremonies, but not many people in Samoa knew that this ritual took place, let alone being aware that such rituals existed as part of the ancient Samoan culture. Before 2008, *Afitunu* was last performed in the early 1960s on behalf of another paramount chief, the late Honourable Mata’afa, who became Samoa’s first Prime Minister and it was performed at dawn while it was still dark. All the (male) performers dressed like they had always done in the days of old Samoa—without clothes but dressed in their traditional *tatau* (tattoo) and therefore were not naked according to the Samoan worldview; that is, every performer was a *soga'imiti*—bearer of the *tatau* (tattoo). The performance in 2008 took place during the day and many people witnessed it; all the performers each wore a black *lavalava* or cloth wrapped around the body from the waist to below the knees. Due to Christian prohibition and

the modern sense of propriety, many of the original actions of this ritual have been amended or discarded. For instance, instead of their traditional *tatau*, they now all wear *lavalava* (cloth worn from the waist to below the knee) on top of their *tatau*, and only two men performed the celebration of semen and sexual organs instead of most, if not all, the performers.

Afitunu is a ritual *taulaga* or offering pertaining only to the village of Salelesi, who perform it for their *tupu* (loosely translated king). This ritual is used on different occasions, such as in a funeral, but in this case it was to acknowledge the new higher status of Tupua as the Head of State. The *tupu*, Tupua (present Samoa Head of State), was seated inside a traditional Samoan guest house; Tupua is a Tama-a-Aiga title and is therefore a *tupu* who has genealogical connection to the village of Salelesi.

The group of performers gathered and presented their *tupu* with their *Afitunu*, or food, which was all wrapped and carried on huge *fata* or stretcher-like constructions. All kinds of cooked food—fish, taro, chicken, whole roast pigs, etc.—were brought in large amounts and were all wrapped and carried on eight different stretchers. The first was the biggest and heaviest, carried by twenty strong young men on their shoulders, the second was carried by 10 men, the third by 6 men and the remaining five were each carried by 4 men. When all the food was placed before the house where the *tupu* was sitting, they sat down and a representative *tulafale* made a *lauga* to their *tupu*, acknowledging his new status. After the speech they receded, only to regroup some thirty meters away in the formation of a canoe. The name of this whole ritual is *O le Afitunu ma le va'a o Salelesi*—The *Afitunu* and the boat of Salelesi.

The whole canoe-formation group consisted of about fifty men all lined up in four straight lines and everyone held a stick about a meter or two in length, used as a paddle. Two elderly leaders of the group, on either side of the moving canoe, commanded the group to move forward, simultaneously singing a village song specific to the ritual. All the actions, movements, the song and vocal performances of the performers are sexually oriented; emphasis and attention is drawn to the body, especially the sexual organs and sexual fluids, the semen, and the bare body's natural order. According to Tupua, in pre-Christian times, the performers masturbated into their hands, and the semen was proudly displayed and celebrated, although this particular part of the act is not performed anymore.

As the group slowly moved forward paddling the canoe to the beat of their song, the two leaders on either side gave a hint at what the performance originally looked like; they imitated sexual intercourse, they *sula* the semen, and literally showcase their sexual organs. Sula means to make a formal acknowledgement, or to give thanks (for presents, honours, speeches, etc.), or to sing the praise of something or someone. Every now and then, the two leaders lifted up their *lavalava*, purposefully exposing their genitals to the laughing audience and to their *tupu* ahead.

In contemporary Samoan culture, it is considered a most profane challenge to purposefully *sigo* (expose the back side) to someone, but the two leaders continuously did that to all directions and especially to their *tupu* in the house to the front of them. This act is extremely rude and humiliating and can result in battle. The two men danced around the group exposing their genitals both from the front and their backside, their aged balls and members hanging and swinging, encouraging laughter and cheers from the crowd. They kept calling out warnings of their symbolic journey, urging the paddlers to be prepared because strong winds are just ahead, and to steer the canoe away from the threat of *ku* (rocks) and the shallow lagoon. Both men held a coconut shell bailer in hand and repeatedly urinated into these, splashing the contents onto their fellow paddlers, who made no effort to evade the splashed urine. One pretended to splash it onto the nearby crowd which erupted with laughter. One of the leaders called out, “*Se’i kakou asia lalo o le auke*—let us visit under the hibiscus tree,” to which the group replied, “*o loo i ai le koeaiga ma le lo’omakua*—where there is an old man and an old woman.” The song and actions were repeated as they approached their *tupu*, who, more than the crowd, was on the receiving end of these seemingly offensive displays of manhood.

EXPLANATION

In pre-contact Samoa, *tupu* were regarded as possessing some divine aspects and were regarded as gods. The underlying message of *Af’itunu* is to acknowledge the connection of people to their god who is present, symbolized and embodied by the *tupu* (Tupua) who is both divine and human, and who has given them the gift of *usu gafa*. *Usu gafa* means the successful courtship or wooing of a woman by a man culminating in sexual intercourse and the production of family heirs.

In *Afitunu*, the canoe symbolizes a journey—that life is a journey where people acknowledge both God’s divinity and humanity. Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi, on whose behalf this ritual was performed, is a participant in this research. He explains:

- 131 Like this thing [ritual] that Salelesi performed
132 Because there are people who do not like these things
133 They say these are idolatry and thoughtless inconsideration
134 But for me alone I wanted this to be re-enacted and reaffirmed
135 To be reaffirmed and be documented because
136 Because there is a big spiritual message constituted within these things, eh
137 Because when people see that, oh oh
138 That sexual intercourse is imitated
139 Or that the semen, or the sacred parts are celebrated
141 But because in the belief of a Samoan person
142 *Ia o a’u foi sa ‘ou la’ititi ā o’u alu atu i ‘o [name of village?] o le ‘au matutua a
savali mai e sau i le, i le vai*
Even myself when I was younger I came there [the village of Asau] and when the
elders come to the pool [to bathe]
143 They just take off their lavalava and come, because the belief is
144 If you have a tatau it means you are clothed
145 There is nothing [wrong] about it because
153 In Samoa’s own religious belief
154 No, the sacred parts are some of the visual image of
155 Of the of your God your origin
180 That means I am one of the descendants of God, I am no different from God, eh
181 The living proof that I am a god, are my sacred parts, eh
182 God can take a person’s life
183 But I can build a person through my sacred parts
184 That means in these things
185 *A o’o la i mea ia a fai mo mea lea*
When it comes to such things
186 *O la e fa’alālā atu*
It is being said that
187 *Leai le Atua o a’u o le isi ou sulī, a*
No God I am one of your descendants

188 *Pei o lea la e, lea la o a'u o le pine fa'amau o lenā sulī*
 Therefore, I am living proof of being such a descendant

Itūsā (lines 139, 154, 181, 183) is from *Itū* meaning side, and *sā*, sacred. Genitals are sacred because they have a profound and divine function: not only that they are a “visual representation of God” who is the “origin” of humanity (lines 154-155), but this is the very sacred side of the human that enables the continuation of procreation and the building of another human being (line 183). They are also sacred because they bespeak of that connection between God and human whereby the human is not only a descendant of God (lines 180, 187), but is also a god (lines 180-181) by virtue of possessing this sacred side from the sacred God.

These beliefs are constructed as embodied by all Samoans and the Samoan religion (lines 141, 153); the use of the definite article *le* in *le tagata* (the person, line 141) instead of the indefinite article *se* as it would be in *se tagata* (a person), creates certainty of this belief as the truth for any Samoan. Christianity in its various denominations is the main ‘religious belief’ (line 153) in Samoa, and so religious belief implies unquestionable divine truth, whereby the ‘Samoan religious belief’ about the sacredness of genitals, warrants the genealogical connection between God and human, whereby human is “no different from God” (lines 153-155, 180), as indisputable truth. The public re-enactment of sexual acts (lines 133-135) that may be deemed outdated, unchristian, idolatrous and inconsiderate in this day and age, is defended and excused by the deployment of academic (the need to document, line 135) and religious discourses (there is a big spiritual message, line 136). This authenticates ancient beliefs and practices as still valid and having a useful “spiritual message” (line 136) for today’s Christian society. According to Connerton,

[R]ites are not limited in their effect to the ritual occasion...but whatever is demonstrated in rites permeates also non-ritual behaviour and mentality....Although demarcated in time and space, rites are also as it were porous. They are held to be meaningful because rites have significance with respect to a set of further non-ritual actions, to the whole life of the community...they do not simply imply continuity with the past but explicitly claim such continuity (Connerton, 1989, pp. 44-45).

These discourses pave the way for the explanation that human sacred parts are a visual image of one's God and origin (lines 154-5), and that one is no different from God and a descendant of God (line 180). Like other participants who utilize a universal viewpoint, this one constructs belief and consequently, practice of such ritualistic beliefs as that "of a Samoan person" (141). The age of innocence (when I was younger, 142) constructs the participant as a mere witness to the fact that the elders openly flaunt their genitals in the belief that they were, by wearing a *tatau*, not naked. Anything to do with the past and elders is presumed to be right and proper.

In modern Samoa, the public display or celebration of sexuality or sexual acts is regarded as most unchristian, inappropriate and offensive, even in ritualistic performances, as noted by Drozdow-St. Christian:

Genital body fluids are not defined as either powerful or polluting by Samoans....Indeed, Samoans are remarkably quiet about semen and menses, and no efforts are made to conserve semen, and menstruation, while embarrassing and deeply private because of its association with marital sex and pregnancy, is not ritualized or secret...[M]en found talking about semen, either their own or semen in general, troublesome (Drozdow-St. Christian, 2002).

This is quite in contrast to belief and public ritualistic celebration of the body and sexual organs and fluids of the pre-Christian era explained above; the ancient perception about the body and sexuality or acts has changed from being a public affair to the private, from celebration to condemnation, and from being sacred to being evil and idolatrous.

O le To'ala Fanau: The Fertile Womb

Sex, in particular, sex between husband and wife, is the site of the most fundamental of Samoan social obligations, the reproduction of fa'asamoa through the reproduction of meaningful Samoan bodies (Drozdow-St. Christian, 2002, pp. 75-76).

To'ala fanau is also known as *to'ala-fa'a'au-tama* or *to'ala-fa'a'au-tagata*. Samoans believe that “at the centre of the human organism is an organ known as the *to'ala*, and occasionally as *to'ala*, without which humans cannot live” (Macpheason & Macpheason, 1990, p. 168). “*To'ala* according to many Samoan traditional masseurs is an organ in the abdomen, but it has no bio-medical equivalent and is translated as a stomach heart” (Drozdow-St. Christian, 2002, p. 77), but they have different explanation of this organ which is believed to be a life source. Some believe that it is the enclosure or womb that holds the foetus. *Fa'a'au* means to make a handle; *fa'a'au le naifi* is to make a handle for the knife. *Tama* is male, boy or child, *tagata* is person, so *to'ala fa'a'au-tama/tagata* means the ‘place’ or ‘land’ (*fanua* means land or womb) where the child or unborn person holds onto as a symbolic handle in the stomach area.

A pregnant woman’s father (and family) can refer to himself as the *to'ala fa'a'au-tama* relative to the husband and his family. That is, the father is the womb that holds the heir. This interpretive repertoire or culturally available linguistic resource (Burr, 2003) helps build the account of the womb as family property; it is not just a woman’s biological organ but it is political and social, since conception is the culmination of the joining of two different family genealogies initiated at wooing and the marriage ceremonies. The birth of a child is referred to in the saying *ua mutia le ala*—the way [between two families] is grassed—life as symbolic of grass growth is established.

Faiaiga is Samoan for sexual intercourse, and it is from two words: *fai* which is to make, and *aiga* is family—the making or creation of families. Pregnancy is usually a public affair that is announced throughout the family and there are a number of rules that pregnant women must observe. They avoid travelling or walking alone, especially at night, and avoid being alone or sleeping alone, especially at night (Kramer, 1995, p. 54). These beliefs, which have much to do with beliefs in vicious *aitu* or spirits who attack the unborn babies, are very much alive in contemporary Samoa (Drozdow-St. Christian, 2002). Certain food is also prohibited to pregnant women, such as the food reserved for the matai and *matua tausī* (elders), and they are also strongly bound by good social behaviour:

If when you are pregnant you eat behind someone’s back, when you have your baby its hand might look like the leg of the pork, or something like that. These are the kind

of traditions that midwives teach young women when they are carrying their children (Barclay, Aiavao, Fenwick, & Papua, 2005, pp. 25-26; Turner, 1984).

Children born with thick pig-like hair on large coloured birthmarks are said to be the result of the baby's father having killed someone else's pig and the mother being a recipient in its consumption. These unwritten moral codes mean that even the unborn are bound by social laws where the marks of the parents' unruly behaviour are literally inscribed upon the newly-born bodies. Every Samoan is familiar with the pertinent biblical verse, "the parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Jer. 31:29); the biblical discourse reinforces the traditional discourse about how parental actions can directly affect unborn bodies of their children.

Birthing

When the wife of a *tupu* (king) or an important *ali'i* starts her birthing pains, her village awaits in silent worship. The family and neighbours also flock in to partake in this silent worshipful wait. When the call comes out of the successful birth, the conch shell is blown, songs are sung, there is shouting and joyful yelling any time day or night of the birth. Then they turn towards feasting and dances (Sunia, 2002, p. 110 author's translation).

In the above quote, giving birth is not a private matter, but a concern of the family, neighbours and the whole village. If this new-born is a result of a *fale na si'i* (wooing party), and is a boy, there would be even more reasons for celebration as the community's future is made brighter by this heir; he living proof of the genealogical connection between two families and villages.

In the research of Barclay and others (Barclay et al., 2005), three issues emerged at birthing from the viewpoint of traditional midwives: One is that most refer to the foetus in the womb as *tagata*, which means person or human being, but is called baby as soon as it is outside during birthing. Second, God is always given credit by the midwives and new mothers for their knowledge and the help in their roles, and thirdly, birthing is not the domain of fathers but of mothers alone. Here are some of the recurrent midwives views from that research:

EXCERPT ONE:

I believe that when God thinks that the baby is ready to come out then that will happen. With young girls who are having their first baby I am very gentle. That is why there is no tear at all because I gently guide the human out. The baby is wrapped and then the placenta is delivered (Barclay et al., 2005, p. 37).

EXCERPT TWO: A TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE LEARNING AND PRACTICING.

With all the cases, I do not feel distress, I think because the Lord has always been with me. Mother So'oleupu was the one that demonstrated and taught me how to do the job. Her advice was, 'Do not panic, think and ask the Lord to help you with the implementation of the job.' Those were the words that guided me, and I have tried very hard to follow them and do it well...I do believe that I felt confident because I could feel the helping hand of the Lord...So when the human being come down, I will have a fair idea of presentation and the kind of delivery to expect (p. 47).

EXCERPT THREE: A MOTHER WHO ALWAYS GIVES BIRTH WITHOUT ASSISTANCE.

I prayed and asked God to help me when I delivered. All my children, now overseas...I have delivered by myself. I never allowed my husband to come and help me...When my husband knew that I was in 'pain' he asked, 'How is it?' I usually replied, 'Go and have your rest. I am gauging the time when I feel that the human being is about to come'...If my husband heard me he would rush to help, if it was during the night, but I will quickly blow out the lamp before he arrived, and then I would give birth...But by the time the lamp was relit I would already be in a proper sitting position [cross-legged] with my baby on my lap...Even my placenta has been wrapped...My reasons are that I do not want him to be involved in these kinds of things because it is not appropriate for a father to touch these 'dirty' things (p. 45).

All three women refer to 'the human' or 'human being' in the womb or during birth, and 'the baby' when it is out: The *tagata* (human) in the womb is not a helpless, non-conscious, lump of vulnerable flesh and bones, but a human who already has all the symbolic and social cultural capital of a family member. S/he has her/his *tuā'ele'ele* in God and a *fā'asinomaga*

with its family roots and genealogy. This unborn child is a family heir, a future *matai* and family leader, or a sister and *feagaiga* (covenant); the family has high hopes for this new addition to the family, this person is a flesh and blood connection between two or more families. As soon as s/he is outside the womb s/he is a baby, still very vulnerable and dependent on parents and family for care, nurture and growth—this young human needs to be taught and shaped by physical, mental, social and spiritual means; the fashioning of the new body now begins.

Excerpt three divides gender roles, where men are not supposed to touch, let alone see, the process and things involved with a mother's birthing. Despite an intimate and close relation between husband and wife, the husband is literally kept in the dark despite being present at his wife's birthing because these are not things for men. The wife does not allow her husband to be involved with the 'dirty' part of the process, which means this is a specific role for women alone. Men or husbands only get involved in other ways, such as providing food and other needs of mother and baby.

Knowledge of the job is learned from the older generation whose experience grew with age. Success is attributed to God and many have prayed before and after each birth. This is the contemporary Christian God, but before Christianity, the same practice of prayers to family Gods was carried out in pregnancy, during and after birth. "When the child was born, the god prayed to just before was carefully remembered and duly acknowledged throughout the future life of the child. By way of respect to him, the child was called his *merda*; 'merda of Tongo,' or Satiā or whatever other deity it might be" (Turner, 1984, p. 174ff). One midwife asked a new mother whom she helped give birth to twins, to name them "Fa'amoemoe i le Ali'i and Fa'atuatua i le Atua—Hope in the Lord and Faith in God" (Barclay et al., 2005, p. 54), respectively. In this same research, many expectant mothers preferred the traditional midwives in the villages over the Western-trained ones at the hospital because of the difference in the level of care provided.

The traditional midwife seems to have that knack of really caring, she does not bring much to do her work but she brings in the love and the comfort. The pregnant mother has all the confidence in this person that she is going to do the work, and she is going to see the outcome of that work. With the Western-trained midwives, they are so

busy...So many clanging things in the ward—Bang! Bang! Bang!—so much noise...they speak louder than they think, and sometimes the way they deliver their messages is harsh. None of them have the time to sit down and touch the mothers and talk, making the effort of being closer and nearer, as the traditional midwives do. The traditional midwife shares everything with the woman who is pregnant—the pain, the happiness, the comfort, the thought, and the relationship. In the hospital it is a very rushed sort of world. There is no time to share anything like that (Barclay et al., 2005, p. 28).

Everything about the hospital and the care offered there is constructed as not as good or up to the level provided by traditional midwives. The Western-trained midwives at the hospital lack the human touch and are indifferent and disrespectful.

In old Samoa it was usually the birthing mother's mother that was present, which meant the level of loving care was unquestionable compared to present Western-style facilities and what they offer. The roles of midwifery or traditional healing are usually passed on to the next generation through the concept of *fafano*, or the washing of hands, to give the talent, knowledge and power to someone else (Barclay et al., 2005).

Fa'afaileleina o le Tama: Nurturing The Male Heir

Failele is a suckling woman or one who has recently given birth. *Fa'afailele* means to nurse; *fa'afailelegātama* is a traditional practice where there is an exchange of gifts between the mother's and the father's families, which is just another occasion to further cement the close relationship between the two families through the birth of a common heir. In pre-Christian times there was "feasting and dancing for at least three days at the birth of a child, then that is repeated when the child is able to sit, yet again when it crawls and also when it stands" This means the child's life is not only celebrated often, it is also closely monitored in terms of her/his embodiment as s/he grows from a child to an adult.

Here I outline the social construction of some of the embodied processes of socialization taught to the young child. A little child might not understand that it is being socialized and inscribed with meaning, but according to Reverend Amosa, with such close scrutiny and

bodily inscription, it is almost as if the Samoan male is born with an inherent knowledge of its relational place, its *fa'asinomaga*, genealogy and roles in life:

- 10 The very first thing that came to mind
11 About the Samoan body, is that it seems that, that they are born
12 Any Samoan that is born as, male, eh
13 It seems that a pre-determined path has already been laid out for
14 The kind of life the Samoan male must live concerning his body
15 So, it seems that when the Samoan male is born his body has already known its
 fa'asinomaga
16 While still little, and young

The repetitive use of the uncertainty “it seems” (lines 11, 13, 15) is deceiving in that it actually allows the text to be told smoothly without raising much awareness or challenge of the “extreme case formulation” (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 47) that a newly born body has already known its *fa'asinomaga* (15); this formulation provides an effective warrant to the claim. The claim is both an explanation and a challenge to “any [or all] Samoan males” (12) who should know their *fa'asinomaga*—hence, their roles in the community which are already laid out for them (13). Understanding one’s *fa'asinomaga* is a prerequisite for understanding one’s place and roles in society. The assertion that a male is born into a pre-determined path for his life (13) echoes Butler’s stance that “there is no sex that is not always already gendered” (in Salih, 2004, p. 91), and Salih, following Butler, adds “there is no natural body which pre-exists culture and discourse, since all bodies are gendered from the beginning of their social existence” (Salih, p. 91). By virtue of being a sexed person—a male (12)—his outlined life entails male action or duties that define his maleness and masculine identity.

In pre-Christian times Samoan babies begin their socialization from the minute of birth. Turner, commenting about new babies, noted that:

If the little stranger was a boy, the *umbilicus* was cut on a club that he might grow up to be brave in war. If of the other sex, it was done on the board on which they beat out the bark of which they make their native cloth” and even the forehead and noses are flattened as estimate of their ‘canoe noses’ (Turner, 1984, p. 175).

The text constructs the shaping of the baby's body within the discourses of war, cloth and canoe-making. These specific gender roles are literally and physically inscribed onto the body and are symbolic of the 'pre-determined path' upon which they shall be socially shaped. The physical body (forehead and noses) is shaped in accordance with some social practices; I shall give Turner the benefit of the doubt here, but no explanation of such practices that I am aware of survives in the language and oral traditional discourses.

If the baby is a girl, the mother starts weaving her *'ie* (fine mat); she would accumulate different kinds of fine mats in her life as a virgin, some of which include the two marriage mats already discussed. If a boy, the mother starts what is called *tautau le lama* (hanging the lama). Lama is the black charcoal gathered from burning candlenut soot. Lama is accumulated and kept in a coconut container that hangs in the house to be used for the boy's *tatau* when he is old enough and ready at about age 16. The presence of this lama container hanging in the house is a constant reminder both for the child and his family of one destination in his social life: to have a traditional *tatau* and become a *soga'imiti* (male with a *tatau*), a *taule'ale'a* (untitled man) and *tautua* (one who serves) and eventually a *matai*. The infant's body is an unfinished project in progress, shaped in accordance with its physical and mental capabilities at various stages of its life.

The baby's body is a constant focus of attention by friends and relatives, and its weight, developing alertness and social skills are noted and discussed while body fluids and faeces are allowed to flow freely through the body as a sign of being healthy (Drozdown-St. Christian, 2002). Everyone in the household is involved in caring for the infant, with the father doing the least, although he remains an active care giver (Ochs, 1988, p. 85). There are stages of socialization and transition toward expectations about good and proper bodies

where the infant progresses from a kind of foetal child—up to 4 or so—and then through subsequent phases of middle and final childhood ending at around age 12. During this period, the word most often used for a child is *tamaititi*, or small person. It is generic, and is applied to both boys and girls. From about 12 onward, however, the generic name is replaced by sexed words—*tamatane*, *tamafafine*—small or incomplete male or female—and *fa'afafine* (the third sex, biological male but socially some other sex) (Drozdown-St. Christian, 2002, p. 87).

Drozdow-St. Christian notes that at about age 12, semen and blood take on differential degrees of importance in the fuller growth of biologically male and female bodies, but these sexing substances (semen and blood), which now differentiate mechanically sexed bodies, are not the determining factor or characteristic of the bodies' ultimate meaning. "That meaning is engaged through other processes in which bodies in the world are divided up into generic types, that is through the process of embodiment rather than those of biology" (Drozdow-St. Christian, 2002, p. 87).

An example of such processes include circumcision, which marks another stage of the continuous progressive transition towards adulthood. Through the caregivers' probing touch and gaze, and the mother's caressing, pinching etc., the infant discovers the boundaries of its body through the attention of others to its bodily processes, and becomes fully engaged as a participant in its community, and in the enactment of its body as part of that community (Drozdow-St. Christian, 2002). Some of the old practices for the physical strengthening of male children and socialization are not seen anymore. So'o, who is in her eighties, shares her experience:

462 But it is really true, they were well cared for, they were taken early in the morning
 463 In those days they were carried
 464 There were no cars to take children to be exposed to the morning breeze, eh
 465 The old lady would carry the baby taking the boy to be exposed to the morning breeze
 473 Taken for a walk in the morning?
 474 Very early in the morning
 475 That is a very important thing
 476 Even for this thing called the burying of children
 477 Our village of Moata'a
 478 There was a, well it was called The Great Beach because there was a big long beach
 there
 479 Inland villages like Māagiagi used to come there
 480 To bury those children who have been too late to walk
 487 There is also that other practice called the crawling of children
 488 That is another important practice in the Samoan culture
 490 Well concerning the nurture and care of children, parents were not negligent in

those days

491 They [babies] are taken to be exposed [to the morning dew] then they are taken to
practice crawling then

492 To bury, Yes. The feet are buried in the sand at the beach

493 [To] strengthen the legs so that they can walk sooner

494 So that [they are] able to walk sooner

495 But the crawling is done on a flat surface

496 But only rocks in those days were

497 Were flat and wide enough for the children to climb and

498 Crawl on to train the legs, yes

499 And all those things were not done to girls but only to boys to build up the strength of

500 Of boys

502 In the very early morning

504 So that the rays of the rising sun can shine onto him

505 Only now that [Western trained] doctors came and said to take children into the
sun because they look pale

506 But I already knew all that from our parents in those days

507 “Take the boy outside the sun will soon rise. Take the boy the sun will soon rise.”

510 Then he is brought home, is fed and given a path

511 I saw those things and I heard about them too

There is contradiction in Turner’s account of the care for the young in the early 19th century, where he claims that “after they were born they were affectionately cared for” but then he asserts that there was also a “lazy unwillingness to nurse” (Turner, 1984) children, which often led to infant mortality.

The word *lo’omakua*, “an old woman” (Pratt, 1911 [1862], p. 183) is constructed as the agent by the use of the ergative marker ‘*e*’ (Duranti, 1994) in *e le lo’omakua* (465), where agent is the one doing the action of care-giving for the child. Instead of the perceived notion of old and helpless, the old are credited with the nurture and training of such “well cared for” (462) children. This indigenous knowledge of the past (“in those days,” 463, 506) positions Samoan care givers as the first proponents of the proper care of children that Western trained doctors only “now” (505) have come to realize. In this text, superior knowledge is the confine of the

past; parents (490) and elders passed it down and the speaker is a thankful witness and recipient of it (“I already knew, 506). Ochs translates “*Ka ‘ika*” (line 511) as ‘poor me’ and notes that it intensifies affect (1986, p. 259). The correct translation in this context, along with *sa ka*—lucky me (511), would be ‘blessed me.’ The intensified affect is that of being blessed and lucky enough to have witnessed such practices of the past.

Fa’atolotologātama (787) is captured in the proverbial saying, *Ua malie le fa’atolotologātama*—the crawling process is completed and satisfied; it denotes a task completed and properly done. The seemingly harsh conditioning of young male children being exposed to the elements and made to crawl on rocks in the early morning was to build their strength (493)—one of the embodied characteristics of a male. The secular male is trained to live and work outdoors; his sacred *feagaiga* sister, whom he serves, remain indoors:

Persons of high status stayed inside their houses in order to avoid the fairness of the skin darkening under the rays of the sun. Those who were deeply tanned thus showed that they worked for others, in the plantations or at sea. In Samoa, this imperative to keep the skin as fair as it had been at birth applied particularly to women who were not married and who were said still to be virgins (Tcherkézoff, 2004, p. 177).

Drozdown-St. Christian (2002) notes that during the first twelve months of life, Samoan children have the greatest ownership and control of their bodies. There is little or no effort to impose urinary and bowel control on infants or very young children, as the emphasis at this stage of life is for a healthy body, one that freely passes waste products out. But when the infant begins the transition to being a young child, attention to its bowels and bladder shifts from the volume and quality of the flow to a consideration for the appropriate place for such acts; this awareness of appropriate and inappropriate places is directly associated with the enactment of dignity and propriety—this is part of a child’s initial socialization into becoming a meaningful body in social space. This socialization culminates in the linguistic marking of boys and girls at the period just before puberty as *tama tane* and *tama fafine*, or *tama* (boy) and *teine* (girl). The assertion of a lack of control for young Samoan children by Mead (1928), Freeman (1984) and Ochs (1988) is dismissed by Drozdown-St. Christian (2002) as a lack of understanding of the subtlety of Samoan socialization “which has as its objective,

not domination, but cooperation, and not submission but support. Learning appropriate body function contributes to this process in subtle ways” (p. 93).

At about 4 or 5, the often naked boys and girls begin to be covered with clothes, although for contemporary Samoa this happens much earlier; they learn genital modesty and “beyond a certain age, although there is no consensus on the limits of this age, boys and girls should no longer see each other’s genitals. This is the beginning of the formalization of the brother-sister relationship, a relationship of profound importance in fa’asamoa” (Drozdow-St. Christian, 2002, p. 95). Contrary to Drozdow-St. Christian, who refers to genitals at this stage as *mea sa* (sacred things), genitals are still called *pi*, the same word for urine or to urinate and even at age twelve the same term is used since children know only one function of genitals at that stage. *Mea sa* or *itu sa* (sacred side or part) is only used when children learn about the sexual nature of genitals at about twelve years, hence the change of its naming. At that stage, “the function of the genitals is being divided, from solely excretory, to a combination of excretory, erotogenic and reproductive potentials. They become sex organs used to have sex but only as potentialities” (Drozdow-St. Christian, 2002, p. 96).

According to Turner (1884), a young boy always follows his mother until about 4-5 years, then he becomes attached to his father, and soon is useful in planting, fishing, house building, and all kinds of manual labour. By following his father, a child learns different roles not just by observation but also through practice because he is often given opportunities to practice the traditions and customs that he observes. Similar socialization was observed by Mead: At age five or six, “little boys begin to tag after the bigger boys, learning to fish, swim, handle a canoe, climb trees, and all other lesser male skills” (Mead, 2001, p. 108).

FROM BOYS TO MEN

The life for a Samoan male from birth to becoming a *matai* entails hardship and many challenges in the service of others, but these are essential pre-requisites to becoming a good *matai*. As one participant recalled about the male heirs of her family, “*Ae pei o le mea lea ga fa’apelepele i ai ia, o le o ia fai ma matai*—this is why they were lovingly nurtured, so that they would become *matai*,” but to become a *matai*, a male has to go through the necessary stages of life from an infant to childhood, to becoming a *taule’ale’a* (untitled man) who has a

tatau (tattoo) and performs *tautua*, and eventually becomes a *matai* and a family leader, and by that time, he has already learned much about the different roles and social relations needed to govern his family and community well. Most importantly, a *matai* must be someone who, in his younger years as a *taule'ale'a*, had served his family and village well, as conveyed in the saying: *O le ala i le pule o le tautua*—the way to authority is to serve. “Some of the most important trades of ‘Old Samoa’ were house-building, canoe-building, tattooing, net-making and the manufacture of mats and fans and baskets and sinnet” (Barradale, 1907, pp. 103-104).

Training a Young Samoan Male Body

In this new millennium, participants still talk about the proper training of a Samoan male body, not to become doctors or lawyers or similar occupation but with reference to the old ways of raising children. This is not because they still prefer those old occupations for their sons, of just getting a *tatau* and becoming a *matai*, but because they feel that the humble training through those old ways establishes the proper foundation to a man’s life; the foundation of knowing one’s relational place or *va* within the family which bespeaks of a relational self as opposed to an individualistic upbringing. Reverend Fau’olo explains:

- 98 There is no small action that the son performs
- 99 That shall remain small in the minds of his parents, yes
- 100 That is why it is said
- 101 “How can he just jump over there but he has never fetched fire for the elders”
- 102 Those are the things by which children start off from
- 103 Good children
- 104 Life as youngsters is regarded as very important
- 105 “Pai cannot get any blessing until he fetches fire for the elders”
- 106 In the days when fetching fire was very important
- 107 Because this is not practiced anymore these days and people these days do not
 understand because matches are now used
- 108 But in those days, “Hey send a boy over with fire”
- 109 They would run whether it is the end of a coconut leaf or whatever
- 110 That’s not a worry as long as fire is brought and given to
- 111 These are the things though they seem small [insignificant]

112 But that was the normal life
 113 From which the lives of young Samoan men were thoroughly trained
 114 Until at a certain age when he can manage
 115 This thing of, climbing a coconut tree and getting coconuts
 116 To know how to prepare a coconut for the matai and know how to prepare a coconut
 for his father when he is sick
 117 He teaches himself throughout his life as he grows up
 118 That is why parents carefully nurture their children
 119 So that they do not grow up and not knowing how to do these things
 120 If other children are able to do these things, so also should be his son
 121 They carefully nurture their son so that he would know how to do all these things
 122 Eventually he would get a tatau, and can prepare a *taufolo* [a kind of food]
 123 But his life was going through those steps slowly starting from climbing
 124 That means, the whole life of a male child
 125 From the hands of his parents in his family
 126 This was their training, yes

The text portrays the ‘proper training’ of Samoan boys in relation to social relationships with parents and elders through respect and obedience. Young boys do small simple chores in accordance with their age and strength capabilities, such as fetching fire, usually to light the elder’s tobacco. This is the image of matai and village elders conversing in the guest house smoking their tobacco. In the old days, before the modern era of matches, there was usually a fireplace in the middle of every guest house, where live charcoal was always burning under the ashes day and night for the elders to light their tobacco. Proper training started from “small” things like fetching fire, mentioned three times (101-3, 108, 111) and this was the ideal responsibility of a young boy, who ran (line 109) to the task.

Running implies an immediate response and obedience of one who is happily answering the call of elders. The imperative *tuli* (send, 108) is typically used in Samoan to “summon others” or “to demand or request goods” and services “and are normally directed from high to lower status persons” (Platt, 1986, p.128). This is the start of a young boy’s training (line 102) and only such boys are regarded as good ones. Those who do not come through this form of training are implicitly bad and they are not supposed to “jump over” (line 101) or

proceed to the next level before they go through this initial step, nor do they consequently expect any blessing in life (105); the son's life is subjected to the elder's authority who gives blessing (105). This is also a 'legitimation' in the form of 'purpose' (Van Leeuwen, 2000), where sons must serve their elders for the purpose of being blessed by them. Legitimation here functions to explain why social practices such as serving elders exist and why they take the form they do. Habermas (1976) adds that "in order to serve as legitimation, the statement must have an additional feature: make submerged and oblique reference to moral values" (p. 22). The submerged moral value is the blessing which all Samoans aspire to; the flip side of blessing is a curse, which must be avoided.

This training proceeds until he is able to climb a coconut tree and prepare the coconut for the *matai* or his father when he is sick (116). Here, the discourse of a boy's training is simultaneously connected to the service of his father and elders. Eventually he reaches the age to be able to prepare traditional food and to have his *tatau* (line 122) and then can be considered a real Samoan *taule'ale'a*, but first he has to learn and must have the knowledge (116) obtained only by serving parents and elders; otherwise he cannot proceed and cannot be blessed (105). The elders have the knowledge, authority and power because they went through the same training procedures (126); they are the source of light, and the boy gets illuminated (Tcherkézoff, 2004) by being blessed.

Fia Maua Se Tama Lelei: The Desire For A Good Male Child

What kind of physical body or mental attributes do parents and families desire for their male children? Or does that not matter as long as they have a male child? Fau'olo constructs the ideal Samoan male son, the good son:

- 62 Because my very own belief is that every Samoan grows up and
- 63 The father and the mother manages their child closely
- 64 To become a good person
- 65 By being good does not just mean when he's told to fetch fire then he goes
- 66 But also being handsome, and strong, and brave
- 67 They want to have a really good boy, a good boy []
- 72 Because they are doing this with the knowledge

73 That there is no future blessing of the family if this boy grows up as sickly
 74 Or he is not strong and []
 140 So that if
 141 The handsome boy
 142 And the strong boy becomes the pride of his parents
 143 That is deservedly so
 144 Because all parents want
 145 Their son to be a strong boy, a handsome boy and also a brave one []
 148 No dumb parent
 149 Would want their son to grow up as a coward
 150 Or grow up as dumb
 151 Or grows up and not knowing how to start a fire or, yes or doesn't know how to
 climb a coconut tree, yes it is very

Platt notes that Samoan “social status is based on a number of factors: age, sex, generation, position in the Church (e.g., pastor, deacon)” (Platt, 1986, p. 129-130). The combined use of the emphatic particle *ā* (translated every, line 62) and the definite article *le* (*le Samoa*-the Samoan) emphasizes the view that all Samoans boys undergo the same conditioning to become “good” persons. The ideal person or boy (*tama Samoa*) is described by the positive adjective *lelei* (good). Pratt (1911) defines *putiputi* (line 63) as “to grasp all or to hold tightly,” but the term does not have such neutral meaning because it constitutes affect and elements of possession and love, and its translation ‘manages,’ is the closest approximation to the constructed meaning of love and care from parents to son. The son is a project of both mother and father, who metaphorically hold on to their son as they shape him into becoming a good person.

The definition of being good constitutes the qualities of an obedient son who “runs” at every command (such as fetching fire), the qualities of a soldier who is strong and brave, and those of a male model who must be ‘*aulelei* (handsome). ‘*Aulelei* is Samoan for both handsome and beauty for both sexes and is often used discursively as the primary quality and reason that men (and women) go in search of potential partners whose *aulelei/lalelei* is told everywhere (e.g., Herman, 1970, p. 34).

Young men are called *o le malosi o le nu'u*—the strength of the village—because they carry out all the more difficult tasks of fishing, working in the plantation, and fighting in wars, so they play no small part in the future of the family and village. The use of the present tense in '*E leai se lumana'i manuia o le aiga*—there is no future blessing of the family' (line 73)—brings the future to the present and heightens the demise of the family in the 'present' if the son is "sickly" and unable to perform the roles required of a son or males for the family. *Manuia* (blessing) is not an abstract value but implies the practicality of the qualities of being 'good,' that is, possessing the strength to serve and the bravery to protect and defend the family. The blessing granted for the boy's service is not a personal reward but for the family; the family's future is dependent upon this boy's service (73).

Lines 140-145 construct the parents' pride as justifiable, achieved by the use of 'legitimation through convention' (van Leeuwen, 2000), where legitimation is discursively constructed to explain why social practices exist. Pride is not a Christian virtue, but is legitimated here through the convention that 'all' (line 144) parents have this common need for good sons. The English term "pride" is utilized as a form of foreign knowledge that puts more weight on the legitimization, further strengthened by the extreme case formulation (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) 'all,' which provides an effective warrant for pride. The Samoan for pride is *mitamita*, which is a frequentative derivative of *mimita*, meaning to boast or brag, which has a negative connotation opposed to both Christian and Samoan values. The loaded terms dumb parent, and coward (148-150) accentuate the role of parents in teaching their sons to be good sons, which means enabling them to be able to light a fire by rubbing two sticks together (*si'a le afi*, line 151) and to climb a coconut tree. It is also an indirect accusation toward parents and males who do not conform to the identity of the Samoan parents and sons explicated in the text.

CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE SAMOAN MALE BODY

In this section I trace the period of the arrival and influence of Christianity in the early 19th century, which marked the beginning of a major swift from the ideals of the cultural Samoan body to those of Christianity, which attempted from the outset to change the physical body from its supposedly heathen state to a modern Christianized and Westernized body.

New Ethics and Conventions

In the words of Gilson, “another object of London Missionary Society teaching and preaching was to Christianize the law of the land—to ban the activities and relationships, social and personal, that by mission standards were immoral or tainted by ‘heathenish’ associations, and to prescribe the ethics and conventions of Puritanism” (Gilson, 1970, p. 96). This is an outline of some of these new ethics and conventions:

1. Imposition of new standards of dress, including ‘full coverage’ for women and, when at worship, shirts or coats for men, but not shoes for either.
2. The adoption of hair styles ‘appropriate’ to the individual’s sex, meaning long for women and short for men, the reverse of traditional styles.
3. The abolition of tattooing, mediumship and the treatment of illness by divination and magic.
4. The internal partitioning of houses and more liberal use of the external blinds.
5. Prohibition of obscenity in word and action.
6. Prohibition of funeral feasts and requiring that the dead always be buried in the ground and without delay.
7. Prevention of political marriages and marriages between Christians and non-Christians.
8. Abolition of polygamy and divorce; prohibition of adultery, fornication & prostitution.
9. Prohibition of certain customary rights, including exchange of goods and public tests of virginity.
10. Forbidding war and violence, except in defence of life and property.
11. Celebration of monogamous marriages in church.

Except for the prohibition of tattooing, mediumship and the treatment of illness by divination and magic (no. 3), the missionaries were eventually successful in inscribing their new ethics and conventions on the Samoan body, which are standardized in contemporary Samoa. The missionaries taught their new worldview and practices to theological students and to villagers, “both children and adults” (Meleisea, 1987a, p. 59). “The minister is the master,

because he has a better education than anyone else in the village” (Barradale, 1907, p. 131). The missionaries taught not just the Bible but also arithmetic, music, carpentry and other trades. This new knowledge defined the construction of the physical and the social body since the early part of the 19th century. Vasa describes the teaching of children with this new knowledge:

- 23 Before the child learns public knowledge
24 But first there is something that comes first, the mother teaches the child
28 Then the mother tries to give her/him her/his language, so that the child knows []
32 Then, in slow succession the, the child knows is familiar with the voice of his mother
33 He is shown what to do, is shown where to sit
34 He is shown where to go to sleep, such similar steps in the life of the child []
41 His oral speaking is good, although it is not that good, he is interchanging T and G []
43 When asked s/he answers. And the very first lesson given by the mother
44 He is always first given a lesson, about the Christian life of the child
45 That means, the first question: Who is your savior? That is always the first question
that is asked
46 by the mother to her son when he knows how to speak, is the teaching of the
beginning of the child’s Christian life
47 Before the child knows anything the motion of life of the child now begins
48 The Christian life that is first given to him by the mother
49 Who is your savior? Who created you? Who stroke the rock? And the mother keeps
on teaching []
51 It would be taught by the mother by being memorized, so that this would be held onto
52 Because the mother knows, it is an important thing for the life of the child

The text mentions “mother” eight times, which underscores the gender role of mothers in child rearing. After the child is “familiar with the mother’s voice,” s/he is taught “what to do” and “where to sit” (32-33). This reflects the clearly-marked sitting positions of chiefs in a council in accordance with status; likewise, children are taught to embody such structure in their homes in relation to older siblings and parents. The term “first” (24) refers to language (28) once but it occurs five times when referring to “Christian life” as the first thing to learn and be taught to children. Biblical stories and the new Christian God are taught as the very

first thing that a child must learn in his new “Christian life” (48). The questions: Who is your Saviour? Who created you? Who struck the rock? are taught in Sunday schools but mothers first teach these to their children at home when they first learn to speak. The answers to these questions are: Jesus, God and Moses respectively and are “memorized” (51), hence embodied. Tagaloa the creator is replaced simply by God (*Atua*)—the same term for Tagaloa, but here the Christian God is presupposed.

“T” and “G” (41) bespeaks the distinction between the formal (T) and the colloquial (G) languages spoken at different contexts and to different people. The formal T, as in *tatou tatalo* (let us pray), would be spoken in church, while the colloquial *kakou kakalo* would be inappropriate in that context. Formal language is spoken to people of status such as church ministers or superiors; the colloquial to mates. In this sense, children are trained from an early age to differentiate social hierarchical statuses. The discourse of child rearing is constructed within the religious and social discourses and children are expected to know and embody both.

One of the defining embodied symbols of masculinity and Christianity for a Samoan male is circumcision. Reverend Fau’olo traces the origin of circumcision in the Samoan male identity to the Bible since there is no Samoan word for circumcision, but is transliterated from the Greek *peritomei* into the invented Samoan word *peritome* and “is based on Abrahamic heirship.” Kramer (1995) on the other hand notes that Samoan circumcision was called *O le tefega*—the incision, and was performed “on Samoan youths...upon entering manhood, between the seventh and fifteenth year.” According to the participant, circumcision is another defining quality of Samoan men to express being brave. An uncircumcised Samoan boy would “shame his father” because he would be labelled a coward. The father’s shame being equated with the son’s is an inscription of the father, family, and society’s ideal masculinity onto the body and is embodied by the son. It is a construction of “the kind of son Dad really wanted” (Jackson, 1990, p. 90). As a rite, the phrase “weighs heavily on people” constructs the circumcised body not as an individual body, but a public social body. (624) The next important rite of passage for a Samoan male is to have his *tatau* (tattoo).

O LE SOGA'IMITI: THE TATTOOED MALE BODY

Soga'imiti means children who are tattooed before they are of the suitable age (Aiono, 1997; Pratt, 1911) of sixteen (Turner, 1984, p.181), but the term has evolved into a new meaning and it now signifies any male who has a *tatau*. This means there was no specific Samoan word for a person with a *tatau*, and this may be attributed to the fact that every male was supposed to acquire a *tatau* in pre-Christian times when he reached the appropriate age, so it was a normal rite of passage and every male was expected to go through it. The word *pula'ū* means a rotten taro (Pratt, 1911) and it now denotes a male without a *tatau*; it is a humorous ridicule that implies someone with unused potential that simply rots like a useless taro instead of being harvested and used properly. Today, *soga'imiti* entails such meanings as pride, masculinity, bravery and manhood.

O le Tatau: The Tattoo

Tatau is the Samoan term that Captain Cook's sailors transliterated into 'tattooing' and eventually became tattooing or tattoo (Mallon, Brunt & Thomas, 2010). The word *tatau* has many meanings, as Wendt (1996) outlines:

- 1 ta—to strike, referring in this case to the rapid tapping action when tatauing.
- 2 tau—to reach the end, to anchor/moor a boat or canoe, to fight. So, ta plus tau could
 mean 'let's fight,' 'let's go to war,' or 'striking' until we reach a conclusion
- 3 tatau also means appropriate, apt, right and proper, balanced, fitting [And I add,
 must, necessary].
- 4 tātā—to strike repeatedly (Each tufuga ta tatau has his own rhythm, each person being
 tataued works out a rhythm to combat/withstand the pain) u—to bite, or is the
 sound of suppressed pain as you clench your teeth to try and withstand the
 pain
- 5 tatau—also means to wring the wetness/moisture/juice out of something.
 (Apparently this is what happens when you're being tataued—the blood
 and pain are 'wring' out of you. Also, after long periods of pain you feel
 totally wrung out!)

THE WOMAN'S TATTOO IS CALLED MALU.

- 1 malu—to be shaded, to be protected. (The malu is also the motif which is unique to the malu).
- 2 malu—coolness
- 3 malu—soft, to soften.

In addition to Wendt's definitions, where *ta* means strike, *tau* also means hit, to hit or to land as in landing a blow, so *tatau* implies two sides or parties: one doing the striking, the other receiving the strike or experiencing the *tau*. This includes both the tattooer and tattooee, where the tattooer symbolizes Samoan social order being inscribed and belted onto the body and the male body as the recipient. "Modern tattoo begins in the Pacific" and the word "tatau was first imported into English in 1769 by Captain James Cook...forming the English *tattoo* as well as the French *tatouage*, German *tätowierung* and Spanish *tatuaje*" (Ellis, 2008, pp. 1, 14). George Turner, who saw no value in tatau, but frowned upon it as "tedious and painful...a waste of time" and as connected with "reveling, immorality and parental pride" (Turner, 1984, p. 183-184), did not bother to understand the meaning of tatau.

The origin of *tatau* is told in the myth of the female Siamese twins Taemā and Tilafaigā (Fraser, 1896; Gell, 1993; Kramer, 1994; Stair, 1897) who were born in the eastern Samoan Island of Ta'u in Manu'a; another version points to Falealupo Savai'i as their birth place, from the family of Sa Tonumaipē'a (Sauoaiga, 1991). Turner (1984) refers to the twins as goddesses while Stair regards them as deities (Stair, 1897). The twins swam from Fiji with their tattooing kit, singing a song that said "tattoo the women not the men." Diving for a huge clam on the sea floor reversed their words into: "tattoo the men and not the women," hence the reason for the men being tattooed instead of women, although women also have a different form of tattoo, called *malu*. Fraser states that Tilafaiga changed her name to Nafanua, but it is more commonly accepted that Tilafaiga eventually married her uncle, Saveasi'uleo, lord of Pulo-tu the underworld, and one of their children is Nafanua, the greatest war goddess in Samoan oral history, who allegedly foretold the arrival of Christianity to Samoa; she is identified with the paramount chiefly family of Tonumaipē'a (Gell, 1993; Kramer, 1995; Sauoaiga, 1991). Samoans attribute the origin of *tatau* to Fiji but Fijians attribute it to Samoa (Ellis, 2008). The *tatau* design has not changed much since it was first recorded and the patterns and motifs "encompasses history, genealogy, and cosmology, the

distant past and the immediate present, and embodies the sacred and the physical” (Ellis, 2008, p. 10).

Tatau Motifs

Figure 4: Tatau, Front View.

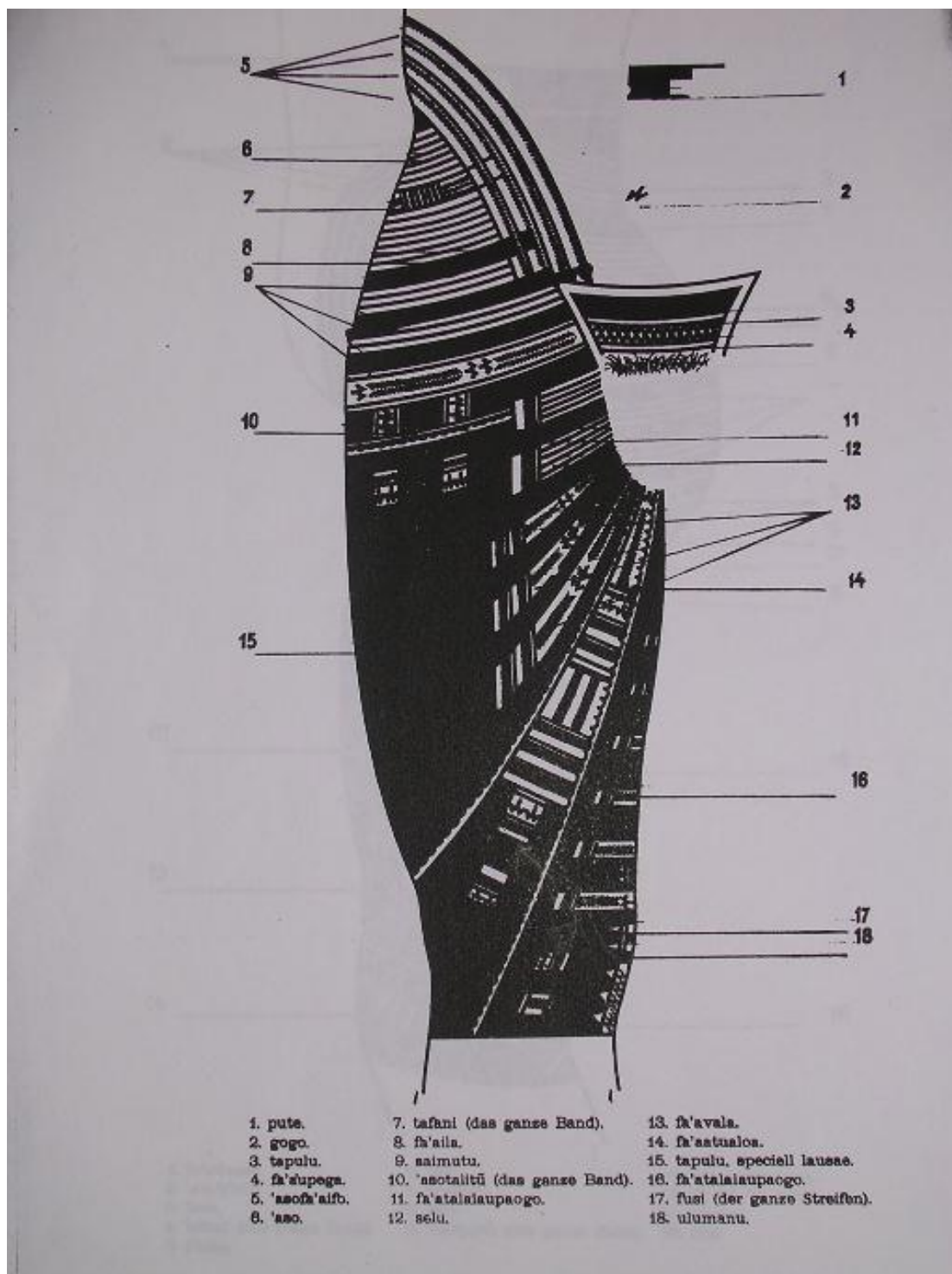


Figure 5: tatau, Left Side View.

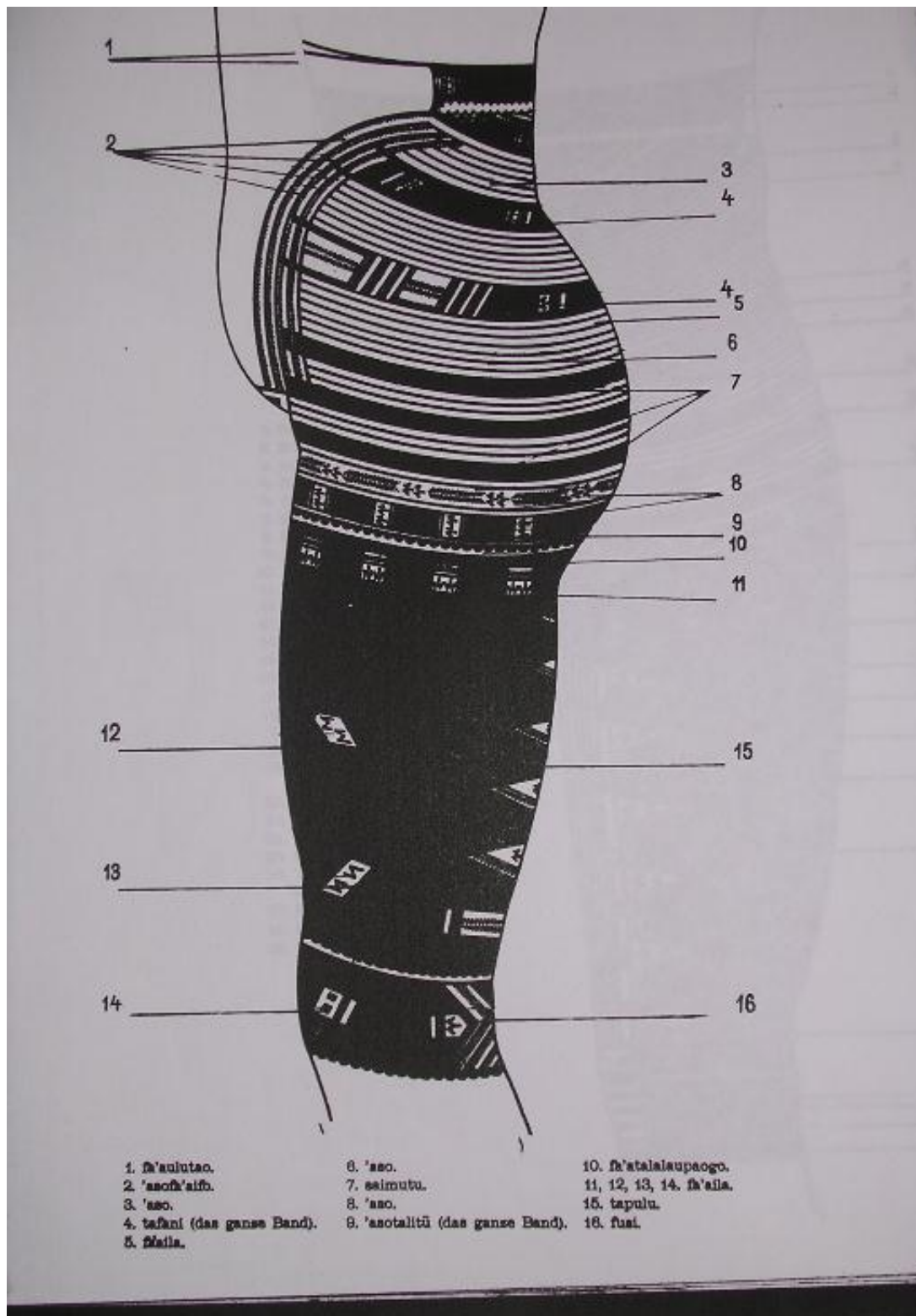
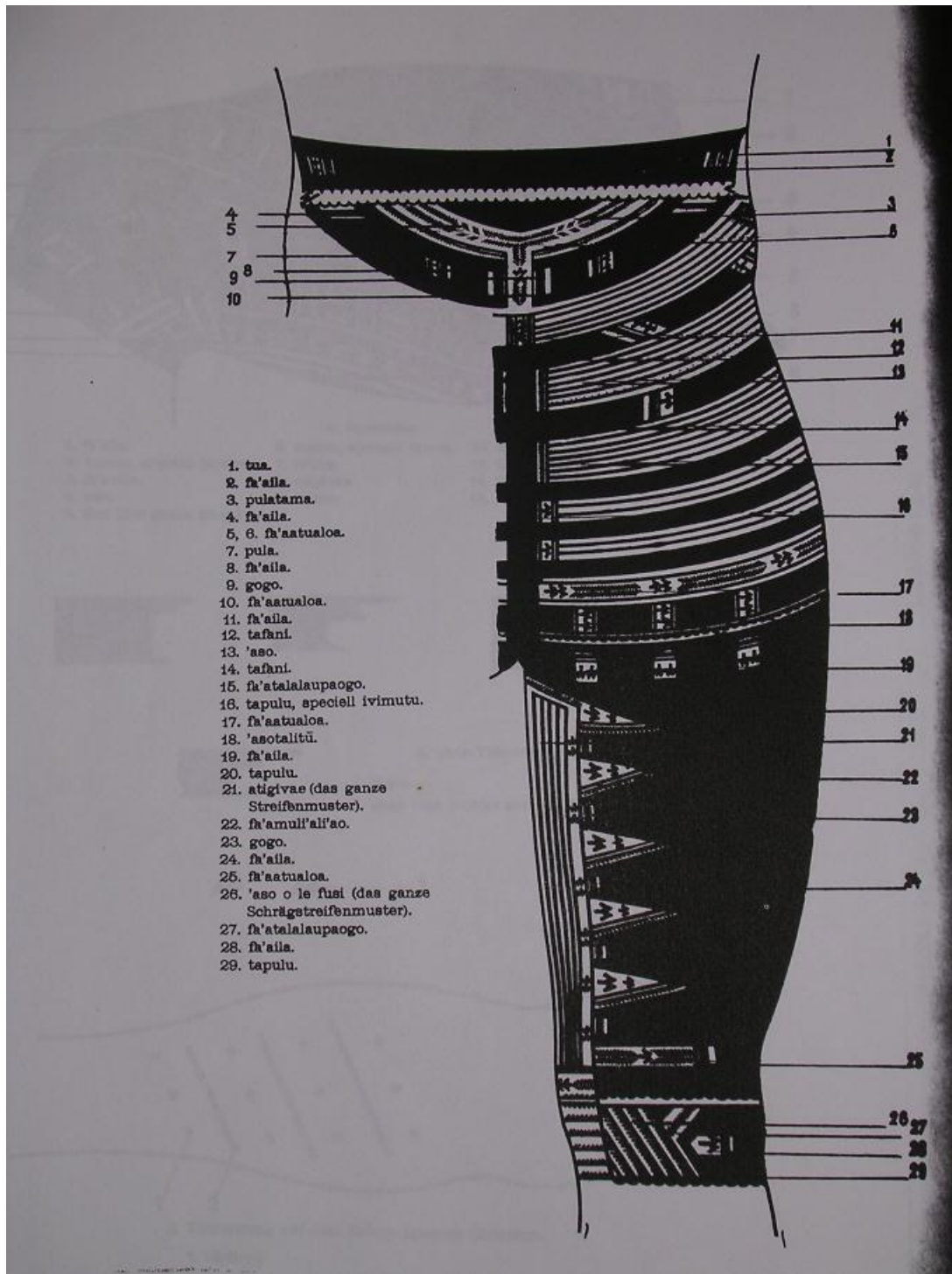


Figure 6: Tatau, Back View.



In referring to the first recorded sighting of the Samoan *tatau*, Turner (Turner, 1984) quotes from the writings of Carl Friedrich: “They were clothed from the waist downwards with fringes and a kind of silken stuff artificially wrought” (Tcherkézoff, 2004, p. 16; Turner, 1984, p. 183). Behrens was part of the Dutch expedition of 1722 which made a brief contact but did not land at Ta’ū Manu’a; his work was published in 1739 (Tcherkézoff). Turner refers to the head of this expedition as Roggewein and the year was 1772, but 1772 was the year of publication of narratives from a French expedition led by Louis-Antoine de Bouganville, which made contact with Samoans in 1768, and which recorded a similar description of the *tatau*. Tcherkézoff (2004) notes that the continuity of the same *tatau* patterns from at least the early 18th century “was demonstrated before the patterns were reproduced and published by German ethnographers at the beginning of the 20th century” (p. 23). His point is that continuous reproduction of the same patterns of the *tatau* through the centuries is not due to the availability of printed material which could have been used as reference, because the *tatau* image was only printed and textually reproduced by German ethnographers in the latter half of the 18th century. The question is, then, if not by the use of printed material, how then did the same *tatau* patterns remain intact from the early 18th century to this day? The answer lies in the transmission of not a mere art form, but a culturally specific and meaningful art form which has social, political and spiritual origins. “Circumcision and tattooing are individualized sites of the embodied order” (Drozdown-St. Christian, 2002, p. 120) for men. In pre-Christian times, with the wearing of *tatau* by itself, the body was considered fully clothed (Wendt, 1996).

Reverend Amosa explains that the *tatau* and the motifs, as in Figures 1-3, are connected to the discourse of family and the Samoan male body and this makes a *tataued* body a meaningful one. He explains:

- 27 The images and patterns that are on the body of the tattoo
- 28 There is that word fa’alaufao, that means, that tells us
- 29 That this boy is, [his] taro rots, [his] ta’amū rots [his] banana, eh
- 30 It is the price of his body becoming a serving body, eh, on the side of food
- 31 There is also, concerning the images inscribed on the boy’s body the fa’a-
 muli’ali’ao, eh
- 32 That means that the boy,

- 33 His life of service is to be familiar with the sea and, eh, and to fish
 34 It is the utilization of his *tautua* body in his family

The term *fa'aaogāina* (34) is derived from *aogā*, which means use or usefulness and *fa'aaogā*, which is to make of, use or to bring into use. It is a term used recurrently in participants' explanations of the body—a body must be useful for the family, village and church, otherwise it is a useless worthless and meaningless body. In this text, as in the previous one, the motifs symbolize the domain and terrain of responsibilities and of the *soga'imiti* (*tataued* man); it is not inside a house but in the sea and forest, fishing and working to produce food in his duties as a *tautua*. Although this is the primary range of male duties in pre-capitalist Samoa, it is here maintained to differentiate male and female roles and statuses, reminiscent of post-war Britain in the 1940s and 1950s, when women were lured back into the home from war work which helped facilitate unequal power relations between men and women (Jackson, 1990). The “price” (30) of being a *tautua* echoes a capitalist discourse and implies the necessity to serve in order to receive a blessing.

The *tatau* motifs, as per Figures 1-3, represent various animals and plants of the forest, creatures of the sea, the human skeleton, Samoan houses and regular objects encountered daily in a young man's domain of work. The Samoan expression *e pala lona ma'umaga*—his plantation rots—means there is so much food in the plantation that it rots before it could all be harvested because there is still plenty to eat. The expression is deployed here by the repeated use of the term *pala* (rot, 29) to reinforce the *soga'imiti* as *tautua* who must work hard to make sure there is always food available for the family. A *soga'imiti* or *tautua* would eventually become a family *matai* and leader with authority in the future, but the more immediate reward in this transaction is the rendering of one's body as useful for the service of one's family. The speaker does not justify the rendering of this service because a body inscribed with the *tatau* and its patterns is a body that has accepted and embodied this ‘life of service’ (line 33). Assigning the construct *tautua* to the inscribed body re-enacts and re-affirms the position of the *soga'imiti* in his *tautua* role.

A Fa'afafine With A Tatau

Lesiva is a successful academic, artist, *fa'afafine*, and is a *soga'imiti*. His “father asked” if he wanted “to have a *tatau*” and he promptly said yes. He shares what *tatau* means for him. The text is original and not a translation.

- 122 If this is a a a a chance for me to, to make good, what I never, gave him
123 This would be my chance, you know, and I agreed because I, I thought that its ahh
124 Its my chance to, to reconcile. whatever I
125 couldn't make up []
128 And, I, felt that after, after I had gotten the tattoo, that we became closer
129 There was ahhh all these other boundaries around us
130 ahhhm were slowly chipped out, chipped away, slowly, melting, And-
131 I: Because of the tattoo-
132 L: Because of the fact that I, endured, this very painful process of being tattooed
133 So ahhhm, so, And, the importance or the significance of the motif itself
134 not only that it ahhhm, it was a ahhhm, ahhhm, a shift in in in perception
135 ahhhm for our family, But it was, ahhhm as you know []
140 And and in every respect it was a ahhhm it was a reawakening for me
141 ahhhm, to be tattooed and to be taken to a different level
142 ahhhm, the whole idea never sunk in until, probably a year or two years later
143 ahhhm that I realized that yeah, I have proven, that I am
144 I am just like, my father or even more or even that, the same
145 So it was almost as if I was trying to measure, up to, the expectation, ahhhm
146 it sounds redundant but, it is a passage it's a rite of passage
147 you know and, for me the process, ahhhm, delivered me, through the void ahhhm
148 the void of insecurity, the void of, ahhh not knowing who I was
149 The void of, not being able to, to hear my own voice
150 The the process itself made me realize that its OK to be insecure
151 Its OK to be, To be lost. And its OK to be, ahhhm not knowing who you are
152 because, you already now are dressed with, your identity
153 that you, will always, look at and find some form of of healing there
154 Ahhhm So, It was a healing process, In so many levels
155 For me and my father I think, Ahhh mentally, spiritually.

Fa'afāfine, literally, means in the manner of a woman; they are considered to be more female than male although they are biologically male. Some *fa'afāfine* are abused by their own families for being *fa'afāfine* and this creates a barrier between *fa'afāfine* and their families. The desire for sameness with his father is a desire for belonging and acceptance as a *fa'afāfine*—a non-male in a patriarchal religious society. The text speaks of a state of confusion, being in a void of insecurity not knowing his identity and not hearing his voice; Culbertson (2002) refers to this state as “gender dysphoria” (Culbertson, 2002, p. 221). For Lesiva, the *tatau* was the “chance” (122) to mend broken relationships; it changed his family’s perception of him (134-135) and brought him closer to his father (128). The *tatau* broke boundaries (129), brought reconciliation (124), deliverance (147), healing (153), and proof (143) of sameness with his father, and a sense of being taken to a different level (141). This is because the *tatau* transformed a non-male into a male. According to Reverend Fau’olo, the shame of an uncircumcised young man is also the shame of the father. There is a tone of shame associated with the *fa'afāfine* gender here—a shame inscribed onto the body—but the *tatau* has overshadowed and healed that shame since the inscription of *tatau* denotes masculinity, a socially inscribed conventional masculinity as male identity. In a video recording during Lesiva’s *tatau* ordeal, his younger brother could be heard in the background: “Take courage while we are trying to beat the *fa'afāfine* out of you.”

O le La’ei Samoa: Clothed In Tatau

The pre-Christian notion of the male body as one fully clothed by means of wearing a *tatau* was eventually subsumed under new Christian ethics and propriety. As Tcherkézoff (2004) observes, the sacred position embodied by a chief (*ali'i*) or *taupou* in relation to secular *tulafale* and males was often represented by the wearing or covering of the body with fine mats, in contrast to their inferiors who wore less or next to nothing. When these mats are *tatala* (unwrapped) and offered as gifts or to save a life, they represent the unwrapping and offering of the embodied sacredness and *mamalu* (prestige) to the one given the mat. The *tatau* and *malu* cannot be *tatala*; it is a lifetime embodiment of all that it represents.

Most Samoan churches still excommunicate men when they acquire the *tatau* and this Church–culture friction continues to exist, though is not seriously considered. Ioane, a *taule'ale'a* and *soga'imiti*, discusses the issue but is reluctant to solve the problem. He states

that “the body of a Samoan male (*tama Samoa*) who utilizes the culture ‘must’ have a *tatau*,” then contrasts this position with: “but there is no reason to have such a thing on the body that was brought which is a temple.” The “temple” is a biblical reference and is used to support the Church’s stance against *tatau* as “*o le silafaga a le Akua*—God’s view.”

On the question of how to dress the male body in public, Reverend Amosa states that a Samoan male body wears no shirt (*fa’asausau*), because it is a body prepared to do “his Samoan duties” and his “*tautua*” for the “village and church.” That “bare” (*tino le ufiufia*) body will be clothed by the “instructions” (*fa’akoguga*) from the village and church authorities because “this bare body is a *tautua* body.” This body would “dress the same way when he goes to fight,” but he has a different view about the body in church, where he avoids the body altogether, but talks instead about Samoans being “clothed by the Gospel.” He warns that “we must consider such issue theologically” because the acceptance of the Gospel by “our ancestors constitutes acceptance of the way the body is covered in church.” Proponents for change are constructed as people of “new knowledge” to contrast it with that of the ancestors who accepted the Gospel. A clothed church body, like that of “John Williams, embodies the *mamalu* (prestige) and *matagofie* (beauty) of God.” In contrast to his earlier position, he now referred to a body outside the confines of the Church status quo as part of *ku fa’a-gu’upō* (traditions of the dark days).

Reverend Fau’olo disagrees with the above view. He says that “Church Elders have much change in their views at present” concerning covering the body and the wearing of suits in hot-climate Samoa. As an illustration, he describes the Samoan Catholic Church, which has indigenized worship by utilizing a traditionally-dressed *taupou* and a bare-chested *soga’imiti* dancing up to the altar presenting gifts during the sacramental offering. According to him, the cardinal requested that these practices must always be performed only by a *soga’imiti* and a female with a *malu* (female tattoo). As a regular witness to these services, he says that “It is such a beautiful sight. Beautiful!” He asks,

If culture is so sinful, why do we keep practicing it? Why not throw it away altogether? But if it is not sinful, consecrate it. Why leave it outside the Church door when we come in [to worship]? Why don’t we utilize it? Culture and religion do have

a connection if we stop thinking that every non-spiritual thing is evil, because we know that body and spirit go together.

The elders' change of viewpoint means a change in the Church's stance against the *tatau* and other traditional practices is in the hands of elders. The above text reveals the continuous divide between church and culture concerning many missionary-initiated regulations and social practices concerning the body, even a century after the missionary era.

In this chapter I have analyzed how the Samoan male body and the Samoan notion of masculinity is constructed and how it is shaped and inscribed with moral values of the Samoan religio-cultural lifeways from birth to adulthood. The next chapter discusses this body as an adult, a responsible and capable body in its roles in the community, how it occupies space, and what moral values it embodies in terms of relationships with others and with God, the past, present and future in its moral universe.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EMBODIED IDENTITY AND MORAL VALUES

INTRODUCTION

“If the Samoan worldview can be summed up in a word it would be: *va* [vah]”
(Tagaloa, 2011, p. 85)

The Samoan notion of body, self and identity is described under ‘The Samoan Body: Self, Person, Identity’ in Chapter One. This chapter, however, analyses the embodied moral values which define identity as constituted in the Samoan worldview, summed up in the concept of *Va*, which is at the core of *fa’asamoa* or the Samoan way of life that Tofaeono (2000) calls religio-cultural lifeways. Religio-cultural lifeways denotes social norms or lifeways that are deeply embedded in religion and culture. “One dimension of culture is constituted by the pattern of *explicit social norms* that is transmitted from one generation to the next. Another dimension...consists of the pattern of *implicit social preferences* that are inherent in a particular social structure” (Jacobson-Widding, 1983, p. 15).

VA: RELATIONSHIPS

Va is both a physical and social space that is often translated as relationship in its absolute simplicity. *Va* has been discussed widely because of its centrality in Samoan social relations that shapes interpersonal relationships in daily life and determines how people behave, speak and occupy social space (Duranti, 1992). It bespeaks relationship between people and the cosmos, between people and God or gods, between people and the environment and between self and others as reflected in the Creation Story (Chapter One). This means there is a very intimate and meaningful connection between individuals and all animate and inanimate objects in one’s surrounding that shapes one’s identity and moral behaviour—the kind of relationship constituted in a *feagaiga*, for example.

Va With The Universe And Cosmos

Tui Atua describes the position of an individual within the social space in the Samoan worldview:

I am not an individual; I am an integral part of the cosmos. I share divinity with my ancestors, the land, the seas and the skies. I am not an individual, because I share a 'tofi' (an inheritance) with my family, my village and my nation. I belong to my family and my family belongs to me. I belong to my village and my village belongs to me. I belong to my nation and my nation belongs to me. This is the essence of my sense of belonging" (Tui Atua, 2003, p. 51).

Pre-Christian Samoans respected and were able to communicate in certain ways with the solar system, where the planets and stars warned people about advancing calamities so they could be prepared, and to guide them in their seafaring and life journey, or planting and harvest seasons. Tui Atua describes one of the pre-Christian Samoan rituals which mimics and celebrates the life of a dog, and says that this ritual is:

815 It's equation! That life and death you know, are one
816 The ultimate purpose of the rituals in these performances is equation []
825 It is God from whom originates the life of the human
826 It is also God from whom originates the life of the dog
827 But since the human
828 Has been given far better gifts of God
829 His/her responsibility, is to preserve the life of the dog and that of the tree []
837 And to know
838 The boundary between him/her and all these things []
844 So as I said
845 It's ah question of equation and affinity []
860 The one from whom the life of the environment originates
861 [Is also] the one from whom originates the life of us
862 And that you should love and respect the
863 If much superior gifts have been given to you [human], eh

864 That means you also have a lot more responsibilities
865 To protect the life of your environment []
867 Because we all, are things [and people] created by God

This ritual was practiced by the Solosolo village in pre-Christian times but survives only in memory. A village *matai* who was going to revive it never did because, according to the participant, “he is a coward, because he would be cursed (*fetu ’u*) by Church ministers.”

“Equation and affinity” equates humans with animals (dogs), trees and the environment (860) since they are all created by God (867). In terms of affinity, they are all siblings from the same parental creator God. The term God (828), who is “the one” (860-1) from whom life originates, implies the Christian God of contemporary times, but the ritual itself was practiced in the days of Tagaloa, the pre-Christian creator. The use of the common name “*Atua*” (God) frames past beliefs and practices in the present and validates these rituals as constituting holistic Christian theological messages that denote equality and the respect for boundaries (838) or the space between each created life. The Christian theological values of “love and respect” (862) are central defining moral values in the concept *Va*. Despite this affinitive equality, humans are given more responsibilities because they have been given more gifts by God to care for other life forms—animals, trees, etc.

A similar story is told about Pupu Luki, a fisherman who when he goes fishing for sharks addresses the shark in chiefly language and naming it as *tamasoāali’i* (aide to an *ali’i* chief). Pupu Luki talks to the fish and recites a respectful chant as it approaches his canoe as he “believed that the shark was his equal. He believed that they shared a common descent and destiny and that the shark understood this” (Tui Atua, 2009, p. 7). When the fish is eventually overcome, the fisherman thanks the *ali’i* aide (shark), and on arrival in the village the fish is covered with a fine mat as witness to its high status before the whole community sing chants of thanks for the fish, the fisherman and God Tagaloa; the fish, the sea, God and the community are all connected in this cycle of life and these rituals inscribe the memory and knowledge of this holistic worldview of life on the body where “man does not have absolute dominion over the sea. While man can fish from the sea, he takes only what he needs to live, knowing that he, the sea and the fish need to respect each other in order to survive” (p. 9).

As “aide to *ali'i*,” the story is constructed within the discourse of *matai* system where *ali'i* is a sacred chief; it constructs the fish and the act of fishing as sacred; the fish being an equal of the fisherman is presupposed in the genealogy stories where humankind and the rest of creation have the same descent origin in one *Atua*. Tagaloa supports this view: “The *va tapuia* (sacred relationship) between the person and environment has always been at the core of our existence. Our sense of time is related to the moon and the sun and their relative journeys throughout the day and night. Our food cultivation was determined by the seasons throughout the year taking into account the rain and the sun, wet and dry, and the need for soil replenishment. There was respect for this need so as to maintain the balance” (Tagaloa, 2010, p. 4).

The connection between humans and the environment is also embedded within discursive constructs such as *palapala* and ‘*ele'ele*, which means soil, land earth, but also means blood; a human without blood has no life, a Samoan without land belongs to no family and has no *fa'asinomaga*—simply put, he or she is a non-Samoan.

Va in Human Relationships

The meaningful body and social space do define each other, as outlined under the section *O le Saofa'iga: Body in space* (Chapter Six); here I extend on the *va* among human relationships which constructs the Samoan moral universe. Wendt explains this *va*:

Va is the space between, the between-ness, not empty space, not space that separates but space that relates, that holds separate entities and things together in the Unity-that-is-All, the space giving meaning to things. The meanings change as the relationships/the contexts change...A well-known Samoan expression is ‘Ia teu le va.’ Cherish/nurse/care for the *va*, the relationships. This is crucial in...cultures that value group, unity, more than individualism: who perceive the individual person/creature/thing in terms of group, in terms of *va*, relationships (Wendt, 1996).

The centrality of *va* in *fa'asamoa* is well documented in literature (Aiono-Le Tagaloa, 1996b, 1997; Anae, 1998, 2007; Drozdow-St. Christian, 2002; Duranti, 1981; Rolff, 1978; Shore, 1982) and various concepts are borne out of the *va*, such as *va tapuia*, *va fealoa'i*, *teu le va*,

and *‘aua le to’ia le va*. *‘Aua le to’ia le va* means do not disturb the *va*; it is a phrase often heard when an argument heats up to remind opposing sides of their mutual responsibilities to maintain peace and good relations in the *va*. Anae (2007).

Teu le va implies both proscribed and prescribed behaviour and the concomitant moral and ethical underpinnings of behaviour....There will be a *va* between the self and parents, siblings, grandparents, cousins aunts and uncles, other extended *aiga* members in New Zealand, Samoa and abroad, church, neighbourhood communities, teachers, friends, peers, and wider New Zealand society. It is in this relational space that new personal, cultural, social, and economic structures of social mobility, ethnicity, gender, identity and well-being are being wrought (Anae, 2007).

Teu means to put in order or to clean up, and it reminds people of their own personal responsibilities in keeping good relations and initiating self-control. Aiono (1996b) demonstrates that *Va* permeates all spheres of life and living in Samoan religio-cultural lifeways, as summarized below:

The *va tapuia* between brother and sister

The *va tapuia* between the parent (esp. father and mother) and offspring

The *va tapuia* between male and female

The *va tapuia* between male and male and female and female

The *va tapuia* between host and guest

The *va tapuia* between *matai*

The *va tapuia* between the dead and the living

The *va tapuia* between man and his environment—sea and sky; flora and fauna

The *va tapuia* between the created and the Creator.

Tapuia is derived from *tapu*, which means “to make sacred or to place under restriction” (Pratt, 1911 [1862], p. 322) or “be forbidden” (Milner, nd [1966], p. 243). It highlights the sacredness of distinguished demarcated physical and social spaces between and among people, as reflected in *matai* sitting positions in a meeting house according to their titles and

status. *Va tapuia* between a brother and sister means not only that the brother is responsible to *tautua* (serve and protect) his sister, but that there are a whole lot of sacred boundaries between the two that the brother is prohibited from overstepping, and vice versa.

The *ali'i-tulāfale* relationship also designates *feagaiga*, a term that derives from *feagai*, which means “to be opposite to each other, to correspond or dwell together cordially, to be on good terms; as a chief with his people, or a minister with his flock” (Pratt, 1911 [1862], p. 139). Pratt defined *feagaiga* in 1862 as “an established relationship between different parties, as between brothers and sisters and their children or between chiefs and their *tulāfale*.” A second definition is “an agreement, a covenant” but he notes that this second definition was “a lately adopted meaning” (Pratt). Milner’s dictionary (nd [1966]), published almost a century later, takes up Pratt’s second “lately adopted meaning” as his first, and while Pratt emphasizes the notion of the relationship inherent in the term *feagaiga*, Milner’s arrangement suggests that this lately adopted meaning (covenant) has become the principal meaning (Schoeffel, 1995), most likely derived from the biblical ‘covenant.’ The parties to a *feagaiga* relationship, defined by Pratt and Milner as outlined in Schoeffel (1995, pp. 86-87), are:

Sacred	Secular
Sister	Brother
Tamafafine (sororal descent line)	Tamatane (fraternal descent line)
Ali'i (chiefs)	Tulāfale (orators, heads of families)
Congregational Pastor	Congregation

According to Schoeffel (1995),

Fundamental to the relationship between the parties to a *feagaiga* is the idea that secular actions require moral or spiritual support....A contrast is drawn between sacred power or moral authority and secular authority and action, in which the sanctity attributed to one party lends dignity and legitimacy to the actions of the other. The supernatural authority possessed by the ‘sacred’ party, on one hand, sanctions and controls; on the other hand, it dignifies and lends blessing to the actions of the secular party. The term *feagaiga* encapsulates the idealised principles of order in Samoan society at all levels of organisation. The dignity and honour (*mamalu*) of a group or its

representative is acknowledged through behaviour that is referred to in Samoa as *fa'aaloalo* (respect and deference). The qualities of dignity, honour, respect and deference are considered to the fundamental ingredients of the social order (1995, pp. 86-87).

As described by Schoeffel, the values embodied in the *feagaiga* concept are not confined to the parties mentioned above, but encapsulate the lives of all Samoans in general.

FA'AALOALO: RESPECT

Fa'aaloalo is often translated as respect. The word stems from the root word *alo*, which is the frontal or facial side of a person, or the stomach as opposed to the back; it also means to face somebody—*alo mai* means face this way. The frequentative repetition of *alo* into *fa'aaloalo* designates not only the physical facing of two people or groups towards each other, but also the expected exchange of respect, hospitality and love from one to the other. In Samoan thought, *fa'aaloalo* must always exist and be practiced even in the most horrendous of situations. It is often said that *fa'aaloalo* is a defining virtue for Samoans.

Forty eight year Ioane, a young married *taule'ale'a* who is caring for his elderly parents in Samoa, was in the bush tending to his cattle when I was talking to his parents in the house. When he arrived he sat himself at the back of the house; we said hello, then he disappeared again. When he returned he was partly wet from the light rain outside and I asked to talk to him. He soon disappeared again to his *faleo'o* (small house) at the back and returned wearing clean dry clothes; he had rid himself of his wet and dirty three-quarter pants and t-shirt, but was now wearing a *lavalava* and a dry t-shirt and sat himself at the back of the house. The change of clothes and bodily appearance is part of the *va-nonofo* and *fa'aaloalo* he was displaying towards me, an outsider, and therefore a guest in his home. Much later, while he talked about the Samoan culture, he recalled our earlier encounter:

741 *O Samoa e, e fa'avae i le Akua ae i ai laga āgagu'u, a*
 Samoa is founded on God and [or but] it has its culture

742 *O le āgagu'u sili ā ga mamafa i le Samoa o le va-gogofa*
 The most important of cultural traditions for a Samoan is personal relation

- 743 *Fa'aaloalo*
[That is] respect
- 744 *O le va-gogofa lea o le fa'aaloalo, a*
That is the relational ties of respect, eh
- 745 *Pei ā ga e saugoa gei ga o'u fealua'i ma lo'u ofuāe faigaluega ma le mikiafu kolou
fo'i le Afiafi*
Like you said before when I was roaming around in my working pants and T-shirt my
apologies for the evening
- 746 *Ga e saugoa mai loa ou ke sau i i*
[But] when you asked me to come here
- 747 *Go'u iloaiga, E 'u'ū lo'u ofu la e fai, a*
I knew what I was wearing was smelly, eh
- 748 *Kulou*
Excuse me
- 749 *Kakau loa go'u alu e sulu mai*
So I should go and wear a
- 750 *Pe kā'ele pe le kā'ele*
Whether I have a shower or not
- 751 *Ae sui mai le lavalava mamā e fa'afesaga'i lelei*
But I should change into clean clothes so [we] could face each other properly
- 752 *A la e mamā lelei lavalava*
While [my] clothes are good and clean
- 753 *A, O le uiga fa'aaloalo ga lea ga fa'aali aku e a'u ia*
Eh, that is the respective behaviour that was shown by me to [you]
- 754 *E le aogā la go'u alu aku ma lo'u, 'ie'ie lea*
It is no good for me to come with that old lavalava
- 755 *Kulou foi o lau susuga ua uma ga fa'auuiga*
Excuse me your honor who has already been anointed
- 756 *Sui va'aia o le Ali'i, a*
[A] visible representative of God

The participant's actions of a change of clean dry clothes and his sitting position at the back of the house clarifies his sense of *fa'aaloalo* towards the interviewer. In his cultural construction, I occupy a higher status in relation to him because, as a theological graduate, I was also a *faife'au* who “has already been anointed” (755) and I was a God representative (756) in relation to him as a *taule'ale'a* (untitled man). In contemporary Samoa, *faife'au* (ministers) are called *fa'afeagaiga* and they symbolically hold the sisterly position of a brother–sister *feagaiga* relationship. They are referred to as *o ao o fa'alupega* (the pinnacle

of *fa'alupega*) so they occupy a high if not the highest status in the religio-cultural social structure. This status is assigned to the interviewer, who is addressed with the *gagana fa'aaloalo* (respective language) such as *lau susuga* (your honour—for lack of a better word, 755) and repeated apologies (*kulou*, 745, 748, 755). When lower status persons walk near a higher one, they say *tulou* (spelled in the text in its colloquial use, *kulou*); the excuse acknowledges the higher status of the other, and to excuse the action of walking, or in this case, the participant's talk, which might infringe upon the sacred space of the other—the *va*, both physical and social.

In this text, social positions in the *va* are constituted in status and office (*faife'au* and *taule'ale'a*) are re-enacted and maintained through practice and the discourse of *fa'aaloalo*, which, according to Ioane, is “the most important of Samoan cultural traditions (742-4).

Fa'aaloalo E Faigata: Respect is Hard

Soa is the treasurer of a Samoan EFKS parish in Auckland and he holds an *ali'i matai* title of his family. He said that the church minister was misappropriating church funds and tried to confuse him about how funds were being used. He said that he knew that what the minister was doing was not right (*e le sa'o*—not straight), but it was hard (*faigata*) for him to tell the minister off, just because he was the minister. The participant nevertheless acknowledged that his use of *fa'aaloalo* in this case was not right.

- 103 Respect is something very nice if it is properly
 104 and correctly used
 105 You know like there are things that I could see, that
 106 Like things concerning the relationship with, for example with the minister []
 108 Something that I could see that is not right and
 109 *ae faigakā ga ka fai aku pei ka ke musu fo'i e fai oga o loka fa'a-*
 But it is hard for me to say like I would be reluctant to do [i.e., tell] because of my res
 110 Respect to him
 111 Say because he is the minister or say because it would be my dear father who is old or
 someone like that
 112 So that kind of respect is not good []
 114 *kusa o ga ua avifo le fa'aaloalo e kava ai le mea lea e*

- Because that means *fa'aaloalo* is now brought in to cover over that which is [not right]
- 115 the right thing should have been done, it should have been made known []
- 143 *ae laga o si o kakou akugu'u e, faigakā ia o lega kulaga, a*
But because our dear country is, that situation is very hard, eh []
- 145 There is a time when, you stray away from the right thing when you
- 146 *lou va'ai alofa aga'i le kagaka lea e*
You consider with love the person to whom []
- 148 *E kupu ai se mea fa'apegā ga le mafai lea ga e*
Something like that is happening to then you could not
- 149 *pei o le kasi ga vaega fo'i lea ka ke iloa i si a kakou*
Like that is one of the things that I know about our dear
- 150 *agagu'u ma le kakou, agaifagua, faigakā kele ga e*
Traditions and our, way of life, it is very hard for you to
- 151 *pe a o'o a'e la i gai o kakou kua'ā ia po'o ē fo'i e makukua*
When it comes to our dear parents and elders
- 152 *faigakā lea ga e faku "ia ka'akia i'iga so'u alu e"*
It would be hard for you to say "well leave it there I will go and"

This excerpt is about the minister misappropriating church funds, who has tried to manipulate the treasurer's report on how the money was used. That is, he used the money for personal need then tried to gloss it under some non-existing Church spending. This is not right according to the treasurer, but he found it 'hard' to reveal the issue to the parish and put the minister in a bad position, simply because he was the *faiife'au*.

Fa'aaloalo is constructed with the positive connotations "nice" (103), "correctly" (104), "the right thing" (115, 145), in contrast with its trace (Derrida, 1976) "not right" (108), "not good" (113), and "stray away" (145). In this construction, the moral universe (Jacobson-Widding, 1983) through which *fa'aaloalo* must be practiced is all good, correct and entails doing the right thing; the antithesis of that is neither right nor good. With the religio-cultural respect entrusted to and embodied by the *faiife'au*, the respondent finds it "hard" (109, 143, 150) to do the right thing or enact the correct essence of *fa'aaloalo* that a lower status parishioner and *matai* is required to pay to the minister. The father is characterized by the sympathetic *loka* (my dear) and effectively excuses the minister's action as all part and parcel of "our dear country" (143) and "dear traditions" (149-150). The love, *fa'aaloalo*, and the notion of

children not to question their parents and elders, is activated not only to “cover over” or smother the wrong but also to compromise the minister’s actions.

ALOFA: THE SAMOAN CONCEPT OF LOVE

The phrase *o le alofa na o upu* or *o le alofa ae leai se tino*—love of mere words or love without a body/action—signifies the Samoan understanding that love without action is no love at all since love must always have a body or be expressed through action, as in the concept of *si’i alofa*. The action indicates the notion of love but not that the action was caused from an inner feeling of love. When relatives, neighbours or friends give gifts of fine mats, money and or food for a wedding, funeral, bestowal of *matai* titles or any similar *fa’alavelave*, this is called *si’i alofa*. *Si’i* literally means to lift, to carry or to go, and *alofa* is love; this is the action of taking gifts to a person or family through the merit of *alofa*. The action conveys *alofa*, not the other way round. Shore (1982) makes the comment that Samoans have a tendency “to respond according to interactional context rather than to express what we would call personal ‘conviction’ is a characteristic feature of Samoan social action” (Shore, 1982, p. 165). *Alofa*, like most other moral values, is discursively constructed in Samoa in the public arena where people can be judged as possessing love or not. Love from the Samoan perspective is not defined from an essentialist viewpoint of some deep-seated essence, but rather from ‘the other’s’ viewpoint of one’s action—one is deemed to be doing love by virtue of her/his action of love for another. In many Samoan churches, the fortnightly financial contributions of parishioners for ministers are called *alofa*. One often hears people say on Sunday mornings: “*E le’i i ai so’u alofa*—I do not have love,” which means they have no money to give for the minister. The action denotes love and in effect defines the person.

PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL SPACE

Drozdown-St. Christian (2002) has highlighted the front-back and center-periphery distinctions seen in the arrangement of physical space in a Samoan family or village, and the corresponding appropriate activities and behaviour in relation to these spaces. He writes:

The back end of the village is the space of manual labour, dirt, and detritus. The front end of the village is the area of politics and religion, of formal events, such as weddings, funerals and village meetings, and of socializing and play. In a sense, the front of the village is the place where one is a member of the community, while the back of the village is the place where one pursues more individualized activities (p. 61).

This front-back contrast determines the arrangement of houses of a family; the *fale tele* or main house is at the front where the *matai* resides and issues all directions for the family. The other minor buildings, including the sleeping houses for other family members, the chicken coops, cooking house, toilet, etc., are at the back. The house immediately behind the *fale tele* is symbolically called *o le fale e tua i ai le fale tele*—the house upon which the *fale tele* (large or main house) depends, or the house that serves the *fale tele*. *Fale tele* is from ‘*fale*,’ meaning house, and ‘*tele*’ is big/large/main. The large house is also the guest house and is symbolically the one with the highest stone foundation and is the largest of each family’s many houses. The front part of the house is where guests or visiting chiefs sit themselves as opposed to the back, which is the usual domain of untitled men and women or *tautua*, from where they serve chiefs in the house.

Another space distinction, the centre/periphery arrangement of physical space within the village and homes, is where the center signifies visibility and *mamalu* (dignity) and the periphery signifies lack of it. The inhabitants of each village know exactly where their *malae*, or center of their village, is situated. With the *malae* as the centre of a village, dignity, sociality and visibility decreases as one moves away from the centre in an invisible circular ripple-like effect.

The original circular village layout, combined with the open walled houses which one still finds throughout Samoa, formed the basic landscape of visibility by which all members of Samoan society were monitored and disciplined. Social life, for Samoans, is the life they see, understanding and seeing something expressed in the same word, *malamalama*. Appropriate and good behaviour [*aga*], is that behaviour which can and should be seen (Drozdown-St. Christian, 2002, p. 62).

Moving away from the visible centre decreases public visibility and increases secretiveness, which is *leaga* or bad. “Bad, for Samoans, is that which is either directly anti-social, as in murder or theft, or that which is asocial, that is, things done in secrecy....*Leaga* can also mean failing to meet your social responsibilities” (Drozdow-St. Christian, 2002, pp. 62-63). If one goes hunting and kills a pig but consumes it all within his own family, he is *leaga*. Likewise, if a big catch of fish or a catch of a big fish is not shared, one might get fined in the village and one is called ‘*ai-fa’a-leaga*’—make eating bad; this phrase implies someone hiding in a corner eating and not wanting to share his food. Even if it is one’s kill or catch, one does not necessarily own that kill or catch; it collectively belongs to the community who monitors unnecessary overkill and waste. The kill or catch must be handed to the village authority, who will distribute it according to village status and protocols. The Samoan worldview is that nothing can be hidden, even in the bush, as told in the proverb: *E natia i vao ae lia’ina i le ala*—it may be hidden in the bush but it will always be known on the [public] road. There is no space that is not already social space.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TIME

Frank Smith (Smith, 2010) alludes to the importance of time from the Samoan perspective, which is related to the act of living defined in terms of living events or natural cyclical events affecting life. Time is perceived in all interactions between human, environment, God, ancestors, cosmos, the past, present, and future. Smith’s findings concerning time are summarized here:

Time is related to activities for survival, for example, in planting, harvesting and fishing. The close relationship between how life is lived and natural rhythms suggest a perception of time as cyclical which correlates to the cycles of human life, birth and death, from one generation to the next so that time is nonexistent outside the experience of living.

Time is related to events assuring continuing survival and rights of passage like marriage, birth and death, succession of *matai* titles, *mavaega* (parting command),

war, law and order. So time is related to concrete entities, that which is related to actions, that which is experienced. Notable remembered events are called *taeao*.

Time is related to the conservation of life and systems of meaning and values, for example *tautua* (service), *fa'aaloalo* (respect), *alofa* (love), *ifoga* (reconciliation) and *atua* (god/s). These system of meaning form the basis of human actions (pp. 71-73).

The importance of time is captured in the essence of some well-known Samoan proverbs such as: *O le ala i le pule o le tautua*—the way to authority is through service. One only has authority when one becomes a matai, so the whole life from birth to the moment of the bestowal of matai title is a life of service for the authority. Another proverb is *E au i le tauola e au i le fagota*—[All] who succeed in being a fisherman's aide eventually becomes a fisherman. Also, *Fa'alogo Mulimai ia Muamai*—Mulimai must listen to Muamai. The prefixes *muli* and *mua* means last and first respectively; the suffix *mai* means arrive—the last arrival must always listen and learn from the first.

Taeao means morning, but it also defines time. *Taeao* is part of oratory that recalls notable past event. This is your *taeao* means this is your time. Tuli explains:

- 187 Like what you said about the boundary. The truth is according to most of the elders'
belief
- 188 *e ke pa'i loa i ai, o loga uiga e o'o a'e i lou kaeao, ma lou kaimi,*
If you touch it, that means when your morning and your time comes,
- 189 Eh, you are nothing
- 190 Like it seems that they are taken away, the blessings are taken away.[]
- 192 The blessings are removed, because, because you have, well may be these are ancient
beliefs of the elders
- 193 That when the time comes for someone, who was dishonest
- 194 *ia ua, ua leai foi se kamāoaiga ua fāoa, ua 'ave'esea.*
He/she would find that, there are no blessings they have been wrestled away, taken
away
- 195 I *O le ā lou kalikoguga o sa'o ā legā kalikoguga i le kaimi legei?*
Do you believe that those beliefs still apply and true today?

- 196 F *E sa'o!*
It is true!][]
- 198 It is very true. Because still up to this day, there are things that have happened []
- 201 *A fa'apea ā e ku le ko'oko'o, pei o, pei o Asau. O Fao ā ia o le ko'oko'o, a,*
When the staff stands, like in Asau (village), Fao always has the [talking] staff, eh
- 202 *kokogu o le afio'aga ma, kausiga o le gu'u. Ia, fa'apegā fo'i ia Mu'a*
Within the village and, caring for the village. And likewise with Mu'a
- 203 But if any of those other men want to hold Fao's staff while Fao is still alive,
- 204 Even if he is also from the Fao family, when his time comes he would have
absolutely nothing in his bag
- 205 Because there are things like that that have happened and I have seen them.
- 206 *Ma o lea la ou ke kalikogu ā e, e kumau ā ga, sa o le akugu'u.*
Therefore I really believe, that those sacred beliefs of the nation remain firm.
- 207 *Ou ke kalikogu fo'i e le o se mea leaga. E le o se mea leaga.*
And I also believe that it is not a bad thing. It is not a bad thing.
- 208 *Ae 'iga 'ia iloa ai fo'i e le kagaka, oga ola, ma kausi le va kapuia.*
But so that for a person to learn [know], how to live, and keep sacred relations []
- 210 It is the same with the relation of a person to God
- 211 When it comes to a situation that I have overstepped that which I should not have
[the boundary],
- 212 Then I know that I have really stomped onto the law
- 213 I would in that situation know exactly what should happen to me.
- 214 *Auā o le Akua ia i lo'u kali [kalikoguga] pei o le kakou kalikoguga fa'a-kelisiago*
i legei kaimi,
Because God in my bel [belief] like our Christian belief at this time [age].
- 215 *ia e saugia e le Akua avagoa. A o'o ā fo'i i le kaimi ia e o le kagaka, e makuā iloga ā*
ga ku mai.
Is that God prepares opportunities. When the [right] time comes for a particular
person, s/he would really make a notable stand []
- 217 *'Ae a o'o aku i loga kaimi ua uma goga fao le kaimi o lesi,*
But when his/her time comes and he/she had already taken someone else's time by
force
- 218 *e o'o aku i loga kaimi ua leai, ua fuāmoa ā ia.*
When his/her time comes there is nothing. He/she is nothing
- 219 And that is my belief about that
- 220 My belief cannot depart from, from that by which our [people] live their [lives]
- 222 And plus as I have said, I have seen it

- 223 I have seen someone who wrestled away someone else's staff
 225 When his/her time came, no one listened or heard his word

The notion of time is constructed within the discourses of blessing (*manuia*, 190, 192), of elders (*koei'iga*, 187), *va tapuia* (sacred relation, 208), the nation, moral values (dishonest, 193), the discourse of God (214-215), the past and present.

According to the text, each person has his or her own time to such privileged position, achieved by going through the proper channel of *tautua*. Anyone who takes such a position before her/his time, or has taken someone else's moment by force (217), would find that blessing has been removed from her/him (192, 194, 218) and there is nothing left in her/his symbolic "bag" (204) of blessing and knowledge, and that no one would *lagoga* (hear, listen or feel, 225) a word they say. Such a voice has no audience, authority or *tautua*.

What, then, is a person's right moment to speak and rule? Although the discourse of time is dependent upon the ancient beliefs of elders, and by implication ancestors of the pre-Christian era where the *matai* system originated, the privilege to appoint people into the office of *matai* at their "right time" is assigned to the Christian God (Christian belief, 214). This authenticates the ancient belief system within Christian moral discourse. The assignment of this great responsibility of appointing *matai* to God frees human subjects and the *matai* system itself from blame for unruly *matai*, who are constructed as "dishonest" (193). The speaker is constructed as an eye witness (I have seen it, 223) to the "truthfulness" (196, 198, 223) of this logic of reward (blessing) and punishment (no blessing) to reaffirm that the sacred convictions of the past still hold true today (up to this day, 198) and shall "remain firm" (206) into the future. The text sounds a warning that the office of *matai* is embedded within the wisdom of the past and the authority of God and that they must learn and accept to live life in accordance with the moral values of *va tapuia* (208). The *matai's* talking staff (*ko'oko'o*, 203) symbolizes authority, and men are given this right over women (other men, 203); the patriarchal *matai* system with its power and authority is re-established and maintained as the status quo—the rule of the day.

EMBODIED KNOWLEDGE

Samoan knowledge is constructed as a “continuous search,” which contrasts human limitations and finitude to God’s wholeness and completeness. Such embodied knowledge is constituted within the concept *tofā sa’ili*. *Tofā* and *moe* are the polite words for sleep or sleeping; *tofā* refers to the *ali’i*’s sleep and it also means the words, will, decree, thoughts or knowledge of an *ali’i* or *tupu*, while *moe* refers to the *tulāfale*’s knowledge/sleep or a commoner’s sleep. Other synonyms of *tofā* are *tofā loloto* (deep *tofā*), *tofā mamao* (far sighted *tofā*), *tofā fa’atoe’ina* (an old man’s *tofā*). *Sa’ili* means search, so *tofā sa’ili* could be interpreted as a *ali’i*’s psychological and spiritual search for knowledge. The *ali’i* and *tulafale* are the keepers of oral traditions and they are referred to by various terms which have age and time connotations: ‘*au faitau lauulu* (the hair counters), ‘*au sinasina* (the grey-haired), *toe ‘ulu taia* (the last matured strong ‘ulu tree branch); such titles construct the older generation as the ones with the knowledge and experience that only come with age.

The connection between sleep and knowledge in *tofā sa’ili* reflects what Blackman (2008) calls an ‘Aha experience,’ which happens after one spends much time working through a problem and gives up and falls asleep, only to wake with a solution. “This magical problem-solving ‘Aha’ experience relates to a magical located within the unconscious. This phenomenon reformulates thought as both conscious and unconscious” (p. 4). Blackman notes that some of the best problem-solving solutions and cognitive processes can be attained not just through conscious thinking, but through subconscious bodily processes that may take place during one’s sleep. The sleep–knowledge alliance is an acknowledgement, from the Samoan perspective, of human finitude, as signified by the sleep, and the necessity to surrender to the divine other for knowledge and guidance. When Samoans find it hard to come to an agreement, they use the proverb: “*Se’i moe le toa o taeao le isi aso*—let the *toa* sleep for tomorrow is another day.”

The Samoan word for “to know (*iloa*) also means ‘to shed light on.’ To know is to see, and ‘to understand’ (*malamalama*) refers also to light, sunlight, daylight, and consciousness” (Shore, 1982, p. 168). Shore notes the prominent status accorded to vision over the aural as the basis for understanding in the Samoa conception of knowledge and points out that “the prominence of oral tradition in political life, the important place of the orator, and the

importance of remembering spoken genealogy, oral report does not have the epistemological impact of the visual” and “by implication, knowledge lies within the phenomenal world and not beyond it” (p. 168). This is not entirely true; I have discussed the finiteness of human knowledge from the Samoan perspective as constituted in the meaning of *tofā sa’ili* and its reliance on the divine other—the non-visual but ever-present God, gods and spirits of ancestors as sources of knowledge. In one’s sleep (*tofā*), one’s vision and awareness are temporarily suspended but the thought processes which operate both in the conscious and unconscious (Blackman, 2008) are still active. The practice of *Fono ma Aitu* (council with *Aitu*, see Chapter Five), which is held in the dark where there is no “visual” presence or voices heard from *Aitu*, indicates human reliance on the non-phenomenal existence of God/s and ancestor spirits as a source for knowledge from the Samoan perspective; otherwise, there was no point in having such a council if the lack of visual or aural presence meant that God/s and *aitu* are not present. Knowledge by implication lies within the phenomenal world and beyond.

The reason for the prominence of the visual over the aural lies with the concepts of usefulness, experience and community; what use is a *matai*, a *tautua*, knowledge? A *matai* or *tautua* who does not perform their responsibilities (useless) are non-existent in the experience of the community. Knowledge that is used for personal gain and not for the community/family is no knowledge. According to Tuli, even a knowledgeable orator, “orally” well-versed in genealogy, is dismissed as “dishonest,” has “no blessing” and no one listens or feels (*lagona*) a word they say and they cease to exist.

Tofa Sa’ili ma le Fa’autaga O’oo’o: Search for Knowledge

Tui Atua delineates the Samoan concept for search for knowledge:

- 47 *Pei o le mau a filosofia ma le ‘au matā’upu silisili a Lea e aumai nei i fafo a*
Like the testimony of the philosophers and theologians from overseas
- 48 *Pei o lea e manao latou foi lele ia pu’epu’e maua le Atua i le latou mau, a*
Like they want to capture God in their testimony, eh
- 49 *Ia, a o tatou la ia, o le tofā sa’ili*
But for us, it is tofā sa’ili
- 50 *Laga lea e fa’avae mai le mea, O le Atua, a, o le Tupua-le-gase, a It’s a riddle.*
Eternal riddle, a

Because it is based on the notion that God is an untamed riddle, eh it's a riddle.

Eternal riddle, eh

- 51 *E te le mafai na e, Ia na e toe fai o le Atua o le fe'e, a*
You cannot, you can also say that God is an octopus, eh
- 52 *E o lona uiga la o le Atua o o le mea lea e te leiloa, a*
That means God is something you do not know [understand]
- 53 *Ia a o le Atua o le mea e te iloa o lea e te va'ai i ai ma e feagai ma o se mea
fa'atauva'a*
But God is something you do know that you can see and face and is insignificant
- 54 *A o Atua uma a ia, a A o'o la 'ina su'e le moni,*
But for all these gods, when searching for truth,
- 55 *Te le mafai na e fa'apea mai a mea la "Ua ou aofa'i, a, ma ua taga i lo'u"*
You cannot say that "I have captured and pocket it in my"
- 56 *Taga o lo'u ofu po'o lo'u 'ie po ua sili i lo'u taliga ia le moni ma le loloto le
Atua ma lana*
That I have pocket [God and truth] in my shirt or display on my ear the truth and
depth of God and Her/His
- 57 *O le mau fa'asamoa lea lona uiga e, o le aga o le tofa saili, e sa'ili pea*
This is the Samoan testimony that means, the conviction of le tofā saili is to keep
on searching.
- 58 *Sa'ili pea, e le mafai ona e maua le atoa*
Keep on searching, you cannot find totality [or completeness, wholeness]
- 59 *Auā' e a o'o fo'i ina e maua le tali o le mea lea sa e sa'ili*
Because even if you find the answer to that which you were searching for []
- 61 *E o ona i'u, e te le maua se, te le maua se atoa (laughs)*
At the end, you cannot find, you cannot find wholeness (laughs) []
- 64 *Oh, Ia o le mea la e fa'amautūina ai, o, o le, Tupua-le-gase*
This supports the [notion] that [God] is unguessable riddle.
- 65 *O le misitelio.*
A mystery
- 66 *O lona uiga la o le galuega a le tofā sa'ili o le su'e mai o,*
That means the function of tofā sa'ili is to search for
- 67 *mea e va'aia ma mea e te iloa e po'o le a lea moni*
concrete things and things that you know to find truth []
- 69 *E, e le maua e leai foi sesi e faumalō E fa'apea laia*
It cannot be found and no one can rightfully claim and proclaim that
- 70 *Se tasi la lea o mea o lea ua ua mafua ai nei na tala le va, a*
This is one reason that the va (space between or social relations) has been broadened
[widened]

- 71 *Ona ua faumalō tagata “O le Atua lea ia te a’u” a*
Because people have selfishly claim “God is in my possession” eh
- 72 *“Ona o a’u e poto pe sili atu la’u mau pe sili atu la’u telosia pe sili atu” o lona uiga la*
“Because I am smarter or my understanding is better or my theology is better or” that means
- 73 *O le Atua la o lea e i i Ae leai la e le*
God is therefore over here, But no it’s not
- 74 *E le fa’apenā le mau fa’asamoa latou ia pei ona ou faiatu o Samoa e fa’avae i le tofā saili*
The Samoan belief is not like that like I said for Samoa it is founded on tofā saili
- 75 *O lona uiga e sa’ili pea, e uma atu fo’i tatou toe sa’ili, toe sa’ili*
That means [we’re always] searching, after us there will be more searching and more searching
- 76 *Auā laga e te le mafai na e maua le Atua laga o le Tupua e le gase, a*
Because you cannot find God because God is untamed riddle

In this construction, only God has complete knowledge and truth but humans must always be searching among us as we do, because “after us” (75), the next generation will continue to search and negotiate in order to maintain the *va* (good relations). The construction of foreign knowledge (“overseas philosophers and theologians,” 47) within the empiricist discourse of finding proof (*pu’epu’e maua* means to catch, to get hold of—capture, 48) and concrete evidence about God heightens the contrasting Samoan perspective as a continuous search; the search for God is a process by which God can be understood (in our limited knowledge), through keeping good relations (*va*, 70) with our neighbour. Such good relations get broken up by our “selfish claims” that we know God (71), or that we are smarter, have a better understanding or theology than the other. These are the visual and concrete “truth” (67) and proof that we understand and know God; *tofā sa’ili* is a search—our descendants will follow and learn from us.

Tofā sa’ili is the search for knowledge, truth and God within the phenomenal world and beyond. The prominent position of the visual sense in this search from the Samoan perspective is because God is manifested and embodied within all of creation, not just through humankind as depicted in the Samoan creation stories. McFague (1993) notes that

Embodiment means paying attention to differences, and we can learn this lesson best perhaps when we gauge our response to a being very unlike ourselves, not only to another human being...but a being who is *indifferent* to us and whose existence we cannot absorb into our own—such as a kestrel (or turtle or tree).” (p. 50).

In this sense, “embodiment gives us a commonality with everything else on the planet (including even such remote bodies from ours as trees, rocks, and mountains) with which to reconceive our place in the scheme of things” (McFague, 1993, p. 48). In her analysis based on a reading of Genesis 33:20-23, she notes that when Moses asked to see the glory of God, he was shown not the face but the back. She writes:

Like Moses, when we ask, ‘Show me your glory,’ we might see the humble bodies of our own planet as visible signs of the invisible grandeur. Not the face, not the depth of divine radiance, but enough, more than enough....We would begin to delight in creation, not as the work of an external deity, but as a sacrament of the living God....We might see ourselves and everything else as the living body of God (McFague, 1993, pp. 131-132).

God Gives Knowledge

- 441 The usual thing for us as in the proverb “The way to authority is through service”
443 And as is said, “I have sympathy for him because he has served a long time but the problem is that he is poor.
444 Or the problem is, “he doesn’t know how to speak, he can’t,” well I do not accept that
445 Because to enable someone to speak is not a human discretion
449 When we believe, when a person’s time has arrived, God would empower her/him
450 *Le kakou ga kalikoguga. Auā o Samoa e i ai oga Akua fekalai.*
That is our belief. Because Samoa has speaking Gods.
452 There is a belief that those Samoan gods can enable a person to speak, through their heathen gods they had in those days, eh

In this text, knowledge is something that is given rather than learned, and it is God who gives it. The “visual” or practical service of *tautua* (service, 441) is prioritised over the aural aspect of knowledge “to speak” (444). This is achieved through the speaker’s rejection of the aural aspect of knowledge as a prerequisite to the appointment of *matai*, and the assigning of the responsibility to give knowledge to God. In effect, the *tautua* is positioned as a better candidate to be a *matai* than those who may be richer (opposite of poor, 443) or are more learned of traditions (444), and reaffirms the proverb that the way to authority is through service (441). This next text also emphasizes the visual aspect of knowledge:

- 129 Actually doing something gives you knowledge
- 130 To do is to know that is how our children were raised
- 132 As you grow up you become wise by observing what your father does
- 133 It is an opportunity given by the father given with joy
- 134 When seeing his son following his footsteps, yes
- 135 And people speak about it too
- 136 “Pai is very good because his father’s mouth is very good [well learned in oratory]
- 137 Yes because his father is very good he always accepts guests
- 138 So if this boy is smart it is no surprise
- 139 Because the old man [his father] this is his favorite is to care for guests.”

“To do is to know” denotes knowledge gained from the experience, which is an opportunity given by the father. The son observes (133) his father and then follows his footsteps (134), learning from the father’s experience, and this has always been “the way our children were raised” (130). A person or *matai* with a “good mouth” indicates someone who is well-versed with oral traditions like *fa’alupega* and is able to speak the oratory language. This aural aspect of knowledge characterizes the son and father as “good” (136) and “wise” (132) but this is only obtained through the visual aspect of the son’s observing (132) the father and practicing what he does (to do is to know, 130). The essence of knowledge, that is, being good and wise, lies not with the aural aspect but with the visual practice of receiving and providing for guests (137-139); it depends upon public acknowledgement that both son and father are good members of the community in their respective roles. The older generation possesses knowledge and the next generation learns from it.

TAPUA'IGA: WORSHIP

Tapua'iga is the noun form of the verb *tapua'i*, which means “to stay behind praying for good fortune; not to go to war”; it “expresses renounced waiting with a chance for success” (Kramer, 1994, pp. 637, 665). *Tapua'i* also means “to abstain from all work, games, etc., and to sit waiting for success in war or in sickness, and or to give something to bring success,” but since the arrival of Christianity a new adapted meaning was added: “to offer religious worship” (1911 [1862], p. 322). Milner (nd [1966]) adds that *tapua'i* means to “be in thought and sympathy at the time someone is undergoing a test or ordeal (in the belief that this will bring about the success desired),” and that the noun form *tapua'iga* means church service, which is a Christian-adapted meaning. The essence of *tapua'i* in the pre-Christian sense is cessation of all human activities or work in order to be in communication with the divine realm. It is the invocation of the superior power of *Atua* and ancestral *aitu* for success, not just in wars but for a good outcome in illness or other undertakings. In *tapua'i*, the human is asking God for service—for God’s *tautua*, not to offer the gods praise, service or worship as in the new Christian understanding.

The Christianized meaning of *tapua'i* and *tapua'iga* as church service or religious worship has reversed the roles of *tautua*, where the worshipper now becomes the *tautua* (servant) who serves the Christian God. The key words from Pratt and Milner’s definitions of *tapua'iga* are sit, waiting, thought and success. So *tapua'i* is the sanctification of body and mind, time and place through silence, serenity of body and a restriction of activities around the place where the invocation of spiritual power takes place. According to Aiono-Le Tagaloa (2003), “*tapua'iga* is the making of a spiritual connection from the inner person, specifically the *mauli*, to God, for situations concerning the Samoan *tagataola*” (p. 60). Tofaeono (2000) also sustains this relational aspect of *tapua'iga*: “The concept includes both the divine and human relations, which are affirmed, performed and observed in social engagements and interactions of people, land, trees, animals, birds, and so forth” (p. 26).

O le Fanaafi o Fa'amalama

Aiono-Le Tagaloa (2003) outlines two forms of pre-Christian Samoan *tapua'iga*: *Fanaafi o Fa'amalama*, which is a private form of *tapua'iga*, and the *Alofisā*, the public *tapua'iga*.

1 This is a fire votive for you our God
2 May you wrap us, cloak us in your goodness and kindness
3 This is a fire votive for you our God
4 Our erring, wrongful, defiant ways are blatant before you
5 This is a fire votive for you our God
6 Direct those gods of the sea—seafarers, to uninhabited lands for they bear sickness
and curses.
7 This is a fire votive for you our God
8 Cover us, hide us in the broad mantle of your love (Aiono-Le Tagaloa, 2003, p. 65).

Turner (1884) describes the *Fanaqfi o Fa'amalama* but calls it an “offering of flaming fire” just before the evening meal, where one is asked to blow on the fire to make it blaze, and all are asked to be quiet while a senior member prays aloud:

This light is for you, O king and gods superior and inferior! If any of you are forgotten do not be angry, this light is for you all. Be propitious to this family; give life to all; and may your presence be prosperity. Let our children be blessed and multiplied. Remove far from us fines and sicknesses. Regard our poverty; and send us food to eat, and cloth to keep us warm. Drive away from us sailing gods, lest they come and cause disease and death. Protect this family by your presence, and may health and long life be given to us all (Turner, 1884, p. 116).

Turner claims that this prayer is related to an old chief in Savai'i whose reserved breakfast was eaten by someone. In anger, he jumped into a ravine so as to cause a storm that would destroy the place. His daughter, who followed him, sat down beside the ravine and turned into a mountain to cover the ravine and stop the storm. By associating the prayer with this story whose characters are nowhere reflected in the prayer discourse, Samoan prayer and worship is deliberately demonized in a twisted construction.

O le Alofisā: The ava Sacrifice

The *alofisā* or the public *tapua'iga* begins with a *alofisā* or *ava* sacrifice, followed by a meal, and ends with the *anapogi* or silent communication between the worshippers and *Atua* where no one speaks or leaves the house for the duration of the *tapua'iga*. *Alofisā* is from *alofi*, the gathering, and *sa*, sacred, a sacred gathering. An example of this is the *tapua'iga o le umuti* (Aiono-Le Tagaloa, 2003), carried out when fishers prepare to go fishing for sharks; it begins with a *alofisā* (*ava* drink ceremony), followed by a meal, then the fishers depart for fishing while the *matai* observes the silent *tapua'iga* until the fishers return. The *alofisā* is still practiced today as an *ava* ceremony to begin village councils or to welcome guests, for example, but not as a form of *tapua'iga*.

Alofisā's origin in oral traditions (Herman, 1970, p. 4; Kramer, 1994, pp. 549-550) is that only God Tagaloa held a *alofisā* and only one Pava was allowed in the house. One day, Pava's young son ran into the *alofisā* and was instantaneously cut into in two parts by Tagaloa. At Pava's request for mercy, Tagaloa brought the two parts together, poured a portion of *ava* onto them, clapped his hands and said *soifua!* (live!); the boy came alive again.

Turner (1884) goes to great length in describing the main Samoan meals, one at 11:00 a.m. and the main one in the evening. He notes that at the commencement of the evening meal, the head of the family would take his cup of 'ava and pour out a little of it on the ground as a drink-offering to the gods, and, all being silent, he would utter aloud the following prayer:

Here is *ava* for you, O gods! Look kindly towards this family; let it prosper and increase; and let us all be kept in health. Let our plantations be productive; let fruit grow; and may there be abundance of food for us, your creatures.

Here is *ava* for you, our war gods! Let there be a strong and numerous people for you in this land.

Here is 'ava for you, O sailing gods! Do not come on shore at this place; but be pleased to depart along the ocean to some other land (Turner, 1884, p. 116).

In a different publication, Turner describes the same *ava* drink offering:

On these occasions a cup of their intoxicating *ava* draught was poured out as a drink offering. They did this in their family house, where they were all assembled, supposing that their gods had a spiritual presence there, as well as in the material objects....Often it was supposed that the god came among them and spoke through the father (Turner, 1984, p. 239).

The use of “supposing” (and “supposed”) in the text functions to negate the presence of “god” in this communication and to underestimate the representative Samoan “family” as unaware that the god they are praying to is not present or does not exist.

Aiono (2003) believes that the missionary accounts have mixed the two kinds of *tapua'iga* and relegates them to saying grace before the evening meal. Turner describes two different prayers above: one is framed under “light,” the other under “*ava*” as proposed by Aiono, but both are supposedly performed before the family's evening meal. The presentation of *tapua'iga* as an act before a meal eliminates the element of *tapua'iga* but downgrades it to saying grace.

They had no fermented liquors, but they made an intoxicating draught from an infusion of the chewn root of the 'ava plant (*Piper methysticum*). A bowl of this disgustingly-prepared stuff was made and served out when a party of chiefs sat down to a meal....It was always taken before, and not after the meal. Among a formal party of chiefs it was handed round in a cocoa-nut shell cup with a good deal of ceremony....The liquor was much diluted; few drank to excess; and, upon the whole, the Samoans were perhaps among the most temperate 'ava drinkers in the South Seas. The old men considered that a little of it strengthened them and prolonged life; and often they had a cup the first thing in the morning (Turner, 1884, pp. 115-116).

The text does not refer to it as worship, and the avoidance of the prayers said before each one drinks her/his 'ava constructs it as a normal *ava* drinking session that is full of unnecessary ceremony and as part of the discourse of "fermented liquors." Although the language of both prayers is very similar to a Christian one, both are merely saying grace, which means in Turner's construction, *tapua'iga* (worship) is non-existent but a superstitious and "disgusting" practice that is different from a Christian form of worship or prayer.

Stair (1896) notes that "original gods were not represented by any priests or temples, neither were they invoked like their descendants" (p. 34); this invocation means the worship of *aitu* and various local *atua*, like the renowned war leader Tamafaigā whom he refers to as an *aitu*, as one who was worshipped, as combining both regal and divine attributes (Stair, 1896). The lack of temples and priests is because it is the family *matai* or elders as priests who lead family *tapua'iga* held within the family home while the public *tapua'iga* is held at the *malae* (Tcherkézoff, 2008). Stair continues:

In addition to the homage paid to these, petitions were offered, and libations of *ava* poured out on various occasions in the home-life, and also at the graves of deceased relatives; whilst the war clubs of renowned warriors were regarded with much superstitious reverence, if not actually, worshipped, under the name of *anava* (Stair, 1896, p. 33).

Anava is the club of a great warrior handed down as an heirloom (Pratt, 1911 [1862]). Being worshipped with superstitious reverence implies magical or mystical beliefs in the supernatural; libations to deceased relatives imply a worship of the dead but since the dead for Samoans are always present and embodied among the living, deceased relatives construct *ava* libations and *tapua'iga* as childish worship of the dead, where the deceased are to be understood from the Western view in which death is the end of one's association with the living. These views of worship are in contrast to Holmes and Holmes:

Actually, the Samoans did have one important god, Tagaloa, and they mentioned others in their mythology, but it cannot be said they worshipped a deity at all. The *mare* (religious centres with temples and altars) of eastern Polynesia were strangely absent in Samoa, and the priesthood, if it can be called that, consisted of chiefs (with the exception of the rather extraordinary Tamafainga) who derived power more from their social and political than from any supernatural sanction....No one really worshipped any deity in special ceremonies. Villages or families had tutelary gods or goddesses who may have been called upon for aids in times of war and natural crisis, but there was no religious philosophy per se that provided moral direction or demanded ritual observance (Holmes & Holmes, 1992, p. 66).

The above view is closely reflected in the prayers already mentioned where the family *Atua*, the *atua o taua* (war gods) and *atua folau* (sailing gods) are all addressed in one prayer; family gods are asked to bless the family, sailing gods are asked not to come ashore but to go to uninhabited lands so as not to bring diseases, and war gods are asked to bring success in times of war. These unsophisticated prayers are simply requests for well-being, sustenance, and security, and reflect no religious philosophy or a demand for a ritual observance.

In traditional oratory, one *tulafale* speaks on behalf of a group after a *fa'atau*, or debate for the right to speak (Togoi'u, 1994; Tu'i, 1987); the others are said to *tapua'i* for his *lauga* (traditional speech) performance. The belief is that the success of the performance is always dependent as much on the actual performance as it is on the act of *tapua'i*. This is reflected in the saying *So'o se faiva e le tapua'ia e le manuia*—any fishing expedition that has no *tapua'iga* or has a bad *tapua'iga* shall never succeed. Tcherkézoff (2008) explains this better:

Samoans speak of a sacred circle (*alofi sa*). This figure is well suited to showing a single belonging: each person sits around the circumference and at the same distance from the centre, which is the place of the divine....Every Samoan belongs to a sacred circle at every level. Outside the circle he ceases to exist. The individual does not exist if he has no 'family circle' (the literal translation of *aiga potopoto*) to belong to. The family (his place of origin) does not exist if it is not inscribed at the territorial level in a village circle (*nuu, nuu o matai*)....During the time of the 'action' *fai* (sport, war, work, travel), a circle of identity must ensure the *tapua'i*, 'communication with divine realm', and it is only the encompassing of the former by the latter which produces a tangible result...in Samoa, people say that the outcome of a sporting event is the fruit of the spectators' *tapua'i* (the union—*feagaiga*—with God) and not the result of the players' action, or rather it is the result of their action insofar as the action is the product of the spectators' *tapua'i*....This *tapua'i* is much more than a prayer: it thinks into existence the 'sacred circle' indispensable to any action; when this happens, the players are no longer alone on the field, they are part of a whole (their families, their village, God) (Tcherkézoff, 2008, pp. 246, 259, 260, 288).

This holistic view of *tapua'iga* brings people together as those who do the action (fishing, fighting, playing, etc.) are at one with those who *tapua'i* and both groups communicate with their *Atua*. The circular formation of the temple (house) and 'ava bowl is symbolic of the inclusiveness of the socio-religio-political life, as everyone has a *aiga* (family) and belongs to a *nu'u* (village) whose hierarchical structure originated from their creator Tagaloa. These encompassing structures determine a people's identity which is embodied by every Samoan who is born into and belongs to this continuum of *Atua*, land, family, and ancestors as constituted in the act of *tapua'iga*. Tuli had a more practical interpretation of *tapua'iga*:

- 301 Likewise is the elderly mother, eh. They raise their voice and, the mothers.
 302 They are boastful in, in public gatherings, because she is proud eh in her heart
 that, her words has a body [action].
 303 *Ia a kigo a fa'akigo la aga 'upu e kigo ā i le kigo o laga kama. Laga kama*
 kama, le kama Samoa.
 So when her words materialize, it does so through the body of her son. Her
 male son, the Samoan male.

- 304 Because “Well a roast pig will be provided for our feast” [next time], eh.
 305 But we already know that they [mothers] do not do those things anymore.
 306 But [she] is depending on, that the materialization of her word, shall be carried
 out by her son’s body.
 307 So when the cooked food is brought, with a nice cooked roast pig, and prepared
 big fish and smaller fish,
 308 And these are brought to the front of the committee house and her son is not
 there
 But when those [food] are presented and laid out, that is her son’s body []
- 311 *I um, o le ola kaukua o le kama a?*
 Um, the son’s life of service eh ?
- 312 *F Ioe. Ia a fa’au pu faigofie ā o laga kaukua.*
 Yes. Well to simplify it it is his service.
- 313 Well his tautua (service) is definitely also his act of worship
 314 The performing of that service, [is seen through] the honesty/truthfulness of his
 tapua’iga.
- 315 *Ia pei o le kaule’ale’a Samoa ā ia a mogi ā loga alofa, o laga kapua’iga o loga*
Akua ā o le makai,
 And for the Samoan untitled young man if his love is true, in his tapua’iga his
 very God is the matai,
 316 *ia, e fa’akigo la laga kapua’iga i laga kaukua.*
 and, his tapua’iga is performed through his service [].
- 320 And that is my interpretation of tautua. [It is] your tapua’iga.
 321 Because you are doing your tautua with your belief, in that which you are
 worshipping.
 322 Because if I believe that my father would give me a blessing,
 323 That is why I do my tautua, because the tautua is

The text points to the *tautua* role of sons through whom a parent’s word becomes flesh (301,303, 306) and is synonymous with the biblical verse “The Word became flesh” (John 1:14). *Tino* is body, *fa’atino* is to make into a body, to materialize or to do something. The word *tama* (spelled in the colloquial usage as *kama*, 303) means male, son or child; all three meanings are used repeatedly and deployed to emphasize that the responsibility of the “Samoan male” is to en flesh a parent’s word and to embody that duty. Pre-Christian material wealth was identified with the possession of land, subsistence crops and animals, fine mats,

canoes and the like, and it entails the abundance of human labour in such families. It also denotes a well-*tatuaed matai* or parents. The elderly mother's offer of a roast pig for the women's committee's next meeting is a display of such wealth, which is only meaningful in the public eye when it is shared. *Tapua'i* here means *tautua* and vice versa. Although the son is not actually present at the committee house during the presentation, the food is his body (307-309) (cf., "this is my body" Luke 22:19) and the materialization of the son's *tapua'iga* to his mother, and the mother's *tapua'iga* to the village committee; it is an offering of service—the word become flesh. The mother, son and family are all accredited and approved by the community as good Samoans who share their wealth. The possessive pronoun "her son" (308-309) indicates the oneness of mother and son in the act of service; the son brought the food for his mother which she offered to the committee—they are one in their act of worship to the committee. The reference to the son "not being there" (308) underlines the importance of the service over the one who performed it. One is reminded of Jesus when he said: "So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty'" (Luke 17:10).

Describing *Tapua'iga/tautua* in favourable terms of truth, honesty and love (315) locates the initiative of the *tautua* with the son who embodies these moral values. This eliminates the notion that the role of *tautua* is forced upon the son, and hence, it vindicates the mother (who represents cultural authority) from accusation of being authoritarian. *Tapua'iga* in the end is a self-conviction undertaken with honesty and love of God because parents or *matai* are gods (line 9 in the previous text; 331, 333, in the next text)—manifestations of God who has the jurisdiction to give blessing (322); God, the source of light, illuminates the *tautua* [through blessing] who performs *tapua'i* (Tcherkézoff, 2004).

- 324 Any person who prepares to go fishing, if you go fishing, there is someone waiting on land, who is doing *tapua'i*, eh.
- 325 And if you go to work [at the plantation], there is a *tapua'iga* [for your work].
- 326 *E ui ā la o lea e kapua'i i ou faiva, a o ōu faiva, o lea e ke kapua'i, o lau kapua'iga legā ia ke ia.*
So although they are doing *tapua'i* for your labour, but through your labour, you are doing *tapua'i*, that is your *tapua'iga* for him/her.
- 328 *Ia, kakou va'ai i le, Ia uā ia ke a'u ā ia pei o le mea ā ga e aukū ā e ā fo'i e maukū ai ā lo'u kalikoguga e,*

- Well, let us look at, well because for me like that is the thing that anchors that affirms my belief
- 329 *E kusa o, o le system lea fa'a-makai, i le va o le makai ma le aiga ma le kaukua,*
That the, this matai system, in the relationship (va) between the matai and the family and the tautua
- 330 *O lo'u ā kalikoguga e fa'a-pegā uma ā le va o le kagaka loku ma le Akua, a.*
My own belief is that it is very similar to the relationship between a church person and God, eh.
- 331 *O mea uma ā ka ke faia, mo le makai, kusa o mea uma foi ga lea e fai e ka'ika mo le Akua.*
Everything that you do, for the matai, like those are all the same things that I am doing for God
- 332 Because we are saying that no one has seen God, eh.
- 333 Because the spirit is, like the belief is, if you do it (your service) to that [matai], that is God.
- 334 *I Pe a e faia lou kiuke lea i le makai?*
If you do these duties of yours to the matai?
- 335 *F Pe a e faia lou kiuke lea i le makai. Po'o lou kamā, po'o se uso o lou kamā,*
[Yes] if you perform these duties of yours to the matai. Or your father, or your uncle,
- 336 You know because the performance of your duties, must have no boundaries.
- 337 No only within your family, but also your village and your church.

The text locates *tapua'iga* within the discourse of the *matai* system, which constitutes God, *matai*, family, village religion and *tautua* and the environment. The point that no one has seen God (332) but what we do for the *matai* are the same things done for God (331) sums up what McFague calls the embodiment of God in the world, where “God is embodied and embodied paradigmatically as one of us, a humble being” where it is “the concrete, physical availability of God’s presence (‘became flesh’) and the likeness to ourselves, a human being (‘lived among us’) that matter” (McFague, 1993, p. 160). “Action” (331) is of immense importance in *tapua'i*. It underscores the value of service done to ‘the other,’ whether it be the *matai*, your father, uncle (335), your family, village or the Church (337), because such a life of service/worship knows no boundaries (336) and is reminiscent of “Whoever does not love does not know God because God is love” (1 John 4:8) or “love knows no boundaries.” Both the *matai* (or God) and the *tautua* perform *tautua* for each other through the exchange

of different services—one labours in manual work (fishing or plantation work, 324-325), the other bestows blessing (322); it is not in a master-servant relationship but of mutual love and respect of their different positions. Since parents, elders and *matai* are embodiment of God, *tautua* for them is *tautua* for God (329-331).

TAUTUA: SERVICE

Tautua is derived from *tau*, to fight, and *tua*, the back—one who fights from the back. The trace of this logic is there is someone else who fights at the frontline of battle and entails two people fighting for the same side or course. *Tautua* is both a noun and verb: it identifies the person and the action of service—the person and the service are one and the same and the person is the embodiment of the service. *Tautua* most often refers to untitled men who are the arms and legs of the *matai* and elders and are also referred to as *taulele'a* or *'aumaga*. Like the term *tautua*, these terms are the embodiment of their responsibilities. The plural *taulele'a* is from *tau* and *le'a*; *tau* is from *tatau*, to wring juice out of something, and *le'a* is another word for the dried *'ava* roots. *'Aumaga* is from *'au*, a team or group of people, and *maga* means to munch. The untitled men wring the *ava* juice, or in an *'Ava Fa'atupu* (kingly *ava* ceremony), they munch the roots to get them ready for the wringing process. Their titles are an embodiment of their roles. The roles of *tautua* are described throughout this work and here I present just a few typical views of the research participants.

In this next text, Vasa Letoe describes a typical day in the life of a *tautua*. I have not translated *tautua* because I could not find a more appropriate translation.

- 130 The life as a *tautua*, to *tautua* the family.
131 The meaning of *tautua* is night and day. You could not sleep well as a *tautua* person.
132 Today I would go and prepare things for this day. After [they] have eaten and you see that
133 There there are no taro for tomorrow the meal for tomorrow [you] sleep at night, but the mind does not sleep.
134 [You] think about tomorrow [you] have to go early in the morning to the bush

- to bring some food, to prepare the meal.
- 135 Life as a *tautua* cannot find good sleep at night. [You] sleep at night but think,
[that you] have to go early in the morning to the sea to fish,
- 136 To bring a fish to eat, to cook for the meal. That is the life as a *tautua*
- 137 Plus many more things [like that] in life.

Life as a *tautua* entails total dedication day and night (131), full of hardship and many sleepless nights. A *tautua* must ensure that the family is fed daily, which requires his working in the plantation and fishing. The bush and the sea are his domain of work, and each day is an early start (134); these tasks require strength, stamina and love of one's family.

Jesus' command is constituted within the Samoan proverb: *O le ala i le pule o le tautua*—The way to authority is through service; if you want to be a *matai*, then be a *tautua*. The Samoan male body in this text is the embodiment of *tautua*, obedience and love (25). Although there may be power imbalance between the *matai* and *tautua*, where the *matai* has more symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1997) and may abuse that power and impose 'symbolic violence' on the *tautua*, it remains that neither *matai* nor *tautua* has any form of capital or meaning without the other.

MANUIA: BLESSING

Pratt defines *manuia* as blessing and *manūia* (from *manū*, luck or good fortune) as "to be happy, to be fortunate, to be prosperous" (Pratt, 1911 [1862], p. 207). In this analysis all of these meanings are regarded as constituted within the translation blessing. The verb *fa'amanuia* is to bless; the noun form is *fa'amanuiaga*, the blessing.

Giving and Receiving Manuia

One popular belief in Samoa is that dying parents, especially fathers and *matai*, do impart blessing through exhaling breath onto the facial area, if not directly into the mouth, of the recipient. Soa describes his last moment with his father before he died; his father said to him to look after the family well, and then he felt a kind of wind-like breeze blowing against his

face. He was fourteen at the time but years later, a builder friend told him about a similar experience before his father, who was also a builder, passed away. According to Soa's friend, blessing was imparted from his father through that last breath, and that is the reason that he (the friend) got his father's talent as a builder. Soa also told of his talents as a mechanic (his father was a mechanic as well) but framed his story through his friend's story. Fiu does not believe in the breath of blessing, but the *mavaega*, or the outgoing *matai*'s final words:

- 906 Because the nation used to be like that. Yes, each person knew her/his time.
- 907 [Parting words]: "Well our family, thank you for coming together, but I feel that my time is near for us to part.
- 908 *Ia ao la'u koe upu i lo kakou aiga, ia kumau lou kou fealofagi*
But my last word to our family, may you remain in mutual love []
- 910 *Kaukuagā ma oukoou kama o oukou kuafāfige*
You males give precedence to you sisters.
- 911 *Oukou kuafāfige, keige, ia oukou fa'aeaea i oukou kuagage.*
You sisters, girls, do uplift your brothers
- 912 But concerning the care of our family, I feel that Pai must come forth to be my successor.
- 913 But do remain in mutual love [for each other], do support the matai, respect one another. Always be reminded of the family."
- 914 After that he would say to you who is given the [matai] title.
- 915 *Ia Pai, kaukuagā le aiga. E le faia i sou poko.*" *Auā o upu ā ia. "E le faia i sou malosī, ia e fa'amoemoe i le Akua. Ia maguia lau gofoa'iga.*
"Pai, remember to honour the family, It [the matai office] does not depend on how much you know." Because these are the words. "It is not by your strength, do rely on God. May your reign be blessed.
- 916 *Ia e alofa. Kausi i le alofa. Kausi i le amiokogu.*" *Ia o upu ga.*
Do love. Care with love. Care in righteousness." These are the words
- 917 *E ke gofo aku ā la e, e ke mafagafaga. E feoa'i fo'i ā la le aiga la e fiafia.*
Lakou ke le ku'ufesilisili pe
[So] During your reign, you are comforted. As the family carry on, they are happy. They are not uncertain about,

The *māvaega* is constructed as the normal way blessings used to be imparted ("used to be", 906) and every dying *matai* used their particular final moment to bestow a blessing while they were still capable of doing so. These final words are constructed in such a way to

maintain the social structure, the *va*, and *feagaiga* relationships within the family. *Tautuanā* (*kaukuagā* in the colloquial, 910) means “to give the precedence to” (Pratt, 1911 [1862], p. 306) or “take good care of, be careful to do (or not to do) something” (Milner, nd [1966], p. 258) and denotes constant reminder; the word is used here to urge the males to constantly be reminded of their roles and responsibilities for their sisters as the sacred and vulnerable partner in their *feagaiga* relationship. On the other hand, the sisters are urged to *fa’aeaea* (raise up, exalt, or honour, 911) their brothers, not in relation to the brother–sister *va*, but to the brother’s relation to other men, *matai* or the village in general, since both brothers and sisters are part of one family whose name they are asked to honour (914).

The core of the blessing bestowal comes in line 915: “May your reign (*gofoa’iga*) be blessed.” These blessings are imparted along with the moral values (914-915) that the experienced outgoing matai knows are the essential ingredients of a good matai, which shall be reflected by a family who lives in peace, mutual love and respect for each other. The ingredients are love, love of family, not to totally rely on what one knows (a characteristic of *tofā sa’ili*) and reliance on God’s spiritual guidance. The way “it used to be” (906) implies the way blessing was imparted in the pre-Christian era; Samoans lived and continue to live under the same moral values like those of Christianity.

What is Manuia: A Cultural Perspective.

The command to the sisters to exalt their brothers in the previous text is due to the fact that the Samoan self is a relational self, with Samoan identity defined through personal relations as described in Chapter One. Terms commonly used in the text below are *mamalu* which means prestige, dignity, majesty, glory, honour, influence, to be in force (e.g., law) and *tamāoaiga* (riches).

- 921 In the Samoan culture, a person who is called a blessed person, his family is full of *mamalu* in the way s/he cares for their family
- 922 It is very much inside the family where [blessing] lies, like the whole village [can] witness it, eh Because if your family never experience hunger [food shortage], your family has everything to look after the family
- 923 [Things] like a flock of chicken, a herd of pigs, a plantation, a plantation of

- coconuts and of cocoa []
- 930 How many canoes there are, the number of people in the family, those are the signs
- 931 Your oratory lauga, your tofā, your status as someone sought after and consulted for the village's tofā, or your thoughts (as a tūlafale)
- 932 Those for me are the visual aspects of blessing
- 933 Others say that [manuia] is the riches of today but I do not believe that.
- 934 But if your family lives in blessing and live in peace, and in mutual love, then that is it [].
- 941 Those are the characteristics of God: They are peace, agreeing with each other, helping each other
- 942 If a family has that, due to the way I look after the family, that is blessing. That is my belief.
- 943 But possessing many cars and whatever is not a blessing and, for me those things are the goods of this day and age.
- 944 Because we are talking about the means of blessing of Samoa,
- 945 Every blessed family is a family who has land, the reason for that is due to the good care of the matai.
- 946 And that is the answer to the blessing, according to the blessing granted from the parents.
- 947 That is a blessed family. One which is able to care for the village and do everything.
- 948 But I'm talking about the good reputation of the family within the village and the church. []
- 950 And a family upon which the village and the church depends upon
- 951 Because the reason for their reliance on that family is because they know that there is much blessing and riches in that family. []
- 953 Because we all believe that the blessing from God is our land,
- 954 And our inheritance that we call the fertile womb which means life
- 955 Like those are our blessings
- 956 Our inheritance is our land that we, we have authority over our own land which differentiates us from other countries of the world. []

- 958 But these days because money is used mostly by countries of the world
- 959 But in the those days I saw, that when something happens to a family [e.g., a wedding or funeral]
- 960 [Matai]: “Guys, roast a big and give and send it there for their [wedding]. Those [kind of] things
- 961 Those were the things that were shared to actualize it. Food is send to them, a basket of taro, ta’amu, a fishing trip is initiated
- 962 [Matai]: “Go fishing” and when the night fishing trip returns, “take it to them for,”
- 963 Those are the kind of things. Give them live chickens, tapa cloth, fine mats, that is our riches.

Manuia in this text is defined not only by the possession of material goods such as land, the utilization of the land and food crops (923), animals (pigs and animals) and canoes, but also by the family population—the more the better. As Kramer notes, “The more children, the more hopes for the family, the more powerful in times of peace and war” (1995, p. 60). This is underlined by the “fertile womb” (954) which, like the land, is part of the inheritance from God (953).

The only source of blessings are parents (946) and God (953), whose “characteristics” (941) of peace and love are underlined as signs of blessing embodied by a blessed person. Despite the material possession, actual confirmation of being blessed exists in the public eye; the whole village has to witness it (921) to be confirmed and this is done by serving the village, the church (947, 950), and any persons or family in need (959-963), as indicated by the word *fa’alavelave* (959). *Fa’alavelave* signifies major events such as funerals, weddings, receiving guests and similar events that require the utilization of family resources and human labour. In this sense, *tamāoaiga* (riches) is not accumulated by one family but is shared among the village community and church. The blessed rich family is constructed as the ideal religio-cultural Samoan family upon which the community and the needy depend (950-951), a feature that is hardly seen again (in those days I saw,” 959) because of the world-wide effect of capitalism (958). The speaker discounts the possession of cars as only modern day “goods” (933, 943) but not a symbol of *tamāoaiga* that defines Samoan blessing. The term *tausī* (to care, nurture, 914) is often referred to a *matai*’s role to nurture and care for the family. Its usage here positions the well-off family in the same position as carers of the community. To

recall Tui Atua, because the human was given more gifts by God, the human role is to care for the environment and our world. Because a family is given more blessing and *tamāoaiga*, its role is to care for the community and those in need. *Fa'akigo*, translated as actualize (561), is from *fa'a*, to make and *tinu*, body—to make into a body. If love is a moral value, it needs to have a body or be turned into a body; the service provided is the body of love.

In this text, the notion of self and the identities of the *matai* and all members of the fortunate family are defined within public relations. *Mamalu* (prestige, honour, 921) is a moral value which can be granted only by the other, the community, who are watching. *Mamalu*, *alofo*, *manuia* and *tamāoaiga* are not self-proclaimed labels: they are identity-defining moral values granted only by the community through service for the community.

In this chapter I have described the embodied moral values which define the identity or aspects of identity of the Samoan male body within the different domains of the respective roles of *matai* and non-*matai*. In the twenty first century, many Samoans, as reflected in the texts, still refer to the religio-cultural moral values of the pre-Christian era to find meaning and to construct their embodiment of God within their moral universe, and there is much overlap in the use of Christian and pre-Christian values and practices that enable them to do so.

The next Chapter is an analysis of the social construction of God and various other aspects constituted within the discourse of God and the embodiment of God in the context of the Church.

CHAPTER NINE

CHRISTIANIZED BODY

The last chapter is an analysis of the construction of the embodied moral values which define the identity of the Samoan male body from a cultural perspective. This chapter will explore the construction of God and the people of God within church discourses and contexts. The main texts used in this chapter will be from three church sermons preached by three different EFKS ministers at different Auckland churches. EFKS is the Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano i Samoa, or the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS). EFKS was established after the arrival of John Williams of the London Missionary Society in 1830, one of the early missionaries who brought Christianity to Samoa.

THE CHURCH CONTEXT

The parish described here is given the pseudonym: EFKS Manukau in Auckland; the minister is given the pseudonym Limu (L).

Financial Obligations

As parishioners arrive for the Sunday 11:00 a.m. service, just inside the door to the left is a long table where about five to six people (usually men) sit, each with an open book to record financial donations. Some record the *Alofa* (love), or the minister's fortnightly stipend paid for by parishioners under family names (the father's name), with different amounts according to affordability. On alternate weeks the offering is the *Atina'e* (literally, [financial] build up) to pay for Church expenses. This means there is always a monetary donation for every Sunday of the month. If there is a visiting minister who leads the service, which is a regular occurrence, then people have to donate for him on top of the assigned donation for that week. Other donations that go on top of these are the *Taulaga* (twice a year). There is also a monthly raffle which costs each family a minimum of two hundred dollars; some pay more according to the number of tickets they take or are given. The *Mafutaga a Tinā* (Mothers' Group) has their own donations and a raffle on top of those given by the parish. Parishioners

are expected to pay for these tickets if they cannot sell them to their relatives or the public. There are other donations, too, that parishioners pay as members of the choir or youth; This parish holds a Housie (like a Bingo game) two nights a week and host two outside ones (by a different parish/organization) in their Church Hall to raise Church revenues. These do not exhaust the financial obligations that parishioners are expected to pay for.

The Church/parish is also called *O le Galuega a le Atua*—The Work of God, and it follows that *o le ola galue mo le Atua*—a life of working for God often characterizes the Church's financial obligations.

O LE TAPUA'IGA: CHURCH WORSHIP

EFKS churches in Auckland follow the Congregationalist format of worship as it was originally established by missionaries. The usual worship format is as follows:

1. Call to Worship (reading a short Bible verse)
2. Call for the Holy Spirit (A short prayer)
3. First Hymn
4. Bible Reading (Usually the minister and congregation read alternate verses)
5. Second Hymn
6. Long Prayer (by the minister or leader)
7. Third Hymn (During hymn a monetary offering is collected, called *taulaga*)
8. Sermon (between 15-30 minutes)
9. Last Hymn
10. Eucharist Sacrament (monthly)
11. Closing Prayer
12. Announcements

The actual worship service lasts about an hour and a half, but the announcements at the end of the service take another hour. There are parish meetings or meetings of various factions at the end of announcements. During the announcements, the parish secretary first acknowledges and thanks the preacher of the day for the “message from God” (the sermon), addressing him in his religio-cultural titles like: *O le ‘au’auna a le Atua* (the servant of God), and *O le ao o fa’alupega* (the pinnacle of all *fa’alupega*). He then addresses the parish according to status in age, cultural statuses of *ali’i*, church status (e.g., a deacon) and *matāfale* or Church Registered Families. The secretary is followed by various committees who announce each family’s financial contributions for different purposes outlined above. These financial announcements clearly differentiate one family from another in terms of the amount given. Some families are *malolosi* (strong), others are *vaivai* (weak); these terms come up in parish meetings and they construct people into such categories of strong, on the one hand, which is synonymous with good, helpful, honest, rich, and good servants of God. On the other hand, the weak are the bad, the lazy, poor, dishonest and bad servants of God (Maliko, 2000).

Lauga: The Minister’s Sermon

It is proposed in this work that the notion of God and Christian moral values embodied by the Samoan body are constructed mainly from church sermons; hence I use, as my texts, most of each of the three selected sermons as they were preached. The *lauga* (sermon) holds a special place within the service as it does with traditional *lauga*. Like a traditional *lauga*, where the *tulāfale* speaks as a representative of families and communities, the minister is a representative of God. The *lauga* is also identified by a number of ‘interpretative repertoires’ or culturally available linguistic resources (Burr, 2003) such as: *O le Manavaga Mai a le Agaga Pa’ia* (The Holy Spirit breathes to us), *O le Finagalo Pa’ia o le Atua* (The Holy Will of God) or *O le Fe’au mai le Atua* (The message from God). These cultural linguistic resources construct human discourse (the sermon) as words directly from the mouth of God and for this reason, unlike a traditional *lauga* where opposing orators negotiate or challenge each other, ministers and their sermons are never challenged because humans simply do not challenge God. Sermons construct and maintain the ideal God, personal identities, and the moral world for parishioners.

Lauga originally referred only to traditional formal speeches (Tu'i, 1987), of which there is much unique knowledge of traditional mythological traditions required of speakers, and which Samoans enjoy listening to. Such speeches are events in themselves and are the highlight of many occasions. People look forward to the performances of these speeches and the same applies to the performances of church sermons, as Asomua reflects:

- 252 If I go to worship in church, I think hard about
253 Hoping that the minister's sermon will be good, because for me, that is the very
thing in my mind []
258 Is the minister's sermon, That is what I focus on
259 I would really experience satisfaction in my soul and in my mind when I hear the
minister's sermon []
261 But if the minister's sermon comes and is, is not good, like it does not satisfy my
heart, eh
262 I really feel sad. I do not feel
264 I don't know, but, my belief is, that is really the most important thing []
268 But that is the very thing that I seek out, for me personally, it is the minister's
sermon []
270 Like that is where I put my first priority when I go to church []
278 Like that is the theology that is needed by me personally [*e lo'u kagaka*, lit. by my
person] []
295 Because like that proverb O le Saluvale le Lauka'amū a Aopo
296 When I anticipate the sermon that will, but when the sermon is delivered and does
not fit with my anticipation, []
298 And it is of great sorrow for my soul when, It's like, my body feels my sorrow []
300 Because what I anticipated does not fit with my desire for the kind of sermon that I
wanted to hear. []
303 Sometimes you can hear that
304 The leader is making a rumpus and racketing on about some inappropriate matter []
312 Well, because me I am not a preacher, eh, but I can feel it in, in what I hear, eh,
You can feel it, eh

It cannot be deduced from the text what the participant wants to hear from a sermon, except it is the “theology” (278) that his heart desires and anticipates. A bad sermon causes sorrow (298) when it “does not fit” (300) expectations. Although as analyst I cannot construct the kind of person the speaker is, the context of his church life cannot be separated from his discourse on church sermons. The speaker is one of the “stronger” families of the church, as identified from the amount of money donated. The text constructs the sermon as the most important part of the service because this is where theology is constructed. It is where identities are constructed or discounted in relation to an ideal body of God, or body for God.

This particular participant is one of the stronger families of the parish and it may be the confirmation of his good work through sermons that is desired to be reconfirmed in the sense of belonging as a good servant of God. Sermons confirm identity as a good father, a good deacon, a good Samoan and a good servant of God. The text alludes to a common feature of sermons which ridicule people in general (304). The disclaimer “I am not a preacher” (312) strengthens the speaker’s claim that he is competent enough to judge what a sermon should or should not say, and whether or not it fits (300) with expectation.

CONSTRUCTION OF GOD IN THE CHURCH

God the Father

Participants were asked directly about their understanding of the identifying notion “*Le Atua le tamā* (God the father),” and were specifically asked: “Is God a father or a mother or both?” Here are a few of the responses; this next text is a response from an EFKS minister who serves in a parish in Samoa. The interviewer is I; the participant is A.

- 261 I How about the question whether God is a man or a woman?
- 262 A [laughs] Well you know very well the language we use in the church building, eh
- 266 [still laughs and coughs], eh eh eh eh eh
- 267 Well [I] believe we have absolutely no knowledge [or authority] to stand up against the witness of the bible, eh.

268 God was not created by anyone, eh even the New Testament says
 269 No man or woman, eh, but then we know
 270 We should not leave God as a man, eh, only as a man,
 271 [because] we know, that God also has, eh, a feminine, feminine [side], eh
 272 Male is the image of God [laughs] female also is the image of God, eh
 (laughs)
 273 If it is father, from whom we originate is this father, this particular father
 274 That means he is a birth-giving father [laughs]. This father is a birth-giving
 father []
 278 If it is as it stands “Our father,” Where is our mother? [laughs] we cannot
 say, eh []
 292 That means this father of ours is a father from whom people originate, eh
 293 Put that in the Samoan perspective For example, Kufuga, marries a daughter
 of Misa, eh. []
 317 So if it was Kufuga who married Kulalauka the daughter of Misa
 318 When the child is born, eh, then it said that this child, is born (*ko’ala-
 fa’a’au-kama*) to Misa
 319 Kufuga [the biological father] is not the *ko’ala-fa’a’au-kama* ia [].
 326 Misa will stand up and say: “I am the *Ko’ala-fa’a’au-kama*,” eh
 327 But Kufuga cannot stand up and say “I am also the *ko’ala-fa’a’au-kama*
 because I am the father,” eh []
 339 I: *Faafefea la ga apalai le mea gā i le Akua?*
 How can that be applied to God?
 340 A: *ia loga uiga la e ave sa’o ā i ai auā laga la o lea e ave e e*
 It is transferred directly [to God] because it is said that that
 341 She/He is God, all of us are said to, It is God from whom we originate
 342 Well, it is not (laughs), it does not refer to
 343 As because we do not know who would be our mother or, if it is compared to
 344 To our ceremonial address (*fa’alupega*) that refers to God as the oneeee from
 whom we originate.
 345 So this same God, eh, who is a father and also mother, eh Am am I wrong or

The laughter (262, 266, 272, 274) before an answer is given indicates the speaker's awareness of the debated label of God as a father, and also denotes the difficulty of proving or disproving any argument concerning the sexuality of God in the sexist language used by ministers in Church. This is the language of Luke 11:2, recited in line 278, "Our Father". Line 262 is an attempt to deflect the question back to the interviewer, implicating the interviewer as a fellow conspirator in that sexist language used during worship. The authority of the Bible is appealed to as absolute and unquestionable to confirm the fatherhood of God and frees the speaker from any accusation of using such sexist language. However, the variation in line 268 is a concession as to the existence in the Bible of feminine attributes of God, but these attributes are only feminine attributes of a father. "God also has" (271) means that the father God has feminine attributes but He is still a father, a man. The conjunction "if" (273) introduces the logic that as originator of humankind, this must be a birth-giving father, and the laughter here (272, 274) indicates the oddity of constructing God in human terms both as a father and originator of humans (to give birth) simultaneously. The term *fanau* (274) means to give birth or be fertile and capable of bearing children. The question "Where is our mother?" again discredits support for a female God against the father God.

The logic is then described using the cultural interpretative repertoire (Burr, 2003) *to'ala fa'a'autama* (293, 317-319, 326-327), where the child's paternal grandfather can claim himself as the *to'ala fa'a'autama*—the womb that conceives the child (Macpherson and Macpherson, 1990). In this cultural concept, the paternal grandfather claims ownership of the female (his daughter's) womb, so the repertoire does not hold up to the description of God as father. *To'ala fa'a'autama* is a cultural masculinization of the concept of giving birth because it assigns the concept of giving birth to the paternal grandfather.

When pursued (339), the speaker constructs the belief in God's fatherhood as a belief of everyone, "all of us" (341), then returns to his prior position of God as "the oneeee" (344), with the lengthening of the e to emphasize God as the origin of humankind, allegedly as a *fa'alupega* of God. The deployment of cultural concepts to construct God's identity as a father does not work, and although in the end there is acknowledgement of God as both mother and father (345), the text as a whole constructs God as father; "we do not know...our mother" (343).

To'ala-fa'a'au-tama does not in fact solve the father–mother issue about God, but has instead elevated the masculinity of God even further, because ownership of the child is debated between two ‘fatherly’ figures: the biological father and the paternal grandfather, to the exclusion of the mother who actually carries the baby and gives birth. The status of God as a patriarchal masculine father is further elevated and maintained as genuine and unquestionable because it is anchored both in the Bible and culture. Ioane also supports this father-figure of God.

713		Well, for me going inside
714		Church and my reading the bible and listening to the sermons and conversations of ministers
715		There is no utterance that says “Our father in heaven,” eh
716		There is only one utterance that is used “Our father who art in heaven;” it is a father
718		God, is a father, not a mother
719	I	Is that based on what you hear, or?
720	Io:	It is based on all these things that I have mentioned
717		Eh, and, so that is the thing in my own clear answer, eh my understanding

The construction of God as father is based on the authority of the Bible and of ministers, who are presumed to have studied and learned the truth about God and the appropriate language to address God. The Lord’s Prayer in Luke 11: 2 (716), which is often recited in prayers and sermons, is the absolute proof as to God’s fatherhood; There is no utterance to the contrary (lines 716, 719). The phrase “there is no utterance” (715) and “there is only one utterance” (716) identifies the ministers’ words during worship. They only say “our father”; the knowledge of the believer here is subject to the knowledge of the minister and his recitation and interpretation of the Bible. This same theological authority of the church minister is credited by other participants for the belief in God as a father.

- 524 Well because we have not seen a God eh, but as we grew up it was always,
the father, eh
- 525 [He] is called the father it is not, [I] hear about it from the minister that, [it is]
a father

526 It is a father, God is, but that is not certain, because of the, none of us has
seen a [God]

527 I: So your opinion is that God is a father?

528 T: Yes. Well because my opinion follows that of what I hear eh, God the father

529 Where do you hear that?

534 T: From ministers, eh, that God is a father Then I know, that means, [he] is a
father,

535 I: Not a mother?

536 T: Not a mother

537 I don't know in case I say that but those guys might be wrong and here we
are being led wrongly ourselves (laughs hard).

The inclusive 'we' (line 524) establishes the speaker's identity as the same with everyone else, that no one can claim to have seen God. 'As we grew up' (line 524) implicates the religio-cultural life which constructs the fatherhood of God, where God the father is often heard in traditional *lauga* and in Church. *Fa'afetai* (thanksgiving) is one of the seven parts of *lauga*, where there is always a mention of God and God the father. The status of minister as a person of theological knowledge is invoked to authenticate the claim to God as father. The participant is positioned as a mere follower (line 528) of the dominant religio-cultural discourses and this also removes him from ownership of his belief (line 539). If this belief is wrong, then it is not his fault, but that of the ministers, who might even be "wrong" (line 537). Another participant, Soa, argues along the same line:

625 There are a number of times that I think [about] the time of the crucifixion of
Jesus and things like that, eh

626 That's when he said, I think he might have said it to his disciples "I am going
to my father in heaven"

627 There is no mother mentioned in this thing

628 And because we, understand the, origin of Jesus, eh []

629 It is not a pregnancy by Joseph or, no

630 It was a plan and an act by the Holy Spirit that came at this point through
Jesus

631 But God is a father who brought the , eh

- 632 This kind of thing so that [he] would be born at this point, in human bodily form and
- 633 I: but your belief is that God is a father, not a mother?
- 634 S: [He] is a fath, father he is a father. God himself is a father
- 635 I: What is your opinion about the saying, that the father is the head of the family?
- 636 S: Well because the, that is the way things are like the father is the very head of, eh
- 637 The father is the head of the family
- 638 Like as we see these days that sometime it's like [the father and mother] are going up equally
- 639 But it cannot be denied that
- 640 The very head of the family is the father

The biblical story of the crucifixion is central to the Christian faith and that story is used here as the basis for the speaker's belief that God is a father. The alleged quote by Jesus (line 626) is misplaced, since it was not uttered by Jesus during the crucifixion but during a conversation with Mary Magdalene after his resurrection (John 20:17). The participant himself is not sure who Jesus was talking to at the time (line 627) and both the event and the person spoken to are incorrect. Nevertheless, the strategy is to anchor that quote onto the authority of the Bible no matter where it was said or to whom. The significance of the place or home where Jesus was going, according to the participant, has "no mention of a mother" but only "my father" so his belief in God as a father is not his, but determined by the Bible. The role of the father impregnating the wife is played by this fatherly God figure in Mary's pregnancy (Matthew 1:18) and is used as further evidence to the 'origin' of Jesus (lines 628-632) and this sustains the argument that God is a father, not a mother. The preservation of the status of God as a father is necessary for men if they are to maintain power over women from the feminist perspective. That assumption cannot be made but can be inferred in this text, but it must also be noted that this participant does not need any justification for his absolute view that fathers are the heads of families; there is no argument there because that is simply just "the way things are" (line 636), probably from a cultural perspective. The equality between men and women, according to the speaker, is something that should not take place, and should be discouraged, if not denied (lines 637-640). It can be deduced from the speaker's

construction that it is unusual for women to climb “up” the ladder of status or achievement on an equal footing with men, and that this equality is something new (“these days,” 638), and so that is not the way things used to be in the past.

The claim that fathers are the heads of families is not only ordinary in church discourses but also in practice. Fathers’ names are called out in monetary donations on behalf of wives and families. Also during parish Sunday meals, women are seated opposite and separated from the men, among whom it will be decided who is to speak to represent the parish if there is a guest minister. The Bible once again is used here as basis for the construction of God as father, and that fatherly status of God is carried over to the human fathers, validating and maintaining their status as family heads.

O le Matai i le Lagi: The heavenly Matai

One part of the cultural representative repertoire for God is *Matai i le Lagi* (The Heavenly Matai), which brings the other-worldly notion of God into the context of the religio-cultural social structure. Another church minister expresses his view:

- 186 There is that connection like the *matai* is the god of the family
187 Therefore now coming into the context of the church
188 Like the matai’s understanding of the word matai, is broadened
189 There is the, there is the matai in heaven who, eh
191 So that is why it is easier to for a Samoan to believe the
192 Although the body of the heavenly matai is not seen but [people’s] sight is familiar
with
193 The body of living under the *matai* system, eh and serve [the *matai*] and, eh
194 And say yes to everything even if the matai’s decision is wrong or whatever

A cultural *matai* in a family is a leader who has *tautua*, or people who serve him. The different kinds of *matai*, such as a *tupu*, a *tamāāli’i* and a *tulāfale*, are not differentiated to construct God as the one and only heavenly *matai*. There are various types of *tautua* (service) to be performed for a *matai*, such as *tautua toto* (service in blood), *tautua ‘upu* (service of words), *tautua matavela* (service of food), and *tautua tuāvae* (ever-available service). These

forms of *tautua* are performed by different people. For example, a *tautua* *‘upu* is performed by a *matai tulāfale* (orator), who has a title that enables him to speak on behalf of the *ali*’i; this service cannot be performed by an untitled man, who can perform the other three services. The text generalizes everybody: *matai* or not, *tulāfale* or *ali*’i, man or woman, are all grouped together as *tautua* for the one *matai* in heaven. The earthly *matai* themselves are consequently robbed of their titles and become like the other untitled people under the one label *tautua*. The text is the view of a Church minister, who as a minister may have a reason to generalize people under one label; the hierarchical Samoan social structure does not seem to apply in Church under the one Heavenly *matai*.

The idea that a *matai* is the god of a family (line 186) is rooted in pre-Christian beliefs and practices, with roots in the Samoan creation stories described in Chapters Five and Six. Defining God as a *matai* enables the “connection” (186) between the pre-Christian *matai*, who was also a family god (superior), and the new Christian-God-*matai* in heaven. “The *matai*’s understanding of the word *matai*” is only broadened (188) when the concept *matai* is brought into the context of the church (187). The present tense “now” (187) underlines the newness of this understanding in the present to contrast it with past understanding of the word *matai*, which by implication was old-fashioned, not broad, and effectively not good enough. This construction validates the association of the Christian God with the concept of *matai* as something good and desired; it improves “knowledge” and authenticates the transfer of the *matai* label onto God. Samoan families accept their *matai* as leaders and naturally (“therefore,” 187) they should accept this transfer because they are “familiar” with the kind of life they live under the traditional *matai* system (192-193) where it is the *tautua*’s responsibility to serve (193) the *matai*. The notion of familiarity is transferred from the worldly *matai* onto the other-worldly *matai*; even though the former is physically present, the latter is non-existent physically. Visual presence and action, which are important in defining Samoan identity, are the missing ingredients with the new *matai*. From the Samoan perspective, a non-visual non-present person is a useless non-person. This is acknowledged in the apologetic tone: “Although the body of the heavenly *matai* is not seen” (193).

The thrust of this text is in lines 193-194: it elevates the cultural *matai* onto an untouchable infallible position where he is never challenged. The *tautua* becomes an uncritical “yes” (194) person, one who agrees, whether or not the *matai* is wrong. This image does not quite

fit the Samoan worldview, for as Duranti (1992, 1994) found out, Samoan *matai* statuses are constantly challenged and negotiated within the circle. Families and villages have the right to strip *matai* of their titles if they behave and act out of order—they are not infallible. The heavenly *matai* is not present but the ministers are; they are the representatives and manifestations of God, as their titles abound with Godly-associated nuances. They define God, the will of God, and the moral world for the people of God. The heavenly *matai*, after all, does exist in person, and the parishioner, every parishioner, is a *tautua* to that *matai*. He is a father, a heavenly–earthly *matai*, and parishioners must serve him.

THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD IN THE CHURCH

O sui va'ai o le Atua: Ministers as visual representatives of God

The whole discourse about serving God and his work is abundant in church sermons and this is reflected in this minister's text, where parishioners are all servants of this one invisible *matai*. There have been many criticisms of Samoan bigger church denominations for their heavy-handed financial expectations from parishioners, but ministers are ever ready to defend the church on this issue. God's representative in the form of the minister is also the voice of the invisible God in the church. Everything that is done in the service of the minister and the church is constructed to be the will of God or for the work of God. Cultural concepts are used in various ways for this purpose in many church discourses.

Samoan ministers usually go on visitations to their parishioners in the village and also visit villagers of other denominations as well. Everyone would notice such a minister during these weekly visitations. One minister shares his experience:

- 668 And the other thing is that the general knowledge in the Samoan way, is like
 669 The minister is representing, eh, God in the human fellowship of, eh
 670 In the life of the village. A Samoan village
 671 Wherever the body of a minister is seen

The minister's viewpoint is constructed as the general knowledge of Samoans that he, the minister, represents God, and as a representative, he embodies God. Because the represented

is not physically present as God *per se* (with the exclusion of Godly manifestations), often the words and actions of the representative are imposed onto the represented. The many cultural and religious repertoires that define a minister mean that the representative is not much different from the represented. The minister represents God and God represents the minister, or to quote Derrida (1976), “meaning is always the effect of the *trace*, paradoxically, of the other in the selfsame” (Belsey, 2002, p. 83).

The next text concerns an incident that happened in the early 1980s, when one *matai* of the village was tied up and left outside the village meeting house ready to be burned as punishment. According to the village *fa’avae* (constitution), if anybody were to ask for pardon on behalf of the victim in such an occasion, that person would also join the victim in the fire, so nobody asked for pardon or leniency for fear of the consequences. Even the powerless police were kept at bay at the outskirts of the village. In other words, no one in the village had any authority or power against the collective *fa’avae*. The text below describes the moment when the *matai* council was caught unaware that the village minister had arrived and had performed an *ifoga* (bow before the village) on behalf of the victim.

- 680 [He] had knelt to do [ifoga], you should have seen the village running
 681 “Someone get to the minister [get him up from kneeling] in case the village is
 cursed”
 682 [That’s what happened] when the body of the man [minister] was seen bowing
 down []
 684 There was absolutely no [contest]
 685 So you see the meaning of what I say
 686 Noticing the body of the servant of God is very important []
 705 Because the village constitution is that the person who postpones the, eh
 706 The person who asks [for forgiveness] and to postpone [the punishment] that
 person will be punished along with the victim as well [].
 714 Those *matai* who [made the decision] stood up [and said] “Keilagi have mercy [for
 the village], [we are trying] to improve the village”
 715 Because the thing that is, It’s [for] the organization of the village
 716 Remember the poor police knew that they would be affected unnecessarily

This text demonstrates the collective authority and power of the *matai* council in a village and, in the same decade, something similar happened in another village and it was also the church ministers who came to the rescue of the victim. In the hierarchical *matai* system, some *matai* have more authority and power than others, but even the most powerful *matai* is expelled and punished by the collective village authority if he does not conform to the collective protocols. This authority cannot even be challenged. This all builds up the authority of the collective as an unbending but ‘necessary’ power, as seen by the use of the favorable term *maopōpoga*, which means to be well-organized (line 715). Using this term warrants this horrible punishment as necessary for the organization and control of the village

The ineffective and useless police force here would have been heavily criticized in any democracy for inaction, and for not attempting to save the life of this poor victim from this impending horrific punishment, especially in the context of a Christian village. To go and bow down in front of someone is an act of shame, but in the Samoan practice of *ifoga* (the act of bowing), it is the only way for a culprit’s family to ask for forgiveness from a victim’s family; this is what the minister was doing here on behalf of the victim.

The fear for a *malaia* (curse, line 681) constructs the minister as a powerful person who can inflict a terrible curse or death if treated with indifference, and so the curse is implied to come from the all-powerful God. The minister maintains his respected position as a fearful representative of God who has the potential power to strike the village with a curse if they do not adhere to his wishes. The text exerts a form of control through fear of a God who punishes wrongdoing against his representative minister. Despite the unchallengeable power of the village authority, this was no match (684) for the minister’s, as the village authority simply ran (680) in fear.

Faife’au as Embodiment of Knowledge

This participant is a recently retired minister.

- 209 Children of today are not able to get the opportunities available in the old days
 210 The life of opportunities by which they lived in the old days Your only schooling
 was with the minister, yes

211 The teaching of your wisdom in those days, was by the minister
 213 That is how you learn to read books, that is how you know how to read the Bible
 214 Because that is the aim of the lives of children of a Samoan with the minister
 215 To know how to read the Bible. Why? Because this is the book by which they live
 216 If [you] read other books, [they] are found everywhere but if you read this book
 217 Everything is all there it says that God likes a boy who behaves well, yes
 218 They are not just books with nice stories But it is clearly presented in the book,
 [that] God is happy,
 219 behave if you behave well you are blessed if you do not behave well you are not
 blessed
 220 And that is why this book is important therefore the only thing is for children to
 know how to read it.
 221 Like this is the aim that missionaries and ministers were trying [to achieve] in the
 beginning
 222 That children be knowledgeable in reading the Bible

One of the first things that the early missionaries tried to do was to translate the Bible into the Samoan language and to teach people to read and write. Malua Theological College was established in 1844, fourteen years after the arrival of the missionary John Williams, in 1830, but before Malua, the first teachers and pastors were trained in mission stations by the resident missionaries. These pastors, teachers and eventual Malua graduates went out into the villages and started teaching people to read and write—the new knowledge (*poto* (211) (see Gilson, 1970, ppp. 99-105). This is where the first ministers were trained to read and write and it was these Malua graduates who went out into the villages and started teaching people to read and write—the new knowledge (*poto*, 211). The ability to read and write was the first sign of the acquisition of foreign knowledge (*poto*, line 212) and those who were fortunate to be trained in the ministry were the first to receive this knowledge and were therefore regarded as people who had achieved wisdom or had acquired *poto*. The possessive pronoun *lou poto* (your wisdom) erects this particular wisdom as the only knowledge that a person can possibly have, and consequently, knowledge acquired from reading “other books” (216) on other subjects is discounted because those other books are found everywhere, which means there is no *poto* (wisdom) to be gained from those other books. The phrase “this book” (217) contains “everything” suggests that all the knowledge in the world is in this book and there is no

knowledge outside the Bible. The knowledge proposed in the text is that of understanding Godly moral values such as *āmio lelei* (good behavior, 217); *āmio* is “behavior that comes within the person...but Samoans do not see this inner-originating behavior as tantamount to nature: *āmio* has moral rather than ontological connotations” (Mageo, 1995, p. 284). The human is subject to the moral teachings of the Bible, which sanctions public behavior and action. According to McFague,

Christianity is but one attempt, from a particular, concrete location, to speak of the unspeakable—reality. Its constructions are limited and partial, as are all constructions; nevertheless, they can and should be offered to the planetary agenda of our day as a voice in the conversation, a piece in the quilt (1993, p. 163).

The temporal markers ‘in the old days’ (lines 209-210, 212, 227) and ‘in the beginning’ (line 227) elevate the past as having been a better time compared to the present because in those good old days there were ‘opportunities’ (lines 209-210) for children to learn to read the Bible. Of course, children of the present computer age have a lot more opportunities not just to learn to read the Bible but to learn a lot more about other subjects. The loss of opportunities to acquire knowledge means that today’s children are less likely to seek knowledge from ministers than was the case in the old days.

The blessing–no blessing dualism (219) put people into categories of the blessed versus the not-blessed, the ones with knowledge and those without, the good versus the bad, and God is on the side of the good (“God likes,” 217).

The teachers of knowledge (missionaries and ministers) are the only possessors of this Godly wisdom who are qualified to interpret the Bible about the will of God and about moral behavior. This text elevates ministers to a status above other teaching professionals, who teach what is often referred to in Samoan as *poto salalau* (scattered wisdom) or *poto fā’a-le-lalolagi* (worldly wisdom) as opposed to this divine wisdom.

Faife'au Are Chosen by God

A minister is often referred to as The Chosen One, or the one chosen by God, to the office of minister. This title also elevates the profession of minister above other occupations because it has a divine aspect to it and it also implies that other people were not chosen by God for God's work or for anything else.

Tau and her husband are retired EFKS ministers in Samoa. Here she talks about her husband being raised by his family to be a *matai* but instead he became a minister. The husband's father holds the family *matai* title Sau.

- 426 Even for him, eh [referring to her husband]
427 Even for him he was taken away with the intention of this old man Sau
428 He [the husband] would be Sau [he would eventually take the title Sau]
429 I had a big knowledge of that thinking of the old man
430 But suddenly now there is something different that
431 That he has been appointed to, by God, that he becomes a minister.

To have been “taken away” (427) underlines separation. The speaker's husband was separated from family in Savai'i to be educated on another island, Upolu, to prepare him to be a *matai* with some Western educational background. Male heirs are normally nurtured to succeed the family titles and the importance of this plan is outlined by the use of “I had a big knowledge” (429), which means the speaker was aware of her future husband's destination in terms of occupation. The speaker herself was educated in a girls-only school (Papauta) originally established to prepare potential wives for ministers in Malua Theological College. The decision to eventually disregard the father and family's wish to be a *matai* on the part of the husband is assigned to God (“he has been appointed by God,” 431); this construction frees the speaker and the husband from having any influence on the controversial decision against a father's wish, and maintains the office of minister to be a higher calling (by God) compared to that of a *matai*—a minister is appointed by the ‘divine sacred’ God; a *matai* is appointed by ‘secular worldly’ humans.

All Equal: But Some are More Equal Than Others

EFKS ministers are selected by individual parishes through a ballot and, once selected, the minister and his family resides within the village for the rest of his working life, unless he or the parish decides to let him go. Usually the most beautiful and biggest house in a Samoan village is that of the minister, as the parish wants to provide well for God's representative. This means the minister and the rest of his family would be deeply immersed into the local community. The following excerpt is the experience of a current EFKS minister, a son of a former minister:

- 35 And, the, the all these things were my eyes witnessed these things, but
36 This is an understanding and knowledge in my mind, but my body was not used
for these practices.
37 Because I am a son of a minister, eh I did not live the life of a serving tautua at the
back, in the back villages, eh
38 [I] lived within [or inside] a ministerial work and this is how I see it

In Chapter Seven, this participant claim that “when the Samoan male is born his body has already known its *fa’asinomaga*” as a *tautua* to authority, but that life of a *tautua* was not experienced by the speaker; instead, he was a mere observer who stood on the outside looking into the harsh life of the *tautua*. Concerning Samoan knowledge, one participant said “to do is to know”; this one says “to observe is to know” (36). The stark contrast of the mind–body dualism (36) seems to take this argument back to its roots in favor of Descartes, using it to validate the non-participation in the real Samoan male life of *tautua*, just “because” he was the minister’s son (37). This position is further contrasted against that of *tautua* through the use the front–back and inside–outside oppositions which differentiate Samoan statuses. Although the speaker’s father was a minister in a “back” (rural, 37) village and therefore did reside within the village and among villagers or their parishioners, the speaker was not “at the back” (37) of the village—he was implicitly therefore at the “front” of the village. Within the village, he lived “within” [inside] the circle that constitutes being a minister and a minister’s family member; outside that circle are the common people, the parishioners and tautua who serve the minister from the back and from the outside. A familiar note is echoed here of God’s chosen people: to be in the world, but not of the world, or according to the text, to be at the front, the inside, not the back or the outside. In this construction, the back and the

outside are the domain of our beloved parishioners, our *tautua*; in this kingdom of God on earth, we are all equal, but we [ministers and their families] are more equal than they are.

Another interviewee, whose father was also a EFKS minister, describes his experience in English (text is original):

46 I was very, lucky compared to a lot of Samoan children
47 because my father my parents were church ministers
48 and they're supposed to be ahh respected throughout the entire village
49 all the families in the village take care of the parents
50 the minister and his children, and the minister's children
51 are not required to do, a regular, village kids supposed to do
52 some of them supposed to go, after school go and do and work in the plantation
53 ahh whereas in my upbringing,
54 I did not because the village take care of our parents and us children
55 most of the kids practically ninety nine percent of the kids walk to school
56 approximately, six seven miles one way
57 whereas on my case I was very fortunate though
58 because I had a bicycle and I ride the bike to school and also that I had a horse
59 but a the horse's main a job is to eat the grass so it save us time to cut the grass in
the pastor's yard
60 and also most of the children of the village cut the grass of the pastor's courtyard
61 growing up there I was, strictly followed a certain kind of a mannerism, as I
mentioned earlier
62 in order to to lead, to give good examples, as a role model to the village kids
63 so I was very very fortunate, no plantation work,
64 very, have all the time in the world to do my work my
65 school work and, and just loathe around and
66 go from one village family to onther village family and play with their children
67 and ah, this is a coastal village with a very nice sandy beach
68 I gallop my horse every evening and bathe my horse in the ocean
69 it was very very fortunate, Great living

70 and in a way, growing up, looking back with retrospect, to my upbringing
71 I feel kind of unfortunate because ah I lack the experience, and the knowhow
72 That, the village kids in Samoa, a came through
73 and that is working in the plantation working hard serving their parents, ah
74 do all kinds of family chores, ah looking for firewood cooking the food, work in
the plantation
75 go serve the pastors those are the kind of things that I lack and ah, but ah
fortunately
76 because the pastor is a role model for the parents and the entire village
77 and the pastor's children are supposed to be a role model for, the village children
78 They were supposed to keep a, well-mannered behaviour and personality.

This is another black-and-white contrast between the social life of a minister and his household and the other “ninety-nine percent” (55) of the village population. To be a minister or a minister's relative entails privilege, higher status, being fortunate, blessed, and with all their needs provided for by the people they are supposed to serve. The text tells a different story: ministers and their families are the ones to be served by the ninety-nine percent. Everything, or chores, that village kids were supposed to do, the minister's son was not; he was excused by virtue of his status. Possession of a bike and horse, as opposed to the village kids who walk long distances, is the image of the haves and the have-nots, the fortunate and the unfortunate. As role models, the minister and family only have to maintain “good manners and personality” (78) but are not expected to do any manual work or even expected to feed themselves—a truly unusual life model for Christianity. Somehow, the minister's title as servant of God does not fit his “great living” (69) lifestyle; it would have been more appropriate to apply this title to the other ninety-nine percent, who are the real servants of this earthly god. The description of the experience to be in this position as “lucky” (46) and “fortunate” (57) is an acceptance and validation of the differential in terms of status and practices (e.g., preparing food for the minister) between minister and parishioners, as being natural and normal.

SOCIAL HIERARCHY IN CHURCH DISCOURSE

In the social life of the church, ministers and their wives are treated differently, and are always given priority in everything. For example, during feasts and meal times in big occasions like weddings or a funeral, ministers and their wives are seated at the centre table and are the only ones who are catered for, which means all the best food is brought to their table; everyone else goes up to get their own food from a buffet-style catering. After the meal there is the presentation of gifts of food, fine mats and money. Only the ministers are presented with money plus the best fine mats and more food. The order of the presentation of these gifts is given according to the hierarchical status of the ministers themselves. Usually the first to be served is a *fai feautoeina* (elder minister), but if there are two elder ministers, then the one called the *Komiti Fa'atonu* (member of the executive committee of elder ministers) is served first. The next after those two will be the minister who holds the position of secretary of the district, then there is the treasurer, then the more senior ministers down to the younger or the newest minister. They are individually provided with these gifts before there is a more general gift for the congregation as a whole from the family of the deceased or the newlyweds. After this part, there is an exchange of speeches among *tulafale* where there is a discursive repetition of the hierarchy I have just mentioned.

In the context of a church parish, the minister and his wife are at the top of the local hierarchy; next in line is the secretary whose job is mainly to announce public notices and to welcome a visiting minister and similar tasks. He is called “the voice of the parish.” Then there are other people whose jobs enable them to stand before the parish and say something or to call out monetary donations. There are various so-called committees who collect and announce different types of donations, and most if not all of them are men.

The text below is from a sermon preached by a visiting minister from the same sub-district in Auckland to a congregation I shall call Manukau. The term *tofiga* (occupation, appointment, position) is used repeatedly in the sermon (lines 85, 93).

- 85 There is no confusion, about our appointed positions in the church
- 86 The minister and his wife
- 87 The theological graduate [or local preacher] and his wife

- 88 The deacon and his wife
 89 A registered member,
 90 The choir
 91 The Youth
 92 We who are inside the church and the circle of the family of God
 93 *Ua laumanu'ia, o tatou tofiga mai le Atua.*
 Our appointments from God have been tainted
 94 Our statuses inside the mission, and the work of God.
 95 *O i tatou o le 'aufaigaluega*
 We are the workers
 96 We have different titles
 97 We have different names
 98 But it all boils down to one thing. You are a worker, for Jesus and his kingdom.
 99 We are, the workers of the kingdom of God

The proverb *E le o toe po se lilo*—there is no confusion [or everyone knows] (line 85)—sets the stage in the establishment of the hierarchical social structure within the church that is constructed to be understood and accepted by all. The hierarchy (86-92) as recited by this minister re-enacts the hierarchical status which he later reaffirms (95-96) is one where ministers and their wives are at the pinnacle. As opposed to a cultural hierarchy based on *fa'alupega*, this one is based on church titles and positions. Since the Church has become a Samoan village outside Samoa, this new hierarchy defines the contemporary hierarchy in Samoan societies, not just inside the church. Theological graduates and local preachers (87), like the minister, can conduct worship services. Men are prioritized over women: minister “and his wife.”

The recurrent use of *tofiga* and *tulaga* (positions, lines 85, 93-94) reminds people of their respective positions within the hierarchy; such positions are direct appointments by God (93) and that each one has a specific function and duty to perform for the church according to these positions. *'Aufaigaluega* (95) means a group of workers or employees of a company; it constructs people as workers “in the work of God” (94) who are subject to the power and authority of the company-owner: God. As workers, the cultural hierarchy is dismantled and a

new one erected in its place which validates the church's excessive financial demands on people because they are employed by God.

The term *laumanu'ia* (93) means “be discussed, talked about” (Milner nd [1966], p. 101) in the manner of village gossip. Ma'ia'i (2010, p. 216) follows Pratt (1911 [1862], p. 168) with the similar term *laumanuina* (to have praise or blame shouted at one). *Laumanu'ia* has only negative connotations and it implies a person(s) as the hot topic of village gossip because they have done something bad or wrong. The construction reminds people who are not contributing to the church that there is no place to hide: everyone can see whether or not you are a good employee. The message is that if you are ‘not’ a good “worker for Jesus and his kingdom” and the “kingdom of God” (98-99), then you are deservedly the public topic of gossip, and the base of jokes; it is an indirect form of accusation and control where people are shamed into active financial participation. This appeal to the abstract ‘kingdom’ of God (97) is a form of divine control: to belong in this kingdom entails responsibility and “work” and one does not have total control of one's salary.

This preacher of this sermon is a visiting minister from another parish of the same district and who was appointed to this parish for this particular Sunday on an exchange scheme called *felāuga'iga*. The local minister (Limu) himself was preaching at a different parish. The following text is part of a sermon by a visiting minister, and it outlines the hierarchical social structure of EFKS ministers and parishioners in New Zealand.

- 190 Limu is one of the seniors within the sitting
191 Or I could say, your minister
192 Is one of the sitting older taulele'a of the district
193 While [name] and [name] are rowing together as a pair to straighten [or to lord over]
194 Then it proceeds to the 'aumaga and older taulele'a
195 So Limu, is one of the older taule'ale'a of the district
196 *E saili i ai le tofā e poupu a'i, le matāgaluega*
To whom knowledge is sought to prop up the [church] district
197 Then my sight proceeds on to the, the holiness of the Church [local parish]
198 It is a sitting that is very grey haired very beautiful

199 [I'm] talking about the leading of [name of local parish] to God and your love for God.

A *matāgaluega* (lines 195-196) is a category that includes two sub-districts called *pulega* and each of the two is headed by one of the two elder ministers referred to as a pair (line 193). This particular *matāgaluega* includes sixteen parishes, so there are sixteen ministers and hundreds of church members referred to in the text. During this part of the sermon, the preacher constructs a hierarchical structure of the church and places parishioners and ministers within that social structure. *Saofa'iga* (lines 190, 192, 198), as described in Chapter Six, refers to a gathering of *matai* inside a meeting house during a village council. Its use in the text places ministers inside the house occupying parts of the house which signify cultural status and authority. The religious status of the two elder ministers here qualifies them as the ones who *fa'asa'osa'o* (line 193); this term has a dual meaning and so plays two parts. It means to straighten or to correct something or someone, but it also refers to a high status chief who sits at the *matuātala* (side of the house), the place reserved for the sacred *ali'i*. *Sa'o*, the root word for *fa'asa'osa'o*, means correct or straight, but it is also one of the many titles which refers to *ali'i* or *tupu*. The two elder ministers who *fa'asa'osa'o* now take the place of *ali'i* and is symbolic of their status and authority above other ministers and all parishioners; the term has favorable meaning which entail the elder ministers rightly deserve their positions. The symbolic characterization of ministers as the only ones inside (within, 190) the *saofa'iga* (sitting) places them inside the imagined meeting house and all the parishioners are outside the house, as would be the case in an ideal cultural setting, where the titled *matai* conduct a meeting inside the house and the untitled men wait outside to serve the ones inside.

Below the rank of the two elder ministers are the untitled but 'older' ministers, such as Limu, the minister of the local parish (lines 190-192); the speaker is one of the other fourteen ministers of the district from whom knowledge is sought (line 196). The word used for knowledge is *tofā* (line 196), a term usually reserved for the opinion of a high chief (*ali'i*) or *tupu* (king) as opposed to that of a lower ranked *tulafale*, whose opinion is *moe* or *fa'autaga*. This also constructs the status of all ministers as comparable to, if not higher than, that of kings and *ali'i*. Ministers are constructed here as the only ones among the thousands of parishioners of the *matāgaluega* to possess knowledge that parishioners seek (line 196).

Ministers do not hold *matai* titles, so the reference to them as *taulele'a* (untitled men) is a play of words to humble and level out the position of ministers' authority, status and knowledge against those of parishioners and listeners.

The word *fa'asolo* (proceed, lines 194, 197) evaluates the different levels of the hierarchy from the top proceeding to the bottom. In the next level below the ministers are parishioners in general, but respect is paid to the older ones (grey-haired), who are beautiful (line 198). Praising the parishioners this way confines them at that level of the hierarchy and encourages them to embrace their new 'beautiful' (line 198) displaced position. At the top of the socio-cultural and religious hierarchy are the two elder ministers (*fai'au toeina*), next to that are all other ministers in general, then the older members and then the general public.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHRISTIAN MORAL UNIVERSE

O le Tagata o le Atua: The Person of God

The sermons in this latter part of the analysis are long because I want to explore the construction of God and the people within that community of God—the Church—from the viewpoint of a complete sermon. As seen in parts of the analysis, many people construct their deductive theology from what they hear in church, and the sermon is the site where that theology is created. I have divided the sermon into three parts according to their functions:

TYPES OF SOIL (PEOPLE) IN THE CHURCH

Text: John 8:1-11

And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."

- 49 The second thing as in Jesus' reminder
- 50 Reminds the Pharisees, the scribes and the multitude of people
- 51 To live with certainty, that you are, a dead soil
- 52 It only became a living soil, when God breathed to it, the living breath

53 And you [as a] soil has a unique status
 54 Because it is a soil that has already been sanctified, for the will of God
 55 The parable that we read from the book of Luke
 56 There are four types of soil mentioned in it
 57 A soil where not a single thing grows on. It disgusts if anything attempts to grow upon it
 58 Secondly is the soil upon which a seed grows,
 59 But it is said that if it grows at all it grows sickly. It is not strong enough
 60 Thirdly is the soil on which the seed grew,
 61 But it was choked and grew together with the world
 62 And the fourth soil, is the soil that bear fruit, it bear a great deal, and it glorified God
 63 *Fea o ia 'ele'ele e ono tau lalata i ai o ta tagata?*
 Which of these soil do we almost come close to?
 64 Judge your own self, and look upon your own self,
 65 *o gāfea o 'ele'ele ia e fa, e tau latalata i ai lou eleele?*
 Which of these four soils, does your soil [or yourself as a soil] is almost closer to?
 66 Is it a soil upon which God's seed is growing well, or a soil where the seed struggles to grow?
 67 Or is it a soil that is sickly in its growth?
 68 Is it a soil that bears the glory of God, or a soil that is full of only dead things?
 69 *Gāfea o 'ele'ele ia e fa, pe afai e te va'ava'ai ifo ia te oe, ma e fa'amasino ia te oe*
 Where about [which] of these four [types of] soils, if you look upon yourself, and judge yourself?
 70 *gāfea o le fa lea e, tau lavelavea mai ai tatou?*
 Which of these four do we almost get caught up with?
 71 The woman that was brought by the Pharisees and the Scribes and the multitude of people
 72 Is a soil that God gave life to
 73 But it is ugly-bended and grew sickly, and grew together, with entertainment of the world

The deployment of the poor Pharisees, scribes, and the multitude (50) in the introduction allows for the authentication of the impending message framed as Jesus speaking to an

audience of Pharisees etc. This enables the preacher to deflect responsibility for his harsh label of people as “dead soil,” (you as a soil, 53). A dead soil is useless, meaningless, worthless, which only came alive when God breathed into it the living breath (52). This characterization of people as dead and worthless intensifies their indebtedness to this God who gave them life and for that, this particular soil has a unique status. It is made alive and sanctified not so that the person (soil) can live, but “for the will of God” (54). The person is not free but a prisoner of God. The four types of soil indirectly assign people into certain categories of usefulness for this God. The first type of soil is personified as one which disgusts (*‘ino’ino*, to hate, to abominate, Pratt 1911 [1862, p. 517, p. 51, line) when something tries to grow upon it. Within the context of excessive and demanding financial obligations of the church, it implicates the poor who do not measure up to these demands, as the ones who are disgusted or unwilling to allow growth (57) through them. The accusation is that they are not merely unable/unwilling to give financially, it’s because they hate doing so and by implication, hate the one who gave them the breath of life. Upon the second type of soil, the seed grows sickly; the word used for sickly (*fa’alautagitagi*) is a derogatory term that denotes something wrong. The seed is alright but something is wrong with the soil; there must be something mentally wrong with such a soil. On the third soil (60), the seed grows but is choked because it grew “together with the world.” There is nothing wrong with this type of soil, but the seed’s association with the “world” also implicates the soil in this failure. The world is often associated with sin, body, and evil as opposed to purity, spirit and heaven. The fourth soil is the only kind of person that ‘glorifies God’ because it bears an abundance of fruits.

The direct question (63) is a command for people to make some self-judgment according to performance: are you still dead like the first soil? or sickly like the second or are you of this world? The combination of *tau* (almost) and *latalata* (close) in line 63 is an indirect accusation that people are so far away from the ideal soil that they are not even close. They are only near the point of being considered close, so their efforts in church are not quite close enough. “Look upon yourself” is the message of self-judgment reminiscent of the Foucauldian panopticon, where control is exerted not just on the body but on the mind—the mindful body through self reflection. *Tau lavelavea* (69) has the same effect as *tau latalata*. The word *lavelavea* (entangled, 70) is a frequentative derivative form of the verb *lāvea*, which means to be caught. Something that is in free fall or free spin but gets caught is *lāvea*;

the moving object is helpless to stop its movement but is only saved by getting outside help (*lāvea*, get caught). The adverb *tau* (almost) modifies the verb *lāvea* into its frequentative derivative, and together may be properly translated as ‘very nearly got caught.’ This is also a negative construction of people who do not always agree or conform to church decisions and are constructed as loose cannons in free fall who are lucky to be in church at all, because they are at the stage where they are very nearly into free fall. This adverb *tau* is also employed in lines 63 and 65 to create the same impression of people as not actually close but only very nearly close to resembling a certain type of soil. In other words, these people are so far away from the acceptable kind or status of performance for the church that they are not even close, but only nearly close.

The personified unacceptable soil in the church is identified by the woman (71-73) who is loaded down with demeaning and accusative labels (73), which represents parishioners who do not bear fruits for the glory of God. In this theology, only the strong supporters of the church are the ones who glorify God. This theology has no place for the needy, the weak, and the poor, the very people that Jesus says belong to the kingdom of God (Luke 6: 20-21).

THE SOWER: YOUR JOB AS A CHRISTIAN

- 115 Is it known through that, that you are a sower of the kingdom of God?
- 116 What about within the church?
- 117 *Na o le tatou pale ea i tofiga fa'a-le-Ekalesia, a o tutusa ma le tatou lūlū i aso uma?*
Are we only wearing the crown of Church positions, but is that the same with the way we sow every day?
- 118 Be sure to sow only the seeds of the kingdom of God
- 119 Do not sow some other seeds []
- 130 Do not forget what you sow is what you reap []
- 155 we are called to spread and proclaim, the good news, of the kingdom of God.
- 156 We are called to save, to love, and to care, but not to judge, and condemn.
- 157 *E fa'a'ata'ata lafoga i nisi, tofi ma tofiga.*
The appointments and positions, is like a joke to some people,
- 158 *E fa'a-ta'aloga-i-vai e isi, e fa'a-le-mamafa tele i ai manatu o isi.*
It is like a game to some, it is not as important to the minds of some.
- 159 *Le au uso e, ua aumai e Keriso lana fa'atuatua ia te oe.*

Brethren, Christ has put his faith on you
 160 Though we are insignificant, and small in comparison to his mission, and work
 161 But he has appointed our insignificance, to do miracles for his kingdom
 162 He has chosen us his warriors [fighting team], that we go and sow the seeds of his
 everlasting kingdom
 163 But it must begin with you, in your family, then it reaches the world
 164 The last point, “your duty and my duty as God’s people
 165 What is our duty by which Jesus entreats of us?
 166 Sow the seed of the gospel. Sow the Holy will of God
 167 Sow only the seed that you know will bear good fruit

Lines 115-116 bring the sermon to its real context of constructing God, the church and parishioners. *Pale* (garland or crown, 117) signifies the status of being anointed or rewarded, as with the Olympians when awarded their medals. In this image, parishioners in their church positions, such as being a deacon or a lay preacher, are thrust to a higher status and judged simultaneously: Does your performance measure up to your status? (“Is it the same with the way we sow?” 117). A warning comes in lines 118-119 to sow only for kingdom of God on earth—the church. Caring for families and children are not part of sowing for the kingdom of God; that is people’s responsibility outside church.

The call to love, to care, and not to judge is already subsumed under the categories of good/bad soil and sower. The sower must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God (155) but there are ready-made categories of sowers already constructed. A further note of warning is sounded again (157-158) that church positions are not a game, not something insignificant. Christ’s name (159) is used to sanction the message and categories of people and positions (161) with their responsibilities “to do miracles” for “His” kingdom (161). The preacher in the text is a mere mouthpiece of God and Christ whose kingdom people are supposed to serve. The text employs the heavenly discourses of God, Christ and the kingdom of God to wrap and dress up the message for people to serve the church, which represents the heavenly kingdom.

After positions are re-enacted, the call is then made to people that they have “duties and responsibilities” as a “people of God” (164). *Naunau* (165) means to desire earnestly and

gives the image of Jesus actually making the call His workers to keep on working and keep on sowing the seed of the gospel (*tala lelei*, 166). *Tala lelei* is another term that defines the church and the message is constructed as being the will of God (166). A seed that bears fruit is a representation of parishioners who can be observed through their contributions that they are bearing “good fruit” for God. The rest of the sermon brings in the Christ Event as a bargaining tool; it glorifies death and suffering and makes people feel guilty that because God died for them, they must give something back through the church.

The Christ Event: Theologizing Suffering

- 184 Jesus Christ himself, came, so that we may have life, and have it abundantly
- 185 He came so that no one perishes but that everybody have eternal life
- 186 He cared for the woman who was said to have a bad manner
- 187 It was a soil that seemed destined to be squandered and stamped on by feet, but he
saved and gave her life.
- 188 This is also his will for us. That is how he ended up on the cross
- 189 It is a life that he lived in Zion, and the life that was good in Zion
- 190 The sacrament every month as a reminder of Jesus to you and me
- 191 about our positions, our responsibilities as sowers of the kingdom of God
- 192 It is a gift from heaven, so that you and I may have life
- 193 What about you? How many lives are growing well due to your good sowing?
- 194 And how many lives, are staggered, because you are the sower?

The woman in the biblical text is described as a soil which was given life by God but it became *pi'opā* (line 72-73), a combination of *pi'o* (bent) and *pā* (fence)—a bent fence, but *pā* also means burst, broken or brokenness; this is another negative construction that aligns this woman with people who spend their time and money on *meafa'afiafia* (things that entertain) of the world or things outside the church. These people are being squandered and stamped on by feet saved only by the cross of Jesus (188). The Christ Event (188) and the sacrament (190), according to the text, are for the purpose of reminding people of their positions and responsibilities (191), not to commemorate Christ's life and sacrificial acts. The concluding part of the sermon is more or less the same for all other sermons; it ends with the death of Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice that was made on behalf of people. This ending functions to

highlight the aspect of suffering as a practical, natural and necessary part of being a Christian. Suffering is analogous with the cultural concept *tautua* or life of service and is exploited within church discourses to subject people into the role of servants or workers for the church at all costs. In this text, God and Christ are constructed as demanding abusive employers. The Bible is used as a tool for the church and ministers to propagate their own spiritually abusive theologies.

Tautua mo le Atua: Serving God

The following text is from the viewpoint of a current minister talking not about his parish, but his home village parish concerning the practice of giving for the church. I have presented only the translation but provide the specific Samoan words used where appropriate in the analysis:

- 816 Like he knew that this honourable [act] makes everything prestigious
817 Once you become matai you are registered as a registered family [in church]
818 You will be expelled from the village if you do not come up with the proposed
amount for your taulaga that is being collected
819 It is a very strict rule
820 They say, people said it is being done in a worldly manner
921 But the belief of the village [is]
822 Your matai is a matai to serve the church, eh
823 If you do not perform well in your duties, you must know you will be expelled,
eh
824 You are not being honest with what you are doing
825 They have inspections of plantations
826 “This part of your plantation would be harvested and taken to the market [to sell]
to pay for your,” eh []
830 Well there is much importance in the performance of [???]
831 I think the elder minister wanted to ease [this practice], eh
832 But then he knew, it is true that there is effective bringing together of [???]
833 Last year, when the minister returned from his three months leave,
834 The church elders have already asked each matai to bring \$1000 each for the

Taulaga Samoa

- 835 That is why [our taulaga] jumped up again in 1987
836 Remember that this village, there is no other village in the EFKS that, see
837 The village our village
838 It [taulaga] started at \$10,000 then it reached \$20,000 and the first \$100,000 was
[by this village]
839 During the time of Fia. So they gave \$110, 000
840 [This is] the importance of people understanding the, because who is what is
used to do this?
841 It is the very body that works and labour in, eh
842 To display the kind of understanding by which they know God, eh
843 The kind of belief, by which people believe. [That is], the people in our village
844 Even the poorest families if you see them they all live in corrugated iron roof
houses, eh
845 leai se mea e, ae mamalu ma maopopo, a
845 There is nothing that [they need?], but the village is honourably majestic and
well organized
846 The kind of village that where the work of God is practiced
847 With this very belief, that serving God will get [them] blessing, eh

The *Taulaga Samoa* (line 834) is an annual EFKS event, where special services are held for monetary donations from individual parishes, and many parishes compete with each other to give the most money. The speaker proudly recalls that his village and church were the first ever to give the amount of \$100,000 and its use here praises the village and its authority because it was all for a good cause—that is, for the church. In this text, the money is collected by force and through fear of being expelled from the village, and such practices are criticized as characteristic of this world (820). The ‘world’ here is used to mean the corrupt practices of the world to contrast it with the justice of God. Punishments are deemed necessary but it is framed as a consequence of dishonesty (line 824) rather than not being able to afford it.

Taulaga (lines 818, 826, 834-835, 839-841) is a translation of the biblical term sacrifice or offering. This term is often used to describe the work and life of Jesus as a *taulaga* or

sacrifice for humanity. This is the context embedded within this term and it is used to encourage people to give money as an offering to God. In this text, even a young man who is *tautua* and providing for his parents' donations, once he becomes a *matai*, he is then an independent registered family and so must provide both for his parents and for himself. In this sense the church has broken up the traditional social structure of families. The new *matai* has to make a choice whether to continue to serve his parents by paying for their church obligations or to propagate his own name up the ladder, but there is no choice; either the parents or their *matai* son will be expelled from the village at the non-payment of church demands. The discourses of church, culture and economy are intertwined and inseparable.

The minister's attempt to 'ease' this financial burden (line 832) is constructed as unjustified because later he "knew" that there is "truth" in these practices as they help consolidate the village under a well-organized system of authority and control. After all, a *matai* title was given for the sole purpose of serving the church (line 822). The traditional role of a *matai* is here changed from one who is to be served to one who serves the new superior *matai*, the church. The words *mamalu* (dignified, majestic, honorable) and *maopopo* (well-organized, lines 816, 850) are evaluative terms that warrant this kind of oppressive practice as glorious and honorable, in the name of the village, the church and God.

The text sings the praise of the village ("our village") as a good village. The village was the "first" ever to donate \$100,000.00 in the history of the EFKS (836-838); this is constructed as an outward sign of the inner conviction of "understanding" (840) God (842). The village here is seen through the eyes of EFKS, the church as a whole, and by donating such amounts consequently raises the reputation and status not just of the minister but also of the village authority. The same status-construction practices are seen in the smaller context of parishes which, of course, is at the expense of the poor. 'There is no other village in the whole EFKS' (line 836) depicts this village as a model one ('the kind of village,' line 851) and all other parishes should follow their model of how to serve God. Despite criticism for the way things are done, the text constructs people as doing this out of their own free will because they 'feel' (line 844) and 'know the importance' (lines 830, 843) of this practice, and they are only trying to 'display' 'the depth of their understanding of God' (line 846). In other words, everyone is doing this out their personal belief that serving God through the church this way will reward them with much blessing (line 853).

Within the economic discourse, no one in this whole village is considered poor and therefore all can afford to pay the money asked for since even the poorest families all live under a corrugated iron roof (line 849). This justifies church financial demands as affordable, even if the iron roof is second-hand and full of leaking holes and a hundred years old. This text constructs people as mere servants of God through the church who are supposed to disregard their personal needs for the benefit of the church in return for some blessing that does not materialize in the text.

O le Taulaga i le Atua: Sacrifice and Offering to God

This sermon was delivered at a *Pulega* (sub-district) service of nine parishes, for the sole purpose of collecting the annual *Taulaga Samoa* (financial offering) and is reproduced here in its entirety as a typical sermon during these events, and because it speaks directly about the practice of offering or sacrifice given to the church on behalf of God; this is the point at which discourse and practice integrates. I have rearranged the sermon under sub-topics for easier identification of the topics analyzed. These offerings were collected under names of individuals and are announced in each parish under the names of *ulu o matāfale* (leaders of families). In this service, the total amount collected from each parish is announced alongside what they had given the previous year. By this tactic, most parishes are pushed to at least improve or top their performance from the previous year. I have presented only the English translation in some parts.

THE IDEAL TAULAGA (OFFERING)

Text: 2 Samuel 24: 18-25

- 1 *Manatu Autū Ave le taulaga e tatau i le Atua*
Theme: Give the offering that is appropriate to God
- 2 *(Leo tele) Ave le taulaga e tatau i le Atua!*
(louder) Give the offering that is appropriate to God!
- 3 What is an offering that is appropriate for God? (repeat and louder)
- 4 Is it the big offering or is it one that is not done?
- 5 Is it one that has an addition [from last year], or is it the offering without an addition?
- 6 Is it a monetary offering, or is it your life? What shall be our answer to these

things? []

12 Like Abel's offering he offered only the fattest birds. It is faith, that caused him to give priority to God.

13 In Abraham's offering Even though he had only one son, who was precious in his heart, but he was not cherished by Abraham

14 God was more precious to him. Even though there was only one [son] he never asked to leave him.

15 "Ave, ave ma ia." *O le fa'atuatua ua moni ma le ola tapua'i fa'amaoni*,
"Take, take for him" [God]. It is a faith that is truthful and a life of worship that is honest

16 *Ua 'ave ai mea e sili ona pele ia te ia.*
That is why the most precious things for him were given []

22 This is why Jesus picked the offering of the poor woman whose husband had died

23 Because it is an offering which was given with her whole life. Even though it was small and insignificant, but everything was given

24 *Leai ma se mea na tu'ua. Mea ua fa'amuumua ai le Atua, ae fa'amulimuli ona mana'o*
There was absolutely nothing left. An offering where God is prioritized, but her own needs are made irrelevant

25 *E mafua ai ona sili le foa'i itiiti ma fa'atauva'a a le fafine mativa*
That is why the smallest and insignificant offering of the poor woman is the greatest

26 *Auā o le tele o i latou na lafo, e tele a latou tupe na alu.*
Because for most of those who gave, they spent a lot of money

27 *A o le mea sili ona tāua, e sili atu mea ia e totoe i ā latou taga, i lo mea ia e ave.*
But the most important thing, there is more [money] left in their pockets, than what they gave

28 *O fea la lea e ta'oto ai le fa'amuumua? La e toe ta'oto ā i le mau'oa. La e toe ta'oto lava ia te ia.*
So where does the priority lie? It still lies with the rich. It still lies with him/her.

The description of David's offering is omitted from the text as it is constructed in a similar manner to those of Abel (12), Abraham (13), and the poor woman (22). The question in line 3 introduces the sermon and it follows on from the theme (1) to determine what offering is appropriate to God and what is not. The appropriate offering is characterized by biblical

examples such as the “fattest birds” in Abel’s offering or, in Abraham’s case, the sacrifice of his only son, which many theologians now hold to be a classical example of child abuse. The Abraham example is described in positive terms of “truthful faith” and a “life of worship that is honest” (15). These terms underlines the church context and enables the speaker to connect the biblical sacrifices (which come from a very different context) to the life of the church and parishioners. The reported speech, “take, take for him” (15), helps visualize Abraham agreeing with God to take his son for his purposes. “Jesus picked...the poor woman” (22) helps visualize Jesus actually picking the woman’s offering from among many others which, by implication, were not picked and therefore disregarded. These unwanted offerings signify the majority who gave more money (26) yet are criticized because they have even more money left for themselves in their pockets (27). Their priorities lie with themselves. The trace of this construction is that everyone has to empty their pockets and life savings for these church obligations; otherwise, their efforts do not count before God. What is needed from parishioners is to give first priority to God through the church, but family and personal needs are to come last (24). In this logic, since everything is given to God first, there is nothing left for the care of families—the family’s and the children’s needs are not important in this theology.

THE MAJESTIC, HOLY AND SUPREME GOD DESERVES THE BEST

- 40 *E le faigofie la, le fa’atinoga o le taulaga, e tatau ona ‘ave i le Atua.*
 So the implementation of the offering, that must be given to God, is not that
 easy.
- 41 *Auā e iloa le fa’atuatua ona o galuega. E mate le fa’atuatua pe a leai ni galuega
 fa’atino*
 Because faith is known through work. Faith dies without practical work
- 42 *E le moni fo’i se ola tapua’i, pe a leai ni galuega.*
 A life of worship is also not truthful, without work []
- 46 *Manatu Tavita o lona Atua, o le Atua mamalu, o le Atua pa’ia, o le Atua silisili
 ese.*
 David knew that his God, is a majestic God, is a holy God, the supreme God
- 47 *E tatau ona ‘ave i ai mea silisilisi.*
 [He] must be given the best things
- 48 *O le manatu o Tavita faimai: “Ou te le faitaulaga i le Ali’i lo’u Atua, i taulaga
 fa’atauva’a,”*
 David’s opinion is: “I do not make an offering to God with insignificant

offering”

- 49 *Afai o le Atua e silisili ese, e aumā ona faitaulaga i le Atua ini mea faatauvaa?*
If it is a supreme God, is it appropriate to make offerings with insignificant things? []
- 63 *O le taulaga e tatau ona ‘ave i le Atua, o le taulaga e sili ona lelei.*
The offering that must be given to God is, the offering that is nothing less than the best
- 64 *O le taulaga la e ave i le Atua, o le taulaga e faia i mea e sili ona pele i le tagata.*
So the offering that is given to God is an offering that is done with the things most precious to a person
- 65 What is that thing that is most precious to you?
- 66 Is it money? Or your children, or you wife? []
- 97 Jesus, was brought by God, to be the sacrificial one to pay for your life and mine
- 98 That is how precious you are to God. That is the love of God
- 99 *O le ola ua sasa’a mai e Iesu Keriso, e le se fasi ola! O le mea ‘ato’atoa.*
The life that is poured for us by Jesus Christ, it is not a piece of life! It is the whole thing

The acknowledgement as to the demanding nature “(not that easy,” 40) of the offering to God temporarily settles the startled listeners, and convinces them that despite this difficulty, it “must” (40) be done. The biblical authority of David and his reported speech (48) perform two types of legitimation: authorization and purpose (van Leeuwen, 2000, 2008). Legitimation answers the questions: “Why should we do this? Why should we do it this way? The invocation of the name David, who is a person of authority in the biblical literature and faith community, is itself is legitimation of doing the offering. The reported speech makes the account more vivid and involving (Tannen, 1989). If David himself did give sacrificial offering, and in the specific manner that he gave nothing less than the best (49, 63) for a holy, majestic and supreme God, then parishioners’ offering serves the same purpose because God sacrificed Jesus on our behalf (97). God’s sacrifice is framed in the language of transactional discourse (99) to remind listeners that what Jesus gave for them was “not a piece of life” but “the whole thing” (99) and parishioners must likewise give back all of theirs.

DON'T ASK, JUST DO IT

- 30 *E pei o nei aso ma mea o tupu pea i totonu o Ekalesia.*
Like these days and what is continuously happening in the church
- 31 *“O le taulaga o le mea faitele.”*
“The offering is something for the larger community” pocket will be enough”
- 32 *“O lo’o i ai foi ē e faia le tatou taulaga ao tatou, ua lava ā i si mea o i le taga.”*
“There are people who will make the offering for us all but for us, the little amount in the
- 33 *O le i’uleo o le fa’atumutumu lima. O le sa’i a lē fai ma se tau ane ai, [???*
It is the sound of [working with] only fingertips. It is the complaint of somebody who only help their relatives
- 34 *Ona tō lea i le i’u le inati o le Atua, ao fea au talo mua e masani ai le ola faitaulaga o so’o se kerisiano?*
Consequently the portion given to God is taken from the rear end, but where are your first fruits that the offering-life of every christian is familiar with? []
- 83 *Le fa’ama’i lea o tau fa’amalumalu mai i le tatou Ekalesia.*
This is a disease that hovers over [and threatens] our Church.
- 84 *Ua tau fesiligia mea e ‘ave i le Atua. Ua tau fesiligia mea e ave i le Atua,*
[People] are starting to question things that are given to God. [People] are attempting to question things that are given to God.
- 85 *Ia a toe fesiligia, ni au mea? Ni a tatou mea?*
Why are you questioning that, are they your things? Are they our possessions?
- 86 *O mea na fo’ai mea i le Atua, e toe ofo atu e le tagata, e faia ma vī’iga o le Atua.*
These are things that God gave us, the person offers them up again, to glorify God,
- 87 *Ae le ni ā tatou mea.*
But they are not our properties []
- 95 *Afai o tele ni mea ia te oe ae itiiti na ave i le Atua, na e te iloa.*
If you still have more with you but you gave less for God, you do know that
- 96 *Le ā le mea silisili ona pele ia te oe*
What is the most precious thing for you ? []
- 101 *Le tatou Pulega, o le ā se tatou manatu i le taulaga na na fai e le Atua mo lou soifua ma lo’u ola.*
Our sub-district, what do you think about the sacrifice that was done by God for your life and mine
- 102 *Mea uma ua tatou maua, Ave. Ave mo le Atua. Ia soifua ona o Iesu.*
Everything that we have, must be given. Give them for God. In Jesus name

Amen.

This text compares the past to the present (these days, 30) and holds the past to be better than the present because today people are beginning to question the excessive financial demands of the church. This revolt is constructed to be something new (attempting to question, 84) that now hovers (83) like a threat over the church; anything new implies young age, immaturity, disobedience, and lack of knowledge and is bad for the church. The revolt against church demands is getting louder as people voice their disapproval over the Samoan radio in New Zealand and in Samoan newspapers in Samoa. This note against the questioning of church authority is a form of control to silence people into submission. After all, what they have do not belong to them in the first place (86); they belong to God and *the* responsible person offers it back to glorify God. The ergative agent *e* in *e le tagata* (the person) lays the responsibility with people to give back to God what belongs to God.

People who cannot afford these obligations often say what is said in lines 31-32. Such people are put on the stand and publicly accused and shamed (33-34). *Fa'atumutumulima* (33) symbolically constructs people as working only with their 'fingertips' (line 33) to categorize them as not putting all their strength and effort into the work. This category is further described in the cultural image of a cooked pig that is divided and shared. The least important part of the pig is the rear side (*i'u*, 34) and is never given to an important *matai* but only to the untitled men. Its use here is an accusation of those who have given little money because implicitly, they have given the rear end to God—a culturally inappropriate and most humiliating act. *Talomua* is a traditional practice where first fruits are brought to the village, who shares the harvest among themselves. Instead of sharing, they are asked to give this to God (34). This is another manipulation of cultural values, and a change of deep values is a change of culture (Ogbonna, 1992).

THE LAST SERMON IS PRESENTED ONLY IN ITS ENGLISH TRANSLATION.

Text Corinthians 13:3

15 God does not condemn what you do. What I do. What you give, what I give.

16 He is much more concern, about the motive, behind, what you do.

17 As for Jesus, he is the sole product, of the motive of love, that was given, for the
 sake of us all.
 18 To Paul, if I give all that I possess, to the poor, and surrender my body to the
 flames,
 19 But without love, it counts for nothing – worthless! What a waste, of effort. []
 132 From this Paul's theology, this is one thing that is happening in people's lives
 133 Especially these days. It can be given to feed the poor, alright?
 134 But love is not the cause of that action. But because there is too much piled up at
 the back,
 135 Nothing to use them for
 136 One of the teachers of the Bible says
 137 "This theology of Paul can be easily understood from the image of one eating,
 then throws the bone for the dog" []
 140 That is the image of giving for the poor but without love
 141 Because there is no more use for the bone, then it is thrown for the poor thing
 [dog]
 142 There are many millionaires. Many organizations established in the name of
 charity.
 143 Many organizations dressed up in the name, good works,
 144 But the one aim, is to escape from paying government taxes.
 145 People who only work, who only give, people who only move,
 146 Because it has been decided in a church meeting.
 147 Or we say, "Oh its it's a shame. We are leaking if we don't contribute"
 148 Some do it out of fear of people.
 149 In human nature, Jesus said: "You already have your reward". []
 152 If you look at the situation that the church of God is heading to through his
 church in this century
 153 It's like the new philosophy is: "Oh the main thing is that it is done. But if [I]
 give nothing it doesn't matter." []
 155 It is not because of the love of God
 156 Not because even [considering] acceptance of His never-failing love everyday
 157 Not even feeling in the heart of the painful death of the Lord

158 The important thing is that there is something to cover it up with.
 159 Even if it's ugly and bad, even if it is shameful
 160 Even if it is taken from the back side. Or discarded like a dog bone
 161 And give the left over of your strength and life's budget.
 162 Paul said it is useless
 163 Because you it's not supposed to be "just" get it over with
 163 Love is not supposed to be taken out of the back side
 164 Love is not to be thrown like a bone
 165 [You] don't have to sing that you are poor
 166 Not only that it is tainted but it is useless []
 220 We are now in difficult times
 221 If you listen to talkback shows on the radio
 222 Jesus' church is made a rubbish area to throw the dirt to
 224 *Sole ia a lafo sole, ni ā fa outou i le maliu o le Atua?*
 Man [how dare] you throw that, what do you think about the death of God?
 225 What do you think about God who died for you and me?
 226 This is the dangerous enemy that most of us have used to dress up the word love
 227 To love with only skin []
 260 To love with only skin and bones and no flesh
 261 You look at God, Jesus knew the cross was coming upon him
 262 He went straight to the cross, did not side step [it]
 265 God's love. Guys, is your love a blowing love? Amen

The God who shows up in the text is a suffering God, one who died a painful death (156) for humankind (17, 224-225), and one who, with Jesus, "went straight to the cross" (262). This discourse of the suffering God legitimizes human suffering in the church through the hardship of financial obligations (what you give, 15). The discourse of the love of God is constructed within the discourses of one's love for God. In previous chapters, I have analyzed love from the Samoan perspective, which is constituted within the discourse of work—what one does for one's family and community. The church discourse of love, on the other hand, is one-dimensional; parishioners are supposed to love God but the action of God's love is rooted in the past, in the Christ Event, and generations are always indebted to that one act of love. Although the ministers and church are the visual representations of God in the world,

they are not implicated in this discourse of love. When the church is implicated, it is because it is the church of God and there must be no argument as to the authenticity of providing for this elusive God. It is not only a sad theology, but a profoundly abusive theology as well, in which ministers and the church hide behind the authority of the name of God.

The text appeals to the essentialist aspect of love as an inner essence inside the human. This is done through the use of the Pauline logic that the action of love, the kind understood from the Samoan perspective, is no love without some inner conviction. Giving one's body to be burnt or giving to the poor is still "worthless and a waste of time" (19) without that personal conviction. Even people who practice that kind of love are constructed as crooks who give only because there is too much of what they give in their backyard (134) or because they want to avoid paying taxes (144). This construction of love for God wrestles total control from people not just of their bodies (action) but the soul as well. The need for this personal conviction puts the responsibility back on the parishioners for their blight in their unaffordable giving and frees the ministers and church from blame. This notion is sounded in line 165: "Don't sing that you are poor." Being poor has nothing to do with loving God. If you are poor then suffer on your own but give the money to God—he has already died for you. If you voice any objection, then your donation is not only already "tainted but useless" (166), worthless and waste of effort.

The text can be called the good news of blame and shame. Parishioners are blamed, shamed, and made to feel guilty for not giving enough. For this kind of theology to be stuffed down the throats of the section of the population most of whom are considered to live below the poverty line is unjustifiable and beyond imagination. People are indirectly urged not to talk against the church; this is done through accusations of radio talkback shows (221) where people find a venue to voice their disapproval of church practices. This is a manipulation of the scripture "to define, reproduce and then transfer God into culture and social life, as it is financially instrumental to the intention of the preacher" (Hodgson, 2000, p. 129). The theology of the suffering God has become a theology of a greedy God, according to an article in the Samoa Observer newspaper:

In Samoa today, the church has developed into such a powerful force people are afraid of it. Not a week goes by without members being asked to give ridiculously

exorbitant amounts. Members openly complain about one *saoga mea* (compulsory contribution) after another after another. Is God really that greedy? (Lesa, 2012).

FINAL WORD

This work set out to analyze the embodiment of God in the Samoa male body from a social constructionist viewpoint. What was found is that the Samoan male body is an unfinished body that travels through time with ever changing inscriptions upon its surface from birth to old age, both from culture and religion. This work is not representative of all Samoan male bodies, but it does reflect strong bondage of this body to its pre-Christian heritage from which its *matai* system that defines identity originates.

The *soga'imiti's tatau* is literally an inscription of history, life and the Samoan moral universe on the skin of the male body. It is inscribed on the skin of a young man, who has entered into manhood and masculinity for the service of his sisters, family and larger community. This might be one reason that missionaries were unsuccessful in stamping out the Samoan tatau, because it is not a mere art form, but an inscribed life of Samoan males that is constituted within the socio-political-religious *matai* system that is anchored onto the creator/progenitor God. The essence of *fa'asamoa* is constituted in the same moral values of Christ: mutual love, respect and care of the needy. These values passed down in history have enabled Samoans to maintain peace and care of each other. The Samoan male body is inscribed from an early age with humility, obedience and a sense of service of the elders because that is how knowledge and blessing is passed down in generations in the cycle of life. It is the older generation that possesses the knowledge and power needed by the next. If they have all the power and authority, they likewise need care, security and respect which is provided by the younger male body who moves through time and space the same manner his predecessor did—with *alofa* (love), *fa'aaloalo* (respect) and righteousness. If the sacred *ali'i*, elders and the *feagaiga* sisters embody *pa'ia* and *mamalu*, it is because they manifest the heavenly God here amongst us on earth. Missionaries themselves noted that Tagaloa was not invoked like other *Atua*. It is because God is here through the other; as one participant said, the service of the *matai* is also the service of God.

The *matai* system defines moral values and identity. In pre-Christian times, *taula-aitu* or spirit anchors communicated the *aitu* or the ancestor spirits to humans, unfortunately, that privileged position is taken by another kind of *taula-aitu*, the modern church minister, who defines God and the moral universe of that God, by which people should live their lives. I speak specifically for the ministers in the texts analyzed, some who live quite different and privilege lives compared to their parishioners. The pre-Christian understanding of a gathered council of chiefs as a gathering of *atua* is replaced with the elite class of ministers who are the mediators between God and human; their theological knowledge privilege them as definers of the will of God and the moral world for the mass, and as Foucault points out, knowledge is always associated with power—a power that results in the exercise of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1989).

When the pre-Christian body surrendered its identity as *atua*, or as a human embodiment of *Atua* in the advance of Christianity, this separated human from God which then makes the body vulnerable to a new post-missionary theology; the human is no longer an embodiment or manifestation of God, but a “worker” or “*tautua*” for the “heavenly” God. Christianity and the specific theology inscribed on the body is seen as contributing to a spiritually abusive embodiment of God that unfortunately constructs God as demanding and as one who sanctions poverty and suffering. Samoans often say that culture and religion empower each other. From the perspective of this work, the church empowers culture only so far as it keeps on supporting its theology; it is a means to an end. What does that say about the embodiment of God in the Samoan male body in the twenty first century?

It is unfortunate that the loving God is constructed to suit a particular power structure outside the real *fa'asamoa*. It is no wonder that people still call upon the roots of their genealogical connection to the so-called belief in heathenism and polytheism, to make meaning in their socio-religious lives. For the EFKS to survive long into the future, we must at least listen and reflect upon the voice of protest of our theology and practices. Such theology and practices survive because the Samoan hierarchical socio-political-religious structure upholds the patriarchal statuses not just of church officials, but everyone else whose status is recognized and maintained within that system. The Samoan male body continues to struggle within the web of culture and religion, where they are always negotiating and shifting positions. There is a good argument about the embodiment of God from the point of view of women. They are

not the only ones who suffer, the construction of the loving God is constitutive of the male and female bodies together, and our descendants of today are on the receiving end of the consequences of our theological constructions. Time moves forward and darkness always comes to light—people will eventually come to understand the time, cultural and denominational specificity of the theology and knowledge we proclaim.

This work is not representative of all ministers, or the EFKS, or other Samoan church denominations. My body is located in the faith community that struggles in their embodiment of God in these difficult times. My objectivity cannot be divorced from my subjectivity; one is the trace of the other. The outline of the half-clothed *soga'imiti* in the preliminary pages of this work is symbolic of the current embodiment of God in many Samoan churches; they still hold onto their pre-Christian heritage and moral values, but the other half is stripped naked of understanding or any meaningful encounter with the real God we seek—the one who died for us on the cross.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONING GUIDE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

RESEARCH TOPIC: O LE SOGA'IMITI: AN EMBODIMENT OF GOD IN THE SAMOAN MALE BODY

Confidentiality will be discussed with participants at the beginning of the interview session and it will be conveyed clearly to each interviewee the steps taken to protect their privacy and anonymity. If there are any concern on this issue, questions can be asked and answered at that time by the researcher.

PERCEPTIONS

What drew you to participate in this research?

When I say the “Samoan Male Body” (SMB) what comes up for you?

What does SMB mean to you?

In your understanding, are there any physical features of a SMB that are deemed unacceptable to be seen in public? Yes or No. Please explain.

What or where is the place of the SMB in relation to all other bodies in the family, community or church?

EXPERIENCE

How do you explain your body as a SMB?

How is your body related to, or how does your body behave or is supposed to behave in relation to other bodies in your family, church and community?

What is your personal understanding and beliefs of the SMB in relation to God?

What is your understanding of how the body is portrayed in your church? How is it portrayed and by whom? Do you agree or disagree with such portrayal of the body?

In your own view, does the Samoan cultural understanding of the SMB agree with or in conflict with the religious understanding of the SMB? Please explain.

What concerns you most when you leave the comfort of your own home? I mean what issues drives you to clothe or present your body the way you do when you step out the door of your home?

Some people (Judith Butler) say that just because somebody possesses a penis does not make that person masculine (as opposed to feminine). What is your understanding of that claim?

Do you consider your body as an ideal SMB or not? Please explain.

Would you explain the different (if there is a difference) in terms of values put on a physically disabled SMB in relation to a healthy and fit SMB.

What about the difference (if there is one) between a young SMB and an old wrinkled SMB?

APPENDIX B

KEY TO TRANSCRIPTION

...	Indicate talk omitted from the data segment
[...]	Material deliberately omitted
[text]	Clarificatory information
Text...text	Long untimed pause
[???	Inaudible text

EXAMPLE OF ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT

- F: O le upu la lea ou ke faakāuaiga e au, oga o le kigo, e i ai loga kuā'ele'ele.
I: Kuā'ele'ele? Le a le uiga o lega upu?
F: E i ai oga kua. Loga uiga e i ai loga kupuaga

EXAMPLE OF REARRANGED TRANSCRIPT

- 31 O le 'upu ā lea ou ke fa'akāuaiga e a'u,
The word that is important to me,
32 Oga o le kigo, e i ai loga kuā'ele'ele.
Because the body, has an origin