

# Mavae and Tofiga

*Spatial Exposition of the Samoan Cosmogony and Architecture*

---

Albert L. Refiti

A thesis submitted to The Auckland University of Technology  
In fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Art & Design  
Faculty of Design & Creative Technologies

2014

# Table of Contents

---

Table of Contents.....	i
Attestation of Authorship .....	v
Acknowledgements .....	vi
Dedication .....	viii
Abstract.....	ix
Preface .....	1
1. <i>Leai ni tusiga ata: There are to be no drawings</i> .....	1
2. <i>Tautuanaga: Rememberance and service</i> .....	4
Introduction.....	6
<i>Spacing</i> .....	6
<i>Rationale of the Study</i> .....	8
Chapter 1: <i>Lau tofiga lea. Vā</i> and the contemporary understanding of space as identity .....	13
<i>Vā: contemporary theorising of identity and space in the diaspora</i> .....	13
<i>Being-social: the context in which the vā has to embed itself</i> .....	18
<i>Vā and the 'body becoming': new subjectivities in the diaspora</i> .....	23
Chapter 2: <i>Teuga</i> and methods .....	26
<i>Mātau: Making and manipulating Samoan concepts</i> .....	27
<i>Exchanging perspectives: "ritual manipulation of the foreign"</i> .....	28
<i>Spatial exposition and "cosmological perspectivism"</i> .....	34
<i>Su'ifefiloi: the process of patching and the nature of parts</i> .....	38
<i>Assemblage: Materials and parts</i> .....	42
Chapter 3: <i>Tupu'aga</i> and Cosmogenesis.....	45
<i>Mythhistories</i> .....	47
<i>The creation story of Samoa and Manu'a</i> .....	51
<i>Solo o le Vā and the Samoan cosmogony</i> .....	54
<i>The Diagram as Cosmogram</i> .....	56
<i>The narrative and analysis of the Samoan Cosmogony</i> .....	60

0. <i>Tagaloa and Vānimonimo: Limitless</i> .....	60
1. <i>Papa: Beginnings</i> .....	62
1a. <i>Mavae 1 and Fanau: Becoming</i> .....	64
1b. <i>Mavae 2: Orientations</i> .....	65
1c.- 1e. [Spatial and temporal qualities] .....	66
2. <i>Tofiga 1: World forming</i> .....	67
3. <i>Lagi: Nine-fold world</i> .....	68
4. <i>Tofiga 2: Emergence of the ancestor gods</i> .....	72
5. <i>Mavae 3: From worms to humans</i> .....	74
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	75
Chapter 4: Cosmic emplacements.....	77
<i>Cosmic emplacement and nofoaga</i> .....	77
<i>Emanation of mana and its spatial qualities</i> .....	82
<i>Papa and the genealogy of tagata</i> .....	88
<i>Papa and matter</i> .....	90
Chapter 5: The spatial exposition and structural implication of <i>mavae</i> and <i>tofiga</i> .....	94
<i>Introduction</i> .....	94
<i>Openings and divisions: tofi and nu'u</i> .....	94
<i>Mavae and fua'iala: connecting outwards</i> .....	96
<i>Ala and passages</i> .....	100
<i>Ala, facets and traits</i> .....	102
<i>Samoan personhood</i> .....	102
<i>Partial lines</i> .....	106
<i>Loops and brocades</i> .....	109
<i>Branches and threads</i> .....	113
<i>Fua'iala as order and separation</i> .....	113
<i>Fa'alupega</i> .....	119
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	122
Chapter 6: Residency and occupation .....	123
<i>Introduction</i> .....	123
<i>Nofo mau: to reside</i> .....	124

<i>Tulaga fale and paepae: marking residency and making an altar</i> .....	125
<i>Loops and knots: forms of congregation</i> .....	128
<i>Charged space: vā, fono and malae</i> .....	129
<i>District and national lines</i> .....	133
<i>From mythology to planes, peaks and territories</i> .....	137
Chapter 7: The Tufuga-fau-fale and building technology.....	139
<i>Introduction</i> .....	139
<i>The archaeology of a technological culture and the coming of the Tufuga guild</i> .....	140
<i>First Lapita Settlement of Samoa ca.700 BC</i> .....	141
<i>Second settlement ca.300 AD</i> .....	143
<i>Ancestral Polynesian Society technology</i> .....	144
<i>Pre-historical settlement pattern</i> .....	150
<i>Technological structure and the Tufuga</i> .....	154
<i>The operational sequence and gestures for creating a faletele</i> .....	157
<i>Fale construction sequence</i> .....	164
<i>Tools and measurements</i> .....	166
<i>Material technology</i> .....	167
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	168
Chapter 8: The time of architecture in Samoa .....	171
<i>Part 1: The relationship between Samoan space and architecture</i> .....	171
Introduction .....	171
Samoan architecture as pre-historical architectural style .....	171
<i>Faletele and faleafolau</i> .....	174
Samoan architecture at the time of European contact .....	176
Colonial transformations .....	178
The relationship between Tufuga and <i>faletele</i> .....	180
<i>Part 2: The fale in indigenous Samoan history</i> .....	182
Genealogy of the <i>faletele</i> and the <i>Fale’ula</i> .....	182
<i>Faletele, Faleafolau</i> and typologies .....	187
Smooth and undulating topography: from the <i>malae – maota – matafale – faletele</i> .....	191
<i>Part 3: What does the fale stand for?</i> .....	195

<i>Fale as tapui: enclosure and covering</i>	195
Architectural origins and binding	201
<i>Part 4: The faletele and ritual of building and binding</i> .....	204
Joining of the ridgepole and central posts and the proliferation of eyes	206
Springing and measuring the curvature of heaven	214
Why ritual and ceremony?	217
<i>Conclusion: housing the cosmos</i> .....	219
Conclusion .....	221
<i>Space in Samoan thought</i> .....	221
<i>Relationship between cosmology, polity and technology</i> .....	223
<i>The transformation of the role of the Tufuga-faufale</i> .....	224
<i>Mavae and the 'afterlife': Samoan architecture in the diaspora</i> .....	227
Appendices .....	232
<i>Appendix 1:</i> .....	232
List of indicative topics and questions	232
<i>Appendix 2:</i> .....	233
' <i>O le Solo o le Va o le Foafoaga o le Lalolagi</i> (in Krämer 1994)	233
<i>Appendix 3:</i> .....	237
Register of Tufuga-faufale known to me at the time of the study	237
List of Figures .....	240
References .....	242

## Attestation of Authorship

---

I hereby acknowledge that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no materials previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor any material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "A. Refiti", with a horizontal line underneath.

Albert L. Refiti  
December 2014

## Acknowledgements

---

I would like to acknowledge the following people who have all passed away while I was carrying out research for this thesis, and who have all remained in some part within the work. My loving parents Palaiali'i Fotua'ana Farani Refiti and Fuatino Malososo'o Refiti, and the *matai* of my *aiga* in Fasito'outa, Aiono Nonumalo Leulumoega Sofara. My dearest uncles Tuilava'i Tofilua Poleki and Gary Simmons, and *uso* Penita Faitau, and my best friends Jim Vivieaere and Terry Firkin. I honour and love you all.

This study would not have been possible without the support of many people to whom I owe a great gratitude.

I would like to first thank my primary supervisor Tina Engel-Schwarzpaul who sat with me for many hours going through the argument of this thesis and to help me bring it to a close (for now) with excitement. The only way I can ever repay your kindness will be to show the next generation of emergent scholars the legacy that you have instilled in me. I would also like to express my great gratitude to Ross Jenner my secondary (but not lesser) supervisor who sat with me for hours talking about the important role that architecture and philosophy can, and should, play in this thesis. You gave me great advice especially when I needed it most. Thank you both for giving me your time: *Fa'afetai le alofa fa'atamali'i*.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the members of my Pacific thought Fa'afaletui: Hūfanga Ōkusitino Māhina, Salā Lemi Ponifasio, I'uogafa Tuagalu and John Pule, who kindly gave me permission to use his cosmograms in the chapter headings. You all gave me the most radical and caring advice on the creative potential of Pacific protocols and concepts that must be continued.

I also owe thanks to Mike Austin, my mentor for over thirty years, and Tagaloatele Peggy Fairburn-Dunlop, who both read my initial proposal and provided invaluable feedback, and Marilyn Kohlhase for her on-going support.

Thank you to the following people who shared their time with me discussing Pacific concepts in architecture, art and anthropology: Māui Tēvita 'Ō. Ka'ili, Semisi Potauaine, Micah Van Der Ryn, Jake Culbertson, Jeremy Treadwell, Athol Greentree and Bruce Moa.

I owe great thanks to the following colleagues and friends at Auckland University of Technology who gave me their support and encouragements: Desna Jury, Tui O'Sullivan, Ron Left, Welby Ings, Fleur Palmer, Mark Jackson, Elvon Young, Sue Gallagher, Andrew Douglas, Carl Douglas, Maria O'Connor, Rafik Patel, Mark Hanlen, Kwong vei Yong, Azadeh Emadi and Yosop Ryoo.

I would like to acknowledge the following fa'a Samoa mentors who provided encouragements and guidance: His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi, Leali'ifano Minati Robert, the *suli* of my *aiga* in Vaovai, uncle Ape Fuli Lei Poleki, Maualaivao Albert Wendt and Papali'i Pita Taouma.

I would also like to express my love and gratitude to my extended *aiga* especially my sisters Aloiafi, Tamali'i, Sara and Sarita and their *aiga*; my brothers Mūgaga, Nanai Poleki, Iapesa, Vini and Ioselani and their *aiga*. Thank you for looking after our family affairs in my absence. I would also like to thank my parents-in-law Neil and Sonia Simmons and their families, for their care and support to our family. Thank you also to Alice Shopland for your long and caring support of my work and especially the hours you spent in the last month proofreading this thesis.

I owe a great deal of debt to the following Matua Faiva o le Aiga Sālemalama o *Agai o Tupu ma Tufuga-faufale o Samoa*, who have all kindly given me their time to *talanoa* about their work: the late Tataufaiga Faiga of Saipipi and the late Mulitalo Faiva'aiga Kilifi of Sa'anapu, Masoe Talama'ivao Niko of Asau, Maulupe Faiga Fa'atali Faiga of Saipipi, Leofo Lea'ina of Sa'anapu, Fonoti Etuale of Fagaloa and Vitale of Lufilufi – I am forever in your debt.

This work would not have had the voice it had without the love of my children Nico and his partner Courtney, Cato Sālemalama and Madalena Leute, and my grandson Orion Tamalelagi. I hope I have made you all proud.

Finally to Lynda Simmons my partner who read the final work from cover to cover making important comments on what I had wanted to leave out: without your intelligent advice to write about Samoan architecture this thesis would have been about some 'crazy' German architect. You nourished, protected and supported me in the thinking, researching and writing of this work. I owe you so much more, thank you for putting up with me: *Fa'afetai lava le alofa*.

## Dedication

---

This study is dedicated to the memory of my mother and father,  
**Malo and Farani**

You have never left my thoughts, even now...  
*Le alofa e le 'uma.*

## Abstract

---

How is space constituted and made manifest in the cultural and philosophical context of Samoan society? And how can a primordial concept of space be constituted in the architecture of the *fale* (house) and then reconstituted as a cultural phenomenon, stretching from pre-contact times in Samoa to the present, in the diaspora? This study undertakes a spatial exposition of how space in Samoan thought arises, inviting an 'exchange of perspectives' between different ways of knowing.

This is achieved by carrying out a close study of the Samoan cosmogony, *Solo o le Vā*, to show how space originally emerged in Samoan thought. Particular attention is paid to the processes of *mavae* (unfold, spread) and *tofiga* (to gather and appoint) and how they developed out of the cosmic unity of the progenitors Tagaloa and Vānimonimo. The study examines the role of space and place in the context of *vā* (relational space), which outlines and structures relations for Samoans, giving rise to social order and compartmentalising it into parcels of territories. These parcels, the thesis shows, are then bounded by the Tufuga in the *faletele* (meeting house), which grounds social order in place.

By developing a theory of *mavae* and *tofiga*, the thesis generates ideas about place and territory in Samoan thought: *mavae* and *tofiga* act as a 'coupling knot', which connects and codifies relationships as *alaga* (spatial, relational and geographical networks) and thereby also defines Samoan personhood. The coupling of *mavae* and *tofiga* shapes *ala* (pathways) and *fua'iala* (village parts) – freeing, and in turn connecting, boundaries and territories on the Samoan landscape. Ultimately, the thesis explores the architecture of the Samoan *fale* and its conditions as a connector between people – first at the centre of the networks of the Samoan *nu'u* (village), where it performs the task of corralling, knotting and shaping the *vā* between the world of men and their ancestor gods. Second, the study examines current understandings of *vā* as an expression of Samoan identity in the diaspora, and as a generator of new forms of Pacific identity and architecture.

The Tufuga-faufale, the builders and architects of the *fale*, who played an important role in the development of Samoan architectural technology over a long period of time, no longer feature in the diasporic dynamics: they lost control of the production and circulation of the *fale* as a sacred building. As a result, most *fale Samoa* (Samoan-

style houses) built today have no recourse to traditional craft. They also lack rituals connected to the soliciting of a sacred house from the Tufuga-faufale, which would connect people to their ancestor gods and their *nu'u* in Samoa. The new building technologies have completely transformed the way in which Samoan buildings are carried out.

*Vā*, as a 'space of negotiations' for Samoan and Pasifika identity in the diaspora, on the other hand, has taken on a central role. In the diaspora, *mavae* and *tofiga* coupling transforms into a mobile concept underpinning the creation and maintenance of a Samoan and Pacific identity in the diaspora – an identity that defines Samoans and Pacific people as different and unique.

The *fale* survives in an 'afterlife', or *Nachleben*, in which the traditional forms of expression retain symbolic potency, life and *mana*. The motifs of the *fau 'afa* (sennit lashings) of the *faletele* and *faleafolau* reanimate and reimagine the potentiality of community life, so that it may continue again over time.

# Preface

---

## ***Leai ni tusiga ata: There are to be no drawings***

On a hot and humid afternoon in February 1998, I trudged my way up a pathway towards an unremarkable *faleafolau*-styled house.<sup>1</sup> This was the village of Saipipi on the large but less populated island of Savai'i in Samoa. I came to visit the of Tufuga-faufale Matuafaiva (chief architect) of the Segi Tufuga clan<sup>2</sup> who goes by his *matai* (chiefly) title Tataufaigā Faiga, a craftsman responsible for some of the most important houses on Savai'i.<sup>3</sup> As I was seated at the front part of his house, the shirtless old man in his sixties sat up from his sleeping mat, with an alert and questioning face. He had been playing with a small electronic game and smoking from a packet of Consulate cigarettes; someone gave him a pink t-shirt with a large Nike swash logo on the front, which he proceeded to put on. For the two hours, we talked about his work and the builders' guild, to which he belonged.

To understand the different parts of the *faletele* house,<sup>4</sup> I asked Tataufaigā to draw and name the different parts of the house, the meaning of each member and what their role is in the structuring of the house. He promptly replied "*leai ni tusiga-ata*" (there are to be no drawings) and he reinforced this by saying "*e fa'a sā*" (its forbidden, not allowed). I asked why, and he answered that he never drew any drawings for his buildings but that outsiders like myself who have been to see him, always asked for drawings of his buildings. I had the impression that is why his answer seemed well rehearsed. He intimated that the knowledge belonged to the Tufuga-faufale. He then told the story of the origin of the name Sālemalama, the honorific title for his guild, also known as 'Sā Tagaloa o le agai o tupu' (family of Tagaloa who serves the progenitor – Tagaloa-a-lagi). In his version of the story, he proposed that 'Sālemalama', the Tufuga-faufale's title, had

---

<sup>1</sup> *Faleafolau* is the long meeting house.

<sup>2</sup> The Tufuga-faufale clan were originally called the Sā Tagaloa, settled in Manu'a. The clan later separated into different branches, with each branch attaching itself to a particular chief; therefore, the ceremonial name '*agai o tupu* – 'companions of kings'.

<sup>3</sup> The most prominent is the *māota* for the late Tofilau Eti Alesana in Lalomalava, Savai'i, built in the late 1960's.

<sup>4</sup> *Faletele* is the oval or round meeting house; see (Buck, 1930). (Krämer, 1995).

a different meaning to the one known to most.<sup>5</sup> He explained that the name means something that is forbidden to be shown or to be revealed to outsiders, and importantly, he said, “not to be seen in the light of day”. *Sā* is taken to mean sacred and forbidden. *Malama* is the word for light and knowledge or understanding. To illustrate this, Tutufaigā told the story of the *Sā* Tagaloa brothers Segi, Leifi, Moe and Solofuti whom the king of A’ana commissioned to build his house in the village of Faleolo (where the Apia airport is located today). The men, who wore no clothing during construction, were forbidden to work during the day, so that they had to build the house at night, in darkness. Every day, when the women arrived to feed the workmen, they had to sing and clap to alert the men, who then had to pack away their tools in their *tufugaga* (sacred bag),<sup>6</sup> put on their clothes and receive the women. When the house was completed, Tui A’ana bestowed the brothers the title of *Sālemalama* – men who were forbidden to work in the light of day.<sup>7</sup>

I took this story to mean that knowledge of the craft and the use of tools were not to be shown or revealed; he said: “*E le maua fua le poto*” (knowledge is not free). Knowledge, he intimated, must always be controlled, and is not something that is freely given; it is passed on from generation to generation according to very specific rules. Drawings, he believed, would disclose the knowledge to others. I explained to him that I had seen drawings in books and that I understood how the houses were made from them. He answered that they were meaningless, with a disappointed expression that then was puzzling to me. It took me until recently to realise that I had misunderstood what he meant by his enigmatic reply ‘*leai ni tusiga ata*’. I had initially thought that what he meant was that Tufuga-faufale were ‘against drawings’ because they thought drawings would devalue their work. I now realize that the old Tufuga-faufale saw no knowledge

---

<sup>5</sup> Another version which I collected in Sa’anapu told of how four brothers Segi, Leifi, Moe and Solofuti, who were Tufuga-faufale from Fiti, came to A’ana to build a faleafolau for the Tui A’ana Lilomaiaava, after which they were given the name Lemalama – the name of Tui A’ana’s daughter, thus the prefix *Sā* means family of Lemalama.

<sup>6</sup> According to oral histories, the original Tufuga guild (brothers Segi, Leifi, Moe and Solofuti) disbanded into four clans after they made a house for the King of A’ana district, and the bag of tools was divided among them, just as they attributed districts of Samoa, in which they were to operate (Refiti, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Similar stories recorded elsewhere revealed a similar pattern of the guild working in the nude but had the brothers with a sister named Salemalama; see Tuitaasauli’i, S., (2009).

in drawings themselves. He was not opposed to them, as I found out later, they are simply of no use to their traditional way of practice.<sup>8</sup>

My misunderstanding was that the Tufuga-faufale had a similar understanding of drawings as that of an architect, in which drawings already contain the knowledge (quality) and value (quantity) of the buildings they represent. In the architectural profession, drawings are normally required to be carried out before the building is built, as a valuation of quantities, and as a crucial part of the contractual obligations between the client, architect, builder and the local authority. Importantly, architects and students of architecture also use drawings to evolve the design, to progress and innovate ideas without recourse to their realities. The space of the paper, awaiting the graphite and ink of the designer, therefore becomes the site of the potentiality for a building.<sup>9</sup> Drawings, in my training in architecture, allowed knowledge to become common, or *noa*. So, here was an architectural tradition that questioned everything I had been taught in architectural practice. I became interested in knowing exactly how the Tufuga-faufale made buildings without drawings. I was fascinated by how the building was a performance space, a meeting place between an architectural tradition, which had evolved over a very long time, and Samoan society. I wanted to understand how a process of rethinking and re-theorising of the *fale* might be a way to refashion and recharge Samoan concepts of space and architecture.<sup>10</sup> I wanted to find a way in which this important tradition could continue and evolve.

---

<sup>8</sup> The Tufuga-faufale used drawings in a very different way. For instance, it was not part of a contractual schema or a process to which a design was toyed with. They had no use for drawings, as we know, but were involved in producing and consuming the essential elements that make-up drawing. These are actions that perform the work in real-time, pure lines connecting the project, the site and the workers. As I discuss later, drawings are literally performed live on the site during the construction of the building. Every project is the unfolding again and again of this relationship between action and the work.

<sup>9</sup> My encounter with the Tataufaiga made me think of the question of meaning and agency of drawings themselves in the practice of architecture, not just about the role of representation and visual technology in the profession but of how geometry becomes the determining factor in forming and projecting the building. It's worth paraphrasing Robin Evans question concerning this relationship of architects' suppression of geometry: "why do architects consume drawings?" (Evans, 1995: xxxi-xxxv).

<sup>10</sup> From here on in, I will use the general term *fale* (house) to denote both *faleafolau* and *faletele*.

## ***Tautuanaga: Remembrance and service***

On a cool late summer evening in 2008, I was present at a keynote address by His Highness the Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi, Head of State of Samoa, at the University of Auckland's Fale Pasifika. Because it was a large and busy occasion, I found it difficult to grasp the main tenets of the address, delivered in Tui Atua's hushed tone, in front of a perplexed audience, made up of the University's Dean of the Arts and guests, Pacific and Māori students and their families, and Pacific and Māori academics – all gathered under the roof of the pan-Pacific, Samoan style *fale*.<sup>11</sup>

Tui Atua repeated some of the important ideas he had been writing about recently,<sup>12</sup> such as: the 'indigenous reference', *tofa saili* (the search for wisdom), and metaphor, allusion and allegory.<sup>13</sup> These concepts were expounded to highlight a desirable engagement with the role of the divine in a search for meaning and *tautuanaga* (obligation and service). These two concepts were the main focus of this evening, which celebrated Māori and Pacific student leadership at the university.

Since the mid-1990s, Tui Atua has become the figurehead in a revival of Samoan concepts. He has published and lectured on subjects such as the indigenous reference and jurisprudence, and he has also controversially published papers that publicly displayed *gafa* (genealogies) of prominent Samoan families.<sup>14</sup> Traditionally, genealogies were only publicly spoken within the circle of *matai* (family chiefs). Tui Atua was now making the knowledge of *gafa* freely available, so that future generations might understand them from his perspective.<sup>15</sup> The traditional way in which knowledge was passed on relayed from generation to generation in Samoa was within village polities. This tradition can, of course, no longer apply in the new diasporic setting because there are no comprehensive village polities.

---

<sup>11</sup> The keynote was hosted by the Faculty of Arts Māori and Pacific Tuakana Leadership Dinner, Auckland, 11 March 2008.

<sup>12</sup> A festschrift *Su'esu'e Manogi* dedicated to Tui Atua contained 18 of his essays from this period – see chapters 1-18, (Suaalii-Sauni, Tuagalu, Kirifi-Alai, & Fuamatu, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> (Tui Atua, 2010e)

<sup>14</sup> Two of Tui Atua's essays displayed genealogies of Tui Atua, Tui A'ana, Malietoa and Tupua lines and Tonumaip'e'a genealogy (Tui Atua, 2010b, 2010d).

<sup>15</sup> One of Tui Atua's concerns was with European scholars, especially Augustin Krämer whom he accuses of recording *gafa* from a "political partisan" perspective. He was, in a sense, trying to 'set the record straight' (Tui Atua, 2010b, pp. 25, 26).

As he spoke, Tui Atua was being sheltered under a *fale* built without the participation of a Tufuga-faufale. The building was built exclusively using detailed CAD drawings, with knowledge of *fale* construction being transmitted via Te Rangi Hiroa's (Peter Buck) book, *Samoan Material Culture*.<sup>16</sup> Ivan Mercep, the lead architect for the firm JASMAX, dispensed with the 'au'au (ridge beam) and installed instead a long ventilation grill in its place. The *fale* has a stepped *paepae* (platform), but the posts do not penetrate into the ground (as they would in a traditional *fale*), as the Fale Pasifika is built on top of a parking garage. Its large roof projects a particular iconic presence, not only on site, but also in the advertisements that littered the Centre of Pacific Studies website at the time. Here is an interesting example of signalling a Pan Pacific identity by taking from traditional Samoan architecture a form that is synonymous with a sense of place and identity in Samoan villages, and transposing it on a large scale into the diaspora. It is this sense of displacement of form, and the persistence of the sense of belonging attached to it, that made me ask: How does space occur (and persist as *vā* relationships) in the development of Samoan thought (and generally in Pacific thought). Under what condition is traditional understanding of *vā*-space linked with new identity constructions in the diaspora?

---

<sup>16</sup>(Buck, 1930). In the absence of a Tufuga-faufale, I was appointed by the University of Auckland to be the Pacific architectural specialist on the project; in one of the project meetings I suggested to Ivan Mercep to look at Peter Buck's book, as it had useful drawings of *fale*. This became the text from which the proportion and form of the *fale* was taken.



## Introduction

### **Spacing**

The two stories, of the old Tufuga-faufale and the Fale Pasifika introduce the main questions addressed in this thesis: How is space constituted and made manifest in the cultural and philosophical context of Samoan society? And, how is space constituted in the architecture of the *fale* and reconstituted as a cultural phenomena stretching from pre-contact times in Samoa to the present in the diaspora? The stories, from very different contexts and perspectives, both lead to further questions: How does space first occur in Samoan thought? What is the relationship between space and Samoan architecture? And how does this understanding of Samoan space and architecture explain current approaches to Samoan building form?

The thesis explores the question of how space in Samoan thought arises by carrying out a close study of the Samoan cosmogony, *Solo o le Vā* (chant of the beginning of the world), in which I attempt to find out how space became delineated and how things emerge in Samoan thought. I explore how the process of *mavae* (unfold, spread) and *tofiga* (to gather and appoint) developed from an initial state, when the progenitors Tagaloa and Vānimonimo were joined together in cosmic unity. I carry out a detailed analysis of the generation process, starting with Tagaloa and Vānimonimo, to Papa, and then all the ancestor gods. In this spatial exposition, the role of space and place are important, in that space as *vā* (relational space; from Vānimonimo) gives Samoan social order the potential to expand and to contract. Thus, I show how *vā* outlines and gives structure to relations for Samoans; how relations give rise to social order; how social order becomes compartmentalises into parcels or territories; and how these parcels are bounded by the Tufuga in the *fale* which grounds social order in a place.

The study advances the argument that the process of *mavae* and *tofiga* is important to understanding the Samoan world. *Mavae* and *tofiga* order and structure the places that connect the ancestor gods to the world of *tagata* (people). I show that *mavae* makes it possible for things to grow, extend, proliferate and circulate outwards by finding new

pathways and connections. *Tofiga*, on the other hand, locates, gathers, corrals and appoints things and people to places, by providing them a *tulagavae* (foothold).

I explore the question of the relationship between space and Samoan architecture specifically by examining the roles that *mavae* and *tofiga* have in generating a theory of place and territory. In this, I propose that *mavae* and *tofiga* act as a 'coupling knot', which connects and codifies relationships as *alaga* (spatial, relational and geographical networks and thereby Samoan personhood, see p. 112). A reading of *mavae*, as an operative concept that structures *ala* (pathways) and *fua'iala* (village parts), allows for the freeing-up and connecting, in turn, of boundaries and territories on the Samoan landscape. I explore the architecture of the Samoan *fale* and its condition as both a connector between people and a link to the ancestor gods. I examine the *fale's* role as the centre of the networks of *nu'u* (village) and *fua'iala* and as the most concentrated expression of *mavae* and *tofiga*; the architecture is an apparatus that performs the task of corralling, knotting and shaping the *vā* between the world of men and their ancestor gods.

Finally I explore the current understandings of *vā* as the expression of Samoan identity in the diaspora, as well as forms of new ideas of Pacific architecture in the diaspora. I look at the role of the Tufuga-faufale as the builder and architect of the *fale* and at the development of Samoan architectural technology, over a long period of time. I examine how the Tufuga-faufale lost control of the production and circulation of the *fale* as their sacred building. The result is that most of the *fale Samoa* (Samoan-style houses) built today have no recourse to traditional craft. They also lack rituals connected to the soliciting of a sacred house from the Tufuga-faufale, which would connect people to their ancestor gods. Further, new building technologies have completely transformed the way in which Samoan buildings are carried out.

In order to address these question within a framework that has affinity with traditional and contemporary Samoan society, the study attempts to weave together a narrative of the relationship between space, architecture and Samoan communities at several levels. Therefore, the study does not present a straightforward narrative but a complex weaving into the discussion of theories and concepts from different disciplines (anthropology, architecture, philosophy, archaeology and history), and a weaving out, back into the world of ideas, of generative concepts and theoretical insights about many possible ways to think through Samoan concepts of space and architecture.

## **Rationale of the Study**

The study is grouped under four sections, set out below. Each section, a step towards addressing the above questions about a Samoan understanding of space and how it shapes architecture.

Section One, including Chapters 1 and 2, develops the thesis position. Chapter 1 is an analysis of the role of *vā* as a ‘space of negotiations’ for Samoan and Pasifika identity in the diaspora. I look at the current theoretical reconceptualization of *vā* as a Samoan notion that serves to unify Pasifika identity in the diaspora. This is contextualised with a comparison of traditional notions of *vā*. I show, first, that the recent academic elaboration of *vā* is an attempt to amalgamate many Pacific nations into a single Pasifika identity; secondly, that this understanding of *vā*, when deployed in the architecture of the Fale Pasifika and other architectural projects in New Zealand, uses the *fale* as an iconic form par excellence that expresses Albert Wendt’s rendering of the *vā* as the “Unity-that-is-all”. I examine why certain Samoan traditional concepts (grown in the *nu’u*) persist in the diaspora without taking recourse to their original contexts. I explore the conditions in the reprise of *vā*, as it is used to bind and hold together disparate communities, like a ‘cobbling together’ of many heterogeneous parts. The result is a patchy quilt work of wholes and parts, fusions and empty spaces that form a generative and temporary “Unity-that-is-all”.

In Chapter 2, I lay out the structure and development of the thesis by exploring the conditions of unfolding and binding of materials that form the basis of the work. The position of the thesis grows out of a spatial exposition that allows for an ‘exchange of perspectives’ between different ways of knowing. I propose that a Samoan ‘perspectivism’ needs to engage Western thought and, in this engagement, must ‘hollow-out’ its own position from which Western thought, in turn, can encounter itself as ‘an other’. I also lay out the background of why a spatial exposition as *teu* (to save, adorn and unfold) is a possible way to display openly the many parts that take up their place within Samoa research. *Su’ifefiloi* (the threading together that makes a garland) is a method that accommodates the melding together of diverse parts in a way that is sympathetic to the cobbling-together of identities in realising a diasporic Pasifika community. The chapter identifies the methods of research (textual and archival research, participant observation, interviews and case studies) that bind together the various sources with which to identify the layered textures in Samoan notions of space.

Section Two, containing Chapters 3 and 4, examines the Samoan cosmogony to further explore the concepts of *mavae* and *tofiga* in the context of an understanding of space in Samoan thought. From there, I demonstrate the development of a possible Samoan theory of space and place based on *mavae* and *tofiga*.

Chapter 3 introduces the origin story of Samoa, to show how things begin and become in the Samoan world; it outlines a context for the different structures of origin stories pertaining to Polynesia and Samoa. I carry out a close reading of the Samoan cosmogonic story *Solo o le Vā* is carried out, in which I advocate for a mythistory<sup>17</sup> approach to read myths, legends and oral stories, in order to unfold new methods of reinterpreting tradition. The exploration of an early oral account of the Samoan cosmogony helps explicate how the concept of space and becoming allowed Samoans to understand, transform, and communicate about their lifeworld. The main figures that are identified in the analysis is *mavae* and *tofiga*, of things becoming and multiplying followed by things coming together and be fortified and given their places. The narrative of events is then translated into a diagram, which articulates the outlines and configurations of the origin process in Samoan thought.

Chapter 4 expands the concepts of *mavae* and *tofiga*. I draw out these concepts' significance within the Samoan cosmogony, as underlying structures in Samoan rituals, via the concepts of *mana* (force, power) and *tapu* (sacred). They institute a cosmic emplacement connecting the ancestor gods and *tagata* (human). I explicate how a notion of place is articulated in Samoan building traditions and rituals, and how the spatial exposition of the cosmogony unfolds a concept of space centred on place. Place, here, is the *tulaga fale* (house foundation) and *nofoaga* (sitting place) for the residence of a *matai* and the extended *aiga*. It is connected to other *nofoaga* and settlements via *alaga* (lines of connections) in the Samoan kinship system.

Section Three examines the role of *mavae* and *tofiga* as spatial manifestations of the Samoan cosmology. I show how the notion of a 'person' is a part of a web of connections that encompasses the scale of the person and the cosmos, the local and the national.

---

<sup>17</sup> Mythistory is a term originally proposed by Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet (1990, p. 31).

Chapter 5 explores the potential of *mavae* as the unfolding of lines and connective pathways that become meshworks<sup>18</sup> of people and places, creating stability and centrality. *Mavae* divides and multiplies, while *tofiga* leads to the convergence of things, places and appoints them to positions and stations in the *nu'u*. This extends to the idea of personhood, as a 'dividual' or partible identity and as a distributed subject or a knot made from multiple lines connecting to others. *Mavae* and *tofiga* form an operating structure that has at its heart the multiple, that is, the many parts that co-exist within the person. I explore how theorising the *vā* as aspects of *mavae* and *tofiga* can form a Samoan's theory of the partible self.

Chapter 6 examines *tofiga* as the concept that structures, maintains and holds together the Samoan polity from the *fua'iala* and *nu'u* to the *malo* (government). I analyse how the *fono* (council, a formal meeting in a circle) and the *paepae* are integral to placemaking. The *fono* forms the system of *tofiga*, in which the *matai* is appointed. This circle of *matai* is a knotted place within the system of lines, in which connections are activated, played and maintained. I examine the plan of the *fono* as the manifestation of a ritual that takes place within a system that transcends time. Each *matai* in the *fono* is part of an unbroken line connected to the ancestors; each also connects to lines that extend outwards to encompass the *aiga*. The same lines are extended to the main families that form a genealogy connecting all of Samoa. I examine, in particular, the *fono* of the village of Fasito'outa to show this.

Section Four, the last section, examines the material conditions of Samoan space; the story of the arrival of the Tufuga-faufale in Samoa; and also how Samoan technology gave rise to the architecture and social context of the *fale*. I discuss, in particular, the role that the *fale* as a building plays in Samoan society. The Tufuga-faufale's role as traditional builder and architect of the *fale* is examined in the context of changes that took place after European contact up until the present.

Chapter 7 explores the emergence of the Tufuga-faufale guild in Samoa's technological history. In recounting of the Tufuga-faufale's history, combining archaeological data and oral stories, I pay close attention to the techniques and the tooling systems they used. I provide an account of the archaeology and history of tools relating to the settlement of the Pacific and Samoa, which shows the evolution of Samoan settlements and the impact of technological changes that affected the production and circulation of

---

<sup>18</sup> Meshwork is a term proposed by Tim Ingold (for a definition, see note 102).

the *fale*. I analyse how the Tufuga-faufale organised the technical system to produce the *fale*, from techniques to tooling, firstly, by considering how the development of Samoan cultural technology produced a milieu and context for the Tufuga's practice. Second, I trace the evolution of a technical system that was introduced to Samoa, as well as its later integration and evolution by the Tufuga into the technological and cultural system as we know it today. Third, I examine the material organisation and the measuring system used to produce the architecture of the *faletele*. And, finally, I explore the cultural and ritual context of the Tufuga's production, in order to understand the importance of technology as enchantment, and how it went hand-in-hand with the waxing and waning of their reputation.

Chapter 8 examines the role of the *fale* in the context of Western architectural history. I explore in detail the meaning and symbolic function of the tectonic and other building elements and techniques that are used in its construction. I suggest that for Samoan architecture to have a place in a world history of architecture, I must engage productively with Bannister Fletcher's categories, in order to twist them to create an alternative position from which to see Samoan architecture. Thus, I engage a perspectivist rereading of the encounter within which Fletcher conceives of Samoan architecture as an 'ahistorical' phenomenon. I propose that for Fletcher's historical style to grasp a 'view' of Samoan architecture, it must 'see' it from the gap between its own frame of reference and the spatial exposition of Samoan architecture I advocate here. The latter is steeped in its own complexity, which elevates a particular architectural form that remains relatively unchanged over a long period of time and is carried along by the history of ebbs (*tofiga*) and flows (*mavae*) of Samoan social history. I show how the architecture of the *fale* re-enacts the Samoan cosmos, the ancestral connection and separation of Papa and Lagi. Architecture, for Samoans, is a 'cosmogram' of the Samoan world, the material manifestation of the ancestor gods, which structures the way in which Samoans carry out their affairs in the world.

The conclusion, finally, revisits some questions raised in Chapter 1 regarding the role of *vā* as a 'space of negotiations' for Samoan and Pasifika identity in the diaspora. The diaspora sees the transformation of *mavae* and *tofiga* (from concepts that structure the system of belonging for Samoans in the *nu'u*, connecting their identity to local conditions) to a concept Samoans deploy to create and maintain a Samoan identity in the diaspora – and identity that defines them as different and unique. I end by indicating examples of *mavae* and *tofiga* in Pacific architecture, which have begun to revive the *fale* as a form to corral and represent Samoan identity in New Zealand. *Tofiga* in this new

context, becomes an operative concept that turns the *fale* into a 'floating signifier', bereft of *paepae* or *malae* and no longer connected to a *nu'u* or *fua'iala*.



## Chapter 1

### *Lau tofiga lea*:<sup>19</sup> *Vā* and the contemporary understanding of space as identity

How does space occur in Samoan thought, and under what conditions does it lend itself to new identity constructions? This chapter explores the concept of *vā*, or relational space, and the current understanding of *vā* as an idea intending to unify many Pacific nations into a single Pasifika identity. This understanding of *vā* is manifest in the Fale Pasifika at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Other architectural projects in New Zealand also employ the architecture of the *fale* as the form par excellence to express Albert Wendt's rendering of the *vā* as the "unity-that-is-all".<sup>20</sup>

This chapter questions first why there is a persistence of certain traditional concepts in the diaspora that are rooted in the place and space of the *nu'u* or village. Secondly, the chapter explores what moves take place in the return of the *vā* as an iconic architectural form and, thirdly, the characteristics of this new iteration of *vā*.

#### ***Vā*: identity and space in the diaspora**

Space as a concept has become an important component of the quest for cultural identity in the last 20 years.<sup>21</sup> A significant amount of recent scholarship<sup>22</sup> has focused on the

---

<sup>19</sup> *Lau tofiga lea* is a Samoan directive indicating to people of Samoan heritage that 'this is where you belong'; the word *tofiga* here means an appointed place or station for particular persons to be at and to act from.

<sup>20</sup> (Wendt, 1996)

<sup>21</sup> This is generally known as the 'Spatial Turn' in which terms used in this quest include 'liminal space' as the "interstitial passage between fixed identification" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 4); 'hybrid space' as transmutation of cultures into a compound, composite mode (Young, 1995, p. 21); 'postcolonial spaces' as spaces of cultural production that intervene into universalist architectural constructions that either exclude or repress differential spatialities of disadvantaged ethnicities,

issue of space and place. Jeff Malpas, for example, identifies the question of place as a concern with “a swirl of flows, networks, and trajectories ... a chaotic ordering that locates and dislocates,” “an effect of social process that is itself spatially dispersed and distributed”.<sup>23</sup> It is part of a ‘cultural globalism’ which Ash Amin believes filters cultural attachment, resulting not in a weakened sense of place, but in a ‘hetero-topic’ sense of space “no longer reducible to regional moorings or to a territorially confined public sphere, but made up of influences that fold together the culturally plural and the geographically proximate and distant”.<sup>24</sup> In a similar way, Samoan identity has been transformed under cultural globalism, so that it is no longer rooted in traditional ritual places of the ancestor gods, but imagined in potential places. The result is a “hetero-topic sense of place”<sup>25</sup> and identity formation in the diaspora. They are spaces in transformation, which Doreen Massey considers to be

...no longer place(s) or region(s) or nation(s) as simply bounded territories with essential external characteristics which somehow grew out of the soil, rather we now lay stress on understanding the identity of place as the product of its relations with elsewhere.<sup>26</sup>

Thus attempting to offer alternatives to the ‘geography of power/knowledge’<sup>27</sup> dominated by Western thought,<sup>28</sup> indigenous populations (first nations’ subjects and migrants) in New Zealand and the wider Pacific region have created concepts that reflect their own desires for a common space of belonging, based on mutual respect. These concepts include the “*Fonofale* model”,<sup>29</sup> the “*Talanoa* model”,<sup>30</sup> the “*Ta-Vā* model

---

communities, or peoples (Nalbantoğlu & Wong, 1997, p. 7); and ‘subaltern spaces’ the space of possibility for the those without place(s) that requires a radical practice of deconstruction to make their world a reality (Spivak, 1988, pp. 284, 285).

<sup>22</sup> (Soja, 1971); (Massey, 2000); (Morley, 2001); (Malpas, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> (Malpas, 2011, p. 228).

<sup>24</sup> (Amin, 2004, p. 37).

<sup>25</sup> Amin uses Michel Foucault’s formulation of heterotopia as spaces that exist outside the normative activities of traditional disciplinary structures (Foucault, 1986); Amin uses heterotopia to explain cultural displacement brought on by mobility in the diaspora (Amin, 2004).

<sup>26</sup> (Massey, 2000, p. 469).

<sup>27</sup> Foucault uses the term “geography of power/knowledge” to mean the historical relations of space, geography and power (Foucault, 1980).

<sup>28</sup> Unless specified otherwise, Western thinking is taken to mean the traditions of Western philosophy from the pre-Socratic philosophers to Martin Heidegger in the twentieth century, to the present.

<sup>29</sup> (Pulotu-Endermann, 2001).

<sup>30</sup> (Vaioliti, 2006).

of reality”,<sup>31</sup> the “*Teu le Vā* model”,<sup>32</sup> the “*Fa’afaletui* model”,<sup>33</sup> and *Kakala*<sup>34</sup> and *Tivaevae*<sup>35</sup> models. They highlight the desire to create a collective ‘space for relations’ that directly challenges the dominant Western modes of governmentality, which produces hegemonic spaces.<sup>36</sup>

The combination of indigenous knowledge with identity politics, brought on by the migration to new locations, projects the possibility of new communities and new collectives with alternative ethics. Homi Bhabha suggests that this possibility is vital for a global community because, “[w]hat is crucial to such a vision of the future is the belief that we must not merely change the *narratives* of our histories, but transform our sense of what it means to love, to be, in other times and different spaces, both human and historical”.<sup>37</sup>

A search for a new community in the diaspora, then, necessitates a reconstructive project, one that invents a ‘Pasifika’ identity in New Zealand, and more recently Australia and the west coast of the United States of America.<sup>38</sup> This search has become part and parcel of a desire to create alternative spaces of relations for Pacific peoples, and such a project forges a relation between identity (that connects with the homeland) and space (new place). In the diaspora, one’s roots are located in the place *other* than where one lives; therefore, identity as a diasporic project amounts to the reformation and reconstruction process that takes place in a new location. To enable a new identity to be formed in a new location, cultural knowledge is important because it is the thing that travels. Cultural knowledge encompasses rituals, cultural traditions of exchange, religion or faith that usually involve sacred relics or objects, which need to be given a place to grow and flourish. Pacific societies generally treat people and objects (including buildings and spaces) as on a par with each other, since both represent the human and the nonhuman. Objects carry aspects of the person, and the person carries parts of the

---

<sup>31</sup> (Māhina, 2010).

<sup>32</sup> (Anae, 2010b); (Anae, 2010a).

<sup>33</sup> (Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave, & Bush).

<sup>34</sup> (Helu-Thaman, 1997)

<sup>35</sup> (Maua-Hodges, 2000)

<sup>36</sup> (Massey, 2005)

<sup>37</sup> (Bhabha, 1994).

<sup>38</sup> See (Tevita O Ka’ili, 2005); (Byrne, 2005); (Tuagalu, 2008); (Mila-Schaaf, 2009); (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2009); (Tamaira, 2009); (Culbertson & Caygill, 2010).

object in return. This is the context in which the Samoan notion of *vā* had been reformulated in the New Zealand Pacific diaspora for the last 20 years.

In the diaspora, cultural traditions can no longer be activated from their proper locations and places. They are now being reinvented and reconstituted on new 'grounds' and therefore the notion of a subject is also evolving in new ways.<sup>39</sup> It is in this context that Albert Wendt's rendition of the *vā* – in his 1996 essay 'Tatauing the Postcolonial Body' – became the foundational text for reimagining the *vā* in the diaspora.<sup>40</sup> The central premise of this essay is that there is a "Unity-That-is-All",<sup>41</sup> the unfolding of a shared genealogy amongst people originating in the Pacific. Wendt suggested for instance that the *vā* shares a genealogy with Samoans, Māori and Japanese. It constitutes a new type of space: "space that is context, giving meaning to things" in which "The meanings change as the relationships/the contexts change." Wendt reinforces the complex notion of personhood in Polynesia by insisting that the individual is a "person/creature/thing" and not a singular individual. He/she gains their identity via the group and therefore he/she is bound to a *vā*, the core of his/her relations. This gives birth to what Wendt calls the 'Post-Colonial Body' or a

body becoming ... defining itself, clearing a space for itself among and alongside other bodies ... a body coming out of the Pacific, not a body being imposed on the Pacific ... It is a blend, a new development ... in which influences from outside (even the English Language) have been indigenised, absorbed in the image of the local and national, and in turn have altered the national and local.<sup>42</sup>

Since the publication of this essay in 1996, many Pacific scholars have picked up the concept and have advanced and developed it in different ways. In making references to Wendt, the Hawai'i-based Tongan anthropologist Tevita Ka'ili made *vā* a prominent motif in his work: "*vā* as a 'space that relates' is an important insight [as] it portrays *vā*,

---

<sup>39</sup> It is important to point out here Arik Dirlik's view who suggests that diasporas have tendencies to become racialised (Dirlik, 1993, p. 26).

<sup>40</sup> (Wendt, 1996). John Pule reported to me that Albert Wendt read the essay at Waikato University to a small audience of about ten academics. "I remember the Samoan poets Ruperake Petaia, and Sano Malifa helped Al with the chorus from his paper. Present also was the Indo Fijian Poet Sudesh Mishra, Tom Ryan, Briar Wood, Ken Arvidson, Michelle Keownson and Alan Riach" (Pule in a personal email 27 November 2014).

<sup>41</sup> (Wendt, 1996).

<sup>42</sup> (Wendt, 1996).

in a social sense, as both relationship and social space”.<sup>43</sup> He sees in it the potential to “provide new spatial concepts for Tongan transnationality and the ways transnational relations reaffirm connected social spaces among Tongans” in the diaspora.<sup>44</sup>

Another Hawai’i-based scholar, Sa’iliemanu Lilomaiava-Doktor, uses the concept of *vā* to highlight ideas of mutual respect and the nurturing of relationships between Samoans, in the homeland and those in the diaspora, through *malaga* (travelling) and *fa’alavelave* (obligation). In this sense she says, “*Vā* transcends the spatial boundaries and dichotomies inherent in the categories of migration and transnationality.”<sup>45</sup> She expands on Wendt’s notion of “Unity-That-is-All” by identifying the networked quality of an “I” as social connector that transcends geographic boundaries:

*Vā* remains a moral imperative that strongly influences ongoing relationships among Samoans as they move. *Vā* is a way of thinking about self, identity, and place. Implicating webs of social networks, institutions, and cultural ideologies, *vā* has spiritual, cultural, economic, political, and social implications for thinking about place, legitimacy, and belonging. *Malaga* of people and their acts of giving and receiving, as manifested in letters and remittances, all symbolize *vā*. It is therefore social connections rather than geographic boundaries that are central to Samoan conceptions of movement.<sup>46</sup>

In New Zealand, Karlo Mila-Schaaf promotes *vā* as a “site of relationships”, a “conceptual glue” which makes “all other principles subservient to this greater idea”.<sup>47</sup> And, “*Teu le va* provides a significant contribution to highlighting the need to ‘tidy up’ the physical, spiritual, cultural, social, psychological and tapu ‘spaces’ of human relationships in research praxis.”<sup>48</sup> Melani Anae rearticulates *vā* as a relational concept encompassing many Pacific communities working within the mode of *teu le vā* – to order and take care of the relations in an ethics that defines personal responsibility in the diaspora.

---

<sup>43</sup> (Tēvita O. Ka’ili, 2008, p. 24).

<sup>44</sup> (Tevita O Ka’ili, 2005, p. 89).

<sup>45</sup> (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2009, p. 22).

<sup>46</sup> (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2009, p. 21).

<sup>47</sup> (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2009, p. 104).

<sup>48</sup> (Anae, 2010a, p. 13).

What all these reconceptualisations of *vā* have in common is what I'uogafa Tuagalu suggests are attempts to initiate a Samoan theory of social action in New Zealand.<sup>49</sup> They all deal with a notion of *vā* as an holistic identity formation predicated on co-belonging and relationship building; its negotiative character becomes desirable when applied as a strategic concept “creating space for mutual respect”. Where *teu le vā* becomes interesting in the New Zealand context is when it is used to mediate community values that are no longer connected to *nu'u* (the village) in Samoa. We can then observe a new dynamism within a democratically shared space of inclusiveness, to counter the Western notion of the individual self.

Implied in Albert Wendt's earlier reconstruction of *vā*<sup>50</sup> is that it can be enacted in other locations, outside the context of Samoan tradition. In this context, *vā* acquires new characteristics that depend on relationships between local diasporic communities and governmental authorities, people and things.

### **Being-social: the context in which the *vā* has to embed itself**

In its traditional Samoan setting, *vā* is the organising principle in which things are given their place and relations are forged between people, as well as between people and objects, and space and territory. As a political agent, it works as a principle of interdependence – a unidirectional relationship between *matai* and dependants, in which one is meaningless without the other. Serge Tcherkézoff points out that, in hierarchical societies, “[p]eaceful relations of equality are located within the hierarchy, understood as a space organized by belonging to the same whole: within that space, there is room for equality at each level.” Thus, the movement of power in this context “is hierarchical because one of the terms is everything to the other – and the converse is never the case”.<sup>51</sup> Samoan society is structured along similar hierarchies that contain different interdependent levels, where each level is meaningless without the other.<sup>52</sup> Persons (and objects), for instance, are ‘graded’ and ranked and given different stations or spheres of relations. Thus, people inherit or are bestowed roles (*tofi*), which allow them to *nofo* (sit) at the centre of the circle of *matai* (made up of *ali'i* [paramount chiefs] and *tulafale* [orator

---

<sup>49</sup> (Tuagalu, 2008, p. 108).

<sup>50</sup> *Vā*, in the village, is always used in the context of “*teu le vā*”, referring to the conduct of *matai* (chiefs) in a *fono* (village council). (Duranti, 1981, p. 30).

<sup>51</sup> (Tcherkézoff, 2009, p. 305).

<sup>52</sup> (Tcherkézoff, 2009, p. 305).

chiefs]). Outside the circle are adjunct spheres, made up of *tausi* (wives of *matai*, mirroring the circle of *fa'amatai*), the *aualuma* (unmarried women) and the *aumaga* (untitled men). *Vā* is the glue that folds relationships and interaction into a relational field of action; as Bradd Shore says, it “order[s] social relations”.<sup>53</sup>

What is integral to the notion of a person within this sphere of relations is that the person is a distributed entity, made up of many parts (and connecting lines of relations), and each part can flow from the person to other persons, connecting many in turn.<sup>54</sup> The term *tautuanaga* (remember) comes into play here as the call for responsibility and responsiveness to one's relationships and for honouring one's ancestors and family – one has to maintain many lines of relationships.

For subjects in the diaspora, these lines of relations to a Samoan context can become very 'slack'. This is because customary understanding of *vā* no longer applies to subjects in the diaspora; Samoans in the diaspora are subjected to laws based on democratic principles of equality, in which all subjects have equal access to rights and resources. By contrast, the *vā* in the Samoan context keeps people within separate and unequal spheres, which are, however, connected and orbit each other. In the diaspora, these spheres are no longer maintained, and the *vā* as a traditional way to manage and order relationships has gone through successive transformations. As I observed above, the Fale Pasifika is one of examples in which the *vā* is reinterpreted and maintained.

To understand the structure of space in Samoan thinking more generally, comparative studies of Samoan concepts and their Western counterparts are useful. For example, in his analysis of the Samoan context of social relations, Bradd Shore notes the absence in Samoan of a verb equivalent to the English verb “to be”.<sup>55</sup> He points out that an important part of Western thought, by comparison with Samoan thought, is the dichotomy between the real and the apparent: “the phenomenal world is interpreted as an array of appearances or seemings and shadows, a veil behind which truth lies as an absolute state beyond both time and space”.<sup>56</sup> Western thought is distinct from Polynesian thought in its stress on the internal consistency structuring human

---

<sup>53</sup> (Shore, 1977, p. 367).

<sup>54</sup> This will be discussed in later chapters.

<sup>55</sup> (Shore, 1977, p. 184).

<sup>56</sup> (Shore, 1977, p. 185).

experience, which reduces the intuition of those (non-Western peoples) it seeks to comprehend by turning the possibility of a cross-cultural interpretation into a science.<sup>57</sup>

A Samoan understanding of space, as Shore indicates, takes into account a “theory of action” rather than one of “being”,<sup>58</sup> which recognises the world in its dual aspects: both a transient, mutable and dynamic aspect and a stable, immutable and formal dimension. Both are firmly linked to the phenomenal world. Shore believes that, for Samoans, “both aspects of experience are equally ‘true’ for each is appropriated to a different context, and all contexts are linked as complements in actual experience”.<sup>59</sup>

Bradd Shore wrote in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and by the 1990s, a greater understanding of space and cultural difference was in full swing. Setha Low and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga, for instance, observed that a renewed interest in issues of space and place in the 1990s fore-grounded spatial dimensions of culture,<sup>60</sup> rather than treating them as background: “human behaviour was now seen as being located in and constructive of space”.<sup>61</sup> This renewed interest in space perpetuated assumptions about globalised space and promoted a ‘divided’ view of the nature of space itself, and of the relation between space and society:

Space and society mapped on to each other and together they were from the beginning divided up, ‘cultures’, ‘societies’ and ‘nations’ were all imagined as having an integral relation to bounded spaces, internally coherent and differentiated from each other by separation.<sup>62</sup>

Places as locations of cultural identity came to be seen as bounded, with their own internally generated authenticities, and defined by their difference from other places beyond their borders. Doreen Massey proposes that this ‘imagined space’ is a way to

---

<sup>57</sup> (Shore, 1977, p. 187).

<sup>58</sup> This position foregrounds aspects of Continental philosophy concerned with the opposition between being and becoming.

<sup>59</sup> (Shore, 1977, p. 186).

<sup>60</sup> See also (Massey, 2005); (Thrift, 1996); 2003); (Thrift, 2006).

<sup>61</sup> (Low & Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003, p. 1).

<sup>62</sup> (Massey, 2005, p. 64).

organise global space as “divided/regionalised”, so that the nation-state as a project<sup>63</sup> could be legitimated as progress, as ‘natural’ across the globe.<sup>64</sup> Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson called this the “isomorphism of space, place and culture”. Using the example of how ‘the Bushmen’ came to be Bushmen, they argue that, instead of assuming the autonomy of the primeval community, “we need to examine how it was formed *as a community* out of the interconnected space that always already existed”.<sup>65</sup> They propose that a shared historical process differentiates and connects the world.<sup>66</sup> Debates in the Pacific and elsewhere suggest that received categories and ‘authenticities’ need to be questioned, and that the current ascriptions of remoteness and isolation have been produced both discursively and materially through colonialism.<sup>67</sup> Anthropologists (and social scientists in general) may have adopted a “lens of local studies”: “Imagining themselves to have found ‘primitive isolates’, they defined them as place-defined societies and assumed that they were pre-capitalist ‘originals’.”<sup>68</sup> Massey regards space as a product of dynamic interrelations: connections and disconnections, and their combined effects; an emergent product of relations. This would include relations which establish boundaries, where ‘place’ is necessarily “meeting place”. In such cases, “difference of a place” must be conceptualised predominantly as the constant emergence of “uniqueness out of (and within) the specific constellations of interrelations” within which a place is set, but also “what is made of that constellation”.<sup>69</sup>

In the rationalised project of modernity,<sup>70</sup> spaces and cultures are differentiated into temporal sequences, in which “Western Europe is ‘advanced’, other parts of the world

---

<sup>63</sup> Massey echoes here Homi Bhabha’s take on the nation-space and -time: “The problematic boundaries of modernity are enacted in these ambivalent temporalities of the nation-space. The language of culture and community is poised on the fissures of the present becoming the rhetorical figures of a national past. Historians transfixed on the event and origins of the nation never ask, and political theorists possessed of the ‘modern’ totalities of the nation ... never pose, the essential question of the representation of the nation as a temporal process.” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 142).

<sup>64</sup> (Massey, 2005, p. 65).

<sup>65</sup> (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992, p. 8).

<sup>66</sup> (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992, p. 16).

<sup>67</sup> (Thomas, 1991, p. 36).

<sup>68</sup> (Massey, 2005, p. 67).

<sup>69</sup> (Massey, 2005, p. 68).

<sup>70</sup> Modernity is a shorthand term for modern society, or industrial civilisation; the world as open to transformation, by human intervention, economic institutions, industrial production and a

'some way behind', yet others are 'backwards'".<sup>71</sup> The transformation of the world's geography into world history renders spatial heterogeneity as a single temporal series, and thereby reduces cultural difference to that between places within a historical queue. 'Scientific study' of 'other cultures' turns out to be a process of distancing, in which the subject of study is separated from the object by history, and the object of study becomes distanced from the subject's scientific gaze. This distancing has the effect of "decreasing the actuality of difference" because "difference/heterogeneity is neatly packed into its bounded spaces and dismissed to the ('our') past".<sup>72</sup> Massey proposes that a more useful way to identify the world of the 'others' is to treat history as a simultaneous event. She uses the notion of 'coevalness', an "imaginative space of engagement" that mutually implicates identity, space and time in the construction of a space of complexity and multiplicity.<sup>73</sup> The end of modernity not only heralds the arrival of the 'margins at the centre' but also the arrival of people from the *past*; distance is suddenly eradicated both spatially *and* temporally, and migration is an assertion of coevalness:

... the repression of the spatial was bound up with the establishment of foundational universals (and *vice versa*), the repression of the possibilities of multiple trajectories, and the denial of the real difference of others ... what was at issue was the establishment of a geography of power/knowledge.<sup>74</sup>

It was in this context in the mid-1990s that Albert Wendt's reimagining of the *vā* took place. The subject of such times, a "body-becoming", created a *vā* by "clearing a space for itself among and alongside other bodies".<sup>75</sup> The crux of the reinvention of the *vā* at this moment is that it must provide a space of 'equality', where a proper engagement between Samoans (and by extension the Pasifika community) and people of the new land could take place – an engagement based on respect (*teu*). In this sense, *teu le vā* becomes the possibility of existing and engaging with others, on the same level, by bringing things into relation and, by doing so, exist as 'equals'. This would be the ideal

---

market economy with certain range of political institutions, including the nation-state and mass democracy, see (Giddens & Pierson, 1998, p. 94).

<sup>71</sup> (Massey, 2005, p. 68).

<sup>72</sup> (Massey, 2005, p. 69).

<sup>73</sup> To Johannes Fabian conceived 'coevalness' to mean 'existing at the same time', in order to show how the ethnographic encounter with the native Other locates the Other in a hierarchical distance, while suppressing the simultaneity and contemporaneity of the encounter. According to Fabian, the denial of coevalness is a "persistent and systematic tendency to place the referents of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse" (Fabian 2002: 31).

<sup>74</sup> (Massey, 2005, p. 70).

<sup>75</sup> (Wendt, 1996).

of coevalness Fabian and Massey conceptualised, which allows the native other to exist spatially and temporally on the same plane with modern subjects.

### ***Vā* and the ‘body becoming’: new subjectivities in the diaspora**

One aspect of Wendt’s ‘body becoming’ is its capacity to ‘blend’ with others in the *vā* spaces of modernity:

a new development, which I consider to be in heart, spirit and muscle, Pacific: a blend in which influences from outside have been indigenised, absorbed in the image of the local and national, and in turn have altered the national and local.<sup>76</sup>

Wendt illustrates this blending with examples from the arts, in which he sees blending not as an equivalent of ‘hybridity’, a term he denounces as racist:

When Picasso developed cubism from African art and other influences was cubism called a hybrid, or a new development? Do we call the American Novel a hybrid, or the American Novel? Do we call someone whose mother is Scandinavian and father English a half-caste Scandinavian or part-English or a hybrid, or English if he lives in England? ‘Hybrid’ no matter how theorists, like Homi Bhabha, have tried to make it post-colonial still smacks of the racist colonial.<sup>77</sup>

Perhaps the most powerful example of Wendt’s notion of *vā*, as providing the conditions for which the birth to this new ‘body becoming’ is possible in the diaspora, is the Fale Pasifika complex at the University of Auckland. In it, we see a direct attempt to blend and indigenise outside influences to forge a space that “holds separate entities and things together in the Unity-that-is-All”. Importantly, Albert Wendt was at the heart of this project, from beginning to the end.

Wendt, professor at the University of Auckland, was the project’s patron and therefore had a crucial role in the realisation of the building, commissioned by the Vice Chancellor for the Centre of Pacific Studies under the directorship of Dr. Melani Anae. Wendt chose the model of the Samoan *faleafolau* as the central focus of the complex, just as the Māori complex on campus had the wharenuī (meeting house) as its centre. The National

---

<sup>76</sup> (Wendt, 1996).

<sup>77</sup> (Wendt, 1996).

University of Samoa's *fale*, built in Apia in 1997,<sup>78</sup> served as a reference point for gauging the size and impact of the architecture. The University of Auckland could not find a Tufuga-faufale in New Zealand with the requisite skills to undertake the building of a *fale* of that size – at least not one who had experience in New Zealand building regulations.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, a commitment was made to commission artworks from established New Zealand artists to create the atmosphere and sense of identity for the Pacific community within the university. Pacific artists have been very responsive in terms of creating and finding new modes of expressions that rely on heritage, on one hand, and embrace new media and contexts, on the other.<sup>80</sup> Thus, their work created reference points that could conceptually stitch together a body becoming. At the *Fale Pasifika*, the surface of the *malae* (in front of the *fale*) uses weather map graphics as tiling patterns, linking the idea of the ocean as an undifferentiated ground of identity,<sup>81</sup> and the role of the *malae* as the sacred ground that brings Pacific people into a relation with their ancestor gods. As well, the *malae* contains artworks by Jim Vivieaere and Tomui Kaloni that are 'beacons',<sup>82</sup> things that stand out as points in the currents of the ocean, as a metaphor of the ability for identity to find landmarks to which it can hold onto. The *fale* at the heart of the complex similarly acts as a beacon of Pacific identity; it is not carried out in a traditional Samoan construction,<sup>83</sup> but acts as an icon of the *faleafolau*. Thus, it is apt to see it as a space and 'body becoming' of Pacific identity, with the ability to combine and to gather a new community in the diaspora. Here, the *vā* becomes a concept for identity in the same manner that artworks as concepts have the ability to extend and create reality, as cultural expressions in which things and objects become the agents for culture itself. In this way, Melani Anae's notion of *vā* as having a 'negotiative' potential makes sense: the building stands for an understanding of Samoan and Pacific relational space in the diaspora. It embodies the etiquette of respect that "implies

---

<sup>78</sup> This *faleafolau* was designed and built by Fonoti Leilua Likisone in 1997, with assistance from Japanese engineers. The building was demolished in 2011, due to rotting timber posts. A replacement *fale* by Likisone was opened in 2012.

<sup>79</sup> I was engaged as the Pacific architectural specialist on the project to work with JASMAX architects, who designed, documented and supervised the construction, (University of Auckland, 2005a).

<sup>80</sup> The group exhibition 'Bottled Ocean', curated by Jim Vivieaere at the Wellington Art Gallery (May-August 1994), was important to the development of Contemporary Pacific Art.

<sup>81</sup> (Refiti, 2002a, p. 209).

<sup>82</sup> This is Jim Vivieaere's term, and the title of his work on the *malae* (University of Auckland, 2005b).

<sup>83</sup> The *faleafolau* is discussed in Chapter 8.

commitment to looking after/tidying up the correct reciprocal relational arrangement between the parties in a relationship".<sup>84</sup>

This is the context in which the notion of the *vā* has been articulated in the Pacific diaspora since the 1990s, and in which the architecture of the *fale* has become the iconic representation of this new concept. Traditional Samoan concepts of *vā* are thus taken up in order to create a new social and political reality for Samoans and Pacific people in the diaspora and through this transformation, enter the discourse of 'cultural globalism' regarding space, place and identity.

## **Conclusion**

I have attempted in this chapter to lay out the thesis questions in which the notion of *vā* is an important concept to consider because it describes the way in which Samoans see the world, a concept that has gained importance in recent scholarship in the attempt to reconstruct Samoan and Pasifika identity in the diaspora. I contextualise *vā* within the recent concerns of the 'Spatial Turn' where space and place have become important ways to rethink globalisation and to come to terms with identity as being important to the local conceptualisation place and space.

I scope out the work being done by Pacific scholars in this area and I suggest that the present study will put into perspective the very long history in the concern with/of space, identity and time in Samoan thought.

Before exploring in detail the origins of these Samoan concepts and contexts in Chapters 3 to 6, it is now time to layout the frameworks, approaches and methods, and the conditions of unfolding and binding of materials that underpin the study.

---

<sup>84</sup> (Anae, 2010a, p. 13).



## Chapter 2

### *Teuga* and methods

*O mea e fai i luma o le nu 'u*

*E le oni mea e fai i tua o le nu 'u.*<sup>85</sup>

(Things done in front of the village  
not things done behind the village.)

The title, “*Teuga* and methods”, reflects the Samoan notion of an exposition or display.<sup>86</sup> As an exposition (*teu*), it opens out to display many parts within the scholarship and research on Samoa. But first, I will lay out the specific rationale for the work, and its philosophical position, to develop an idea of a Samoan ‘perspectivism’.<sup>87</sup> This is to present a Samoan ontological view with specific reference to recent developments in the ‘ontological turn’ debate in the Human Sciences. Secondly, I show how perspectivism plays out in this thesis, via *su’ifefiloi* (the threading together of flowers to make a necklace or garland), a research method that assembles many parts to construct a work. It is a generative method, akin to bricolage as Deleuze and Guattari use the term (see p. 39), but also akin to the ‘cobbling together’ of identities in an emergent diasporic Pasifika community. Thus, this chapter identifies the methods of research: textual and archival, participant observation, interviews and case studies – as discrete but linked elements, all binding together diverse sources, in order to identify (*tofiga*) a consistent texture of Samoan notions of space.

---

<sup>85</sup> An *alaga’upu* (proverb) that my mother Fuatino Malososo’o Refiti wrote for me to welcome the guests to her 70th birthday celebrations.

<sup>86</sup> *Teuga* comes from the word *teu*, meaning to adorn oneself in an orderly manner in the presence of the community.

<sup>87</sup> See definition on p.35.

### ***Mātau*: Making and manipulating Samoan concepts**

The study explores ideas and concepts, many of which are in tension with each other. At the outset of the research, a reviewer of my thesis proposal advised that the research should be approached more from an architectural perspective, “as against the anthropological”. In response, I propose that, firstly, this study concerns the question of space as constructed and organised by people. This requires a consideration of aspects of anthropology (and, to some extent, philosophy) to identify the forms and structures that give rise to space and architecture in the Samoan context. Further, almost all of the available historical sources and data on Samoan and Pacific architecture are from ethnography and anthropology. A tension, between the desire to institute an anthropology that gives rise to architecture, on one hand, and an architecture that gives rise to anthropology, on the other, is at heart of the thesis and remains partially unresolved.<sup>88</sup> This relational tension, however, helps reveal certain overlaps between anthropology and architecture. Anthropology may therefore clarify or undermine architectural concepts and questions (and vice versa), and identify the emergent in reality by “decipher[ing] patterns-in-the-making”.<sup>89</sup>

Another tension driving this study concerns the development of an ontological position that can account for a Samoan perspective of the world, rather than defaulting to Western philosophical modes of thinking, being and becoming. This tension compels me to ask questions which I quibble about and doubt at my attempts to reconcile inconsistencies, on one hand, and the desire to let concepts run so that they may overwhelm good sense, on the other. I wish to maintain this tension in the manner of a *su'ifefiloi*, that is, to let the diverse elements initiate a sense of variety, so that the clash of colours and materials that make up the study give it a particular texture – a multivocal structure that allows me to give things from different perspectives in play.

Making *su'ifefiloi* requires the manipulation of Samoan concepts to generate new concepts and, thus, the notion of *mātau*, meaning “to consider”, or “to mark attentively”,<sup>90</sup> is important. Here, it is used to reference a number of Samoan concepts

---

<sup>88</sup> Important attempts to engage architecture and anthropology of the Pacific region in a critical conversation can be seen in the work of only a few architectural historians and theorists, namely Paul Memmott (Memmott, 1979); (Memmott, 2002); (Memmott, 2007); and Mike Austin, (Austin, 1996); (Austin, 2001).

<sup>89</sup> (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1999, p. 283).

<sup>90</sup> (Pratt, 1893, p. 213).

related to knowledge and knowing, in order to create a Samoan perspectivism, or the position from which Samoan concepts can engage with other knowledge systems. The first is the act of knowing and naming that allows things to be ‘grasped’ and remembered. *Mātau*, in this sense, like the artworks on the Fale Pasifika *malae* discussed above (p. 24), provides markers (or points within a field) on the otherwise undifferentiated space of the ocean/*malae*. Likewise, the points and markings that make up of clusters of concepts approximate a location, a dwelling or a space within this study. Another meaning of *mātau* comes into play here as a ‘barb’ or ‘hook’ with which to capture and delay thoughts and concepts so that they may be incorporated and coiled up around the work. *Mātau* is therefore a way to think ‘of’ and ‘with’ theory as a ‘box of tools’, which, as Gilles Deleuze reasons, must be useful and must be made to function in such a way that the theories and concepts enacted start to construct and invent new ones.<sup>91</sup> Thus, it is suggested here that *mātau* is able both to coil things up and then to unfold them, operate on them and perform with them, as required.

Samoa concepts and ideas are important as tools and materials that need to be resharpened and reused in new situations, allowing lived traditions to produce new ideas and concepts.

### **Exchanging perspectives as ritual manipulation of the foreign**

In the previous chapter, I wrote about Bradd Shore, who identified in the Samoan language the apparent absence of an equivalence of the English verb “to be”. This is striking, given the importance of this verb to the Western philosophical tradition, and led Shore to ask:

On what premises does one language family posit, even require in its most basic constructions, a verb of state, while another family of languages manages comfortably without a trace of the form? What are the epistemological implications of such form, or its absence, and what logical assumptions would one have to make in order to require or omit such a verb form from a language?<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> (Foucault & Deleuze, 1977, p. 208).

<sup>92</sup> (Shore, 1977, p. 84).

Shore finds in the Samoan worldview a propensity for things to “become rather than be”,<sup>93</sup> a favouring of becoming over being. Out of this, Shore develops a Samoan theory of action. Thinking and action, he believes, are linked as a process in which the person recognises the world in both aspects – of things fixed, stable and immutable (in the sense of “to be”) and at once transient, mutable and dynamic (becoming). The relation between the two is complementary, but it is the realm of experience, action and doing (the phenomenal world) that allows the two terms to come into play: “For Samoans, both aspects of experience are equally true for each is appropriated to a different context, and all contexts are linked as complements in actual experience.”<sup>94</sup>

Shore developed this theory of action through a critique of Euro-American thought, which he saw as dependent on unitary truth and natural, unchanging laws as then prevalent in the Human Sciences. By contrast, a Samoan vision of order assumes “a pluralistic universe” that focuses on “socio-centric and context-dependent orientation”.<sup>95</sup> Thus he suggests that, in Samoa, the constitution of ‘being’ is based on a perception that turns outwards from the self, to be woven with the external world so that it knows/sees itself:

The Samoan word from “to know”, *iloa* is also the word for “to shed light on”. To know is to see, and “to understand” *mālamalama* refers also to light, sunlight, daylight and consciousness. Knowledge, by implication, lies within the phenomenal world and not beyond or behind it. Of the blind in Samoa it is said *latou te le iloa se mea* “they do not know/see anything”. To the extent that a person's sensory access to the world is diminished, to the extent that he is turned inward on himself, deprived of the power to “read” the world, to that extent is he in darkness, neither knowing nor seeing himself in relation to the external world.<sup>96</sup>

The notion of *iloa*, which Shore uses to mean ‘to know’, relates to a particular quality of looking that brings about *mālamalama* (to be illuminated or enlightened, or, the act of seeing), the shedding of light on things. The polite word for *iloa*<sup>97</sup> in Samoan is *silafia*, which has a more direct meaning, to apprehend something by the ‘look’. *Sila* means “staying fast” or “being held within view”, alternatively it is used to describe a magnet.

---

<sup>93</sup> (Shore, 1977, p. 186).

<sup>94</sup> (Shore, 1977, p. 186).

<sup>95</sup> (Shore, 1977, p. 191).

<sup>96</sup> (Shore, 1977, p. 192).

<sup>97</sup> The word *iloa* comes from the word ‘*ilo* meaning worms - importantly people (*tagata*) evolved from ‘*ilo* which grew out of rotten vines.

This look therefore is like a pervasive magnetic field, a total-all-seeing-look, a gaze that everyone sees and understands – a collective type of looking. For Samoans, the world is apprehended in this type of looking, a perspective that differs from Euro-American ways of apprehending the world.

Tcherkézoff noted that in the first contact between Samoans and Europeans, Samoans (and Polynesians in general) apprehended Europeans according to a category already known within their cosmology.<sup>98</sup> Europeans were equated with ‘luminous beings’ (*pa’ia*), those touched by light or *mālamalama*. Luminosity as a quality defined ancestors, chiefs and those of higher status, as sources of light and therefore life. Rather than treating European visitors as strangers with unknown qualities, Samoans, Tcherkézoff argues, “appropriated” them as ancestors, that is, into their own genealogy and cosmology. The Europeans, on the other hand, interpreted this status accorded to them as the Samoans’ desire to be “assimilated”. In this encounter, each group sees in the other a mythic value that it tries to integrate. For Samoans, appropriation functions within a hierarchical system, and it is therefore “a question of knowing the level on which the powers that one is aiming to integrate should be placed”. For Europeans, assimilation is “a projection of what one constructs in imaginary terms as a desired Same”.<sup>99</sup>

Thus, for a Samoan perspective to function in this study, it has to ‘bend’ the already constructed and ‘naturalised’ view of the world that the Western imagination has determined in advance for cultures outside its own frameworks. Therefore, *su’ifefiloi* appropriates from available theories and methods to assemble a toolbox from which it can begin to create new becomings.

The anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro<sup>100</sup> suggests that Western thought must go through an “exchange of perspectives” to actually encounter the thoughts of others. Such encounters between different worldviews are akin to meetings at “right angles”,<sup>101</sup> and Viveiros de Castro coins the term ‘perspectivism’ to conceptualise them. In perspectivism, two perpendicular axes meet at an impossible surface, and one axis

---

<sup>98</sup> (Tcherkézoff, 2008); Marshall Sahlins had earlier pointed this out in the case of Hawai’i (Sahlins, 1981).

<sup>99</sup> (Tcherkézoff, 2008).

<sup>100</sup> (Viveiros de Castro, 1998, p. 469).

<sup>101</sup> (Corsín Jiménez, 2011).

becomes the subject and the other the object (and vice versa). In this engagement, the “axes collapse and the perpendicular emerges”.<sup>102</sup> As two worldviews frame and apprehend each other, each sees the other like an anamorphic spot, an undecipherable stain when seen from the perpendicular. It is only from an oblique angle that the stain becomes clear: the two views must shift relative to one another so that the work of translation can begin. This exchange of perspectives articulates the borders between two types of seeing:<sup>103</sup> the two sides mediate and apprehend one other as their respective axis move in different directions and at very different speeds to each other.

Jacques Lacan, the psychoanalytic philosopher, explored such an intersection in his writing about the gaze. He observed that the gaze is a by-product of a particular type of relation between two sides, who both imagine what the other might be. As an example, he invited us to imagine two parties, where one side is doing the looking and the other side is being pictured by the look.<sup>104</sup> Lacan believed that fantasy projection, or the ‘screen’, is one way to image the world of the other: it is that moment when we can attain a relation, or ‘correlative’, which is the purpose of the gaze. The gaze here is exterior to both sides and mediates their exchanges.

This, I propose, is what is at stake at the intersection between two different worlds. There are two perspectives perpendicular to each other producing difference at the interface of cross-cultural relations. They can never be equivalent to one another except

---

<sup>102</sup> (Corsín Jiménez, 2011, p. 151). The perspectivism I engage here incorporates and appropriates other types of perspectives, similar to what Tim Ingold called a “meshwork”, made from “a tissue of knots, whose constituent strands, become tied up with other strands, in other knots” (Ingold, 2011, p. 70). Within such a meshwork, the operations of a particular spatial language (and its coding of the comings and goings of different forms of cultural milieu) are interpreted via concepts of *mavae* and *tofiga* – concepts embedded within Samoan thought. This interpretation, too, becomes an exposition, as a methodological task of unfolding an understanding of Samoa spatial concepts. And this, in turn, shows how a Samoan perspective constructs a notion of space and architecture.

<sup>103</sup> In that sense, Shore had encountered the border between Western thought, with its emphasis on the notion of “to be”, and the Samoan willingness for things to be activated or “become” (see p. 9 above).

<sup>104</sup> Lacan explains that when the light glimmering on a sardine can floating on the sea is seen by a fisherman, he apprehends only the light reflected from its surface, as it enters the hollows of his retina and thereby makes a picture. But since he is nowhere near the sardine can’s proper location, and does not belong in its ontological universe, it is only the gaze that brings those two sides into a relation. However flawed, the gaze as appropriation creates a surface on which perspectives can engage. An “impression, the shimmering of a surface that is not, in advance, situated for me in its distance”, and not mastered, can create something beyond a picture (Lacan, 1998, pp. 95-96).

through translation, and in translation, each side produces fantasies of what the world of the other might be. In this study, the in-between space is not avoided but treated as a border of potentiality, where fantasy via translation can create concepts and new relations. Thus, the thesis operates a method of “appropriation” in the manner that Tcherkézoff suggested is a typical Samoan perspective on things: to take from others the potential to imagine new kinds of becoming.<sup>105</sup> This study, similarly, is a quest to appropriate, make and cast new becomings, or *mavaega*.

One such becoming was the encounter between American explorer Admiral Charles Wilkes and Samoans in the nineteenth century. It is an example of how Samoans appropriated and imagined, from their position, the new arrivals and their possessions. In 1839, an American scientific expedition headed by Wilkes encountered a group of Samoan natives attempting to construct a replica of a European sailing ship in a forest clearing near a mountain on Upolu. Wilkes observed with bemusement that:

A fine large tree has been lopt of its branches (except at the very top), for a mast; around this a framework of timber, after the model of a vessel, was constructed; all the timbers were carefully fastened together with sennit, and with the requisite curvature; from the bow a large and long piece of timber projected, and at the stern a rudder was contrived, with its tiller; but instead of ordinary movements as with us, it was intended to act vertically, in the way to which they are accustomed in managing or steering their large canoes with an oar; vines and creepers were used for the rigging; ballast had likewise been placed in the hold. This afforded them great amusement, and showed an ingenuity in construction of this Papalagi ship, as they called it, which had cost them much time and labour.<sup>106</sup>

This description accompanied an etching typical of narrative illustrations of the period which shows a replica ship on a clearing, surrounded by a group of (half naked and naked) men and boys. Wilkes noted that it was “an odd amusement of the natives ... in the forest ... near one of the heathen villages”.<sup>107</sup>

One hundred and fifty years later, Nicholas Thomas suggests that these were “material expressions of the symbolization” of the Europeans by native Samoans in which the “ritual manipulation, of the foreign” took place.<sup>108</sup> He surmises that “the intentions of

---

<sup>105</sup> See p. 18, above.

<sup>106</sup> (Wilkes, 1855).

<sup>107</sup> (Wilkes, 1855).

<sup>108</sup> (Thomas, 1991).

those engaged surely amounted to ‘amusement’ of a serious kind”<sup>109</sup> but concedes that those intentions are somewhat inaccessible due to the lack of documented evidence. The (mis)representation of the enjoyment of the other (Samoan, in this context) that is rendered ‘problematic’ by Nicholas Thomas and ‘odd’ by Wilkes, takes place in the boundary that cuts across the surface of postcolonial discourse. Gayatri Spivak articulated it as the impossibility of the subaltern to represent him/herself,<sup>110</sup> whilst Homi Bhabha sees this (mis)representation as the difference created by the ambivalence of cultural authority.<sup>111</sup> It is a boundary that remains unruly and problematic. It creates a problem that remains unresolved in spatial and architectural discourses, which I attempt in this study to deal with by advancing perspectivism to show that boundaries between cultural differences are a result of a misrecognition of the relationship between Samoans and others, occurring in the encounter between knowledge systems.



**Figure 1**  
**Papalagi ship in Samoa in 1839 (in Wilkes 1855)**

---

<sup>109</sup> (Thomas, 1991).

<sup>110</sup> (Spivak, 1988).

<sup>111</sup> (Bhabha, 1994).

## **Spatial exposition and cosmological perspectivism**

A Samoan *perspectivism* situates the work firmly within Samoan thought and makes possible an account, a *spatial exposition* of the Samoan concept of space, from within this tradition. Rather than providing a definition of space, I seek to *exhibit* (Latin, *exhibere* ‘hold out’) the contents of the concept of space. Exposition comes from the Latin *ponere*, originally to put, place or set. With the prefix ‘ex’, it yields *exponere* (to put out, to interpret or explain), and then ‘exponent’ or ‘exposit’. In this thesis, exposition is a method of ‘exhibiting’ (both in the sense of ‘opening something up’ and ‘something opening up’), or, to expose and to publicly display.<sup>112</sup>

This exposition is an engagement with social space and lived situations, in which concepts, identities and politics are continually produced and consumed from within Samoan culture and society, in what Eduardo Viveiros de Castro termed “cosmological perspectivism”.<sup>113</sup> Cosmological perspectivism opens and orients the researcher to many possible worlds in which beings (animals/humans/environment) and objects circulate. It encompasses a *cosmocentric* perspective that supposes “a spiritual unity and a corporeal diversity”.<sup>114</sup> Culture or the subject is treated here as a form of the universal, whilst nature or the object would be the form of the particular.<sup>115</sup>

Samoan cosmogony is, in this thesis, the place from which to start locating a cosmocentric view of the world. It also provides an understanding of the birth of space in Samoan thought.<sup>116</sup> Accordingly, in Chapter 3, I carry out an exposition of the *Solo o le Vā*, a chant and narrative account of the birth of the world.<sup>117</sup> It provides a perspective

---

<sup>112</sup> (Partridge, 2006, p. 2509).

<sup>113</sup> ‘Cosmological perspectivism’ treats the world as being inhabited by different sorts of subjects or persons, human and non-human, which apprehend reality from distinct points of view, often at right angles or “perpendicular” to the opposition between relativism and universalism view of the world, which seeks to resolve partial and multiple views into a stable picture (Viveiros de Castro, 2012, p. 45). Viveiros de Castro suggests that this is an indigenous theory (Viveiros de Castro, 1998, p. 470) or a native anthropology (Viveiros de Castro, 2004) or a cosmology or ontology which primarily constitutes a body of generalisations about indigenous South American thinking designed to throw into relief certain contrasts with the ‘modern West’.

<sup>114</sup> (Viveiros de Castro, 1998, p. 470).

<sup>115</sup> (Viveiros de Castro, 1998, p. 470).

<sup>116</sup> There are a number of extant versions recorded by the missionaries, see (Turner, 1884); I have relied on a particular tradition from Manu’a, commonly understood to be the oldest in Samoa.

<sup>117</sup> Powell and Fraser published the interpretation of the chant first (Powell & Fraser, 1892), and the chant itself five years later (Powell & Fraser, 1897).

on how the world emerged and became differentiated into many parts, the firmament, the environment, and humans – each part arising from a divarication of Papa, the original matter (see p. 62ff). In this cosmogony, each being can trace its lineage to the original being, and all human beings have a genealogy connecting directly to the ancestor gods.

There are two main aspects of space discussed in the thesis. First, *vā*,<sup>118</sup> the spatial relations bonding the Samoan social sphere and, second, the shape, form and material realities of such a bonding. Exposition, as a method, relates to the Samoan notion of *teu* (to reveal and embellish, to ornament and adorn in a public manner). What *teu*, as exposition, highlights is the crucial link with ‘public-ness’, which prevails, in the form of an openness, everywhere in a traditional Samoan settlement.<sup>119</sup> It is most effectively felt at the centre of a *faletele*, where an invisible force always seems to inhabit the centre that never escapes our gaze.<sup>120</sup>

Public-ness takes a particular form in the *alofisā*, or sacred circle, a ritual and spatial configuration that literally shapes the form of every gathering. Tcherkézoff described it as an “eloquent visual example”<sup>121</sup> of the way in which people throughout Western Polynesia arrange themselves when they come together in a socially recognised group: they form circles and, by extension, the configuration of a sacred house. The figure of a circle, according to Tcherkézoff,

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. Yet the circle is oriented, simultaneously and contrary to the geometry we are familiar with, by axes of value which divide the circumference into clearly differentiated arcs. Within these arcs, each point is different from the next. In Samoa, these points are represented by the posts

---

<sup>118</sup> There are two types of *vā*: *feiloa’i* (everyday social relations) and *tapua’i* (consecrated).

<sup>119</sup> Bradd Shore used the ‘structural’ image of concentric circles that converge on a centre to describe a Samoan settlement; a *malae* is located here surrounded by the *faletele* (Shore, 1996, p. 271).

<sup>120</sup> I have written about this condition as being a “panoptic habitus” using Michel Foucault’s notion of the panoptic to describe an all-seeing gaze that regulates people’s behavior, and Marcel Mauss and Pierre Bourdieu’s idea of “habitus” to refer to techniques of the body that give rise to spaces of dwelling. The point here is that the body in Samoan thought is seized and taken up by something other than itself (Refiti, 2009).

<sup>121</sup> (Tcherkézoff, N. Scott/2005, p. 246).

that hold up the conical roof of the ceremonial house, itself comprised of a circular base, a circle of posts and a roof, with no internal partitions.<sup>122</sup>

The circle is the all-pervasive form of gathering because faces are brought together to bear on each other. *Mata* (face) has an important relationship with the Samoan conception of time and space, particularly in a collective conjoining of people. The most important circle is that of the circle of *fa'amatai*: a transposition of the first *fono* held between the god Tagaloa-a-lagi and the architects of the first house (see p. 56f).<sup>123</sup> The prefix *fa'a*, like the Māori *whaka*,<sup>124</sup> denotes an action or a manner of becoming, so that *fa'amatai* means “becoming-*matai*”. *Mata* (literally: eye, point, spot, or centrality) is related to the word *amata*, “to-begin” or “to-become”. To orient oneself towards the ancestor is to become *a-mata*, or to be at the centre of becoming-ancestor. Thus, in Samoa and Polynesia, the concept of space-time suggests a movement towards a future in which our being is oriented towards a collective opening that continues with us. Some call it the past, but I would add that this past is not static but an ever-moving ancestor-duration,<sup>125</sup> which, as Albert Wendt suggests, is always already woven within us and endures within our becoming.<sup>126</sup> In Polynesia, this notion of becoming is a constellation commonly articulated in the metaphor of walking with our backs into the future, facing the past.<sup>127</sup> Time is placed at the service of the ancestors. Together, we and they mark and make time, and make it evolve as duration. Time opens and contracts (see also, *mavae* and *tofiga*, Chapter 3) relative to our engagement: this is the meaning of the Polynesian word for time – *tau*.<sup>128</sup> Outside our involvement, time becomes *tā*, unmediated action. Therefore, a collection of individuals gathered in space is a neighbourhood of ancestor-becoming, a duration – woven time – within a collective belonging of *vā* relationships.

---

<sup>122</sup> (Tcherkézoff, N. Scott/2005, p. 246).

<sup>123</sup> (Krämer, 1994, p. 259); (Buck, 1930, p. 85).

<sup>124</sup> (Tregear, 1891).

<sup>125</sup> Albert Wendt uses “the ever-moving-present” (Wendt, 1996).

<sup>126</sup> Albert Wendt in his poem ‘Inside Us the Dead’ provides the nature of Polynesian subjectivity as being woven from the flesh of others – “ Inside me the dead / woven into my flesh like the music / of bone flutes / my polynesian fathers / who escaped the sun’s wars, seeking / these islands by prophetic stars”(Wendt, 1991).

<sup>127</sup> (Whiteford & Barns, 2002, p. 214); (Salmond, 1978, p. 10); (Metge, 1976, p. 70).

<sup>128</sup> Edward Tregear suggests that under the words *tau*, *whakatau* and *whakatatau* are meanings pertinent to understanding, engaging and acting out in the immediacy of the present moment (Tregear, 1891).

A similar notion of public-ness as a collective space of co-openness in Western thought was conceptualised by the philosopher Hannah Arendt as a “space of appearance”, which comes into being wherever “men are together in the manner of speech and action”.<sup>129</sup> She proposed that such a space precedes all formal constitution of the public realm and the various forms of government, which we know today. It exists only when and where “people gather together”. At other times, it is “potentially there”, “not necessarily and not forever” because this space “does not survive the actuality of the movement which brought it into being”. Rather, it “disappears not only with the dispersal of men ... but with the disappearance or arrest of the activities themselves”.<sup>130</sup> The space of appearance exists during an event that fortifies a co-belonging and produces a particular kind of power that “springs up between men when they act together and vanishes the moment they disperse”.<sup>131</sup> Arendt describes this power in terms very similar to the Polynesian notion of *mana*:

Power is what keeps the public realm, the potential space of appearance between acting and speaking men, in existence. The word itself, its Greek equivalent *dynamis*, like the Latin *potentia* with its various modern derivatives or the German *Macht* (which derives from *mogen* and *möglich*, not from *machen*), indicates its “potential” character. Power is always, as we would say, a power potential and not an unchangeable, measurable, and reliable entity like force or strength.<sup>132</sup>

Arendt’s notion of “speech and action”, which open up a space of co-belonging, resonates with the Samoan understanding of *tau* (the moment of ‘watchfulness’). Time happens as *tau* when we are conscious of things, when we are embedded together in a situation: facing each other produces *tau*. *Tautai*, for instance, is the name for a navigator and literally means, “to count” (*tau*) the movement of waves and tide (*tai*). *Tautai* is also used to address a *matai* who is recognised as a leader for his watchfulness of the confluence of forces that resonate in the middle of the *alofisā* circle. The power that is manifest within this circle is thought to purify and fortify things – it ‘sanctifies’ things or makes things *pa’ia*, giving them a quality of *mana*.

---

<sup>129</sup> (Arendt, 1998, p. 199).

<sup>130</sup> (Arendt, 1998, p. 300).

<sup>131</sup> (Arendt, 1998, p. 299).

<sup>132</sup> (Arendt, 1998, p. 200).

In context, I propose, a spatial exposition works to highlight and to focus on the material of research, on shifts and currents and situational change; a spatial exposition, then, is not so much analytical but productive, less comparative and more generative. An important part of this process is *ololo* ('make-over'), which in its original context means 'to rasp', 'hone' and 'smooth' materials, in preparation specifically for building a *faletele* (ancestor house). My treatment of 'data' (books, archives, photos, interviews, discussions, houses, rituals, memories) starts with the selection of the most suitable materials, which are then smoothed to contribute to a Samoan perspectivism, as an ontological position that circulates within the Samoan understanding of what makes a life world.

### ***Su'ifefiloi*: the process of patching and the nature of parts**

Once smoothed and worked over, the data has to be fitted together. What I aim for is not a unified body of information, nor necessarily an entirely consistent argument. *Su'ifefiloi* is a method of constructing narratives, which Samoan writer Sia Figiel<sup>133</sup> has created to piece together *fagogo* (fables) and narrative fiction in her novels.<sup>134</sup> She likens this technique to the making of flower garlands and the stringing together of songs for performances to create a richly textured outcome:

We have the tradition of *su'ifefiloi*, which you can see in a flower garland – *su'i* means to sew, *fefiloi* means mixture, so it's a mixture of different flowers that we sew together. And then at the end, you hook them up, and they become an *ula*, a necklace of flowers ... people will sing this very long song so that more *alofa* is shown, so they'll go from one song and then they'll hook that up to another one and another one, stringing all these songs together, and these songs are absolutely independent songs that are just stuck together ... that's the exact thing that I was doing in both books.<sup>135</sup>

*Su'ifefiloi*, in which diverse elements are brought together to construct a sequence or build a surface area from many pieces, establishes an order without denying heterogeneity and discontinuity.

At the heart of this study, are methods of gathering and connecting information to form a narrative. To account for the complexity of Samoan concepts of space, I had to find an

---

<sup>133</sup> (Ellis, 1988, p. 74#).

<sup>134</sup> (Figiel, 1996); (Figiel, 1999).

<sup>135</sup> (Ellis, 1988, p. 74).

approach that enabled the stitching-together of heterogeneous materials from many archives: theology, cosmology, anthropology, sociology, archaeology, cultural studies, philosophy and architecture. In stitching together the many pieces in the manner of *su'ifefiloi*, seams were left exposed, in many places even untrimmed. The result is therefore 'patchy' and has a 'psychedelic effect' that is not altogether unexpected. Patchiness is a quality that is preserved and even nurtured in this study because the gaps in the fabric or narrative allow the process of generation of perspectives to continue.

Likewise, Figiel uses *su'ifefiloi* as a way to thread together English and Samoan prose, poetry, songs and mythology to give voice to displaced characters (who grew up with the conflict between traditional and modern Samoan identities), creating a "multivocal structure" that presents the collective talking, all at once.<sup>136</sup> In a similar way, this thesis is a concatenation of many voices, with a 'patchy' that accords with an understanding of the Samoan notions of *mavae* and *tofiga*, central to this study. Things have the predisposition to unfold (*mavae*) into rampant diversity in periods of growth. These are followed by periods of extreme order (*tofiga*), during which responsibility is brought to bear on every element created.<sup>137</sup> *Vā*, the Samoan concept of space, is an image of this 'toing and froing' from divergence/divarication to order/unification, from the smooth to the striated, from lines of flight to knots and entanglement. These movements bring into being *tagata* (humans), agents of both growth and inertia.

*Su'ifefiloi* allowed me to give a specific Samoan inflection to the approach I used at the beginning of my research project: a wonderful idea by the philosopher Gilles Deleuze and the psychoanalyst Felix Guattari, who shifted and twisted Claude Lévi-Strauss' concept of bricolage, or bricklaying, into a 'smooth' desiring-machine.<sup>138</sup> One of my supervisors termed this a "psychedelic method", intimating that it must include the abandonment of a 'straight method' for madness, as when one is on a hallucinatory trip.<sup>139</sup> Over the course of my research, Deleuze and Guattari became silent co-authors in the writing of a thesis on Samoan concepts of space and architecture. Deleuze and Guattari rejected the notion of a history that orders and subsumes events underneath its project. Rather, they believed that history should be a machine that works *for* the events

---

<sup>136</sup> (Keown, 1992, p. 42).

<sup>137</sup> See p. 70.

<sup>138</sup> (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 7); (Lévi-Strauss, 1966, p. 17).

<sup>139</sup> (Refiti, 2012, p. 30).

that are usually subsumed under history. They termed this re-engineering of history nomadology.<sup>140</sup> History as a State-like apparatus (associated with striated or gridded space) orders events (already existing in many pieces) into discrete components and insists on a particular order. Nomadology, on the other hand, is immersed in the changing state of things in such a way that the whole of history can be present. It works by avoiding sedentary perspectives of history and by operating a strategy of interrupting the past (as an ordering of the present). Instead, 'the past in the present' is activated as pieces are picked up irrespective of the 'right' order. This strategy requires the stitching together of many parts, while each part retains its own consistency, its own voice. The "psychedelic method" is my attempt at 'activating the past in the present'.

Deleuze and Guattari also strove for an art of inventing and creating new concepts. Rather than bringing things together under an existing concept, they were interested in relating variables according to new concepts to create productive connections.<sup>141</sup> This approach allows our view of things to "move beyond experience so as to be able to think anew, rather than 'standing apart' from experience"; "concepts must be creative or active rather than merely representative, descriptive or simplifying".<sup>142</sup> One way of rehabilitating the history of philosophy, and thereby creating new concepts in the process, was a form of 'buggery' or 'immaculate conception'.

I saw myself as taking an author from behind and giving him a child that would be his own offspring, yet monstrous. It was really important for it to be his own child, because the author had to actually say all I had him saying. But the child was bound to be monstrous too, because it resulted from all sorts of shifting, slipping, dislocations, and hidden emissions that I really enjoyed.<sup>143</sup>

Rather than approaching texts with suspicion, Deleuze advised his students to "trust the author you are studying. Proceed by feeling your way. You must silence the voices of objection within you. You must let him speak for himself, analyse the frequency of his words, the style of his own obsessions."<sup>144</sup> I adopt a Deleuzian methodology to unfold

---

<sup>140</sup> (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 7).

<sup>141</sup> (Deleuze, 1995, p. 5).

<sup>142</sup> (Stagoll, 2005, p. 51).

<sup>143</sup> (Deleuze, 1995, p. 6).

<sup>144</sup> André Pierre Colombat (Colombat, 1999, p. 204). The philosopher Slavoj Žižek, who contrasted deconstruction with Deleuze's nomadology, suggested that Derrida's deconstruction proceeds in the mode of critically undermining the interpreted text or author, while Deleuze's buggery "imputes to the interpreted philosopher his own innermost position and endeavors to extract it from him", (Žižek, 2004, p. 47). Derrida engages in a "hermeneutics of suspicion" while

an approach that is akin to a 'sympathetic reading', and concerned with the 'sensible'. I want to develop a creative feeling for and towards the text, rather than a critical reading that becomes obsessed with limits, so typical of the intrusive and clinical workings of deconstruction:

A text is merely a small cog in an extra-textual practice. It is not the question of commenting on the text by a method of deconstruction, or by a method of textual practice, or by other methods; it is a question of seeing what *use* it has in the *extra-textual practice that prolongs the text*.<sup>145</sup>

This bricolage approach has enabled me to account for the many forked and varied pathways originating in the diverse texts from several disciplines that have something to say or ask of my topic. It also allowed me to 'pry' into them and then to attempt to make these texts productive in narrating a new story. I found that one has to have sympathy with, and for, the materials one looks at to 'feel the text', to read along and with the grain of its texture. From it alights the possibility to align images (next-to or overlaid) with others with which they have an affinity.

The movement between images and texts, their connection and separation, strategies of confinement and release, resembles the rolling motion of the ocean, which gathers and pushes up a stair-casing energy of water into a bulging restrained force that, once released, causes an almighty clamour. Ever present, it shapes key concepts ordering the Samoan world. *Noa*, free and unrestrained, often characterises things and people outside the known polities; *mana* refers to divine qualities that enable people and things to be close to the ancestor gods; *tapu*, ensnaring and capturing *mana*, holds it in place so that its potency becomes accessible. *Tapu* establishes 'circles of control' (*fono a matai*), pulling people and resources in and regulating and distributing roles (*nofoāga*) and functions (*tautua*). *Noa* is the impulse to dissolve the constraints of *tapu* and thereby to discharge lines of flight in all directions, creating and inventing new genealogies. *Mana* is the elevated and invisible seat of power and prestige emanating from the ancestor gods, which both *noa* and *tapu* aspire to. *Noa* looks for *mana* in the unstructured free-space of the extended periphery beyond the social circle. *Tapu* tries to capture and control *mana* within the centre of its socialising operations.

---

Deleuze practices an excessive benevolence toward the text or author. This benevolence, Žižek intimates, is much more violent and subversive than the Derridean reading, because Deleuze's "buggery produces true monsters", (Žižek, 2004, p. 47).

<sup>145</sup> (Deleuze, 1988, pp. xvi, my emphasis). I would like to acknowledge Dr. Andrew Douglas who alerted me to this connection.

This exposition of Samoan notions of space takes account of concepts that enable Samoans to talk about 'being in the world'; sustaining their existence in the space given to Samoan thought by its traditions and limits; and opening up and constraining one's ability to engage with one's tasks. At the heart of Samoan thought is a notion of space that is a 'problematic', a question of identity of how one can relate to the divine.

### **Assemblage: Materials and parts**

The study takes on board Deleuze's method of "starting in the middle".<sup>146</sup> The middle, in this case, was a group of key texts that deal with identity and space as motifs in the construction of new identities for immigrants and minority communities in New Zealand and elsewhere. They are what Deleuze calls 'minor' texts, what a "minority constructs within a major language",<sup>147</sup> which "connect individuals to a political immediacy and the collective assemblage of enunciation".<sup>148</sup> These texts were analysed alongside current philosophical writings regarding space, to connect and contextualise Samoan notions of space with the wider world of ideas. Thus, the theoretical framework for the thesis, too, is a result of *bricolage* and intermixture of concepts and ideas.

Historical archival materials on Samoan material culture, myths and legends are available in documents produced by missionaries, explorers, ethnographers, anthropologists and colonial administrations held in libraries in New Zealand, Australia and Hawai'i. These texts provide much of the material for the spatial exposition unfolding a genealogy of origins in Samoan thinking of space.

Along with these found data, other parts of the materials were generated through interviews, translations, photo documentation and diagrams.

The interviews aimed to gather different oral histories of Tufuga-faufale, regarding the status of their practice today in relation to the tradition they belong to. Two interviews went back to February 1998, with Tataufaiga Faiga in Saipipi, Savai'i, and Faiva'aiga Kilifi in Sa'anapu, Upolu. Three new ones were conducted specifically for the thesis in

---

<sup>146</sup> A rhizomatic approach always starts not at the end or the beginning but in the middle, because it is in-between things, therefore it is in alliance with the open field and the flow of things, "where things pick up speed" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 25).

<sup>147</sup> (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 16).

<sup>148</sup> (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 17).

July 2011 with Maulupe Faiga Fa'atali Faiga in Saipipi, Masoe Talama'ivao Niko in Salelologa, Savai'i, and Leifo Leaina of Sa'anapu. The 1998 interviews were entirely unstructured, like *talanoa* (conversations), whereas the 2011 interviews followed a principally open format, though I provided the Tufuga with indicative question in advance.<sup>149</sup>

Translations of key texts were carried out by me, including *Le Solo o le Vā* (in Krämer 1994), parts of Le Tagaloa (1997) *O le Faasinomaga*, and Leaupepe (1995) *Samoa i Lona Soifua i Ana Aganuu*.

This thesis also draws on measured drawings and a photographic survey of five *faletele* I carried out in 1998 in Savai'i and Upolu. A new photographic survey was carried out in 2011, for which I travelled both Savai'i and Upolu to document currently remaining *faletele* and some very old *faleafolau*.

An important part or process of my generative approach to conceptualisation was the production of diagrams. The 'Spatial Exposition of the Samoan Cosmogony and Architecture' draws on a series of intricately woven diagrams of several superimposed maps of information, where, from one map to the next, new maps of new territories could be drawn. Thus, the diagrams do not just serve as illustrations, rather, following Kenneth Knoespel, they "function as vehicles that emplot and invite elaboration through narrative [they are] vehicles for seeing how visual discourse is actually comprised of a genealogy of figures that trace the generation of meaning".<sup>150</sup> And, they generate thoughts and meaning themselves.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter shows the workings of an exposition as the display and opening outwards of many parts that make up the scholarship and research on Samoa. This concerns the creation of a philosophical position or Samoan 'perspectivism' in order to present an ontological view specific to a Samoan worldview. In cobbling this 'view' together I have resurrected the notion of a *su'ifefiloi* (threading pieces together) to make the work as an assembly of parts, which I link with the Deleuze and Guattari's concept of bricolage in order to construct and produce a concept that shows the emergent and patchy quality of

---

<sup>149</sup> See Appendix 1 for the Ethics application.

<sup>150</sup> (Knoespel, 2001, p. 147).

identity formation. The research is therefore a cobbling together of textual and archival materials, participant observation, interviews, case studies, diagrammatic analysis and recasting of philosophical ideas about place and architecture which are all treated as discrete but linked elements, all binding together diverse sources, in order to identify (*tofiga*) a consistent texture of Samoan notions of space.



## Chapter 3

### *Tupu'aga* and Cosmogogenesis

This genealogy of the Samoan cosmos is an attempt to put in place a coherent scheme for how space became delineated in Samoan thought as a system of articulating the world of people, animals and the environment. Pertinent to this project is the question: how were things caused and given their becoming? The exploration of an early oral account of the Samoan cosmogony helps explicate how the concept of space and becoming allowed Samoans to understand, transform, and communicate about their lifeworld. It is a story of the birth of natural environment: rocks, land, water, and the firmament, but also of the ancestor gods who formed the first humans, who came to settle in the Samoan archipelago. Central is an understanding that 'space as place'<sup>151</sup> co-existed with Tagaloa, the first being, who began *tupu'aga*, the sequence of events that gave birth to the world.

*Tupu'aga* cascaded and spilled out of Papa, the Earth, who was growing out of Tagaloa's feet.<sup>152</sup> The past is continually (re)born in the present, so that everything has a genealogy connected to the first unfolding. It is often said that Samoans can trace their genealogy to the elemental parts of becoming, to Leai (nothing), Nanamu (fragrance) and 'Efu'efu (dust), as well as Tagaloa (a god) and Papa (stratum).<sup>153</sup>

Samoan cosmogony, like that for Polynesia generally, begins with a relatively undefined primordial state, from which the union of a male and female primordial pair arose. They

---

<sup>151</sup> As explored later the space in Samoan thought is a type of emplacement, where space is always contextualised by relationships and connections that occur within and around it.

<sup>152</sup> Powell interpreted the name Tagaloa as 'tanga' means 'unrestrained', and 'loa' continuously, or illimitable (Powell, 1887, p. 167).

<sup>153</sup> According to Tauanu'u who was keeper of traditional knowledge on Manu'a (Powell & Fraser, 1892); and more recent Tui Atua expressed the same opinion (Tui Atua, 2010c, p. 155); see also (Turner, 1884, p. 3).

generated cosmic beings, who, in turn, gave birth to the first order of anthropomorphic gods.<sup>154</sup> According to Alfred Gell, this profusion in Polynesia of a creating primordial pair (Rangi and Papa are a notorious example) differs from Judeo-Christian ‘creationist’ traditions predicated on the *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) creation of the universe.<sup>155</sup> Another aspect of Polynesian cosmogony, the role of space and place, in the context of the universe’s unfolding, has not been studied closely yet.

This chapter attempts to tease out the role of space at the primal scene of Samoan cosmogony. I intend to demonstrate, through a spatial exposition of the latter, how important space is in thinking about origins. As shown below, space as flickering *vānimonimo* (*vā* or space that emerges and disappears) accompanies the work of creation, thus space is conceptually and fundamentally bound up with Samoan identity. As will be explained below, the original scene of the Samoan universe places Tagaloa as the primordial god within *Vānimonimo*, while Papa, the first primordial material, grows out of Tagaloa’s feet.

This exposition is also an attempt provisionally to pry open the internal primordial world of Samoa. This ancient world can be accessed via myth and legends, oral history, genealogies and archaeology.<sup>156</sup> While there are blank spots and empty spaces, which this research can only draw to the surface, the extant sources enable us to imagine the context in which the craft of house building and its rituals were formerly connected. With this in mind, the main task in this chapter is to unfold the prehistorical context that gave rise to the status of the Tufuga-faufale, who were organised in a system that operated throughout Samoan society, from which arose this system’s development as a technological art form.

---

<sup>154</sup> (Marck, 1996b, p. 13).

<sup>155</sup> Gell saw the two types being opposed, but I suggest that both existed in Polynesian thought, for example, there are elements in the Samoan cosmogony that is of *creatio ex nihilo* character as well as being a ‘differentiative’ schema of creation emerging out of an “all embracing plenum or tightly-bound continuum” (Gell, 2001, p. 292). See also (Thornton, 2004).

<sup>156</sup> Myth and legends, oral history and genealogies, are readily available in Samoan village stories, histories and *gafa* (genealogy), some were collected in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by missionaries and ethnographers and have been widely interpreted and circulated (Krämer, 1994); (Fraser, 1891); (Fraser, 1897); (Fraser, 1897); (Powell, 1887); (Powell & Fraser, 1892); (Powell & Fraser, 1897); (Powell & Pratt, 1890); (Pratt, 1890); (Pratt, 1893); (Stair, 1895a); (Stair, 1895b); (Turner, 1884). The fields of archaeology, archaeological biology and linguistics are more recent and have provided important evidence of migration and settlement history of Samoa before contact.

## Mythhistories

William McNeill has suggested that mythistory is a useful “instrument for piloting human groups in their encounter with one another and with the natural environment”.<sup>157</sup> Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet, in their work on Greek myth and tragedy, showed a way to engage the mythical as a context or “under-text” which they suggested had to be dealt with first, in an unravelling they termed a “detour” around the text itself, by going back over the text, concentrating exclusively on distinguishing features, its forms, object, and its own specific problems.<sup>158</sup> This extends the field of inquiry to cover the complex social and ritual conditions that prompted the emergence of myths. Like tragedy, cosmology is present in religious rituals, myths, and graphic representations of the divine. Mythistory therefore should be comprised of an analysis of oral thought processes that decode a text from within or around, and/or going back over it.<sup>159</sup>

Oral thoughts are components of a cultural complex in which ideas, values, symbols, and modes of behaviour, are moulded by a group’s shared conception of who they are. Mythistory operates between the poles of myth and reason. Their transformation from one to other, according to Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, occurs in the movement from the ritual place of mythic history to the agonistic and public space of the agora – the cleared space of community, which has similarities with the *malae* and *marae* ceremonial spaces of Polynesia.<sup>160</sup>

Myth has recourse to reality. The term is not used here to suggest that these narratives are untrue, but, as Laurence Babb has suggested, it indicates that

---

<sup>157</sup> (McNeill, 1986, p. 10).

<sup>158</sup> (Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1990, p. 31).

<sup>159</sup> (Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1990, p. 31).

<sup>160</sup> Jean-Pierre Vernant, in his analysis of the organisation of space in Ancient Greece, shows the agora as a space for “public debate, in the broad daylight of the agora, between the citizens who were defined as equals and for whom whom the state was a common undertaking” (Vernant, 1984, pp. 45-46); (Vernant, 2006, p. 194); (Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1990, p. 306); this has similar echoes to the role the *malae* had in Samoa as the place where the village *fono* took place in the presence of *ali’i* and chiefs. It is thought that the *malae* is a ‘common’ (*noa*) public space belonging to the whole community rather than the interior of the *fale* which is closed off and available only to *ali’i* and chiefs of the circle of *matai*. This makes it similar to the *agora* which Daniel Smith suggested was a new type of geometry space (*isonomia*), “which organised the polis around a common and public centre (the agora), in relation to which all points occupied by the ‘citizens’ appeared equal and symmetrical” (Smith, 1997, p. 19).

their authority is not conferred by the kinds of systematic testing against evidence that we expect to see in the work of modern historians [rather, it] stems both from their alleged antiquity and their functional relationship with the social identity of existing groups.<sup>161</sup>

Their truth lies, in part, in the reality of the structures, which they charter.

The spatial exposition of Samoan thought activated in this study seeks, in a similar way, to gather active parts of myths from chants and songs, to open a relational space or *vā* which connects them. The cosmogony is broken down into parcels below, and I go over and around it to tease out active elements that explain the processes of *mavae* and *tofiga* that are active within. The Samoan cosmogonic process is then spatialised, via a diagram exposing the origin of space and becoming in Samoan thinking. But first, I review some studies that account for possible ways of scoping out a cosmological view of history via the mythologies of Polynesia.

Mythologies in Polynesia are explored in the anthropological works of Marshall Sahlins, Neil Gunson, Alfred Gell and Hūfanga 'Okusitino Māhina, inter alia. Their analyses of Polynesian concepts related to mythologies and cosmology are attempts to show the close links between myths and their practical application in rituals and performance. The latter, in activating a sense of place, provide the possibility of dwelling in the present.

Sahlins, in *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities* (1981), reasons that Polynesian cosmology eminently lends itself to the creation of systems of reproduction, by linking early divine cosmogonic myths to chiefly heroes of the historical legends. In the resulting descent system, the mythical and the present are amalgamated in a “[c]ontinuity between ... beginnings, and the present, between abstract categories and historical persons, guaranteed by unbroken succession of births between them”.<sup>162</sup> Sahlins uses the word *mythopraxis* to refer to this activation of mythical reality in the present moment – the “deployment of the myth as practice”.<sup>163</sup> Myth, he writes, “cannot merely be a set of tricks the living play on the dead ... mythical incidences constitute

---

<sup>161</sup> (Babb, 2004, p. 24); Cf Sahlins’s mytho-practices, reference (Sahlins, 1981, p. 14).

<sup>162</sup> (Sahlins, 1981, p. 13).

<sup>163</sup> (Sahlins, 1981, p. 30).

archetypal situations” whereby the present “re-lives history”, and the living “become mythical heroes” themselves.<sup>164</sup> Descent, here, means a relation of genus to species:

Just as the father is to his sons, so the ancestor stands to his descendants as a general class to its specific instances, a “type” to its “tokens”. Where descent groups are corporate, they are often named from the ancestor, with a prefix signifying descendant (“the kinship”), not only into the past but in reference to contemporaries of the group and future generations. Mythical incidents [therefore] constitute archetypal situations. The experiences of celebrated mythical protagonists are re-experienced by the living in analogous circumstances. More, the living *become* mythical heroes.<sup>165</sup>

Sahlins strongly reaffirms, in the image of *mythopraxis*, a typical Polynesian metaphor for time: walking backwards into the future while facing the past, meaning that the mythic world of the ancestors is constantly (re)engaged with the present. This enables imaging of a future to come in a cosmological totality of time (the sequence of descendants) and space (the claim to place and land). It suggests that, in cosmogenesis, time and space are woven together with the ritual *praxis* of re-enacting ancestral chiefly names of *ali'i/ariki*, which in turn shapes a polity: form follows ancestral politics. But as we see later, the ancestral is bonded to nature and the animal.

Neil Gunson offers a way to structure the different periods in Polynesian cosmogonic schemata into four distinct periods. First, the age of the gods; second, that of legendary tribal and national ancestors; third, the first, semi-legendary, genealogical period; fourth, the period of a living chief in the past, whose place can be fixed historically.<sup>166</sup> These, he proposed, are accessed via oral genealogical accounts – *gafa* (genealogy) in Samoa – through which the present generation can trace their descent. Gunson called the Samoan *gafa* “truncated” by comparison with what he considered a ‘full’ Polynesian genealogical schema, namely: 1. God(s); 2. legendary national ancestor(s); 3. family ancestor(s) and 4. the family within living memory. *Gafa* is a line of descent commonly referred to in anthropology as a ‘conical clan’, meaning an extensive group descended from a common ancestor, ranked and segmented along genealogical lines.<sup>167</sup> An oral genealogy links ancestors and their descendants within a family / clan structure, and it is attached to a *nofoaga* (place) – like memory inscribed on paper. Land is directly linked to

---

<sup>164</sup> (Sahlins, 1981, p. 14).

<sup>165</sup> (Sahlins, 1981, p. 13).

<sup>166</sup> Niel Gunson, (1997: 140).

<sup>167</sup> Patrick Kirch (1996: 31).

*gafa*, and the latter's recitation in the present allows descendants to connect and lay claim to ancestral names and land. The Samoan cosmogony schema below (Figure 3) is based on this understanding of a sequential structure of unfolding from the first age of the gods and progenitors, which covers the first age of the 'birth' of the Samoan world starting with Tagaloa and the first qualities (rocks and stones).

For Alfred Gell, the difference between the treatment of the origin of the world by Polynesians and Judao-Christian perspectives is that "Polynesian thought about the universe [was] predicated, not on the creation of the universe *ex nihilo*, by god. But on the initial existence of everything in an all-embracing plenum or tightly-bound continuum".<sup>168</sup> Polynesian creation is an extended series of differentiations and articulations, in which the world is given distinct qualities and components that contain cosmic qualities of the god himself.<sup>169</sup> This system relies on differentiations or transformations, rather than creation *ex nihilo*, and immanent, rather than transcendent divinity. Because god is immanent, Polynesians say that they can trace their ancestry and bloodlines to Tagaloa, their god, making him a progenitor. Any diagram of the cosmogony is therefore also a genealogical map of relations connecting people with their gods (ancestor gods from hereon). A cosmogenesis, then, is the image of a *gafa* connecting persons, their god and the extant world.

'Okusitino Māhina proposes that myth, origin and genealogical stories can be made to connect, on one hand, the creation of a mythistory and, on the other, the practical lives of people. He called this *tala-ē-fonua*, "traditional history ... carved with traditionally-formalised social imagery and symbolism onto the landscape by means of orality".<sup>170</sup> *Tala-ē-fonua* means the narration, or telling (*tala*), of people (*kakai*) and their land

---

<sup>168</sup> (Gell, 2001, p. 291). Elements of these approaches explaining the origin of the Samoan universe and creation is used in this study to develop the spatial exposition. Neil Gunson's notion of *gafa* as connective strands between the ancestor gods and ancestors is applied to the schema below as lines that connect the different planes and stages of the cosmogony diagram. Māhina's *tala-ē-fonua* is useful as the orality that sings into the present *fonua* (land) as he says, the landscape is "carved with traditionally-formalised social imagery and symbolism by means of orality". Sahlins insistence that myth is present in everyday practice as *mythopraxis* of Polynesians, I have taken as the structure of the cosmology mapped onto the contours of the Samoan social structure. Pertinent to all this is the link between the ancestor gods and their Lagi world, and the world of *tagata*, which as Gell and Sahlins intimated, has an imminent and intertwined relationship in which the recurrence again and again of the ancestors gods within people and things that are born into the world. Implicit in this linking of past and present is the character and effectiveness of *mana* as a residue echo that passes from generation to generation.

<sup>169</sup> (Gell, 2001, p. 292).

<sup>170</sup> (Māhina, 1992, p. 2).

(*kelekele*). Māhina extends this notion of narrating people, and their connections to ancestors through genealogy and mythology, to *tā-vā* (*tā*: time and action and *vā*: space and content), which transforms things “from a state of flux to a situation of harmony and beauty”.<sup>171</sup> *Tala-e-fonua*, for Māhina, is the manner in which a cosmology is possible that connects past, present and the future.

Thus, in the Samoan story of creation explored below, two entities existed at the origin – Tagaloa the ‘Illimitable one’ and Vānimonimo. The story does not start with the typical Polynesian primordial pairing of Rangi (or Lagi) and Papa,<sup>172</sup> but with a generative constellation involving Tagaloa and Vānimonimo, which is extended to encompass subsequent generations, starting with Papa. A progenerative<sup>173</sup> schema, as Tim Ingold suggests, marks the transition between becomings or creations in the evolution and duration of space. It is a process-generated concept that is perpetually alive, a “site where generation is going on”.<sup>174</sup> The cosmogonic schema below (Figure 3) presents different generations, not as points on a graph, but as comings and goings (rather than starting and finishing), as fractal parts or Tagaloan microcosms that are diffracted, diffused, obviated and converged at different stages, to narrate, just as Tauanu’u<sup>175</sup> had done to Thomas Powell, the comings and goings of the cosmocentric beginnings of the Samoan world.

### **The creation story of Samoa and Manu’a**

There are several cosmogonic stories in Samoa and, like a variegated garden, their diverse streaks, marks, and patches portray a lively scene within a shared enclosure. All

---

<sup>171</sup> (Māhina, 2004, pp. 88-89). Māhina’s definition of *ta-vā* as giving rise to a state of flux and a situation of harmony and beauty, echoes quite well the conditions in which *vāniminimo* appears as a flickering phenomenon coming in and out of sight.

<sup>172</sup> Jeff Marck suggested this to be the case in Tonga, Samoa, Marquesas, New Zealand, Cook Islands and Tuatmotu (Marck, 1996a, p. 223).

<sup>173</sup> I use here Tim Ingold’s notion of *progenerative* as a process of continuous birth and unfolding which differs from procreation, which has a one-off event in creating something absolutely new out of elements derived from immediate antecedents. Progeneration, in contrast refers to “a continual unfolding of an entire field of relationships within which different beings emerge with their particular forms, capacities and dispositions” (Ingold, 2000, p. 142).

<sup>174</sup> (Ingold, 2002, p. 50).

<sup>175</sup> Tauanu’u narrative in Samoan was published by Thomas Powell and John Fraser in 1892 titled ‘The Samoan story of creation: a tala’ (Powell & Fraser, 1892); an earlier version was published by Powell without Tauanu’u Samoan text (Powell, 1887); Krämer in the late 1800’s also collected the same story.

stories reference the Manu'a version, *O le Tala i le Tupuaga o Samoa atoa fo'i ma Manu'a, ae amata le tala ona fia i Manu'a* (The creation story of Samoa and Manu'a from the point of view of Manu'a), which is understood to be the oldest.<sup>176</sup> It was relayed to the Reverend Thomas Powell by Tauanu'u, an important orator from Tau in Manu'a, written down by Powell in the 1840's in the Samoan language, and appeared in numerous publications by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>177</sup> Tauanu'u is a *tulafale* (orator) title, appointed by the Tui Manu'a (Ruler of Manu'a) as keeper of traditions for the kings of Manu'a. Tauanu'u was acknowledged with the following honorifics in the *fono* of Manu'a: "your venerable highness Tauau'u, first mātua (elder) who provides the first word of the Fale'ula gathering, guardian of the title and heeds the words of the king".<sup>178</sup> Powell reported that sacred stories and chants were guarded by the Tauanu'u family and descendants, who are called *fatua iupu* (the 'keepers of myths'),

(W)hose office it has been, from time immemorial, to guard these myths with sacred care, and, only on occasion of a royal tour, to rehearse any of them in public. They were taught to the children of the family with great secrecy, and the different parts of a myth and its song were committed to the special care of different members of the family; so that a young man would have the special care of the prose part, and a young woman that of the poetic part, while to the older members, and especially the head of the family, belonged the prerogative of explaining the meaning of the various allusions of the poetic lines. A single line would often bring out a lengthy piece of history.<sup>179</sup>

Krämer, who at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century also sought out Tauanu'u and his assistant Fofō to collect and check versions of the cosmogony, also stated that Tauanu'u was the "best informed regarding old traditions. If inquiring people have had their discussions in the lonely house, the *faletalatala* of the *malae poumasamē*, and are still confused, they send for Tauanu'u who furnishes information".<sup>180</sup>

---

<sup>176</sup> (Powell & Fraser, 1892). The Mōa atoa family of Manu'a, for instance, is claimed to be the oldest; their name 'Mōa atoa' when it is the added prefix Sā (meaning clan) becomes Sāmoa atoa as in the 'whole of Samoa' (Krämer, 1994, p. 504), (Turner, 1884) and (Stair, 1897) recorded origin stories that pointed to their origins in Manu'a.

<sup>177</sup> (Powell, 1887); (Powell & Fraser, 1892); (Powell & Fraser, 1897); (Fraser, 1891).

<sup>178</sup> Krämer 1994 (507).

<sup>179</sup> (Powell, 1887, p. 147).

<sup>180</sup> (Krämer, 1994, pp. 616, fn 619).

The office of keeper of myths was attached to the Fale'ula,<sup>181</sup> the house of traditions and stories, of which Tauanu'u was the caretaker. The Fale'ula played a crucial role in Samoan cosmogony, and is relevant in the context of the thesis, because it was the first house built in Lagi – the distant home of the Sā Tagaloa clan – to house the sacred objects belonging to Tagaloa-a-lagi, the ruler of Lagi. The Tufuga, or the builders' guild, probably built this house in the form of the *faletele* (see below, pp. 182).<sup>182</sup>

In 1871, Thomas Powell recorded the cosmogonic chant *Solo o le Vā* that was to accompany the creation story *O le Tala i le Tupuaga o Samoa atoa fo'i ma Manu'a, ae amata le tala ona fia i Manu'a*. The chant was normally sung in sections and was then interpreted, in the *tala* (narrative). Powell initially collected these interpretations, and received the text of the chant itself only later.<sup>183</sup> *Solo o le Vā* is commonly translated as the 'Song of Creation'. *Vā* refers to a space or opening that begins and extends relations and thus makes possible the coming into being of the world. *Solo* is an epic poem in a form of a chant; the word *solo* conveys the idea of a sequence of events, memorised and relayed, which also suggests, on one hand, the idea of a chain of images mixing or separating.

*Solo o le Vā* relays how Tagaloa appointed the elements to be created by Papa, the stratum or rock giving rise to Tagaloa's progenies and *Lagi*, the manifold heavens. It then recounts the first *fono* meeting; the islands of Manu'a, Savai'i, Tonga, Fiji and Upolu; and finally the creation of *tagata*, the human.

Mythological elements and historical events are combined and relayed through time in the *Solo o le Vā*, which is divided into three parts: first, the *tūlagi* (opening prelude), similar to an opening prayer; second, the *solo* (chant), generally sung by an apprentice; and, last, the *tala*, the interpretation narrated by the *fatua'iupu*, literally 'keeper of words', which was Tauanu'u. The chant's directive is to secure and guard the tradition,

---

<sup>181</sup> Fale'ula shares a similar function with the Māori house of lore the Wharekura, and have the same meaning - the red or crimson house, red, a sacred colour signifying Tagaloa (Powell & Fraser, 1892, pp. 189, fn. 185); (Krämer, 1994, pp. 618, fn. 675).

<sup>182</sup> (Green & Davidson, 1974, p. 232).

<sup>183</sup> Powell's manuscript stated that the Taū chief and *fatua'iupu* (keeper of tradition) Tauanu'u dictated the interpretation to him on March 21, 1871 (Powell & Fraser, 1892, pp. fn.4, p. 189); John Fraser wrote in 1897 that the *Solo o le Vā* was relayed to Reverends George Pratt and Powell by Fōfō and Tauanu'u (Fraser, 1897, p. 19).

with an emphasis on Manu'a and its traditional ruler. Manu'a, home of the Sā Tagaloa clan in Samoa, was also the seat of the Tui Manu'a, the first king of Samoa.<sup>184</sup>

### ***Solo o le Vā and the Samoan cosmogony***

Valerio Valeri observed that deities form a hierarchy and rituals to “hierarchize concretize subjects, actions, and social contexts relating them to different gods”.<sup>185</sup> The *Solo o le Vā* is arranged in a reproductive schema (with the progenitor at the beginning); every being is produced as a knot in a continuous thread tied to place which, in turn, produces the next in the chain of beings. For Samoans, inheritance in the form of *gafa* connects humans to the divine. A person, therefore, is part and parcel of the divine principle and guarantees the continuous work of the ancestor gods. The motto *Samoa ua 'uma ona tofi* (Samoa has been allotted all its parts) means that all Samoans can trace their genealogy to the ancestor gods and therefore continue to provide a place for their ancestors, a location and a possibility for them to be in the present. But, *gafa*, when recited, is not only an oral record of genealogies that connect people to god; it is also a directive that names and ranks people, connecting people, place and their relationship to the divine.

A cosmogonic schema is proposed to map the strands and traces of the ancestor gods remaining within Samoan myth and oral tradition. In order to picture a ‘holistic’ outline of Samoan spatial theory, this cosmogonic schema needs to be closely explicated. No definitive texts<sup>186</sup> have been written so far on the subject. In what follows, I pull together several different versions of the Samoan creation story<sup>187</sup> to provide a picture of space in Samoan cosmology, which can then be extended to encapsulate the works of architecture. I will also attempt to show that the principal notions of space in Samoan

---

<sup>184</sup> The first Tui Manu'a (king of Manu'a) was Taetotaloa, his name means “issue of Tagaloa”. His father Tagaloaui was the son of a mortal woman and Tagaloa Lā (Tagaloa the sun) (Krämer, 1994, p. 537).

<sup>185</sup> Valeri applied this to Hawaiian cosmology specifically regarding sacrifice (Valeri, 1985, p. x).

<sup>186</sup> Theologian John Charlot has attempted the most important analysis so far in a linguistic and formal analyses of the chants relating to his theory of Samoan oral tradition and linguistics; (Charlot, 1988); (Charlot, 1991).

<sup>187</sup> Thomas Powells version of the *Solo o le Vā* collected in the mid 1840's and published in a number of renditions (Powell, 1887); (Powell & Fraser, 1892); (Powell & Fraser, 1897); (Powell & Pratt, 1890); and the later revision by Krämer (Krämer, 1994, pp. 539-544).

thought originated with the creation of humans and their capacity to gather in a meeting space (*fono*).

The *Solo o le Vā* begins with a *tūlagi*, a prose explication or short summary of the chant, usually poetic and obscure and chanted by Tauanu'u.<sup>188</sup> The *tūlagi* would have been chanted in a manner suggesting that Tauanu'u had his eyes fixed on the ocean, a forceful image of the chaos of warring waves, as he recited the chant, setting the scene for a great clamour of beings in the Samoan cosmology.<sup>189</sup> The *tūlagi* provides a play of imagery of the ocean with many configurations, now menacing ('*O galu lolo ma galu fatio'o*), now calming ('*O le peau malie ma le peau lagatonu*) and wandering free ('*o le 'au'au ta'a*). The fearful and playful *tūlagi* sets the scene for the full song, which was then sung by a young boy or girl who memorised the full chant of 113 lines.<sup>190</sup>

The following spatial exposition of the Samoan cosmogony falls into two parts. The first part is a cosmogonic schema that diagrams its structural sequence as stages (see Figure 3), according to Tauanu'u's five-stage narrative, beginning with the initial unfolding and ending with the production of the Samoan archipelago and the creation of the first people. I have arranged the movement of the diagram to begin from the ground, reflecting the orientation of things as they are placed on the *paepae* (a built-up platform made of stone) of the *fale*. As discussed below in detail, the rationale is that, as the

---

<sup>188</sup> (Charlot, 1988, p. 302).

<sup>189</sup> The *tūlagi* below:

'*O galu lolo ma galu fatio'o*, Rolling and crashing surf,  
'*O galu tau ma galu fefatia'i*, Colliding and clashing surf,  
'*O le 'au'au peau ma le sologa peau*, Frothy sea and the procession of waves,  
*Na ona fa'afua, 'a e le fati*. Swelling high and not crashing.  
'*O le peau lolo ma le peau tao'to*, High rising and low gliding waves,  
'*O le peau malie ma le peau lagatonu*. Splendid wave and precise waves.  
'*O peau aliali'a ma peau la'asia*, Feared waves breaking on reef banks,  
'*O peau a sisifo mai gaga'e*. Waves from the west and the east.  
*O le peau lagava'a ma le peau tagata* (Searching waves that raise ships, reaching out for people),  
*Ma le peau tautala 'o lona soa*, (And the speaking wave his equal),  
'*o le 'au'au ta'a* (These wandering companions).  
*Mapu i le lagi Tuli mai vasa* (In heaven, Tuli rests from the sea),  
*Tagaloa fia malolo* (Tagaloa is wanting of rest),  
*Ta lili'a peau 'o lalō* (Those chilling waves from the world below). See Appendix 2 for the full song.

<sup>190</sup> This is according to Krämer later rearrangement of his own versions and Powell's version, he claims that "Here the Powell-Pratt song ends. But 'Tagaloa Counsel', beginning with line 78 and extending up to this point, was truly thoroughly juggled around, since a line appeared now here, now there, several missing altogether. Nowhere did it provide additional insight about this the only not quite lucid part of the song" (Krämer, 1994, pp. 622, fn.201).

narrative develops with the birth of Papa, the elements are unfolded in an upward, vertical direction; this shows a homology between the cosmogony and the construction of a *fale*, which starts with the *poutu*, the central post.

The second part is the *tala*, the recounting (and analysis in stages) of the main points of the cosmogony that relate to the coming-to-be of space and events. A detailed discussion of the *tala* follows below; here, I want to give an overview (section names in the *Solo o le Vā* are capitalised). Stage 1: the growth of Papa, the stratum. Stages 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d: the first period of *Mavae* and *Fanau* (differentiation and birth), in which the geological elements are produced by dividing Papa. Stages 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e: the second period, the first *Tofiga* (appointment), where all elements are recombined to produce *Lagi* (heaven). Stage 3: the creation of different layers of *Lagi* and the birth of La, Masina and Fetu (sun, stars and moon). Stage 4: the second *Tofiga*, in which the first Tufuga-faufale (builders and architects) are appointed to make the Fale'ula (sacred house). Finally, Stage 5: *Mavaega*, the creation of the first humans, the islands of the Samoan archipelago, and the regular motions of the moon, sun and the stars, relative to human needs. It is important to note here that the events recounted in the *Solo o le Vā* focus mainly on Stages 2 – 5. The Tufuga-faufale and the sacred house, the Fale'ula, emerge near the end of the chant, in the last level of *Lagi* - *Lagi-tuaiva* (stage 5).

### **The Diagram as Cosmogram**

The schema of the Samoan cosmogony below is drawn from Tauanu'u's narrative describing the coming of Tagaloa and the creation of the elements. The structuring of the stages of generation follows Tauanu'u's version in Thomas Powell's records, as well as the reorganised version published by Krämer.<sup>191</sup>

The diagram reveals a particular shape of the cosmogony; the narrative taken from the cosmogony is literally transformed into a spatial schema by mapping the movement in each stage. As the narrative expands and contracts in diagrammatic form, it not only prises open Samoan mythistory but also delays it, so that we are able to relate our world to the possible worlds of the distant past. One way to think of the diagram is as an extra, fourth step in the process of narration of the Samoan cosmogony; if the first step is the *tūlagi*, the second the *solo*, and third the *tala*, I propose that the diagram of the spatial

---

<sup>191</sup> (Krämer, 1994, pp. 539-541). Krämer's reorganisation is an interesting case of constructing a possible image of the world of Samoan antiquity. It raises important questions about the reordering of oral histories and the role of archives, which are not explored here.

exposition is the fourth step, in which the first three steps are imaged. John Mullarkey describes the diagram as an “image of thought” – images can, on one hand, be partially caught in the mental process and, on the other, be partly concrete or actual.<sup>192</sup>

The diagram is helpful when it becomes a piloting device by which to mark-out gestures and the momentum of a narrative towards meaning. It can ‘emplot and invite’ narrative elaboration to articulate the genealogy of figures of meaning (see p. 30). Here, the diagram is to catch important episodes of the cosmogony, map their qualities as they cluster around significant periods, and then show their transformations and movement in time. Overall, it captures moments of diversification, which are reflected in the Samoan notion of *mavaega* (divaricate and diversify) and also periods of great convergence reflected in the idea of *tofiga* (converge and appoint to place).

I arrived at the shape and form of the diagram through a detailed analysis of the structure of the *faletele* described in Chapter 8 (see below, pp. 195ff. Because of the progenerative and circulatory aspect of the connection between the ancestor gods and the present, I want to emphasise in the diagram a movement that circulates up, around, down and up again. This constellation is manifest inside the *fale*: the outer posts designating the sitters’ positions, recycling of the positions of the ancestors, facing inwards towards the *poutu*; the *poutu* rises up from the earth (Papa) to meet the *au’au* (ridgebeam, Lagi), from which the roof is hung; the roof’s curved shape follows the arc of the sky, which is maintained by propping outwards its shape with *so’a* (tie beams). Thus, the image of the *fale* provides a suitable outline for the diagram, referencing the notion of *fale* as the covering and enveloping structure of the Samoan world that shelters the work of creation.

An important architectural element of Samoan buildings, the *paepae*,<sup>193</sup> floats above the *malae* (central open ground) like a drifting rock on the ocean. The *paepae* reflects the role of Papa, as foundational origin of *tagata* (human), who first appears in the cosmogony as a stratum that grows from Tagaloa’s feet.

---

<sup>192</sup> John Mullarkey in explaining the diagram in Gilles Deleuze’s work (Mullarkey, 2006, p. 176).

<sup>193</sup> See section *Tulaga fale and paepae: marking residency and making an altar*, p. 100.

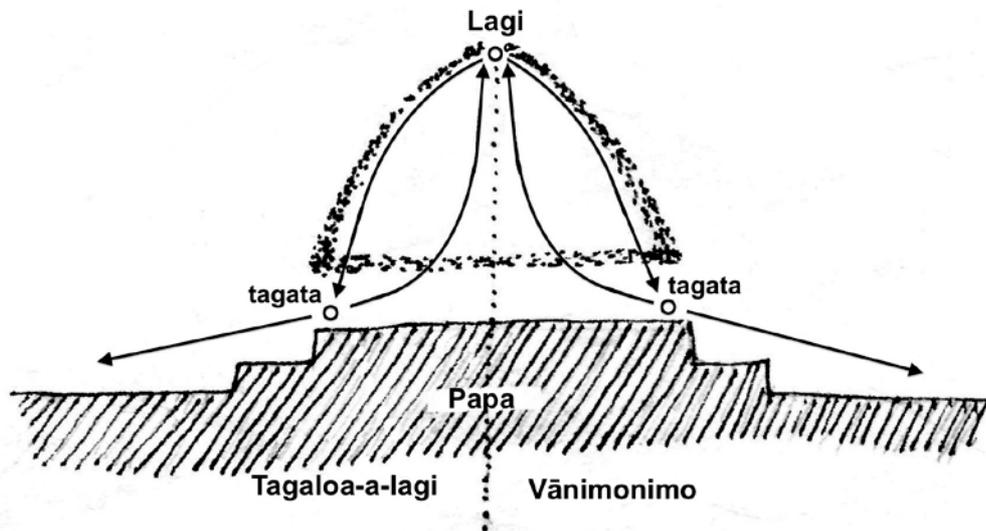


Figure 2  
 Relationships between the world of Lagi and the world of *tagata* as reflected in the *faletele*

From here, the schema moves upwards to show the partition of Papa and the multiplication of its parts, as it differentiates into qualities that give birth to more qualities, until it forms the first Lagi (Mata-o-le-Lagi) at the apex of the diagram. Then, the schema moves downwards to form descending horizontal 'branches' that reflect the number of Lagi produced in the cosmogony. The diagram then folds the production of *tagata* and the world of men back onto the beginning, to show that the world of men strives to reflect the world of the ancestors and the ancestor gods. The narrative movement in the diagram (from below in stages 1 to 2; up towards the apex in stage 3a; returning downwards in the horizontal elements, Lagi) suggests the image of a *faletele* (great house). I later (see Chapter 8 pp. 217ff) explore this link between Samoan cosmogony and the structure of the *faletele* as the 'image-thought', or diagram, of the cosmogony.

Below, I lay out the narrative and analysis of the Samoan cosmogony in sequential fashion, which allows it to be read against the stages in Figure 3, below.

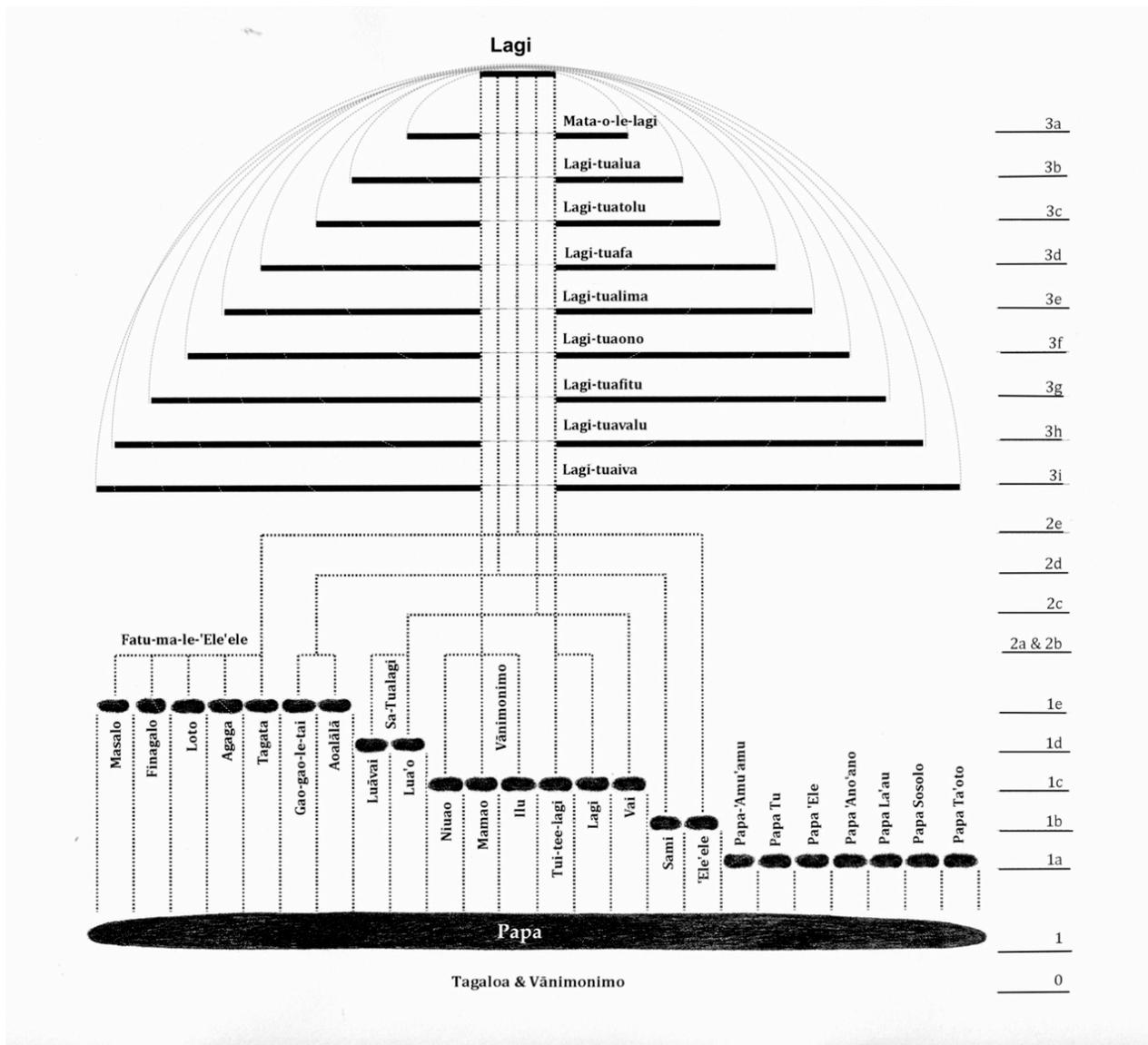


Figure 3  
 Samoan cosmogonic schema

## The narrative and analysis of the Samoan Cosmogony

The analysis highlights the oscillation between *mavae* (the movement outwards), as an unfolding, divaricating process of creation, and *tofiga* (the movement inwards), as the folding and combining of extreme ordering. The narrative is interspersed with definitions of terms that help extend and contextualise the cosmogony – between becoming and being, *mavae* and *tofiga*. The numbering system to the right of the diagram corresponds to the numbering of the explanation below.

### 0. Tagaloa and Vānimonimo: Limitless

---

Tauanu'u, keeper of the Manu'a tradition, began the *tala* with these lines: *Tagaloa le atua nofo i le vānimonimo* – god Tagaloa resided in the singularity of Vānimonimo,<sup>194</sup> an “all-embracing plenum or tightly-bound continuum”.<sup>195</sup> There was no sky, land or sea. By extension, there was no distinction between space or time, time and space are initially enfolded within Vānimonimo. As *mavae* (expansion) happens, Vānimonimo retracts to another realm and becomes *nimonimo* (unreachable and ‘beyond sight’), unattainable by vision or knowledge.<sup>196</sup> Samoans now use the term to designate ‘outer space’ beyond earth’s atmosphere. Māori and Tahitian cosmogonies suggest a similar plenum of existence before the world began, *Te Kore*<sup>197</sup> and *Vātea*, a “breathing-space of immensity” with “no glimmer of dawn, no clearness, no light”, “no earth, no sky, no sea no man”.<sup>198</sup> *Te Kore* and *Vātea* do not designate a void, a lack, or “chaos”, as they are often translated, but describe an “unlimited space”.<sup>199</sup>

---

<sup>194</sup> The following are dialectal variations of the name Tagaloa in other Polynesian languages: Māori – Tangaroa; Hawaii – Kanaloa; Tonga – Tangaloa; Tuamotu – Takaroa; Mangaia – Tangaroa; Marquesas – Tanaoa; Tahiti – Ta'aroa.

<sup>195</sup> (Gell, 2001, p. 291).

<sup>196</sup> Powell with Pratt translated *vānimonimo* as “expanse” or “unlimited extension” (Powell & Fraser, 1892, p. 182); *vā* being “space between two things” and *nimonimo* meaning something going out of memory or sight, alternatively Powell translated *vā* in the *Solo* as “the space between earth and sky” (Powell & Fraser, 1897, p. 26).

<sup>197</sup> (Tregear, 1891, p. 168); (Dixon, 1916, p. 6); (Handy, 1927, p. 12).

<sup>198</sup> (Handy, 1927, pp. 10-11).

<sup>199</sup> (Gill, 1876, p. 10).

Powell translated the name Tagaloa as “the Unrestrained, or Illimitable one”: from *taga*, “unrestrained by tabu”, and *loa*, “continuously”.<sup>200</sup> Tagaloa of the Vānimonimo cannot take form, because he cannot be differentiated until Papa comes to be, he is but a quality beyond representation and measurement: “What the god does is to articulate or differentiate the world into its distinct components and qualities, but the substance of the newly articulated cosmos remained what it always was, nothing other than the god himself”.<sup>201</sup> Tauanu’u relayed that Tagaloa moved back and forward in Vānimonimo (*fealualu mai o ia i le vānimonimo*),<sup>202</sup> suggesting that the Samoan progenitor is always present; but he cannot be explained or given form directly because he moves in and out of focus. The quality that can be ascribed to him, perhaps, is the circular movement of a vortex or whirlpool, a dizzying motion<sup>203</sup> and a phenomenon that causes an effect without being seen. *Fealualu mai o ia i le vānimonimo* (moving back and forth in Vānimonimo) is this quality of a vortex to continually spin.

Tagaloa, the god principle or *atua*, is unlike other Polynesian deities who are proposed as a “cosmic pair” creating a “bi-cameral world”<sup>204</sup> as the beginning point of creation. Whereas Rangi and Papa, or Vātea and Papa, for instance, articulate the point of separation between the realm of gods and men, night and day,<sup>205</sup> Tagaloa precedes differentiation. Nevertheless, Tagaloa is known as the ‘Lord of the Ocean’ in Polynesia

---

<sup>200</sup> (Powell & Fraser, 1897, p. 148). The Eastern Polynesian progenitor Vātea shared similar attributes with Tagaloa; the name Vātea means “unrestrained *vā*” containing the notion of unlimited especially with *vānimonimo* as part of the state of Tagaloa – see (Gill, 1876, p. 4).

<sup>201</sup> (Gell, 2001, p. 292).

<sup>202</sup> The term *fealualu* is often used in the context of moving and floating on the surface of the ocean.

<sup>203</sup> The Samoan word *moa* means centre is related to *vili* or whirling motion that spins attaching itself to the ground drawing things from the surrounding – the word is related to *niniva* or dizziness. A whirlpool vortex was thought by Māori as the connection from our world to the underworld (Williamson, 1933, p. 248); Hawai’ian *akua* gods for instance moved in a circular movement (Valeri, 1985, p. 88).

<sup>204</sup> (Gell, 2001, p. 291).

<sup>205</sup> An extensive analysis by Jeff Marck suggested that “Polynesian cosmogonies conceived of the primordial pair condition as one in which the land, sea and sky pre-existed, the sky was hugging the earth and the primordial period was interrupted by actions of cosmic beings...none of which had anthropomorphic forms or incarnations except the Primordial Pair, *Rangi* and *Papa* and *Waakea* and *Papa*” (Marck, 1996a, p. 222). The present study suggests otherwise, with the entity *Rangi* or *Lagi* in the Samoan cosmogony making an appearance in the third generation (1c in Figure 3). It seemed for Samoa, Tagaloa was omnipresent, an entity that cannot be defined by those he created, Papa, the second entity, was the entity that enabled things to generated and therefore be differentiated.

and associated with the open sea and voyaging. Donald Dennon and others, for instance, have suggested that Tagaloa was part of a “cult that came with people from the Sangir Islands north of Sulawesi, where *tagaloang* signifies ‘open sea, ocean’”.<sup>206</sup> In Eastern Polynesia, Tagaloa, as Tangaroa, is the deity of the creatures of the ocean.<sup>207</sup>

Different attributes of Tagaloa are later treated as separate instantiations Tagaloa in the cosmogony (“tagaloa” plus epithet designating the character of this particular Tagaloa). Thus a Tagaloa lineage of ancestor gods is created, for instance Tagaloa-a-lagi, ruler of Lagi, and Tagaloa-fa’atutupu-nu’u, the “creator of places”.<sup>208</sup> It is never stated directly in the *Solo o le Vā* where the first Tagaloa resides, except, at the beginning, in the *vāninonimo*. Lagi has a nine-fold structure, though Samoan myths sometimes suggest there is a tenth heaven, where Tagaloa resides.<sup>209</sup> As the narrative unfolds, Tagaloa increasingly manifests as male and Papa manifests as female.<sup>210</sup> Both are associated with particular positions – Tagaloa rendered as *tū* or standing (extending vertically) – the movement upwards to the sky is associated with him. Papa is rendered as lying down, horizontally extends to the horizon. The narrative associates Tagaloa with *tā* (to strike), which requires force. Papa is shown as *mavae* (branching out), and as capable of growth, *fanau* or birthing.<sup>211</sup>

### 1. Papa: Beginnings

---

The story relays that Papa grew where Tagaloa stood (*ua tupu ai le Papa i le mea na ia tu ai*). Papa is associated with ‘rock-like’ qualities and its hardened materiality is generally

---

<sup>206</sup> Donald Dennon (Dennon, Firth, Linnekin, Meleisea, & Nero, 1997, p. 71).

<sup>207</sup> (E. Best, 1928, p. 257).

<sup>208</sup> It is unclear from the cosmogony whether Tagaloa-a-Lagi and Tagaloa-fa’atutupu-nu’u are the same or separate.

<sup>209</sup> George Turner reported a story from Manu’a regarding the wrath of Lu, whose sacred chickens were eaten by some Tagaloans. He pursued the culprits all the way to Lagi-tua-sefulu, the tenth heaven, to complain to Tagaloa (Turner, 1884, p. 14). Krämer contradicted this view suggesting that Lu only made it to Lagi-tua-iva, the ninth heaven (Krämer, 1994, p. 27).

<sup>210</sup> In Mangaian tradition, Vātea and Papa gave birth to Tangaroa and his brother Rongo - see (Gill, 1876, p. 10).

<sup>211</sup> By extension Tagaloa is the principle that is attached to *pa’ia* (sanctity) and Papa to *mamalu* (dignity and place in the order of the world), I use here Tcherkézoff’s definitions of *pa’ia* and *mamalu* (Tcherkézoff, N. Scott / 2005, p. 254).

referred to as *papa* (the volcanic rocks at the edge of land and sea, or ‘earth’s crust’).<sup>212</sup> A definition for *Papa* is ‘stratum’,<sup>213</sup> a horizontal plane, which can provide a foothold or a ground on which things can be differentiated from what is ‘above’, ‘on’, ‘beneath’ and ‘within’ the confines of the plane and thereby given first orientation or directionality. *Papa* is also the name given to the first mats that are laid on the rough stone floors of a *fale*. In this way, *Papa* is associated with the first covering placed on the *paepae* platform, which provides the boundary between ‘undefined and under-refined matter’ below, and the ‘refined’ objects above, as well as the sanctity of those who sit and dwell within the house proper. Genealogies, strata and generations are connected to *Papa* via the *paepae* platform of the *fale*. It is here where the descendants of Tagaloa-a-lagi and *Papa* relive and recycle, again and again, the work of the ancestor gods.

With a similar impetus, the highest chiefly titles in Samoa are collectively known as *Papa*,<sup>214</sup> the oldest titles belonging to the early ancestors who were the first Samoans connected to Tagaloa-a-lagi. As the genealogical narrative of the *Solo o le Vā* generally moves from large entities to smaller ones, and from generic to specific qualities, the *Papa* titles act as coverings (*papa*), as it were, between the rough ‘stones’ of the earth below (the current descendants) and the world of Lagi above (the ancestor gods).

*Papa* is thus a general concept in Polynesia, referring to a foundation that allows things to come into existence, or to begin in the world. *Papa*, grown at the feet of Tagaloa, is associated with growth and the creative principle. *Papa* makes things possible, allows them to be known, to be counted or differentiated. Its predominant qualities, “broadness”, “flatness”, “layered[ness]”,<sup>215</sup> lend themselves to an “arrangement”, an “order”, in which things are “pile[d] in layers”.<sup>216</sup> *Papa* provides a levelled ground to stand upon – *tu*. In Polynesia, the place to stand on, to greet the community, is the *malae* (marae atea in Māori), a cleared space for sacred and ritual meetings and dancing at the

---

<sup>212</sup> Manganian cosmogony has *Papa* as a hollowed-out coconut shell (Gill, 1876, p. 2).

<sup>213</sup> Jeff Marck traced the origin of *papa* as a Proto Nuclear Polynesian word meaning “stratum” or “board, plank” (Marck, 1996b, p. 14). Also Handy described *papa* as a “strata or levels” (Handy, 1927, p. 16).

<sup>214</sup> Samoan *Papa* titles are known collectively as *tafaifa* (four sided one) and made up of the following: Tui Atua, Tui A’ana, Gatoaitale and Tamasoalii.

<sup>215</sup> (Tregear, 1891).

<sup>216</sup> (Pollex). *Papa*’s genealogy is different from the traditions of the cosmic pair (earth mating with the sky) in that in the *Solo o le Vā*, *Papa* alone is the primary source and Lagi is given birth later – see 1c of the schema.

centre of every Polynesian village. A *malae* is the centre of *fanua* (whenua in Māori), the settling place of the ancestors. Papa as *fanua* is the place of *tulāgavae* (foothold, turangawaewae in Māori), where a person can trace their genealogy in Samoa, and to which personal identity is connected, as the family land where one was born the place where, in most cases, one's ancestors are buried. Identity is *fa'asinomaga*, literally, one's "appointed place of being", which is always determined by *tofi* – the roles and functions bestowed by one's family and village.<sup>217</sup>

Papa's foundational qualities are generally characteristic of Polynesian genealogy. Māori, for instance, describe their genealogies as *whakapapa*, literally translated as "becoming Papa", which conveys the image of a person as the compression of layers and layers that are connected to Papa. *Gafa* in Samoan similarly conveys a sense of great depth or boundless measure connecting people to Papa.

### 1a. *Mavae* 1 and *Fanau*: Becoming

---

Tagaloa spoke to Papa with the words "*mavae ia*" (become now! - *mavae* translating as "to become" or "measure out", "to open" and "unfold").<sup>218</sup> Papa started to unfold and generate (*fanau*): (1) Papa Ta'oto (lying-down stratum);<sup>219</sup> (2) Papa Sosolo (creeping stratum); (3) Papa Lau-a'au (wide coral reef stratum); (4) Papa 'Ano'ano (multiplying stratum); (5) Papa 'Ele (earth or ground stratum); (6) Papa Tu (standing stratum); (7) Papa 'Amu'amu (cellular and coral-like stratum). These seven Papa, which carry the prefix Papa in their names,<sup>220</sup> are thus the first creations are therefore placed closest to Papa on the diagram.

---

<sup>217</sup> (Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, 1997).

<sup>218</sup> Powell and Pratt translates *mavae* as divide, I have used the word 'become' to translate *mavae* and 'becoming' for *mavaega* as it more fitting to the notion of time and space. *Mavaega* has become an important concept in Samoan thought as part of a public declaration of a will or parting words which attest to titles and land ownership, for current usage see (Tui Atua, 2010b, p. 22). Tagaloa does not carry out the unfolding of Papa, but only speaks to it: "*fai atu*", willing Papa to branch out, rather than copulate with her.

<sup>219</sup> I use 'stratum' here, rather than rock, to translate Papa to convey the sense of a horizontal layer that 'spreads out' rather than an inert matter; I also wanted to connect with its etymological connections to 'stratification' and 'structure', linking with Papa as genealogy or *whakapapa*.

<sup>220</sup> Papa Ta'oto, Papa Sosolo, Papa Lau-a'au, Papa 'Ano'ano, Papa 'Ele, Papa Tu, Papa 'Amu'amu.

*Mavae*, the first word uttered by Tagaloa, moved the natural world, allowing elemental time to begin. The world comes about not from *tū* (the rising up),<sup>221</sup> separating sky and earth that often characterises creation in the Polynesia. Tagaloa simply sets in motion an unfolding. *Mavae*, a compound word made up of *ma* (pure, a connection to *totomā* sacred blood is noted by Pratt)<sup>222</sup> and *vae* (to divide and separate), which means “branching out” or unfolding if used as the verb *vaega*. *Vaega* is also an important concept in the Samoan system of exchange, it is the procedure for the redistribution of prestige goods among kin and clan presided over by the highest *matai*. *Mavae* and *vaega*, in the present context, mark a sacred covenant, which has a sense of finality to it. This is also the case with *mavaega*, the departing will of a paramount chief, in which *mavae* designates a threshold, or point of inflexion. At this point, one state transitions into another, in an obviating return,<sup>223</sup> where beginning and end eclipse one another. Thus, *mavae* is central to any concept of genealogy in Samoa, designating the moment of becoming that constitutes all genealogies for all *tagata* (human), who must branch out and multiply.

The proliferations of Papa, Papa Ta’oto, Papa Sosolo, Papa Lau-a’au, Papa ‘Ano’ano, Papa ‘Ele, Papa Tu and Papa ‘Amu’amu are all named after essential characteristics of *fanua* (land). These are ta’oto (levelled), sosolo (spreading), lau-a’au (generous), ‘ano’ano (fertile), tu (stable), and ‘amu’amu (malleable). In a second move of *mavae*, these qualities together provided a favourable and stable foundation for the conception of Lagi, and later the world, to come into being.

### 1b. *Mavae* 2: Orientations

---

Tagaloa faced the west (*sisifo*) and struck Papa who divided, giving birth to ‘Ele’ele (Earth) and Sami (Ocean). ‘Ele’ele, the earth and dirt, is also the sacred name for the

---

<sup>221</sup> The Ku god of Hawaii is a case in point who expresses the quality of the “male generating power of the first parent by means of which the race is made fertile and reproduces from a single stock” (Beckwith, 1970, p. 12).

<sup>222</sup> (Pratt, 1893).

<sup>223</sup> Obviation, according to Wagner, is the cumulative and transformative process that happens to things once they are initiated or come into being – they begin to lose their coherency and fall apart: “a series of substitutive metaphors that constitute the plot of a myth (or the form of a ritual), in a dialectical movement that closes when it returns to its beginning point, A myth, then, is an expansion of trope, and obviation, as process, is paradoxical because the meanings elicited in its successive tropes are realized only in the process of their exhaustion” (Wagner, 1986, p. x).

blood of the highest chiefs”<sup>224</sup> “o le matua lea o tagata ‘uma i le lalolagi” (‘ele‘ele the ancestor of every being under the heavens). Sami, the ocean, then began to cover all of Papa and her children.

*Sisifo* is a compound word, meaning “to prop and hang up”. There is a connection with *ifo* (to bow, prostrate and pay homage to the west). Thus, *sisifo* is associated with the westerly direction, towards the setting sun, and an important point of orientation towards Hawaiki, ‘Avaiki, Hawai‘i or Savai‘i, the home of the Polynesian ancestors.<sup>225</sup>

### 1c. – 1e: Spatial and temporal qualities

---

[Sections 1c. to 1e. do not directly bear on the thesis. However, a very brief summary is provided here.]

In Section 1c, Tagaloa stood facing north (right-hand-side), and Vai (water) was generated (*tupu*). Tagaloa caused Papa to generate Lagi, the elevated platform that becomes the home of the ancestor gods. Lagi was hoisted (*te‘e*)<sup>226</sup> up above to become the first place from which other Lagi would be created. With the creation of Lagi came Tui-te‘e-lagi (king of propping-up-Lagi) followed by Ilu (innumerable), Mamao (distance), and Niuaō (the great day). Lagi is generally located above and is commemorated before any major rituals which usually begin with reference to Lagi – *lagi* are songs that honour and proclaim things that have divine qualities.

In section 1d., Lua‘o, the abyss, and Luāvai (girl) were generated. They would later be bestowed the title of Sa-Tuālagi, the family of those who reside beyond the heavens.

In section 1e., Aoalālā, or branching day, and Gao-gao-o-le-tai, or barren sea, (girl) were generated. They were followed by Tagata (human), Agaga (spirit/soul), Loto (heart), Finagalo (will) and finally Masalo (thought).

These marked the final stage of generation for Papa, with a total of 24 offspring, which all had physical, spatial and material qualities yielded from Papa, and identified by name. The first set contained seven general qualities of Papa: levelled, spreading, generous, fertile, stable, malleable; the second set deals with two geographic elements: earth and ocean; the third set contained seven spatial and materiality qualities: liquid, sky, propping up, immensity, space and hazy cloud; the fourth set described the

---

<sup>224</sup> (Pratt, 1893).

<sup>225</sup> (Green & Kirch, 2001, p. 95).

<sup>226</sup> Thus the name of the god who props up Lagi, Tui-te‘e-lagi.

elements located beyond the knowable heaven: two circles and two waterholes; the final set contained seven life giving elements: branching tree, empty sea, human, spirit/soul, heart, will and thought.

## 2. Tofiga 1: World forming

---

With *mavae* and *fanau*, the generating processes of Papa completed, *tofiga*<sup>227</sup> (the aggregation and distribution of attributes) marked the beginning of the creation of five groups of ancestral lines. The first is Tui-te‘e-lagi<sup>228</sup> who propped up Lagi and elevated the cosmos (2a), so that it became recognisable by sight as Lagi, the firmament. This became the home of Ilu, Mamao and Niuaio (2b). The firmament is also where Vānimonimo, the primordial abode of Tagaloa receded. The first two plants appear: Masoa (arrowroot) and Teve (an acrid plant), which helped Tui-te‘e-lagi in the propping up of heaven. The second group of Lua‘o and Luavai were given the title of Sā Tualagi, elements existing beyond Lagi. Lua‘o and Luavai combined with Vai (liquid) to create the source of fresh water (2c). The third group brought together Aoalālā, Gao-gao-le-tai and Sami (Ocean) to form and people the great ocean (2d).

The fourth and final group brought together Tagata (human), Agaga (spirit/soul), Loto (heart), Finagalo (will) and Masalo (thought), they are combined with ‘Ele‘ele (earth) to form the first couple Fatu (male) and ‘Ele‘ele (female) (2e). With this final grouping, we encounter for the first time the emergence of an anthropomorphic deity. Tagata is an anthropomorphic shell with all the qualities found in humans - a soul/spirit, the heart, a will, and thought combined with ‘ele‘ele. The general name for this combination is Fatu-ma-le-‘Ele‘ele. Fatu is the stable core within the human made of hard stone. The word has a number of connected meanings in Polynesia: to plait or weave; to compose or plan a song; it also the word for “to fold” and for kidneys, clotting or seed. ‘Ele‘ele, the earthly soil, is the element that mirrors the firmament and provides footholds for

---

<sup>227</sup> *Tofiga* is ‘an ordinance’ which comes from the verb *tofi* meaning ‘to divide an inheritance’, or ‘to apportion a father’s property among children’ (Krämer, 1994, p. 16; Pratt, 1893); (Tui Atua, 2012); “Tagaloa’s *tofiga* is the exercise of his sovereign pleasure allotting to his children their stations and spheres of action (Powell & Fraser, 1892, p. 184).

<sup>228</sup> Tui-te‘e-lagi role is similar to that of the Māori Tanemāhuta who propped apart Rangi the heavenly father from Papa the earth mother (Schrempp, 1992, p. 82).

humans. Fatu and 'Ele'ele are biological constructs of Tagata, which gives the god principle a reproductive and genealogical system in the world.<sup>229</sup>

### 3. Lagi: Nine-fold world

---

Now that all of Papa's offspring are in the world, the latter begins to develop properly, with the placement of beings and the assignment of qualities. Thus, Lagi takes form as the world of the ancestor gods. Generally, in Polynesian cosmogony, Lagi is a place, the sky, heaven or home of the ancestor gods.<sup>230</sup> Only in Tahiti, Cook Islands and Aotearoa, Rangi is one of the oldest deities. Lagi also means a lament or a song to honour the dead. Often in poetry and chant, a dedication would be narrated in the form of a *tūlagi* (see above, pp. 55ff): "standing before heaven" or "a song that will reach for the heavens". Related to *tūlagi* is *tulaga*, its opposite, to reach downwards (*laga* is "to disclose" or "to stir up") and secure one's footholds onto the land. *Tūlagi* is synonymous with the sacredness of past events, while *tulaga* is to place oneself in the absolute present.<sup>231</sup> *Tūlagi* and *tulaga* thus set up a spatio-temporal relationship that is, in the *faletele*, embodied in the *poutu*.<sup>232</sup> Lagi is therefore an important motif in Samoan thinking, as it is central to the process of recounting and locating the home of ancestor gods.

Tauanu'u's narrative places Lagi in the third stage of Tagaloa and Papa's offsprings. Lagi became a residence of the first gods with the emergence of Fatu-ma-le-'ele'ele, the ancestor of humans (tagata). Ilu (Immensity) and Mamao (Distance) gave birth to Ao (Day) and Po (Night), the first heavenly couple; in turn they gave birth to Mata-i-le-lagi (Eve-in-the-sky), the sun. They dwelled in the first fold of Lagi, which became known as Mata-o-le-lagi (Eve-of-the-sky). What followed was the process of forming the nine folds or districts, all called Lagi. The generation procedure required Ilu (Immensity, male) and Mamao (space, female) to give birth to the grandchildren of Tagaloa. At each birth, Tui-te'e-lagi would prop up a piece of Lagi, creating each Lagi division in turn. Each

---

<sup>229</sup> Fatu and 'Ele'ele, as we encounter later, were the first people to settle Manu'a Islands.

<sup>230</sup> The cosmos appears over and above the world of Lagi in a manner reminiscent of *noumena*, but *mana* is a particularly Samoan and Polynesian concept of the sacred.

<sup>231</sup> *Tulaga* is foothold, it is also the word for pulpit according to Pratt, see (Pratt, 1893).

<sup>232</sup> Lagi is also a funeral ceremony for highest chiefs. There is a link here with Tongan stone-lined tombs called *langi* of the paramount chiefs and the burial place for Tui Tonga – ruler of Tonga. Importantly, Tonga treats Samoa as symbolic of Langi (Māhina, 1992, p. 89).

division was given the name Lagi, followed by the number of the sequence in the unfolding (Lagi-tualua, etc.) except for the first fold, Mata-o-le-Lagi.

The process of propping apart Lagi gave origin to the notion of a bounded space. The stratum below, the compression of the unfolding's created by Papa, now has an opening to the vertical dimension as well as an edge at the horizon. Finally, there is the potential for a 'worlding' that can be expanded, explored and opened beyond a defined edge.

Lagi-tuaiva, the ninth and the last heaven to be formed, became the place where Tagaloa consolidated his dominion. Tagaloa would now be known as Tagaloa-fa'a-tutupu-nu'u, or Tagaloa the progenitor. His abode is never discussed so, therefore, he is never fully attached to a place except for the time when he was in an embrace with Vānimonimo at the beginning of creation. Some sources suggest that he dwelled on Lagi-tuasefulu, or the tenth heaven, but this is not revealed in Tauanu'u's narrative, possibly due to a convention in Samoan mythology to separate human from godly affairs. Our human understanding cannot be privy to Tagaloa's activities, and therefore we have no cognisance of his whereabouts, or his place of rest.

Neil Gunson suggests that the folds of Lagi in Polynesian myths represent different phases of the ancient Polynesian voyages across the Pacific Ocean.<sup>233</sup> Each Lagi in the series is a horizon point or threshold that marks a region, land or event encountered in the journey away from the first homeland. This homeland is known as Avaiki, Hawaiki, Hawai'i or Savai'i, meaning a small channel or opening. This would imply that the homeland was either a place with a small harbour, or a compressed world that would later expand to encompass multiple worlds. This theory has some resonance with Tauanu'u's narrative, where the expansion of Lagi required that Ilu and Mamao go out to find and people new places, also called Sā Tulagi (Lagi beyond the horizon), with the help of Tu-te'e-lagi to prop up the edge of the known heaven and open new boundaries or frontiers.

The Tuamotu conception of the cosmos presented a similar version to the Samoa image of Lagi:

The universe like an egg contained Te Tumu (The Foundation) and Te Papa, ...burst and produced three layers superposed, the one below propping two above, the lowest layer remained Te Tumu and Te Papa, who created man,

---

<sup>233</sup> (Gunson, 1993, p. 151).

animals, and plants, ... When the people had greatly multiplied, Hoatea (Atea), their progenitor, proposed to expand their dominion by raising the layer above them, ... strong men raised the layer above them with their arms, mounting upon each other's shoulders as they did so until the highest trees could stand upright. When the lowest layer of earth became filled with creation the people made an opening in the middle of the layer above so that they could get upon it also, and there they established themselves, taking with them plants and animals from below. They then raised the third layer in the same manner as the first, and ultimately established themselves there also, so that human beings had three abodes.<sup>234</sup>

The Tuamotuan cosmos (Figure 4) contained ten strata inhabited by plants, animals and human worlds, with nine heavenly arches. A Samoan story from Manu‘a describes how a man called Lu pursued thieves to Lagi-tuasefulu, the tenth heaven, where “no strife was allowed; the place was kept beautifully clean, no rubbish to be seen about the roads, and there were no clubs hanging in the houses”.<sup>235</sup> Edward Tregear recounts how there were ten heavens (Rangi) for Māori, each having a different ruler: Kiko-rangi, Waka-maru, Nga-Roto, Hau-ora or Wai-ora-a-Tane, Nga-Tauira, Nga-Atua, Autoia, Aukumes, Wairua, and Naherangi or Tuwarea, the Great Temple, where the supreme divinities reside, the Heaven of Rehua.<sup>236</sup>

---

<sup>234</sup> Quoted in Kenneth Emory, (Emory, 1940, pp. 571-572).

<sup>235</sup> (Turner, 1884, p. 14).

<sup>236</sup> “Rangi as Heaven, less in the sense of a person and more as a locality, is supposed to contain ten divisions or spaces, in opposition to Papa, who contains ten hell-spaces or divisions downwards to the Nether-world. The first division of Rangi is called Kiko-rangi, the home of Tawhiri-matea; the second is Waka-maru, the heaven of rain and sunshine; the third, Nga-Roto, the heaven of lakes; the spray splashing over is the rain of the Lower-world. Herein reigns Maru. The fourth heaven is the Hau-ora or Wai-ora-a-Tane, the ‘Living water of Tane,’ from this circle the soul of man comes when a child is born. The fifth division is Nga-Tauira, the abode of those who attend the inferior gods who officiate in Naherangi; the sixth, Nga-Atua, the home of the inferior gods, and the dwelling-place of Tawhaki; the seventh is Autoia, where the soul of man is created, and where spirits of mortals begin to live; the eighth is Aukumes, where time is allowed for spirits to live; the ninth is Wairua, therein dwell the Spirit-gods who attend on the deities in Naherangi; the tenth or highest heaven is Naherangi or Tuwarea, the Great Temple, where the supreme divinities reside, the Heaven of Rehua. Of these heavens, Maru is god of the lower three, Tawhaki of the next higher three, and Rehua of the upper four” (Tregear, 1891, p. 392).

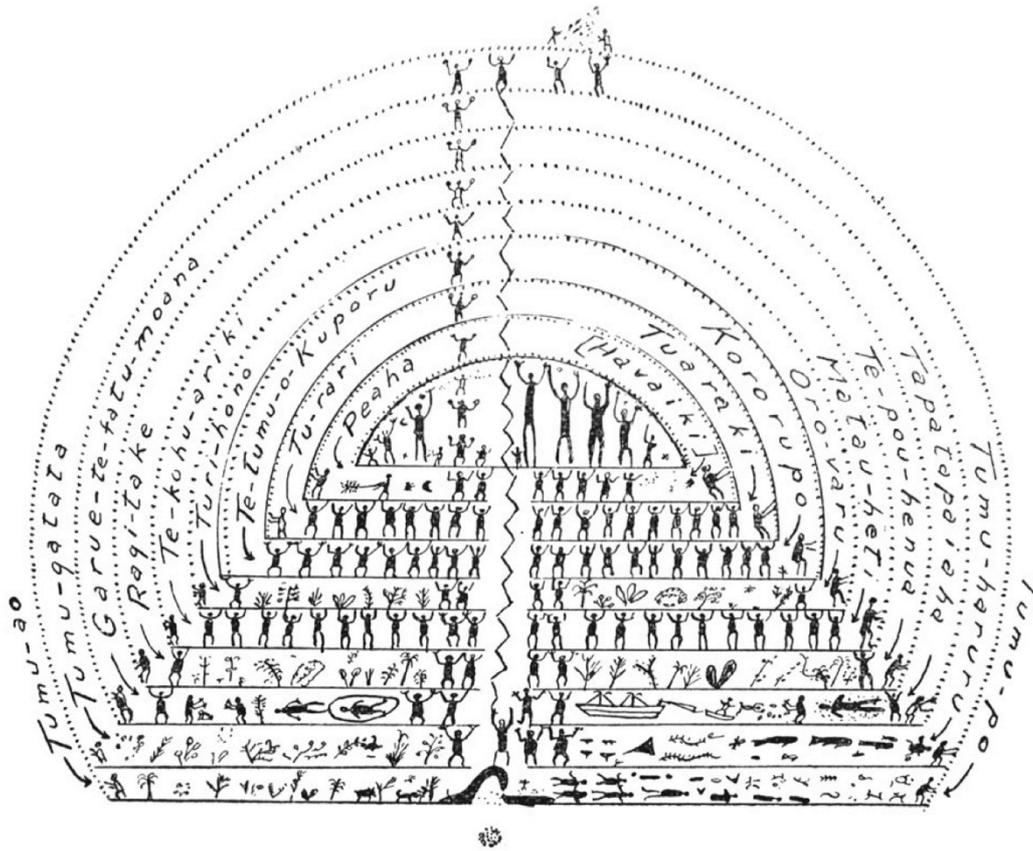


Figure 4  
 François Caillet's illustration of the Tuamotu conception of the Cosmos (from Paiore c. 1920)

Po (night) and Ao (day), which came into being when the first Lagi (Mata-o-le-lagi) was created, form the “bicameral world” of the Polynesians, dividing the world into Po (night, the other-world, darkness, the original gods, the dead, etc.) and Ao (the world of light, day (ao) life, human activity). This division of time between night and day, and the circularity of events, facilitated the coming into being of the ancestor gods.

#### 4. Tofiga 2: Emergence of the ancestor gods

---

Once Lagi-tuaiva was propped up, Tagaloa, now known as Tagaloa-fa’atutupu-nu’u (Tagaloa the cultivator of places) created six gods with anthropomorphic features, who would become the ancestors of the humans. The high-ranking *ali’i* titles of Samoa trace their entire lineage to these ancestor gods, who were connected to settlement of Manu’a. They are:

1. Tagaloa-le-fuli (Tagaloa the immovable), who became Tagaloa-a-lagi the ruler of Lagi;
2. Tagaloa-asiasi-nu’u - Tagaloa the inspector of places;
3. Tagaloa-tolo-nu’u - Tagaloa the regulator of places;<sup>237</sup>
4. Tagaloa-sāvali - Tagaloa the messenger and ambassador of all nine lagi;
5. Tuli - scout of Tagaloa;
6. Logonoa - silence.<sup>238</sup>

Tagaloa immediately called an assembly to be held at Malae Toto’a (the tranquil meeting place) on the ninth Lagi where the first Tufuga built the sacred house *Fale’ula*. This house would be the blueprint for all subsequent meetinghouses in Samoa. In front of *Fale’ula*, the final *tofiga* (distribution and appointment) of Tagaloa’s empire in Lagi, as well as all other territories, took place. There were four other *malae* in Lagi: Malae Vevesi

---

<sup>237</sup> My translation of *tolo* in the name Tagaloa-tolo-nu’u is an approximation of a number of meanings in Pratt’s dictionary (1893) and common use, (Pratt, 1893). I have equated *tolo* with someone who adjourns or make decisions when people of a place are to meet to decide on an outcome.

<sup>238</sup> Pratt translated Logonoa as deaf (Pratt, 1893), which I have equated with silence, but it is important to point out that there is also the possible meaning for Logonoa as “one free of obligation”. The word *logo* means to broadcast an important message by a conch trumpet, a wooden drum or a crier, and *noa* meaning free, which implies the idea of Logonoa being the youngest of the ancestor gods, who might be *noa* or neutral from any obligations to the Tagaloa clan.

(chaotic meeting place), Malae Auasia<sup>239</sup> (visitors' meeting place), Malae Alamisi (meeting place of desire), and Malae Tafuna'i (cloudy meeting place).

Tagaloa-fa'atutupu-nu'u sent Tagaloa-sāvali the messenger to notify all districts of Lagi regarding the assembly in Lagi-tuaiva. He went to Po (night) and Ao (day), who lived on Mata-o-le-lagi the first heaven, with their children Lagi-uli (dark heaven) and Lagi-mā (bright heaven) and the stars. All had already taken their places in the firmament, except for the four boys: Manu'a who was injured on his side, Samoa, who had a blocked chest, La (sun) and Masina (moon). The four uncommitted children of Po and Ao were sent to Lagi-tuaiva to be part of the *tofiga*. When all the family of Tagaloa took their seats in the meeting, Tagaloa made his final *tofiga*:

1. All of Ilu and Mamao's children, a thousand of them living on the eighth heaven, would become Tufuga, builders of sacred houses and boats. In honour of their skills in building the *Fale'ula*, they were also gifted the *tufugaga* tool kit.
2. Two boys, Manu'a and Samoa, were taken to earth and their names would be remembered as those of kings, Tui Manu'a<sup>240</sup> and Samoa Atoa respectively.
3. Po and Ao and their remaining children La and Masina were to go to the realm between earth and Lagi, where Po and Ao would follow each other as night and day. La, in turn, followed Ao, as the sun, and Masina followed Po, as the moon. The stars, too, now followed the moon at night.
4. The messenger Tagaloa-sāvali fished-up<sup>241</sup> Fiji, but it was too remote from Manu'a, so he appealed to Tagaloa-a-lagi to make it easier for him to go to and fro, and so Tonga was brought-up as a steppingstone between Manu'a and Fiji, and Savai'i was brought-up as a steppingstone between Manu'a and the rest.
5. Tagaloa-sāvali returned to Lagi and was instructed to take the couples Atu and Fiti to settle Fiji, thereby Atu Fiti or Fiji Islands, and Atu and Toga, who became Atu Toga or Tonga Islands. Fatu and 'Ele'ele<sup>242</sup> and their children had already

---

<sup>239</sup> I have used Auasia from Krämer's version rather than Asia contained in the *Solo* text, which I believe was a misspelling (Krämer, 1994, p. 540).

<sup>240</sup> Tui Manu'a was the highest chiefly title in all Samoa until extinguished when the eastern part of Samoa including Manu'a became an American territory in the late 19th century.

<sup>241</sup> I've translated *fa'atutupu* as 'brought-up' rather than 'creation' to express notions of growth and cultivation inherent in the Samoan meaning.

<sup>242</sup> Fatu and 'Ele'ele came down from Lagi to settle in Malae-a-vavau, near the east of the village Taū and gave birth to Ti'apa and Valu'a who went and peopled Savaii (Powell & Fraser, 1892, p. 188).

settled in Manu'a and two of their children, Valu'a and Ti'apa, were sent to settle the island of Savai'i.<sup>243</sup>

6. Upolu and Tutuila were the last lands to be brought-up by Tagaloa.<sup>244</sup>

### 5. Mavae 3: From worms to humans

---

Tagaloa appointed Tagaloa-sāvali to the newly created lands of Upolu and Tutuila.<sup>245</sup> Tagaloa sent down Fue-tagata or Fue-sā (a peopling-vine)<sup>246</sup> to grow in Salēa-au-mua on Malae-lā (malae of the sun) at the western side of Upolu. When Tagaloa visited, the vines had rotted in the sun and had given birth to 'ilo (wiggling worms); so Tagaloa proceeded to pull out and fashion the worms to have a head, eyes, hands and feet until they completely looked like *tagata* (humans). He imbued them with *loto* (heart) and *agaga* (spirit/soul), qualities that were originally born from Papa (see section 1e). There were four creations altogether, Tele and Upolu, who together peopled Upolutele ('Upolu the great'); and Tutu and Ila, who combined to people Tutuila. The final and departing *mavaega* of Tagaloa decreed, "Always show respect to Manu'a, who does now shall be overtaken by calamity; let each one do as he likes to his own lands".<sup>247</sup>

A slightly different version recounted by John B. Stair,<sup>248</sup> has Tuli rather than Tagaloa-sāvali as the messenger of Tagaloa who took with him to Malae-lā his brothers Tagaloa-tosi (Tagaloa the marker) and Tagaloa-va'a-va'ai (Tagaloa the seer or beholder). On their arrival, the two Tagaloa proceeded to pull out and shape the worms, forming the head, eyes, elbow, knees until the beings were fully formed. As they were being formed, Tuli would give his name as a prefix to each part until each part of the body had a name with Tuli as a prefix (for instance, *tuli-lima* for the elbows and *tuli-vae* for the knees). Tauanu'u's interpretation of *Solo o le vā* ends with the command to always show respect

---

<sup>243</sup> Savaii was named after Sava (boy) and I'i (girl) the children of Valu'a and Ti'apa. Importantly, both Manu'a and Savaii are related being settled by Fatu and 'Ele'ele and their children, Upolu and Tutuila were settled by the first humans created out of 'ilo or maggots.

<sup>244</sup> Tagaloa-sāvali turned to Lagi and appealed to Tagaloa, who turned and "looked" (*silasila*) thereby brought-up Upolu and Tutuila – again here Tagaloa engages a miraculous will by looking.

<sup>245</sup> He said, "Ua ou mana lua nu'u e mapu ai" - Two lands have been sanctified to me.

<sup>246</sup> Fue-tagata is 'peopling vine' and Fue-sā is 'Fue the deified'.

<sup>247</sup> (Krämer, 1994, p. 540).

<sup>248</sup> John B. Stair (Stair, 1897, p. 214).

for Manu'a reaffirming Manu'a's importance as the place where Samoa's genealogy connects to the ancestor gods on Lagi.

## Conclusion

At the conclusion of the cosmogony, during the emergence of the ancestral gods, there appears to be an increased concern with ordering and positioning of things in their proper places. The rampant growth and profusion of elements during Papa's first differentiations has now given way to the crystallisation of form, with the emergence of land formations and the coming of the human. Papa, as cosmological matter, has been absorbed into all the created elements – completely immersed in the world and its becoming. Tagaloa-a-lagi (later Tagaloa-fa'atutupu-nu'u [creator of lands]), the first being, remains aloof and removed from human affairs. Tagaloa's name remains as a prefix to the names of all ancestor gods therein as well as a sacred chiefly title in Savai'i still.<sup>249</sup> Importantly, Samoans believe that they can trace their genealogy to Tagaloa.<sup>250</sup>

Accordingly, the diagram (Figure 5) shows growth moving upwards to the apex and returning down towards Papa, to illustrate the integration of the realm of the ancestor gods and that of the world of *tagata* (humans). It takes into account the Samoan (and more generally Polynesian) view that there is no principal separation between cosmogony and the world of *tagata*.<sup>251</sup> Samoans understand their cosmology as the transposition in time of the past into the present, which is evident in the metaphor of moving with one's back to the future facing the past, allowing the present to proceed into the future.

A diagram that transposes past and present also allows for an analogy to emerge between diagram and the architectural schema of the *faletele*. As I discuss in more detail later (see below, pp. 214ff) the house's roof reflects the multi-layered curvature of the system of Lagi and its connection to the world of *tagata* below, via the central post that simultaneously holds apart and bridges together the two realms. The outer posts

---

<sup>249</sup> Funefea'i of Safune acquired the title Tagaloa and the circle of *matai* Fale Fagafua from Tagaloa-a-lagi after he allowed him to lay with his beautiful wife Sinaalāua (Krämer, 1994, p. 115).

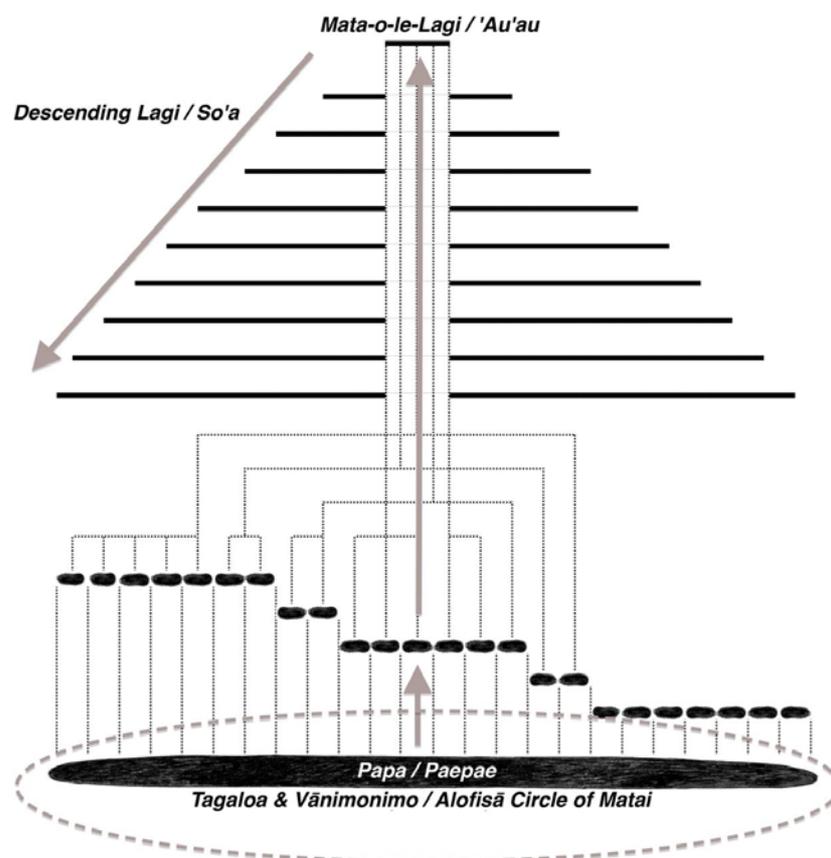
<sup>250</sup> One of my Fa'afaletui informants, I'uogafa Tuagalu, believes that this is not the case for the north of Savai'i where they tend to refer to Tagaloa and *Solo o le Vā* as being particular only to Manu'a.

<sup>251</sup> Gell, 2001: 86.

(*poulalo*) stand-in-place for the founding *matai* (chiefly ancestors), whose deeds connect the past and present, allowing everyone who sits on the *paepae* (house platform), in the shade of the roof, to call this place *aiga* (family), the place of their family.

From the *Solo o le Vā* emerge the beginnings of Samoan notions of space, place and subjectivities through a process of *mavae* and *tofiga*, in which matter expands in an outward movement which is the reversed to aggregate and combine elements in an order. *Mavae* and *tofiga* alternate to form the world, which can be articulated through a detailed reading of parts of the *Solo o le Vā*, and, in a fourth step of the chant, the diagramming and the back-and-forth between text and diagram.

In the next chapter, I will explore in detail the spatial characteristics of the elements outlined in the discussion so far. I will also extend the spatial exposition from the diagrammatic level towards a connection with meaning in the discourses of space and architecture.



**Figure 5**  
The movement of generation in the narrative of the cosmogony



## Chapter 4

### Cosmic emplacements

This chapter draws out the significance of the Samoan origin story to the spatial structuring of Samoan society, its rituals, and the concepts of *mana* and *tapu*. I will explicate how a notion of place is articulated and how the spatial exposition of the Samoan cosmogony carried out in Chapter 3 shows that this concept of space centres on ‘place’. Place, here, is *tulaga fale* (foundation for family *faletele*) and *nofoaga* (seat) for a *matai* and ‘his’ extended clan, which is marked by the mounding of earth and stones to form a *paepae* (platform) over which a *fale* (house) provides shelter. A *nu’u* (village) is made up of several *nofoaga*, grouped around one or several *malae* (open ceremonial ground/s).<sup>252</sup>

#### **Cosmic emplacement and *nofoaga***

The *Solo o le Vā* is determined by a contextual cosmic relationship, articulating an idea of place and ground, in the exchange between Tagaloa-a-lagi and Papa (see p. 60). The narrative places things in their first proper order, as a form of ‘cosmic emplacement’. In this way, as Edward Casey suggests, the cosmogonic narrative not only recount events in time, “but also tells of things *in place*, how things occupy or come to acquire places [as] events in place”.<sup>253</sup> The act of creation sets up ‘a first place’. Even the strictest void is related to place and, as Casey intimates, at the very least,

the void may possess certain residual place-properties: for example, ‘bereft of body’. To be devoid of body is still to be capable of containing a body – even if the body in question does not yet exist, or no longer exists. What void and

---

<sup>252</sup> I use ‘his’ to refer to *matai* as it is the usual custom in Samoa for men to hold titles in the precontact era, the exception being Salamasina, a woman who was the first person to hold the four highest titles in Samoa around 1500 AD giving her the status of Tafaiā – the ‘four-sided-one’.

<sup>253</sup> (Casey, 1998, p. 7).

place share is the common property of being the arena for the appearance of bodies.<sup>254</sup>

In Samoan and Polynesian cosmogonies, the void as ‘nothingness’<sup>255</sup> is not bereft of qualities concerning place or relationships with other things, but involves dwelling in the “active scene of creation, the scene of what-is-to-come”.<sup>256</sup> *Te Kore*, “the limitless space-filling void”,<sup>257</sup> of Māori creation accounts, is, for instance, not empty, but a plenum filled with unknown entities, or a “water filled world”.<sup>258</sup>

The Samoan concept of space as *vānimonimo*, the primordial space, has similarities with Casey’s notion of ‘place’, the context in which the work of creation can begin.<sup>259</sup> *Vānimonimo* is made up of two words: the prefix *vā*, which describes a period, space or gap between two or more things, and *nimonimo*, meaning ‘unknown’ and ‘out-of-sight’.<sup>260</sup> *Vā*, as I explore it in this thesis, characterises the Samoan understanding of a social and cultural space of relations. When understood as a quality that is present at any point in the origin of the universe, *vā* is (like the Māori *Te Kore*)<sup>261</sup> a first place with the capacity to ‘locate’ and extend the work of creation. Edward Tregear defines *Te Kore*

---

<sup>254</sup> (Casey, 1998, p. 17).

<sup>255</sup> The world was created *ex nihilo* in the Judean and Christian concept of the origin of the world the rationale being, “If God creates the world out of nothing, and all humans are made in the image of that God, which is here Christian, then the world waits for Christian un-covering, for recognition of what already is one, true, creation out of nothing” (Bauman, 2009, p. 46) – see also pp. 6ff, above. In contrast, traditional societies have polytheistic cosmogonies, in which the universe does not get created with a bang but emerges/ appears (Casey, 1998, p. 5). These are also re-enacted in annual ritual cycles (Eliade, 1959, pp. 81-81).

<sup>256</sup> (Casey, 1998, p. 18).

<sup>257</sup> (Hongi, 1907, p. 114).

<sup>258</sup> Alternatively, as Roland B. Dixon observes in reference to the Hawai’ian creation story *Kumulipo*, a striking feature in some Polynesian cosmogonies is the fact that, “although we have the source of all things from chaos, it is a chaos which is simply wreck and ruin of an earlier world”, thus suggesting that there was another origin point beyond the known creation stories (1916, p. 15).

<sup>259</sup> (Hongi, 1907).

<sup>260</sup> (Pratt, 1893). Similarly, the Greek chaos (*khaos*) refers to gape.

<sup>261</sup> For instance David Simmons says that “*Te Kore* is where the first twitch of life occurs. It is a state of unity a presence which has no regard to time, place, extent or majesty” (Simmons, 1986, 8). According to some indigenous scholars, *Te Kore* has a Māori whakapapa or lineage that places him away from the point of creation, but is positioned, according to Moana Nepia, “within a genealogical continuum linking the past to the present, among the many ancestral figures we (the living) embody” (Nepia, 2012, p. 46).

as “the primal Power of the Cosmos, the Void or negation”, which yet contains “the potentiality of all things afterwards to come”.<sup>262</sup> In Samoan thought, *vā* and *vānimonimo* emplace the birth and rebirth of the world as a cosmic event. At the level of cosmology, the work of creation continually repeats and returns, implying an ecology in which all things are interconnected, which I propose to be inherent in the ways in which *mavae* and *tofiga* configure the world. This configuration, as I present in Chapter 8 (see below, pp. 217ff), is enacted within the architecture of the *faletele*.

In the relationship between *Vānimonimo* and *Tagaloa*, *Vānimonimo* is the scene and place of creation, in which *Tagaloa* is the subject and cause – they define each other. Importantly, *Vānimonimo* situates *Tagaloa*. *Vānimonimo* does not conform to a conventional notion of ‘place’, because it cannot be defined with certainty (even though it provides a spatial context for *Tagaloa* to begin the creation process), because it continually emerges and withdraws – it shimmers. *Vānimonimo* is unreachable by sight (*nimonimo* means invisible, or too distant to grasp) and therefore unattainable to our knowing. A Polynesian etymology of the word *nimo* suggests active motion: “move round in a circle” or “to encircle”.<sup>263</sup> *Nimonimo* also denotes something shimmering or flickering, moving in and out of sight, appearing and disappearing. *Nimo* means to “vanish, disappear, out of sight”.<sup>264</sup> The stars in the night, for instance, have the same qualities of going in and out of sight, because they exist in a faraway place. Equally, *nimo* is an unknown property of an object within proximity (which we may see, even touch, but cannot comprehend). *Nimo* relates to a sense of wonderment when used to describe the distant sky. The *vānimonimo*, as a concept of place, is therefore a paradox, a location without knowable quantities, always located elsewhere. To give *vānimonimo* a definable place within creation, one has to imagine it as a virtual cosmic support that holds and secures the work of creation. *Tagaloa* “the Unrestrained, or Illimitable one” is suspended in it: “*fealualu mai o ia i le vānimonimo*”.<sup>265</sup> Thus, *vānimonimo* cannot provide a firm foothold, nor a sense of orientation – no up or down, beyond or near. It is without orientation, as the other name it is known by indicates: *valevalenoa* (without direction, unclaimed or unmarked).

---

<sup>262</sup> (Tregear, 1891).

<sup>263</sup> Also, to be “giddy” and the feeling of “vertigo” (Pollex).

<sup>264</sup> (Pollex)

<sup>265</sup> (Powell & Fraser, 1892, p. 171).

*Valevalenoa*, too, is associated with things of unknown qualities, which are yet to be given meaning. *Vale* translates as “worthless; unproductive; needless; inactive”,<sup>266</sup> while *valevale* connotes youthful, childish and untamed. George Turner, a missionary in Samoa in the mid-nineteenth century, collected a creation story in which *Valevalenoa*<sup>267</sup> was a progeny of Tagaloa, whose mother was the “Queen of earth”.<sup>268</sup> *Valevalenoa* adopted a boy (head only and without a body) that had fallen from heaven and gave him a body.<sup>269</sup> When the boy grew up, he enquired about the whereabouts of his father and was told that his father lived in the east, in-land, above and below. Therefore, the child took the name “All-the-sides-of-heaven”, and from him sprang the four divisions East, West, North and South.<sup>270</sup>

*Valevalenoa* and *vānimonimo* are spaces without cause (*noa*), without body (*vale*), without extension or orientation. They challenge our reliance on measure and definition, which are incapable of describing the conditions constituting *valevalenoa* and *vānimonimo*. They also express a sense of free and whirling movement (*vale* in *ta'avale* describes a spinning wheel, or car in postcolonial Samoa).<sup>271</sup> In this context, a relevant image is that of Tagaloa, the unrestrained, moving circularly in a vortex (*valevalenoa*),<sup>272</sup> or *fealualu*<sup>273</sup> (going back and forth) within and around *Vānimonimo*. To understand Tagaloa-le-lagi,

---

<sup>266</sup> (Pratt, 1893).

<sup>267</sup> (Turner, 1884, p. 5) Turner translated *valevalenoa* simply as ‘space’, but he probably did this, as was common at his time, to take space to mean a “linear distant”, an “interval between two or more points, or objects”, and also “a certain stretch, extent, or area of ground, surface, sky” (Murray, Bradley, Craigie, & Onions, 1919, p. 496). *Valevalenoa* commonly describes something without direction, unclaimed or unmarked. It is likely that the meaning of space Turner was trying to convey, and which coincided with the Samoan word, referred to an “immeasurable expanse”, with “extension in all directions”; see Murray for the 10<sup>th</sup> century English meaning, (Murray et al., 1919, p. 496).

<sup>268</sup> Turner recorded that Tagaloa the explorer married the Queen of earth, and their offspring was “Valevalenoa, or space” (Turner, 1884, p. 5).

<sup>269</sup> *Tino*, or body, has a connection with *ilo* – wiggling worms that emerged from rotted vines.

<sup>270</sup> (Turner, 1884, p. 6).

<sup>271</sup> *Ta'avale* is the combination of *ta'a* and *vale*; *ta'a* has come to mean, in modern use, to roam freely, but Pratt suggests that it means a party who go to a woman’s family to take proposals of marriage, or food taken on such occasions as a present; it also means to commit fornication with a woman. The combination of *ta'a* and *vale* therefore relay the meaning of an action that is not done without a reason (Pratt, 1893).

<sup>272</sup> Hawai’ian *akua* (gods) performed a similar circular movement (Valeri, 1985, p. 88).

<sup>273</sup> “*Fealualu mai o ia i le vānimonimo*” (going back and forth in the *vānimonimo*) (Powell & Fraser, 1892, p. 171).

the progenitor, is to understand the condition of emplacement just before the creation of the world as a continuum, without extension or time, in which Tagaloa-a-lagi spun back and forth in *Vānimonimo*'s embrace.

Tagaloa-a-lagi and *Vānimonimo* are both identified with qualities beyond human affairs. This enables them to attain a potency associated with extra-dimensional *mana* (power) – a supernatural procreative force that has the ability to “implement” and “manifest” itself in lifeworlds; it is also the catalyst for the processes of becoming.<sup>274</sup> *Tupu* (to become, to grow and unfold) marks the life processes of *mana*, which stems from a power or force that is “beyond abundance”, beyond the measurable.<sup>275</sup> Tagaloa, the ‘unrestrained’ and ‘illimitable one’, is or wields *mana*, and *Vānimonimo*, as a place of unknown quantity, has or contains *mana*.

The relationship between the world of generative Tagaloa and *Vānimonimo*, on one hand, and the human world, on the other, are mediated through *mana* as an impersonal force. This relation can materialise in objects and things, which can be inhabited or organised by *mana*. People are ‘moved’ to possess or inhabit these objects,<sup>276</sup> thus they become links in a chain of events related to the original *mana*. I suggest that in the Samoan world, it is *mavae* and *tofiga* that structure the unfolding of *mana*'s influence and potency in the world. Marcel Mauss talks about *mana* as a person, honoured by wealth and authority,<sup>277</sup> a view supported by Roger Keesing, who suggested, “things and human enterprises and efforts are *mana*”.<sup>278</sup> *Mana* has an unseen quality (*ninimo*) that can take up a place, both within persons and objects of special qualities, which allows the person or object to emanate an ideal condition.

---

<sup>274</sup> Aiono Fana’afi Le Tagaloa quoted in Tcherkézoff (2012, p. 318).

<sup>275</sup> Abundance is the quality that is associated with chiefly *mana*, which has its source in the ancestor gods (Shore, 1988, pp. 138, 140).

<sup>276</sup> Alfred Gell called these ‘indexes’ (Gell, 1998, p. 13).

<sup>277</sup> (Mauss, 1966, p. 36).

<sup>278</sup> (R. Keesing, 1984, p. 138).

## **Emanation of *mana* and its spatial qualities**

*Mana* is defined in the Samoan cosmogonic setting as the ‘residue echo’ or an ‘indivisible remainder’<sup>279</sup> of Tagaloa. This residue or remainder of what took place in the *vānimonimo*, the primordial space, continues to emanate as an ‘impersonal force’ that echoes throughout the Samoan world. It manifests itself in the brilliance, or ‘shining’, of things. This shining characteristically appears as smooth and white (*sina*), which enchants the viewer. This is achieved by technical virtuosity and highly refined processes of making. Alfred Gell suggests they are embodiments or residues of complex intentionality’s,<sup>280</sup> in which technological virtuosity imbues the things with enchantment.<sup>281</sup> This characteristic of *mana* has been explored widely in Polynesian anthropology and theology, suggesting various ways in which the divine realm can manifest itself in the human world.<sup>282</sup>

If the cosmic principle, or force, is conveyed in the general Polynesian conception of *mana*, the latter is knowable only indirectly, through its efficacy and through its manifestation in things.<sup>283</sup> In trying to understand, Marcel Mauss, who linked magical

---

<sup>279</sup> “Indivisible remainder” is a term used by Žižek (following Schelling) to describe things that cannot be internalised properly and thus they become an excess. It is used here in the sense of something that cannot be exactly divided or structured, articulated or counted by the signifying network (Žižek, 2007, p. 154). Thus, as Schelling contends, it remains like a ‘ruleless’ force lying in the ground waiting to break through. “After the eternal act of self-revelation, everything in the world is, as we see it now, rule, order and form; but anarchy still lies in the ground, as if it could break through once again, and nowhere does it appear as if order and form were what is original but rather as if initial anarchy had been brought to order. This is the incomprehensible base of reality in things, the indivisible remainder, that which with the greatest exertion cannot be resolved in understanding but rather remains eternally in the ground” (Schelling, 2006, p. 29). While the indivisible remainder is a force that lays dormant in the ground for Western philosophy, *mana* in Polynesia is a desirable force that remains in things on the world, a force that many try to harness by cajoling and soliciting it to be enclosed and bound-up by *tapu*. Thus, the impulse to build and make things in Polynesia is the instinct that calls forth the *mana* principle, to be domesticated and ‘buried’ within the everyday.

<sup>280</sup> (Gell, 1996, p. 37).

<sup>281</sup> Achieved by psychological manipulation, which Gell proposes to be adjunct to technical procedures, because they are a magical thought that “formalizes and codifies the structural features of technical activity, imposing on it a framework of organization which regulates each successive stage in a complex process” (Gell, 1988, p. 8); see also (Gell, 1994).

<sup>282</sup> (Codrington, 1891); (Prytz-Johansen, 2012); (Hocart, 1914); (Firth, 1940); (Henare, 2001); (Shore, 1988); (Tomlinson, 2006), (Golub, 2014).

<sup>283</sup> See (Codrington, 1891)@116-127; (Firth, 1940); (Mauss, 1972); (R. Keesing, 1984); Roy Wagner (1987); (Shore, 1988).

practices to the impersonal force characteristic of *mana*,<sup>284</sup> described the latter not as a mechanical force, but as one he termed a “mysterious milieu” – an environment and context that does not function in the way we expect the empirical world to operate.<sup>285</sup> *Mana* works across time and space, independent of measurable coordinates.

*Mana* is, therefore, seen to be something both mysterious and separate. In sum, *mana* is first of all an action of a certain kind, that is, a spiritual action that works at a distance and between sympathetic beings. It is also a kind of ether, imponderable, communicable, which spreads of its own accord. *Mana* is also a milieu, or more exactly functions as a milieu, which in itself is *mana*. It is a kind of internal, special world where everything happens as if *mana* alone were involved. It is the *mana* of the magician which works through the *mana* of the rite on the *mana* of the *tindalo*, and which sets other *manas* in motion and so forth and so on. In its actions and reactions there are no other forces involved apart from *mana*. It is produced in a closed circuit, in which everything is *mana* and which is itself *mana*, if we may so express it.<sup>286</sup>

Either directly or indirectly, *mana* is tied to divine powers. These powers have been variously described as genealogically transmitted;<sup>287</sup> or, as a psychic dynamism that can affect the human word;<sup>288</sup> or, as a force channelled through religious rituals.<sup>289</sup> In general, *mana*'s visible effectiveness emphatically underscores associations of nobility and status. Handy describes *mana* as a primal cosmic force, “not merely power of efficacy, but procreative power, derived from an ultimate source and diffused, transmitted, and manifested throughout the universe”.<sup>290</sup> Marshall Sahlins observed that, essentially,

*mana* is the creative power Hawaiians describe as making visible what is invisible, causing things to be seen, which is the same as making them known or giving them form. Hence the divine *mana* of chiefs is manifest in their brilliance, their shining.<sup>291</sup>

---

<sup>284</sup> (Mauss, 1972, p. 131).

<sup>285</sup> (Mauss, 1972, p. 132).

<sup>286</sup> (Mauss, 1972, p. 138).

<sup>287</sup> (Goldman, 1970, p. 9)

<sup>288</sup> (Handy, 1927, p. 26)

<sup>289</sup> (Hanson, 1987, p. 426)

<sup>290</sup> (Handy, 1927, p. 27).

<sup>291</sup> (Sahlins, 1981, p. 31). Bradd Shore attributed this image of ‘brilliance’ to abundance (Shore, 1988, p. 138).

The connection with the world of high-ranking chiefs and aristocratic family lines enabled the world of Tagaloa and the ancestor gods to exert effective influence on the world of *tagata*. The highest and most sacred of titles in Samoa, for instance, inherited qualities from Tagaloa's world that are all associated with light as a shimmering effect, abundance and generative powers. *Mana* is known generally in Samoa via the effect and cause of *pa'ia*<sup>292</sup> – people and objects “not touched by work”,<sup>293</sup> or by what is “considered sanctity”<sup>294</sup> or “sacred-divine”.<sup>295</sup> As a more specific equivalent of *mana*, which emanates from persons, *pa'ia*, in the Samoan context of *ali'i pa'ia* (paramount chief or holder of titles connecting to the ancestor gods), refers to being dazzled by a person's presence or charisma. In return, we become *mamalu* – sheltered and protected as a form of dignity. We will see in Chapter 6 how *mana* via chiefly titles extends to encompass land and resources in Samoa.

The shimmering of *pa'ia* also occurs within the *fono*, a congregation, or gathering in a circle, of *ali'i* (chiefs) and *tulāfale* (orator chiefs). In this context, *pa'ia* relates to the collective gathering in the *alofi sā* (sacred circle). The *ali'i* and *tulāfale* face each other in a circle, along the edges of a *fale tele*. From this facing emanates a special collective power, which is commonly known and addressed as *o le mamalu ma le pa'ia* (dignity and sanctity).<sup>296</sup> *Feagai* (worship) also means to face, and to attend to, each other; the particle *aga* can mean the face or the front of a person's body; compounded to *agaga*, it means soul or spirit. Therefore, the *fono* is a meeting of souls or essences, which manifest in the body corporate, linked together in the presence of *ali'i*. *Mana* emanates from this gathering, from people with genealogical connections to Tagaloa, who bear the names and titles of ancestors as status objects denoting their office. Importantly, their willing congregation is marked out spatially in their *nofoaga* (sitting), in the shape of a ring or circle.

---

<sup>292</sup> *Pa'ia* (to be dazzled), relates to the act of seeing and how one's eyes become blinded by the brilliance of a shimmering shining light source, for instance the sun (Fraser, 1897). *Pa'ia* is also the word for 'touch'.

<sup>293</sup> (Pratt, 1893).

<sup>294</sup> (Tcherkézoff, 2008, p. 254).

<sup>295</sup> The word is used to address direct descendants of the highest *ali'i* (paramount chiefs) in Samoa. An *ali'i'* title connects directly to the Manu'a Tagaloa clan's genealogy, via the Tui Manu'a (king of Manu'a) and progeny of Tagaloa-a-lagi. (Tcherkézoff, 2008, pp. 295, fn. 242) *Pa'ia*, as an effect, describes the power and influence of *mana* as a cascading force, passing from chief to chief in a line of descent. When we are in the presence of such *ali'i*, we take on board his or her *mana* as *mamalu*; we become like *ali'i pai'a* (sacred-divine chief).

<sup>296</sup> (Tcherkézoff, N. Scott/2005, p. 254).

Beyond the *fono*, *mana* as divine force has also shaped the grouping of *nofoaga* around the cleared space of the *malae*. As noted above (p. 72), the *malae* in Lagi was the common form of meeting places of the Sā Tagaloa clan.<sup>297</sup> Reflecting this first meeting place of the ancestors, the Samoan village is concentrated around a *malae* (ring *a* in Figure 6) and bounded by *fale tele* (council meeting houses, *x*). *Nofoaga* (family dwellings) are located within a secondary ring (*b*), beyond the first; a third ring (*c*) with houses for cooking and ablution huts forms another boundary, which extends towards the edges of the bush, inland, or to the seashore.

The shape of a village reflects a similarly emanating or cascading structure, where the divinity at the centre is *pa'ia* (ring *a*), in an empty space, devoid of a body but with an intensive force that Samoans acknowledge, and to which they direct their attention, because of its panoptic power.<sup>298</sup> And from this invisible emanation, the *ali'i* gains his *mamalu* (dignity) in a chain reaction that echoes throughout the social structure of the village:

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*). 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.<sup>299</sup>

---

<sup>297</sup> See page 29; they are Malae Toto'a (the tranquil meeting place), Malae Vevesi (chaotic meeting place), Malae Auasia (visitors' meeting place), Malae Alamisi (meeting place of desire), and Malae Tafuna'i (cloudy meeting place).

<sup>298</sup> *Pa'ia* and *mamalu* are effects of divine power or *mana* in which those who dwell within the *nu'u* (village) are seen and monitored by every community member; *pa'ia* refers to the power of a divine light that sees all corners of the community, similar to what Michel Foucault called a panopticon (Foucault, 1995, p. 200). See also (Refiti, 2009, p. 10).

<sup>299</sup> (Tcherkézoff, 2008, p. 259).

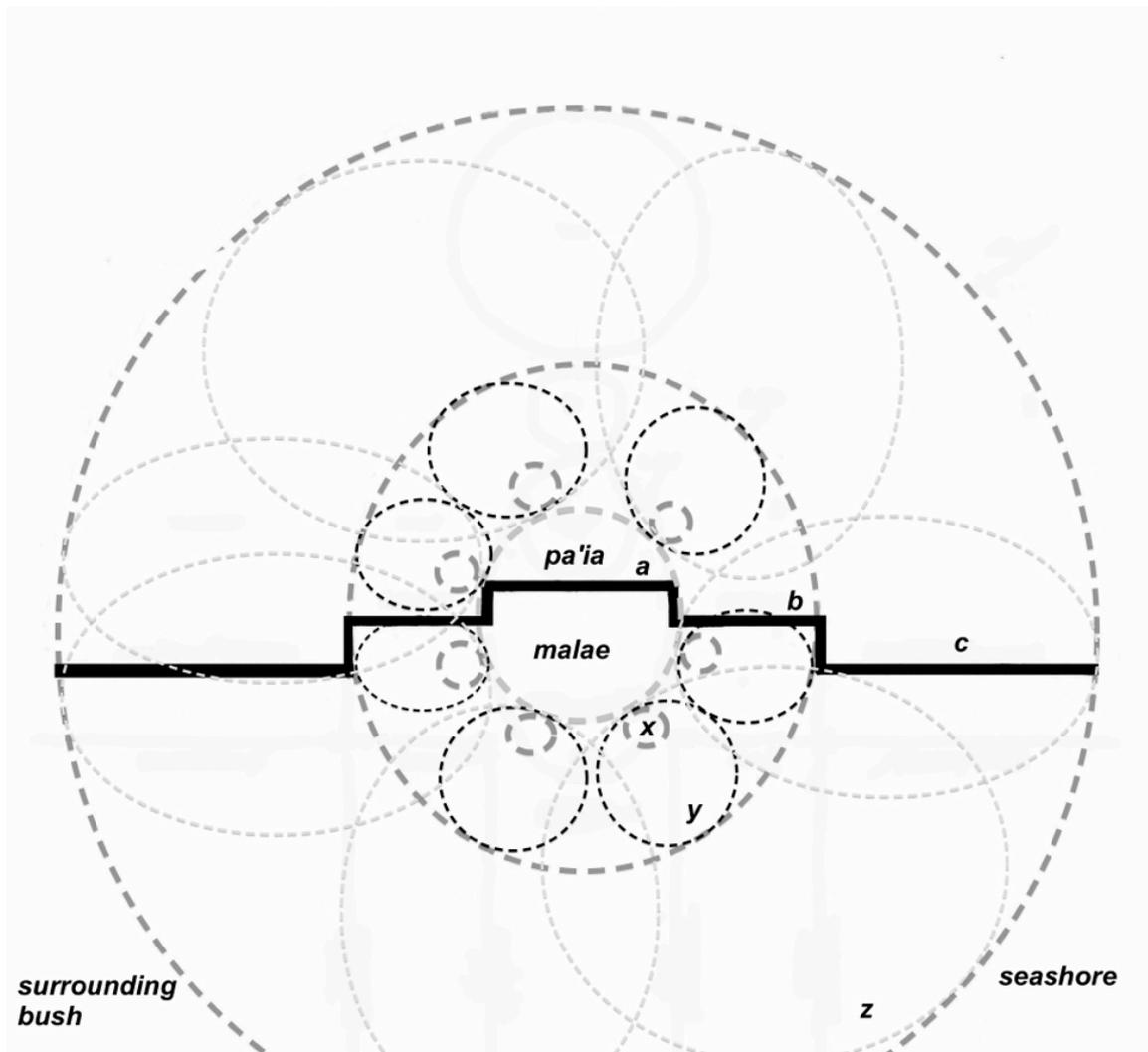


Figure 6  
Diagram of Samoan village showing the spheres of influence

Tagaloa and *Vānimonimo* form the origin point, or ‘event horizon’, of the Samoan world and generate a force whose indivisible remainder passes to the world of *tagata* (humans) as *mana*, with the capacity to shine brightly as *pa’ia* – a quality much desired by men. In Samoa, and Polynesia more generally, this divine quality was much sought after, and the need to capture it impacted on the structure of rituals as *tapu* events.<sup>300</sup> Spatially, these rituals were organised in a circular fashion, around the ringed site of a *malae* (marae ātea for Māori) or *fono* (council meeting). *Tapu* is commonly referred to as *tapui* (closure) in Samoa, or *sā* (sacred, confined). All titles and lineages connecting to the ancestor gods are bundled together under the concept of *sā*, as closed sacred objects. The family of Tagaloa, for instance, comes under the *tapu* of Sā Tagaloa, indicating that all who belong to this name are *sā*. This is why every family is grouped around a titled member, usually with an *ali’i* at the centre and clan members surrounding and supporting him. These relationships manifest in the form of the family compound, a cascading ring. Persons are therefore literally bounded to titles, and titles are grouped in ringed formations within the *nu’u* village, within *itumalo* (districts), and at the national level (see pp. 133ff).<sup>301</sup> The *mana* emanating from titles and connected to *ali’i* (an emanation of the ‘grace’ of the ancestor gods) thus draws and binds people together as a form of emplacement. It creates clans and families as production centres, in which the flow of service and labour adduced from each individual, moves things from the periphery of the village to the interior family circles, and from there to the centre with the sacred houses and the *malae*. Within the circle of *ali’i* and *matai*, the objects produced by the labour of individuals are turned into *measina* and *toga*, sacred and valuable things, which then flow out again, to the ring of family house and the village, to be exchanged with other families and groups in other centres. *Toga* (finery), made by women, for instance, acquires value only when shown before the family or the village in exchange ceremonies.<sup>302</sup> Food, as a sign of abundance, also acquires *mana* when it is distributed by *ali’i* and *matai* in exchange ceremonies.

Spatially, the advent of *mana* triggers the formation of each village centre, in which *malae* and *aiga* dwellings repeat the same cascading, repetitive assemblage that has been noted

---

<sup>300</sup> The “tangling or binding idiom associated with *tapu* concept turns up as the concept of *fa’alavelave* literally ‘to tangle’ or ‘to make complicated’” (Shore, 1988, p. 151).

<sup>301</sup> (Shore, 1988, p. 151).

<sup>302</sup> Their values are determined by the potential of the female members of the families to produce children in the future, (Schoeffel, 1999).

to have a “holographic fractal” structure.<sup>303</sup> This propensity of *mana* (as emanation of Tagaloa and *Vānimonimo*) to form coherent structures, which organise the Samoan world from the pre-Lagi period to the formation of contemporary Samoan villages, is countered by the deterritorialisation<sup>304</sup> associated with the spatial manifestation of Papa (stratum), which untangles Tagaloa and *Vānimonimo*. It is as though any ordered system can only be temporarily stable, because it is already marked by another, subsequent transformation, eventuating as an unstructured event, which breaks it down so that the order again proliferates in *mavaega* (becoming).

### **Papa and the genealogy of *tagata***

In Samoan cosmogony, Papa is central to the birthing process of the universe. Papa grounded Tagaloa, who until then, without extension, engaged in *Vānimonimo*. When Tagaloa branched out and extended to make Papa (who, in turn, contextualise Tagaloa), their qualities multiplied. All *tagata* (humans) can trace their ancestry to Papa, whose form and mass provided all the elements in creation (see Figure 7 and 6).

With one word, “*mavae*”, Papa began the great unfolding that shaped the world, providing it with all its qualities. These are then transformed and become diversified into many parts that are part of each other. In turn, they carry or engender others, by making themselves genealogical or reproductive factors of these others, forming a gene-archaeological matter<sup>305</sup> that is like Wagner’s enchainment of people that would be seen

---

<sup>303</sup> Roy Wagner, in theorising a repetitive and partible structure of personhood in Oceania, uses the image of fractals to describe a system that welds the individual and corporate together. “A fractal person is never a unit standing in relation to an aggregate, or an aggregate standing in relation to a unit, but always an entity with relationship integrally implied [thus] people exist reproductively by being ‘carried’ as part of another, and ‘carry’ or engender others by making themselves genealogical or reproductive ‘factors’ of these others. A genealogy is thus an enchainment of people, as indeed persons would be seen to ‘bud’ out of one another in a speeded-up cinematic depiction of human life” (Wagner, 1991, p. 163); see also (Wagner, 2001, pp. 3-17).

<sup>304</sup> Deterritorialisation is a concept invented by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari to explain the freeing-up of boundaries and territories by strategies and processes that allow for things to branch out and multiply like the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 68). There is relationship here between deterritorialisation and *mavae* as concepts – they share the propensity to multiply and map out things in “detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and multiple entryways and exits and lines of flight” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21).

<sup>305</sup> I discuss in this relation to the work of Albert Wendt and John Pule elsewhere (Refiti, 2005).

to 'bud' out of one-another.<sup>306</sup> Samoans record these becomings as *gafa*, oral genealogies that are ritually enounced and which structure the *matai* system in Samoa.

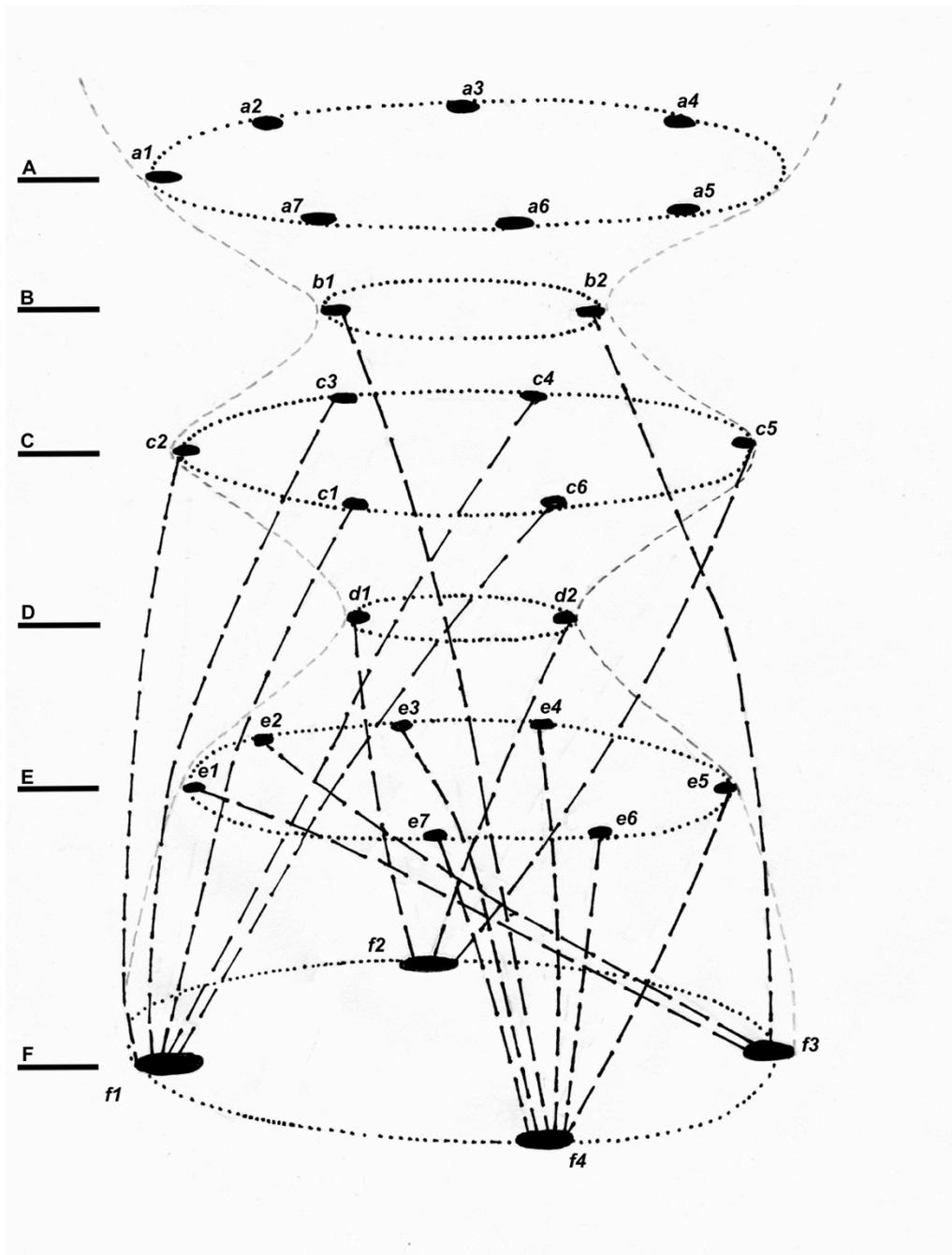


Figure 7  
The divarication and differentiation of parts in Papa's birthing process

---

<sup>306</sup> (Wagner, 1991, p. 163).

Papa's genealogy thus takes shape as:

- a1. Papa Tao'to; a2 - Papa Solosolo; a3 – Papa La'au; a4 – Papa Anoano; a5 – Papa 'Ele; a6 – Papa Tu; a7 – Papa 'Amu'amu.
- b1. 'Ele'ele; b2 – Sami.
- c1. Vai; c2 – Lagi; c3 – Tui-te'e-lagi; c4 – Ilu; c5 – Mamao; c6 – Niua.
- d1. Lua'o; d2 – Luāvai.
- e1. Aoalālā; e2 - Gao-gao-o-le-tai; e3 – Tagata; e4 – Agaga; e5 – Loto; e6 – Finagalo; e7 – Masalo.
- f1. Tui-te'e-lagi propped up Lagi and elevated the firmament and the home of Ilu, Mamao and Niua. This is where *Vānimonimo*, home of Tagaloa, is also located.
- f2. Lua'o and Luavai were given the title of Sā Tualagi, meaning, "existing beyond Lagi", joined with Vai to form all watery elements.
- f3. Aoalālā, Gao-gao-le-tai and Sami joined to form the great ocean.
- f4. Tagata, Agaga, Loto , Finagalo and Masalo combine with 'Ele'ele to form the first anthropomorphic couple Fatu (male) and 'Ele'ele (female).

The above schema describes *mavae* moments in the cosmogony as sequences of movements and divarications from the period of creation (A), the moment when Tagaloa and Papa can be described as a 'singular one'. At this moment, Papa cannot be shown directly. But then, Papa became differentiated into many parts, 'multiple ones'. In the diagram above, periods of rampant growth and scattering are at intervals interspersed with episodes of reconfiguration and alignment of the multiple, until we reach the first *tofiga*. Thus, the origin, as a cosmogenic event, is characterised by an alternation between *māvae* (rampant growth) and episodes of *tofiga* (consolidation); the process of becoming is interspersed with moments of refolding, redistribution and recombining.

### **Papa and matter**

Papa is designated in the cosmogony as a stratum, a steady ground on which Tagaloa can stand. The indefinable world belongs to Tagaloa and Vānimonimo, whereas Papa establishes lines that connect and encircle the world, a place where creation takes place, as well as a location from which to extend. In the cosmogony Papa allowed Tagaloa to

find a foothold in the world, an orientation towards all corners of the earth.<sup>307</sup> Previously, as an omnipresent being floating in Vānimonimo, Tagaloa was able to see and be everywhere, all at once; however, Tagaloa therefore lacked the orientation of up or down, left or right. With the advent of Papa, Tagaloa gained orientation and thereby acquired a face. Papa, who branches out and extends, is able to replicate via its qualities that spill out and form spaces and worlds. By comparison, Tagaloa's immobility and inactivity denote a sense of completeness and self-sufficiency that generally characterises Polynesian deities and their descendants.<sup>308</sup>

The descendants inhabit the middle ground or plateau,<sup>309</sup> the centre as *moa* where motion is intense like a vortex, and where things are pulled into the core and held in an orbit. This is why they need a territory to operate; the formation of things with divine qualities needs an amorphous will to point and direct where a territory is to be made. Tagaloa's *tofi* points and appoints, directs and influences – it is a *mana*-like force. Yet, one can sense already that Papa, in the background, goes about dissolving and dividing the borders of Tagaloa's territory. If this sounds like a dissolving force, it is important to remember that Papa has tangible and material qualities. Outside of Samoa, James Gibson writes, in the context of ecology, about the terrestrial ground as the medium for earth, in terms that sound remarkably like Papa: water, and air – a solid, a liquid, and a gas to circulate.

The earth forms a substratum; the water is formed by the substratum into oceans, lakes, and streams; and the formless gases of the air make a layer of atmosphere above the earth and the water. The interface between any two of these three states of matter – solid, liquid, and gas – constitutes a surface. The earth-water interface at the bottom of a lake is one such, the water-air interface at the top is another, and the earth-air interface is a third – the most important of all surfaces for terrestrial animals. This is the ground. It is the ground of

---

<sup>307</sup> Not long after Papa grew from Tagaloa's feet he found his bearing and started to face west and all the sides of the known world making each element appear in turn (Powell & Fraser, 1892, p. 175).

<sup>308</sup> Valerio Valeri pointed out that the highest point of etiquette in Polynesia was not to move, he says that "Laziness for a high-ranking ali'i is a duty, not a vice; it is a manifestation of his absolute plenitude, of the absence of any lack, and moreover, of perfect self-control. The prescription of immobility helps explain why divine ali'i do not walk but are carried; moreover, this custom reveals that ali'i belong to a realm above (heaven) as opposed to the below, represented by ground" (Valeri, 1985, p. 147)

<sup>309</sup> I use Deleuze and Guattari definition (after Gregory Bateson) of plateau as a 'continuous vibrating point' or 'region of intensities' without specific orientation (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 22).

their perception and behaviour, both literally and figuratively. It is their surface of support.<sup>310</sup>

As for substances, they are aggregates of “[r]ock, soil, sand, mud, clay, oil, tar, wood, minerals, metal, and above all, the various tissues of plants and animals are examples of environmental substances”.<sup>311</sup> At the interface between medium and substance are surfaces that have Papa-like characteristics, as the “literal *basis* of the terrestrial environment ... the ground, the underlying surface of support that tends to be on average flat – that is to say, a plane – and also level, or perpendicular to gravity”.<sup>312</sup>

Gibson is concerned with the surfaces of texture, which is the structuring of surfaces (rocks, ploughed soil or grass) aggregated in different units – “crystals, clumps, and grass blades”, with smaller units nested within larger ones.<sup>313</sup> In an almost identical manner, Deleuze suggests that matter “offers an infinitely porous, spongy, or cavernous texture without emptiness, caverns endlessly contained in other caverns”.<sup>314</sup> He imagines every possible matter in existence, from the smallest to the largest, as a “world pierced with irregular passages, surrounded and penetrated by an increasingly vaporous fluid”. If there is a picture of a totality, it would be of a cosmos “resembling a pond of matter in which there exist different flows and waves”.<sup>315</sup>

In Samoan thought, these are almost exactly Papa’s qualities, which generate the divaricating and porous structure that enables extension and growth. There is a paradox in the notion of a foundation that becomes steady when it divides and extends. The concept of place in Samoan thought is equally about the ability of place to guarantee a location, for the ancestor and descendants to dwell together in a place, and also about the ability of a stratum to be extended or transplanted and repeated elsewhere.

We will see in the following chapter how these qualities appear and manifest themselves in the world of men, in the places of *fua’iala* and the *nu’u*, and also how they manifest within persons. I will also show that the constant movement and iteration between

---

<sup>310</sup> (Gibson, 1986, p. 16).

<sup>311</sup> (Gibson, 1986, p. 19).

<sup>312</sup> (Gibson, 1986, p. 10).

<sup>313</sup> (Gibson, 1986, p. 25).

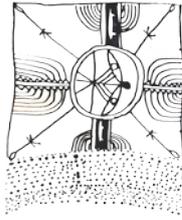
<sup>314</sup> (Deleuze, 1993, p. 5).

<sup>315</sup> (Deleuze, 1993, p. 5)

*mavae* and *tofiga* never stops. It is an integral part of the flow between Lagi above and Papa below, in which the *fale* becomes the bridge, which the cosmic flow enters from above and where it becomes expanded, as it *lavelave* (ravels) with social reality. We will see how Papa becomes memorialised in the raised *paepae*, on which are admitted those who gathers in the *fono* circle of *matai*, who meet and commune with the ancestor gods. The roof of the *fale* built above the *paepae* is inscribed with a diagram of Lagi, making the house a cosmogram.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter draws-out the spatial characteristics of some significance concepts in my earlier analysis of the Samoan origin story *Solo o le Vā* namely Papa and the creation of *tagata* relating to the creation of matter. I attempted a spatial exposition of these concepts in which *mana*, *tapu* and *noa* become important concepts that structure the spaces of rituals and the construction of important places within settlements. They are explored as places of *tulaga fale* and *nofoaga* for a *matai* and his extended clan, which is marked by the mounding of earth and stones to form a *paepae* (platform) over which a *fale* (house) provides shelter. The spatial conceptual structure developed here will be further expanded in the following chapters (5 and 6) as I explore the spatial exposition of the nature of personhood, the village and Samoan kinship structures.



## Chapter 5

# The spatial exposition and structural implication of *mavae* and *tofiga*

*A ua sala uta, ia tonu tai*

(A mistake made inland is rectified by the seaside) <sup>316</sup>

### **Introduction**

The formal and spatial manifestation of the Samoan cosmogony within the structure of the landscape and Samoan polity is best exposed by linking creation (from the cosmogony) to the concepts of *mavae* and *tofiga*. These are embedded in the Samoan notion of the person. I explore this idea of personhood as an interconnected matrix which structures the environment by forming passages, pathways, traits, lines, loops, brocades, knots and branches within the Samoan kinship system. I want to emphasise the idea that the person and the world, from a Samoan perspective, form an interconnected schema reflecting the cosmos.

The potential of *mavae*, as the unfolding of lines and pathways of connections, along the way becomes a conglomeration of people and places and ultimately creates stability and centrality as *tofi* – the appointment of positions and stations, which shapes the meaning and characteristics of *fua'iala* (villages).

### **Openings and divisions: *tofi* and *nu'u***

The Samoan world opens with the notion of *nu'u tofi*, which conjures up notions of culture, society, polity, citizenship and governance, and within which every person is

---

<sup>316</sup> (Schultz, 1980).

given a place, or appointed to a position. The full proverb is “*E tala tau Toga ae tala tofi Samoa*”, which translates as “Tongan stories (traditions) are those of war, whereas those of Samoa are about divisions”.<sup>317</sup> These divisions, according to Malama Meleisea, usually resulted from “mavaega (death wishes) by paramount chiefs to their families, villages or even districts for services rendered”; they were “also brought about by wars, especially when the winning parties decided to divide lands they gained amongst themselves”.<sup>318</sup> Before looking at detailed etymologies of some key terms, some contextual information about the use of these terms will be useful.

*Tofi*, with its plural *tofiga*, is the proper placing of a Samoan person, who already has a position because s/he is connected to an ancestor. That ancestor’s land is *tofi* “as heritage/inheritance/legacy” which “defines the reference point of political action and motivation”.<sup>319</sup> Tui Atua proposes that *tofi* designates bodies and places within the order of the Samoan world by making them belong, in the sense of *tulagavae* (to provide a foothold). He suggests a sequence of life beginning with *tofi* as the ‘designation’ that emerges (*to*) from the body (*o le mea e to mai tino*). The process of *vaevae manava* follows in the dividing up of the mother’s life-breath,<sup>320</sup> which begets *tagata*, the human. The *tagata*’s umbilicus is divided and taken to be buried in the mother’s land, which gives rise to the meaning of *tulagavae* – the place where ones umbilicus belongs.<sup>321</sup> The visible

---

<sup>317</sup> There are a number of ways to interpret this, although in this context *tofi* is seen as dividing, the intended meaning of the phrase is supposed to suggest that power within Samoan polity is distributed amongst *ali’i* and *tulafale*, and not held by a single ruler as is the case with Tu’i Tonga.

<sup>318</sup> Meleisea (Meleisea & Meleisea, 1987, p. 29).

<sup>319</sup> (Tui Atua, 2010d, pp. 33, fn. 32).

<sup>320</sup> The quote in Samoan: “*O le tofi o le mea totino; o lona uiga, o le mea e to mai tino. E māfua ai the upu ‘vaevae manava’. E vaevae le manava o le tinā. Ona maua lea o le tagata. A fanau le tagata, ona vaevae lea o le pute o le pepe ma ‘ave le fanua o le tinā, ua fai le sauvinga faalelotu (le lotu a oa tatou mātua) e tanu i le eleele, e māfua ai the fuaiupu ‘O lo’u pute lea e tanu i le eleele’, e māfua ai the upu ‘o lo’u tulagavae’, e lē gata e faasino i le aia i le eleele ona o le faasinomaga, ae faapea ai ma se faailoga po o se alafua e faasinoala i fanau, e māfua ai le upu ‘ia soli mulivae’, e māfua ai ona faaogā le upu ‘palapala’ ma le upu ‘eleele’ e faasino i le ‘toto’ o le tagata. E māfua ai ona tutusa le upu ‘fatu’ e faasino i le ‘papa’ po o le ‘ma’a’ ma le upu ‘fatu’ e faasino i le totoga o le tagata” (Tui Atua, 2012). *Vaevae manava*, dividing the breath, creates the person, followed by the severing of *vaevae fanua* (the umbilicus) and the internment of the placenta in the mother’s land; this connects the child safely to the environment – his or her blood is now *palapala* (soil, or and *eleele*, dirt). The person is thus completed with a *fatu* (centre, heart) – a centre that is fixed to a *papa* or *ma’a* – a stratum.*

<sup>321</sup> See footnote 320, with the Samoan text and explanation. It is important to note that Tui Atua is relaying a version of Samoan identity pertaining to the bodies and articles of those of higher rank, usually *ali’i*. Aiono Fana’afi Le Tagaloa outlines who they are in the *matai* system in terms of 3 *poutū* or posts of the *faletele* – 1., those who are *matai*, 2., land and resources belonging to the

reminder of this foothold is the *paepae*<sup>322</sup> (platform, see p. 77) of the *fale*. Also known as a person's *tulagavae*, it places the person within the proper context of an *aiga* (extended family) and *fanau* (descendants). Thereby, he or she becomes another loop in a web of being that constitutes an ecology of connected beings.<sup>323</sup>

The phrase *Samoa o nu'u ua uma ona tofi*,<sup>324</sup> (Samoa is a village with inherited positions), is always enounced at important gatherings. *Nu'u* is typically translated as village, but Krämer suggests that it simply means place.<sup>325</sup> Meleisea proposes that *nu'u* is a basic political unit made up of extended families;<sup>326</sup> it was often said that Samoa is a "country of villages".<sup>327</sup> *Atunu'u* signifies the deployment of social groups in clusters, joined together by pathways.<sup>328</sup> Thus *tofi* demarcates places (*tulagavae*, *paepae*) at the centre of the *nu'u* that importantly emerge from the connection between people and land.

### **Mavae and *fua'iala*: connecting outwards**

A synonym for *nu'u* rarely used today, but still in use at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is *fua'iala* (one division of a village), which has a more active connotation of connecting to

---

*matai* title – *fa'asinomaga*, 3., *gagana* or abilities with the Samoan language and custom (Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, 1997, p. 6).

<sup>322</sup> The *paepae* is discussed throughout the study in a number of contexts; here, I want to point out its importance to the Samoan notion of 'place', where one's *tulagavae* (place one belongs to) is marked by one's *fanua* (umbilicus) being buried under stones that form the *paepae* of the extended family's house.

<sup>323</sup> This system of belonging is configured by Tcherkézoff as *fa'amatai* or 'system of *matai*', a social system of belonging where "[e]very person, in every social situation (therefore subjected to at least one prohibition and one obligation, and usually to several) acts (in accordance or in conscious and deliberate contradiction) with reference to a 'place' (*tulaga*, *nofo*) that he sees himself as occupying with respect to the others present in this situation" (Tcherkézoff, N. Scott/2005, p. 256).

<sup>324</sup> (Leaupepe, 1995, p. 11).

<sup>325</sup> (Krämer, 1994, p. 663). The English translation of *nu'u* as village suggests further meanings that are worth exploring here. The original meaning of the English village stems from the Latin word *villa* and denotes a grouping or collection of grand houses (*villa urbana*, *villa rustica*) forming an estate (Rykwert & Schezen, 2000). This homology, however, does not adequately explain the nature of *nu'u*.

<sup>326</sup> (Meleisea & Meleisea, 1987, p. 28). A helpful definition is suggested by Keesing and Keesing who propose, "The Samoan village, in sum, approximates in miniature an independent state" (F. M. Keesing & Keesing, 1956, p. 18).

<sup>327</sup> (Tcherkézoff, N. Scott/2005, p. 255).

<sup>328</sup> *Atu* indicates the direction from which the speaker addresses something, which is in front and moving away from him, and also indicates a chain of *nu'u*; *atunu'u* is used to describe other islands or countries.

other pathways.<sup>329</sup> Krämer took *fua'iala* to mean “the village”, or “the section of a village community”.<sup>330</sup> Derek Freeman provides an account of a large village, Saleupolu, which consisted of one hundred *fua'iala* village segments before European contact.<sup>331</sup> *Fua'iala*, then, is a way to identify the size of a settlement by the number of families that have settled there. It points to pathways as *ala* (*ala* is also road or path) that literally criss-cross the land connecting different villages.<sup>332</sup> Wallin and Martinson-Wallin indicate that *fua'iala* is a domestic family unit strung along and connected by pathways,<sup>333</sup> as indicated by the numerous stone pathways intersecting the archaeological sites surrounding the Pulemele'i mound on Savai'i (see Figure 8).

A linguistic analysis shows that *fua'iala* has the literal meaning of ‘unfolding pathways’. The first particle *fua* has two meanings that are relevant here: to measure, as in “weighing something up”,<sup>334</sup> and to unfold, as in bearing fruit or to originate. *Ala*, the second, means pathway(s), or “to spring from, to arise”.<sup>335</sup> Pratt recorded one meaning of *ala* as “cause or reason” of something “springing forth” and “to arise”. The connotation being that the thing (or event) has potency and vitality, which links it to *mavae*. *Fua'iala* is, in this context, an unfolding of space in a movement that continues and persists along a pathway in the sense that cause and becoming are aspects of creation that are produced as we move along the way.

---

<sup>329</sup> (Pratt, 1893).

<sup>330</sup> (Krämer, 1994, p. 661).

<sup>331</sup> (Freeman, 1944, p. 149). The village was set up by Malietoa Savea's two sons Upolusāvea and Umusāvea (Lau Asofou So'o, 2008, p. 15).

<sup>332</sup> Krämer compared *fua'iala* to a city ward, joined to a larger entity or district government that is aligned to a national body or *malo* (side that has the right to govern).

<sup>333</sup> (Wallin & Martinsson-Wallin, 2007b, p. 85).

<sup>334</sup> (Pratt, 1893)

<sup>335</sup> (Pratt, 1893)



**Figure 8**  
 Pulemele'i archaeological site showing *fua'iala* (from Jennings et. al. 1982)

It is worth playing out the linguistic analogies relating to *ala* to tease out the relationship between staying still in a place (*nofo*) and the unfolding of life along pathways. *Ala* relates to *a'alala* comes from *a'a* (roots) and *lala* (branches) and thus has the literally meaning of branching roots or rhizome. *A'alala* is also related to *alalafaga*, which refers to residency and dwelling and literally means a group of people sitting and staying-up together in the night (another meaning of *ala* is to be awake).<sup>336</sup> Here *alala* conveys the meaning of an 'ever-moving-present'<sup>337</sup> inherent in the self-conscious collective of people sitting together (*nofo*) and attending to each other. *Ala* allows things to stay and also to extend.

While *nu'u* seems to indicate the heart and stability of the centre of local polities, *fua'iala* in former times was a more active confluence between places criss-crossing the landscape. This is quite clear from the archaeological map of the area around Pulemele'i (see Figure 8). Pathways were either made of raised earth, sunken into the ground and surrounded by walls on both sides or raised and paved with stones.<sup>338</sup> Their height and size, according to Davidson, is related to consideration of status. Therefore, the raised structures, including mounds and *paepae*, are organised architectural landscape elements, which not only concentrate around *fale* and mounds, but also spread out across the landscape to connect with other settlements. *Fua'iala*, I propose here, works in the manner of *mavae*, in the way pathways extend to incorporate many other places.

To sit and anticipate (*ala*) in prayer is *tapuia*.<sup>339</sup> In a sacred gathering between *ali'i* and the divine, men sit together at night, in the dark, with all the blinds drawn except one. Here *fua'iala*, as extension of *ala* (to dwell in anticipation), is concerned with allowing the divine in the form of *aitu* to find a pathway (*ala*) to enter into the house so that it may

<sup>336</sup> (Pratt, 1893)

<sup>337</sup> A term used by Albert Wendt denoting a dwelling perspective as a moment of relativity of past present and future revolving together rather than operating as separate moments in the following poem (Wendt, 1991, p. 307):

Time is everywhere linking everything. To alter it in one

Place is to change the whole of it.

There is no time past or time future.

Only an ever-moving present.

Our *va* with others define us.

We can only be ourselves linked to everyone and everything else in the *Va*, the Unity-that-is-All and now.

<sup>338</sup> (Green & Davidson, 1974, pp. 239, 240).

<sup>339</sup> (Aiono Le Tagaloa, 2003).

consecrate the congregated men, who then relay the *mana* along connected pathways. There are chains of connections that pass from *tofi* (beginning), through *tulagavae* (identification), *paepae* (emplacement), *fale* (ritual attractor), *ali'i matai* (consecrated being) to *fua'iala* (as a synonym of *mavae*) – forming a loop that returns back again to *tofi*.

The word *nu'u*, now commonly used to describe a village, has a greater sense of finality and certainty about it than *fua'iala* used to have. *Nu'u* fixes a location in space and clusters dwelling, creating the notion of place as identity. *Nu'u* comes from the expression *na u'u*, meaning holding on and grasping something firmly, as in taking possession of a place. It sways the meaning of dwelling space in the Samoan context towards a marker of identity, replacing the vitality connected with *fua'iala*.<sup>340</sup> What is significant, though, is that *fua'iala* means much more to the contextual understanding of Samoan space (see diagram on p.112), where *fua'iala* is a loop within an extended system of relations.

### ***Ala* and passages**

The word *ala* is important here because it renders an image of Samoan spatial systems in a dynamic light, rather than as a simplistic grouping of territories and subjects bonded to particular places. A notion of space, as a set of conjoined territories, has a systemic character relating to *ala* in Samoan thought and practice. *Ala* is in fact an expansive and extended notion of 'live connection', like a phylum as generator and connector of events. An example is the notion of *alaga'upu* (proverb), a widely used method of condensing events into metaphorical sayings to signify and commemorate important events.<sup>341</sup> *Alaga* means a shoulder or leg of an animal, and is used to signify that words are able to travel and cause things *en route*; it also means a cry or call-out to be saved. In this way, *alaga* is generally used to mean 'the cause of things to become' or the 'route' to making things become.

The notion of vitalism comes to mind when *ala* is applied to a person in the way that an "awakening" is within one, an inherited potency connecting one to a present and a past (to other beings and deeds) and to a future potential. From this stems the Samoan notion

---

<sup>340</sup> In the diaspora, with the loss of *nu'u*, a new conceptual version of *vā* takes on a similar role in the structuring of social relationships, (see Chapter 1, pp. 12ff).

<sup>341</sup> "E pala ma'a, ae le pala 'upu" is a well-known *alaga'upu* translated as "stones will rot but words do not"; generally interpreted to mean - words become the cause for many things, something the stone is unable to do.

of responsibility, where one has to hold and tend to many *ala*, inherited 'pathways' that pass through one. This notion of responsibility perpetuates the sense of always being pushed along by fate, that one is bonded to *ala* (passageways).

The person is incomplete without these continuous routes passing through one's being. This is essentially what *tofi* comes to mean in the person, who not only inherits a position in the matrix of belonging, but is also another particle flowing through the system of belonging and connections. Identity, as a recess or a holding cell, does not define an individual in the system; rather, a person is identified as a branch or phylum connecting stages of belonging. *Tofi* then means holding onto a position or *tulaga*, by making loops and knots from lines of belonging. In this way, one's position as a looping and knotting being intersects with others to create new branches and becoming a phylum of the many.

Elizabeth Allen notices this divaricating character of the Samoan concept of the person and the world, for which she proposes the image of the pomegranate to describe how a Samoans' social space is divided:

(When) viewed from the outside, the Samoan spatial system is like a pomegranate, a macrocosm which contains within it many microcosms, the seeds who possess the potential for production at their nucleus. The Samoan framework possesses an objective, unified identity, yet it is partitioned internally into segments which in turn are further subdivided. These formulated divisions derive meaning only in their ability to produce or reproduce, a capacity which is facilitated through dialogue, behavior and human relationships.<sup>342</sup>

The internally partitioned segments are scaled and repeated at many levels to encompass a multi-layered and multi-levelled reality, which equates with the notion of a fractal system, a complex, non-linear, interactive system, which has the ability to adapt to a changing environment.

The proverb "*Samoa 'ua uma on tofi*" takes on a new meaning with a reading of *tofi* as a branch in a rhizomatic<sup>343</sup> fractal structure of belonging. It acknowledges that the person is attached to a system of belonging that is pervasive, folding and unfolding the person

---

<sup>342</sup> (Allen, 1993, p. 3).

<sup>343</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's rhizome has many alliances because it has no beginning or end. This is what I want to infer here with *tofi*, as branching out into rhizomatic *ala*, or routes (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 25).

to encompass a lineage, a sub-phyla that branches out towards infinity. It supposes that the person appears within the system as something already in play (“*ua uma on tofi*”) a divarication already set in motion and on the way: *ala*, becoming ‘alive’.

A notion of belonging in Samoan thought, then, has to do with persons connecting to *ala* (pathways) that flows to encompass a *malo* (national branch) an *itumalo* (district branch) *nu’u* (village branch) and *aiga* (family). Together, these *alaga* (pathways) weave a system of belonging that is particular to Samoan thought and warrants some further discussion.

### ***Ala*, facets and traits**

Another connotation of *ala* refers to a personal trait that resembles the tracing of furrows in the ground,<sup>344</sup> cutting across the person as *fa’asinomaga* (identity). *Ala* as *vā* creates relationships between *nu’u* and spaces beyond by connecting them along multiple pathways; *ala* as *vā* also connects a person to social relationships and provides identity. *Fa’asinomaga* (identity) comes from the Samoan notion of a trace or trait: *fa’asino* denoting a directive or the pointing towards what has been allocated to a person or persons.<sup>345</sup> The word is generally used to mean identity as given or ordained (*tofi*) to the person, rather than gained. “Trait” is a suitable translation for *ala* because it refers to an understanding of identity as given, something a person ‘takes-on’ and completes in the process of doing and living *fa’a Samoa*, and becoming a Samoan.

### **Samoan personhood**

Not only are there in Samoan no terms corresponding to English ‘personality’, ‘self’ ‘character’, but there is also an absence of the corresponding assumptions about the relation of person to social action.<sup>346</sup>

Samoans focus on things in their relationships as the contextual grounding of experience, in which behaviour is externally caused rather than internally motivated.<sup>347</sup> This notion of an external origin of Samoan ‘identity’, and more fitting that of a ‘trait’, is

---

<sup>344</sup> Trait is from the Latin *tractus* to draw or *tract*, the scratching or marks left on surfaces which I have used here to denote *ala* in a similar way, (Partridge, 2006).

<sup>345</sup> (Pratt, 1893).

<sup>346</sup> (Shore, 1982, p. 136).

<sup>347</sup> (Shore, 1982, p. 135).

useful here to describe identity or trait as something predestined and already in process for a Samoan self. This was noticed by Margaret Mead who was mystified by the non-committed nature of the Samoan personal character; she made the observation: "The whole preoccupation is with the individual as an actor, and the motivations peculiar to [a Samoan's] psychology are left an unplumbed mystery", because "Samoans have a low level of appreciation of personal differences and a poverty of conception of personal relations".<sup>348</sup>

According to Shore, the Samoan conception of a person is a "multi-faceted gem" that "maintains its own form through differentiation, a maintenance of distinct sides, and a denial of that integration which would render it without sides".<sup>349</sup> Shore's metaphor of the multi-faceted gem suggests that the notion of a person in Samoan thought is different to that of the European concept of the "integrated, coherent, and 'rounded' personality".<sup>350</sup> He suggests that the Samoans' "too many sides" is not a negative characteristic but one that requires the 'person' to acquire the control of actual and potential relationships, by manipulating and crafting the positioning of his/her multiple sides. This many-sidedness is reflected in Samoans' frequently asserting that "'ua 'ese'ese tagata" (people are different), or "'ua salasala tagata" (people are cut up differently). Shore points out that:

Both *salasala* and *'ese'ese* are ambiguous in that they suggest both that people are different from each other and that people are all differentiated internally. Samoan conceptions of behavioural variation link a notion of individual differences within a population with a notion of the internal differentiation of each actor, such that personal differences seem to be a function of situation type and not of discreet person type.<sup>351</sup>

If both Shore and Mead stress the lack of fixed self or personality in the conception of a Samoan subjectivity, Thomas Bargatzky points to the person's attachment to lineage and genealogy as possible reasons for this. "[T]he famous Samoan genealogies are not genealogies referring to persons as real beings, but to persons as cultural constructs. Overarching genealogies, in Samoa, are part of the ceremonial charter for the relations

---

<sup>348</sup> (Mead, 1924, p. 221).

<sup>349</sup> (Shore, 1982, p. 141).

<sup>350</sup> (Shore, 1982, p. 141).

<sup>351</sup> (Shore, 1982, p. 142).

between 'districts' and 'subdistricts'".<sup>352</sup> Alfred Gell intuits a multiple self when he theorised the Samoan person based on the myth of the Siamese twins Taema and Tilafaiga by suggesting that an *involute*d symmetry cuts through the Samoan conception of the person, a duality and the coming together of many parts that form an aggregate space of power and perfection: "Siamese twins and the Samoan person have a tendency towards a multiplicity-cum unity".<sup>353</sup>

Douglas Drozdow-St Christian also introduces the notion of a multifaceted person in his study of a Samoan personage and proposes that it is composed of a body divided into three sections: the interior or the body core; the boundary or *pā*; and things outside.<sup>354</sup> Within these divided regions are multiple levels of movement and complexities that are influenced by numerous external factors. Drozdow-St Christian identifies the Samoan body and its segments as being "bodies as motion" and having essentially "two collateral qualities...location and process (see Figure 9)."<sup>355</sup>

While the organs have a proper location they also have a tendency to move by forces outside the body, "by physical activity or by inference of *aitu* (spirits), who kick organs out of location or who may actually enter the body and physically move organs about".<sup>356</sup> In the process, the body organs are experienced as conduits through which substances move; for instance, food, blood, water, air faeces, semen or bile. Their material world is actualised by projecting outward from their bodies "a model of order and power". Body and village and the world itself mimic each other, each with a "sacred core, where the most important processes of organic life occur". Each also has "a functional ring of connection through which the body is tied to, and makes use of, the world around it."<sup>357</sup>

Drozdow-St Christian thus extends and scales up the body segment schema to encompass the environment of physical and social relationships as a single organic unity.

---

<sup>352</sup> (Bargatzky, 1995, p. 47).

<sup>353</sup> (Gell, 1993, p. 71).

<sup>354</sup> (Drozdow-St. Christian, 2002, p. 165); see also (Aiono Le Tagaloa, 2003).

<sup>355</sup> (Drozdow-St. Christian, 2002, p. 165).

<sup>356</sup> (Drozdow-St. Christian, 2002, p. 165).

<sup>357</sup> (Drozdow-St. Christian, 2002, p. 167).

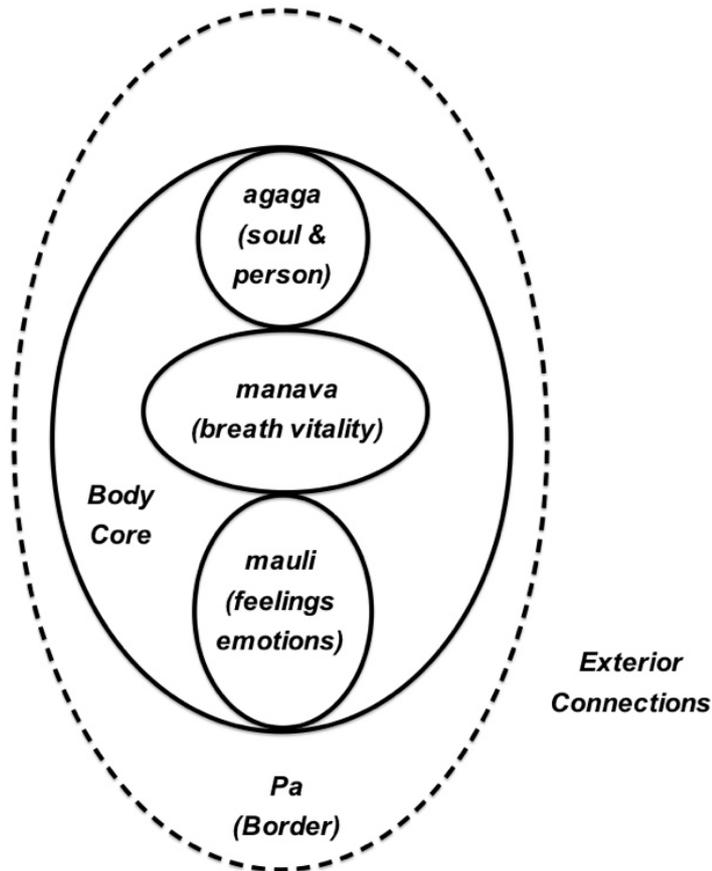


Figure 9  
Body segments (adapted from Drozdow-St Christian, 2002)

Like villages, these bodily sites decrease in dignity and sacredness, the further one moves from the core. Like in the villages, the danger of illness is most perilous in its effects in the interior of the body, and, again like in villages, the most dangerous site is the surface of the body, where it connects with and extends into the rest of the physical world.<sup>358</sup>

By contrast, Fanaafi Aiono-Le Tagaloa describes the Samoan person as a unified entity around the *fatumanava*, an inner unseen person, or the spiritual being, around which the senses circulate.<sup>359</sup> Importantly, the *fatumanava* is a central component in the

---

<sup>358</sup> (Drozdow-St. Christian, 2002, p. 165).

<sup>359</sup> Fanaafi Aiono-LeTagaloa suggests a different tripartite system to that of Drozdow-St Christian for the person, based on an understanding of a Christian notion of a person, which is similar to that in modern psychological studies. An external world is apprehended by the five

construction of the human in the Samoan cosmogony.<sup>360</sup> The *tagata* as a unitary being is anchored to his/her *Fa'asinomaga* (the "heir" to the legacy of the *Fa'amatai*, the *matai* system). *Fa'asinomaga* here means much the same as *tofi*, as a condition of being predestined. *Fa'asinomaga* allows one to be identified with land:

The land tenure of the *Faamatai* states clearly that the *matai* title owns the land. It holds the 'title deed', while the title-holder or the heir chosen by all heirs is the trustee and protector of the *aiga* (extended family) land, and verbal tradition. Since a Samoan is connected as heir to more than one *matai* title, he/she has access to more than one land or property.<sup>361</sup>

*Fa'asinomaga* has the character of a trace or trait, the word deriving from *fa'asino* meaning "to point out to show or to point to".<sup>362</sup> *Fa'asionomaga* is usually applied to mean a Samoan identity and designates a person's *tofiga* (predestined alliances), which must be attended to. It is also used to refer to one's commitment to one's genealogical alliances by giving and providing one's *tautua* (service). A person belongs to many families because he/she is born into a system, which is already entangled with many kin connections. However, the person resides with and serves mainly one *aiga* (family), the mother or father's family. *Fa'asinomaga*, as Le Tagaloa indicates, allows one to ascend to the rank of *matai* as a family leader and the rights to property, especially land. Le Tagaloa's reading gives *Fa'asinomaga* the sense of 'rights', a right to life: "the Samoan child has only *one right ... the right to life regardless of how conceived*".<sup>363</sup> She bends the Samoan concept of *Fa'asinomaga* towards a conception of universal rights. What is indisputable is that *Fa'asinomaga* is a marking of the person, to identify him/herself with a land, leadership and alliances, as an *inherited trait* that positions the person 'in-place' within a system of belonging to many lines and lineages.

### **Partial lines**

It is possible to think of the person as the centre of a constellation of roles, facing in several different directions, as the pivot or meeting place for diverse views, or as the

---

senses and separate from the inner world of the *fatumanava*, which is divided into three parts: the *ola* (biological), the *aitu* (*daemon*, good or malevolent spirit) and the *mauli* (psyche) (Aiono Le Tagaloa, 2003, pp. 39-49).

<sup>360</sup> Thomas Powell and John Fraser's version of the *Solo o le Vā* contains the lines which suggested that *tagata* needed the *fatumanava* to work (Powell & Fraser, 1897, p. 22).

<sup>361</sup> (Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, 2000, p. 97).

<sup>362</sup> (Pratt, 1893).

<sup>363</sup> (Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, 2000, p. 98).

manager at the core of a network. What connects all these suppositions is the notion of individual personhood. In this configuration, the human figure appears either as fragmented or as integrated, for the same reasons. A person can always be counterposed to her or his placement within either a sociocentric, or an egocentric network. He or she gives personal coherence to the network but is equally a part of the structure, which defines his or her location. It is intriguing, then, that either position may in turn be seen as a source of personal integration or fragmentation – they coalesce as personified forms of numbers.<sup>364</sup>

Extending on this, Marilyn Strathern's suggestion of the category 'dividual',<sup>365</sup> which accounts for a Melanesian notion of personhood, might be useful to explore in parallel with that of Samoan personhood. This allows us to see their conjunction as spatial components of a cultural circulatory system that produces beings and persons. Strathern proposes that persons are composed out of relations between others (parents, ancestors, communities, etc.), as well as the ongoing relationships each person engages in. People in this sense are multiply authored, in a process of replication of many parts.<sup>366</sup> The dividual nature of the person emphasises that each person is a composite of substances and actions of others, which means that each person encompasses multiple constituent things and relations received from other people. Internal composition depends on external relations, and relationships are condensed into physical substances or objects, all of which can be given away. A dividual person contains within them components from the whole community at different levels and stages and thus, as Roy Wagner suggests, possesses a character similar to that of a fractal unit. The dividual person cannot be said to have a core but is rather a 'fractal':

A fractal person is never a unit standing in relation to an aggregate, or an aggregate standing in relation to a unit, but always an entity with relationship integrally implied. People exist reproductively by being 'carried' as part of another, and 'carry' or engender others by making themselves genealogically or reproductive 'factors' of these others. A genealogy is thus an enchainment of people, as indeed persons would be seen to 'bud' out of one another in a speeded-up cinematic depiction of human life. Person as human being and

---

<sup>364</sup> (Fowler, 2004, pp. 23-25).

<sup>365</sup> The *dividual* nature of the person was first proposed by McKim Marriott to account for the composite and external nature of the Indian person (Fowler, 2004, p. 14).

<sup>366</sup> (Strathern, 1988, p. 208).

person as lineage or clan are equally arbitrary sectionings or identifications of this enchainment, different projections of its fractality.<sup>367</sup>

In this view of the person, he or she is the potential for actions that operate between people and things, as relations of forces that make things flow in exchanges and relationships, as agents that act in the knowledge of his or her own constitution.

The Samoan conception of a person as a connected tissue and distributed substance is compatible with this notion of a fractal self. It was common for Westerners in the past to consider a Samoan person as 'unstable' and inconsistent, because the Samoan notion of 'self' shifts and changes in scale and situation, according to context. At one funeral or wedding ceremony, a Samoan person may belong to 'one side', at another to the 'other', depending on which relationships are foregrounded at the time. This focus on relationships (as 'space in-between persons'), rather than persons, had wider implications when Samoa came into contact with Christian missionaries, because it affected local notions of morality: with the introduction of the concept of 'sin', individual responsibility for one's action came to be assumed.

The notion of *ata* works in a similar way to fractals, namely, it operates at different levels and scales. *Ata* is commonly used to explain an image or representation, but is also used to mean a "new or recent part or son of a chief", as in *atali'i* or *atariki* (the son of an *ariki* or *ali'i*). Arne Koskinen suggests that the word for chief, *ariki*, originated in the notion of *riki* (little or small and hence a child).<sup>368</sup> In this usage, it is often referred to as a "shadow", to mean something that has all the attributes of an original but is still on standby to parallel the original at some time. *Ata* is a 'fractal' or 'partible' self, always needing its connection to its other, older part or self in order to be able to define itself.

What clearly appears in the construction of a Samoan person is its distribution along many *ala* (pathways), in which it coincides with Wagner's fractal person who exist reproductively by being carried as part of others and, in the process, carrying or engendering others as genealogical or reproductive factors. And if a genealogy is an enchainment of people, in which persons bud out of one another, an enchainment

---

<sup>367</sup> (Wagner, 1991, p. 163).

<sup>368</sup> (Koskinen, 1960, p. 8).

through bodily reproduction is itself merely one of a number of instantiations of integral relationships. Another is, for instance, the commonality of shared language.<sup>369</sup>

It is a helpful way, therefore, to think of the Samoan person as being dividual or distributed as a fractal Self, stretched along many lines and alliances. This provides the image of a person as a consolidation of many parts or many lines of descent, connecting to many lineages with multiple faces or facets. According to the Samoan system of belonging, every person has always already been allocated a place in the matrix of *'ua uma on tofi* (belongingness).

These relationships are perhaps best shown in a comprehensive spatial structure, where the comings and goings that produce the roles and functions of a person in Samoan society are mapped. This diagram would also show how space and architecture are structured in a similar manner in the context of the relationships and experiences typical of Samoan society. These relationships make up the facets and lines in the circulation of value that is attached to persons and things in the complex web of the play of beings that inhabits the Samoan Self.

### **Loops and brocades**

In what follows, I discuss and unfold a map based on the notions of loops and brocades. It pictures the Samoan person in a spatial schema of connective structures describing the nature of the Samoan self and the world, as a tangled web of relationships. Figure 10 shows this 'self-scaling' person as a fractal unit.

The person is imagined here as a faceted dividual being whose parts unfold outwards as brocading lines or *'ave* (extensions) that are looped back to a central meeting point of parts: *mauli* (the seat of desire) and its invisible part, the *to'ala*; the *fatumanava* (life force); and the *agaga* (domain of knowledge) made up of *ilo*, *māfaufau* and *māsalosalo*. They are all held together within an *alofi sā* (ring), deep in the conversation of *fono*. Each part inside the ring extends lines outward and is embraced by connections to other parts, in the ring. These extended particles are held in place as 'multiple selves', *alaga* that are connected to many lines of descent and alliances. The particles are continuously in orbit

---

<sup>369</sup> (Wagner, 1991).

and act as relays and feedback loops – extending out and feeding back in. The person, therefore, is the sum of many connecting paths in a *vā* machine.<sup>370</sup>

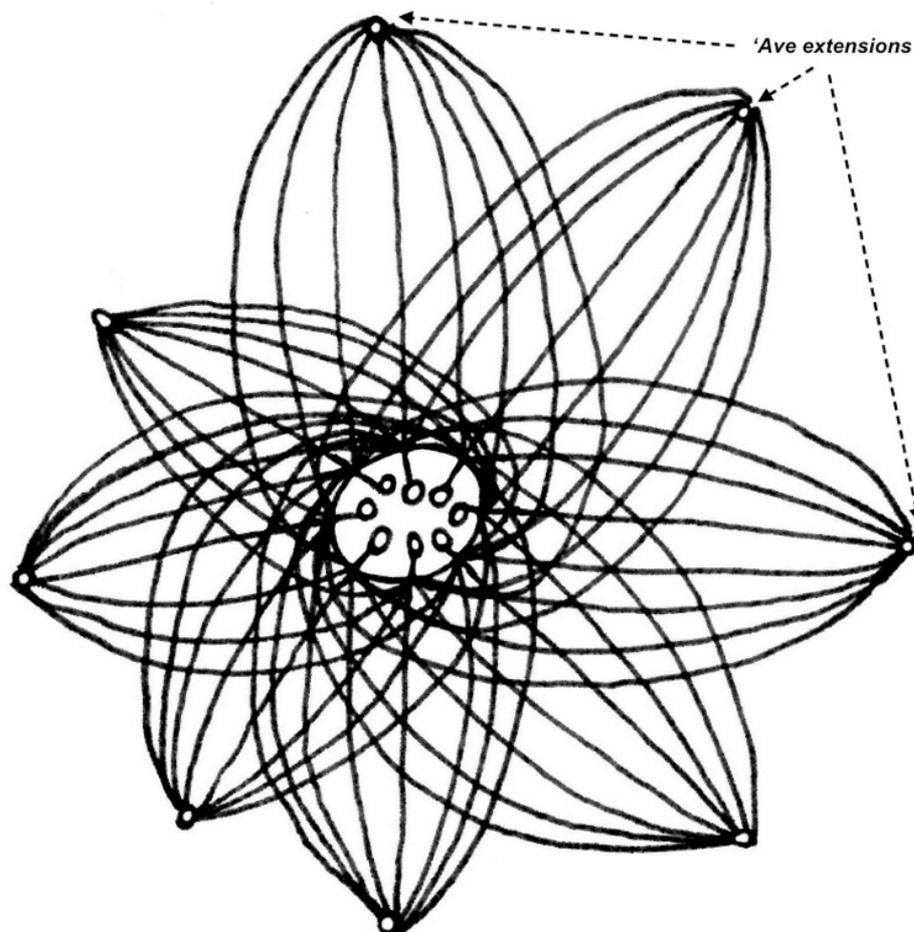


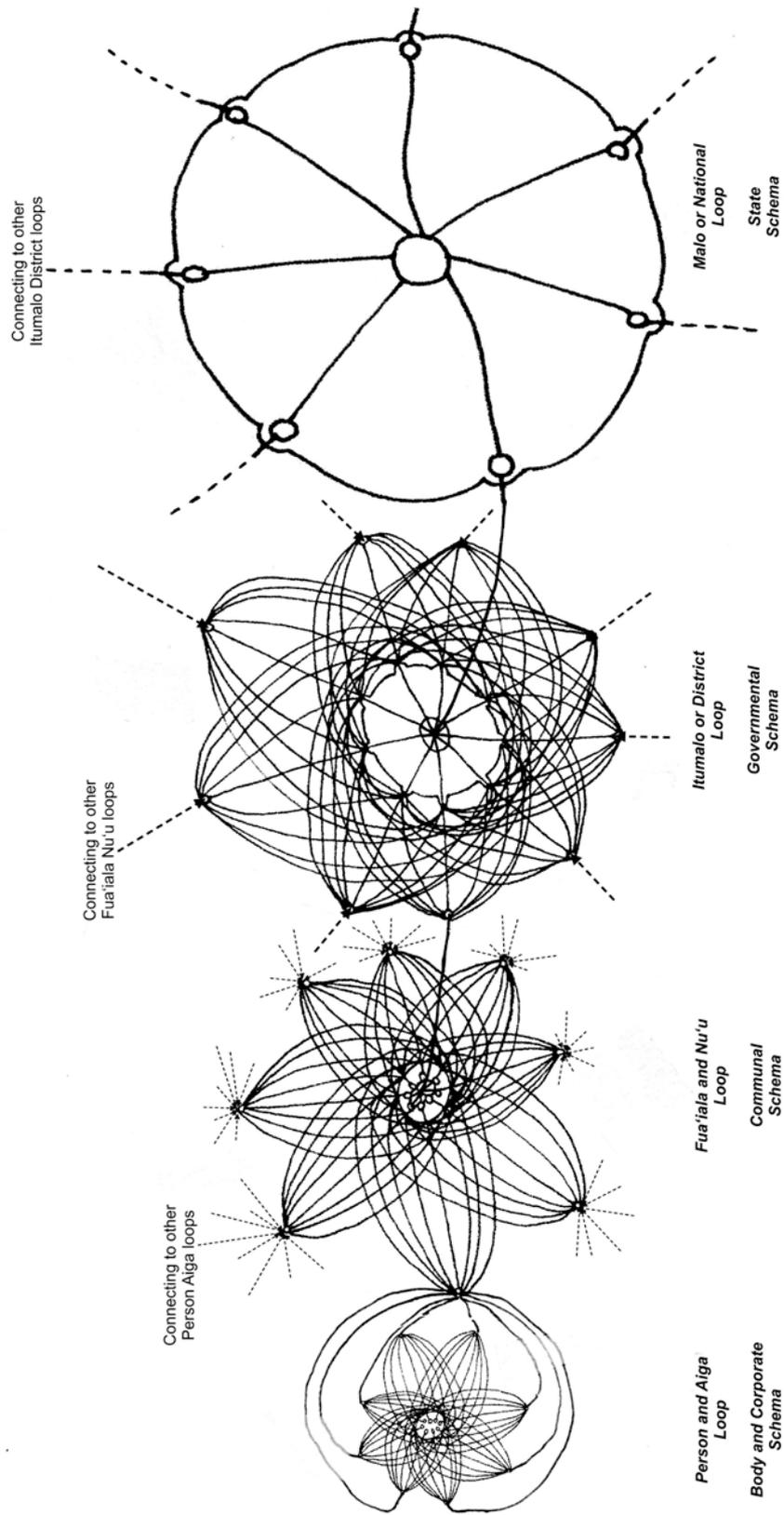
Figure 10  
The body and corporate schema of the Samoan person and the *aiga* or family

---

<sup>370</sup> Machine here does not mean a mechanical operation but, as Deleuze and Guattari intimate, a “system of interruptions or breaks” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 36). In this sense, I am alluding to the particles that connect to the internal parts, working like smaller machines within the larger machine of Samoan identity predicated on *vā* relations.

This image of the Samoan fractal person in this diagram would also describe the *aiga* or family. They are almost identical and operate at different scales. The person is folded outwards to incorporate all members of the *aiga*, and vice versa. The person is a particle of the *aiga* and carries with him/her all the requisite parts, but at a personal scale. The *aiga*, central clearance, is populated by persons who are connected externally to other parts, who are in turn connected to yet other family lines and alliances. In this way, a Samoan person is a being that is affectively connected to others by a series of invisible lines or *alaga* (pathways). The lines of connections are activated by events (for instance, marriage alliances, funerals and times of conflict), which produce vibrations in the network, by ‘pinging’ the lines. This results in a soundscape of actions and reactions; creating what I propose here as the Samoan system of belonging.

The quality of the connections and relationships are expressed by the tensions felt through the lines and by the loops as they orbit around the centre. The inner configuration of a person repeats exactly the character of the *aiga* as in a *fono* meeting, where certain parts come to the surface and some are submerged. Those parts that surface tend to maintain a coherency in the order and structure of the person, just like in the ideal workings of the *aiga*. The Samoan motto for ethical behaviour, “*Teu le vā*” (to tend and care for the relationships), dictates the terms in this system of belonging, and thereby the construction of the individual. To participate in the system one has to engage and attend to relationships and connections. The Samoan system of belonging requires one to literally engage and ‘ping-the-lines’ in times of *fa’alavelave* (‘entangled’, event of obligations and celebrations). At these events, the notion of one and many intertwining in the *aiga* comes into play. Connections and entanglement take on the qualities of bits of strings *tatau* (strung) between persons, places and things, because the *aiga* at this very moment become a web of connections. People (and their status of belongingness, *matai*, women and untitled man) become intermingled with objects. Both circulate in exchange of kinship alliances, between production and reproduction, as tokens of status and commitment to promises of past and future dealings. *Fa’alavelave* gatherings become the test of how tight or slack connections are; the difference could be between an orchestrated symphony and a cacophony of misconnections. This image of the *vā* as made up of strings like a guitar or piano is evocative because for the instrument to work properly all the parts must be in tune and be played together.



*Alaga System of Belonging from Person to National*

**Figure 11**  
*Alaga* system of belonging from personal to national context

### **Branches and threads**

An interesting example is when distant relatives, friends or acquaintances go to someone's funeral to pay their respects. This is called *si'i o le alofa* or the transporting and connection of affection from one *ala* to another. The visitors bring gifts of *toga* (fine mats) and *fesoasoani* (monetary assistance). The two parties would first determine the *ala* (pathway) between them to establish their mutual relationship and thus the correct exchange of gifts. *Ala* in this sense establishes a pre-existing, inherited 'cause', or causeway, connecting the two parties (kinship or inherited debt), a kind of *trace*, allows the two parties to come together again and renew their links. The *ala* is then recharged with mutual respect and the exchange of gifts, for which, in return, the grieving family would offer up *toga* mats and money for passage home. In this way, communities realign old *ala* by retreading and retracing connecting pathways, which may have been left unattended and overgrown.

*Ala* is thus the multiplicity of connecting genealogical lines that are lived and played out on the land of a person's ancestors – genealogical pathways inscribed within every person; they are lived, scratched and trodden on the surface of the land.

### ***Fua'iala* as order and separation**

*Ala* and *fua'iala* parallel Tim Ingold's notion of paths as wayfaring lines, as the physical traces on the surface of the land, woven from the texture of feet traversing back and forth that create a meshwork.<sup>371</sup> Ingold's meshwork, in a Samoan *nu'u*, translates into the 'belonging' to the lines of many histories (*fua*) that are strung across the *ala* (place) of one's *tupua* (ancestors).

What is important to point out here is that the actions of *fua'iala*, which is "to make a pathway", and *tofi*, "to appoint a place," have to do with the founding of a Samoan *nu'u* village. *Tofi* (to appoint) is conveyed by pointing and enouncing a will, or leaving a testament (*mavaega*), which suggests that it is a foundational code. A *nu'u* therefore is essentially a unit founded on a code of connecting pathways or *fua'iala*. At the heart of the *nu'u* is 'a'ai (residential core) where chiefs *alala* (dwell). 'A'ai means feasting and is where *ali'i* and *tulafale* meet and congregate around the 'ava ceremony, and *aiga* take their evening prayer and meals. 'A'ai (residential core) and *aiga* (family or clan), thus have a relationship with feasting and partaking in a meal. The meaning of residency is

---

<sup>371</sup> (Ingold, 2011, p. 71).

connected with *nofo* (sitting down) and taking a meal, *nofoaga* being the word for a family's residence in the 'a'ai (village centre). *Nofo* is important to Samoan custom as the most fundamental of behaviours, signalling a persons' manner of being civilized.

Figure 12 shows a plan of a typical 'a'ai or *fua'iala* unit in a *nu'u*, showing *nofoaga* around a *malae*. 'A'ai denotes the place where an *aiga* resides. It is therefore an 'internalising' term, while *fua'iala* is used throughout to denote 'a'ai as a unit that is connected to others in a neighbourhood, or collection of 'a'ai. *Fua'iala* has in this sense the meaning of 'belonging to a line or pathway'. Each *aiga* (indicated in dotted circles) has an elected *matai*, who sits in the *fono* council of village *matai*. Every *aiga* also has a *faletele* or *faleafolau* (guest or meetinghouse; indicated in a black circle) with *faleo'o* (sleeping houses) and *faleumu* (cooking sheds; in grey circle), to the rear and furthest away from the *malae*.

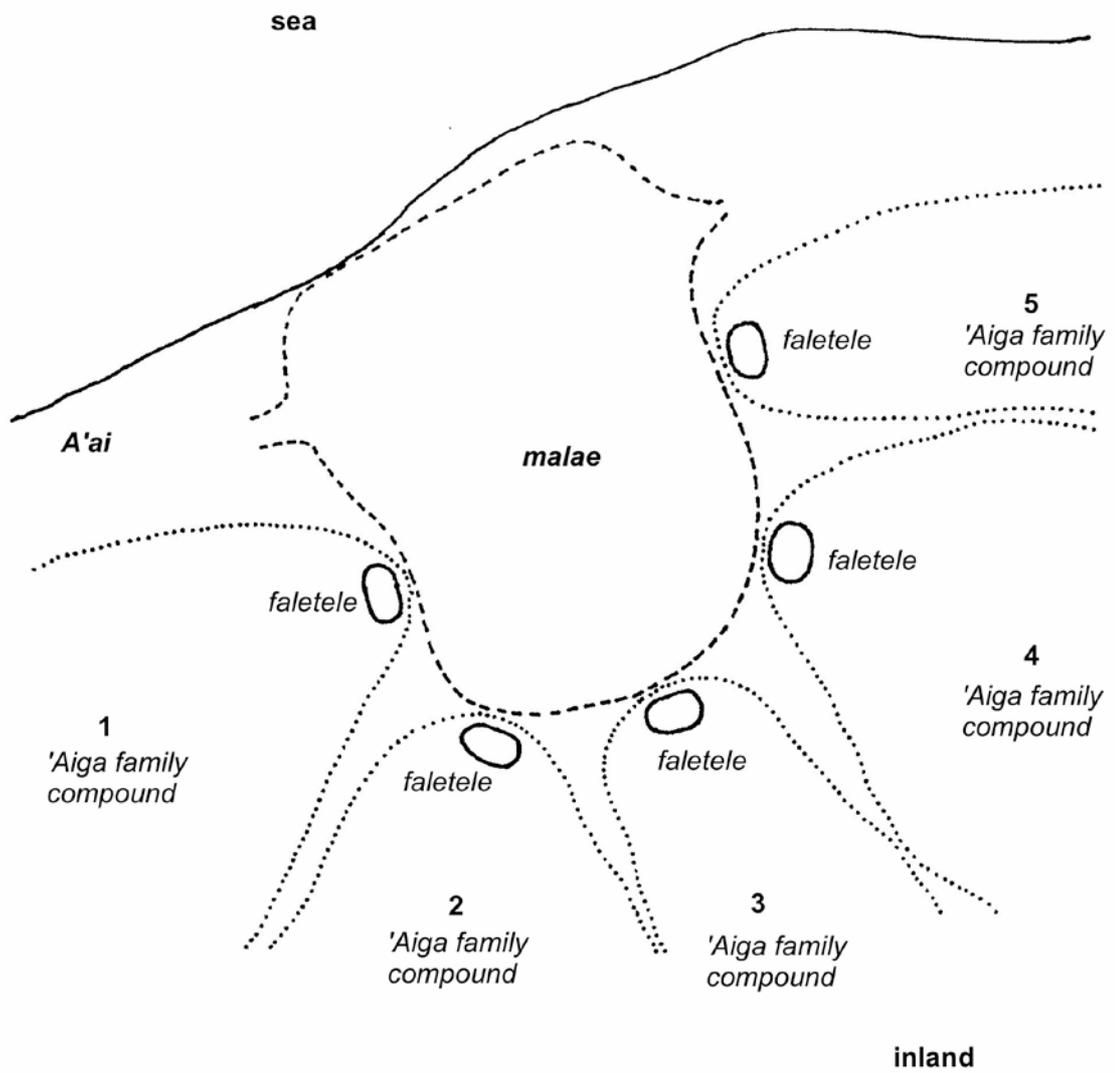
A village therefore is a relational neighbourhood of *aiga* clans, living and tending to their ancestral places. Each village has a *fono matai* (governing body) or council of *matai*, which sets the rules and laws of the village. *Matai* is the *aiga* or clan leader<sup>372</sup> who is able to sit in the *fono*, to represent the family's interest in the affairs of the village. Tcherkézoff observed that:

The name of an ancestor becomes a *matai* name (*suafa o matai*), a title, if this name has authority over a land: a land that has been connected with the name since time immemorial, or which was given to this ancestor by another *matai* who had authority over this land, often in token of a service rendered in time of war. Today as yesterday a *matai* can still create a *matai* name and give this new name a land over which his own name had authority. In this ideology, where the continuity between the gods, the ancestors and men is uninterrupted, men have always behaved towards each other as (they imagine) the gods behave towards them. The great *matai* names come down from the gods (they originate in the cosmogony), others can be traced back to another *matai* name (which originally created them).<sup>373</sup>

---

<sup>372</sup> (Tcherkézoff, 2000, p. 156).

<sup>373</sup> (Tcherkézoff, N. Scott/2005, p. 256).



**Figure 12**  
**Plan of a typical *fua'iala***

*Ali'i* titles are the highest and most important *matai* because they are either descended from the most important families of Samoa or recognised as the oldest title of a village,<sup>374</sup> or descendants of an ancestor who caused a great deed, as is the case with the Malietoa title in Samoa.<sup>375</sup> The whole system takes account of each person as 'subject' of a *matai* title therefore each person has been assigned a role – a *tofiga* – within the clan. A *tofiga* is also a line of belonging that allows the individual to 'play' a part in the make-up of the collective.

As a rule, every *nu'u* is recorded in the district *fa'alupega*, an oral genealogy or honorific enounced at the beginning of important meetings. Until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a *nu'u* rarely had its own *fa'alupega*.<sup>376</sup> As a settlement, a *nu'u* was made up of a group of extended families with a shared history and genealogy, which was connected to an ancestor or ancestors. Every person is connected to a number of *fa'alupega* lines. Each *nu'u* has a gathering place or places, a *malae* (an open ground) or *laufanua*, bordered by the *faletele* (called *maota* and *laoa*) of each leading family.<sup>377</sup>

Leaupepe Pita Leaupepe put forward that *laufanua*<sup>378</sup> is land belonging to the '*a'ai*'.<sup>379</sup> '*A'ai* (feasting place) represents the centre of a village community. More precisely, *laufanua* is centred on the *malae*, the 'village green'. Leaupepe continues that often a large number of lands belong to *ali'i* and powerful *tulafale* who distribute them (*tofi*) to extended families and those who come to serve them, thereby creating new *fuaiala*. In former times, a *nu'u* put aside land for common use, which, in the case of burial grounds, are important because they provide proof of a family's rights of residency in the village. Leaupepe writes: "Some lands are designated for burial of the dead as proof

---

<sup>374</sup> The title exists in both Fasito'outa and Fasito'otai and probably in place not long after the time the two villages were founded, (Krämer, 1994).

<sup>375</sup> After his defeat at the hands of the brothers Tuna and Fata, the Tongan ruler of Samoa for 200 years Tui Tonga (this was about 1400AD) called out to the victorious brothers, "Malietoa, Malietau" - brave warrior, bravely fought (Krämer, 1994, p. 336). See also p. 68f.

<sup>376</sup> (Krämer, 1994, p. 661).

<sup>377</sup> *Maota* is the meeting or ancestor house of an *ali'i*, the paramount chief, whose ancestors founded the village; the house usually has a name. *Laoa* is the meeting-house of a *tulafale*, the orator.

<sup>378</sup> (Leaupepe, 1995, p. 21).

<sup>379</sup> Krämer said '*a'ai* is "village community" (Krämer, 1994, p. 657), while Shore holds it is the "village centre; residential core" (Leaupepe, 1995, p. 317).

of the family's claim to the land".<sup>380</sup> *Ali'i* were buried near the *malae* in tombs, the villagers were buried in plots near the plantations.

A map of the village of Fasito'outa (Figure 13),<sup>381</sup> where Leaupepe Pita Leaupepe hails from, has four *fua'iala*; the first, Satui, is the founding resident of Le'aupepe's clan, who preside over the *malae* Tapula'aia;<sup>382</sup> the second and third are Avano and Sali'oa, two *fua'iala* ruled by the orator group Falefitu (House of Seven); and the fourth is Mata'ili'ili, which is the resident of the original Aiono clan, who preside over the *malae* Malaeti'a.<sup>383</sup> 'A'ai or residential cores are located within the four *fua'iala*. Fasito'outa's geography is demarcated as *fua'iala* residency units of families 'connected' to the titles inherited from two founding ancestors: Leaupepe and his son, Aiono. Leaupepe is part to the Sātuala family belonging to the larger *malo* (political district) of A'ana and Tui A'ana (king of A'ana).<sup>384</sup> The Falefitu orator clan<sup>385</sup> made Le'aupepe's son Aiono their *ali'i*, so that the village has two main *ali'i* to this day.<sup>386</sup>

---

<sup>380</sup> "O nisi o fanua ua aveva ma tuugamau o e ua maliliu ma pine e faamaonia ai the aia i le fanua" in (Leaupepe, 1995, p. 21).

<sup>381</sup> I was brought up in Fasito'outa where I hail from the Sā Aiono line. The village traces its origin to a man called Tapuaau (Swimming-Tapu) who was also called Tooaa (Swimming-Stick) who swam from Fiji with a stick and landed at Leulumoega village in A'ana district, married there and had two sons. The boys were each given a piece (*fasi* means piece or portion) of the stick which he brought from Fiji, the boys were named Fasito'otai, or 'Bit-of-the-stick-seaward' who went to settle to the west of Leulumoega village; the other boy was named Fasito'outa, or 'Bit-of-stick-inland' who settled to the east of Leulumoega (Turner, 1884, p. 248) Leaupepe, the first *ali'i* (high chief) of Fasito'outa resided in the western part of Fasito'outa near Leulumoega the capital of A'ana district; his son Aiono later became the *ali'i* of the Falefitu orator group in the eastern part of Fasito'outa.

<sup>382</sup> Tapula'aia means a 'sacred gathering place'.

<sup>383</sup> Malaeti'a means a 'raised ground' where Aiono play the sport of kings - *seugalupe* or pigeon snaring.

<sup>384</sup> According to Krämer's genealogy of Sātuala line of the Tuia'ana clan, Leaupepe appeared around 1700 in the 26<sup>th</sup> generation of the Tuia'ana family (Krämer, 1994, p. 233).

<sup>385</sup> Falefitu, meaning seven houses or *ala*, were Ape, Faletutulu, Tua'au'toto'a, Pa'o, Muliaumaseali'i, Auola and Feaunati (Krämer, 1994, p. 201).

<sup>386</sup> Toleafoa and Su'amata'ia (shortened Su'a) were the other *ali'i* who also resided in the village, and still acknowledged today (Krämer, 1994, p. 201).

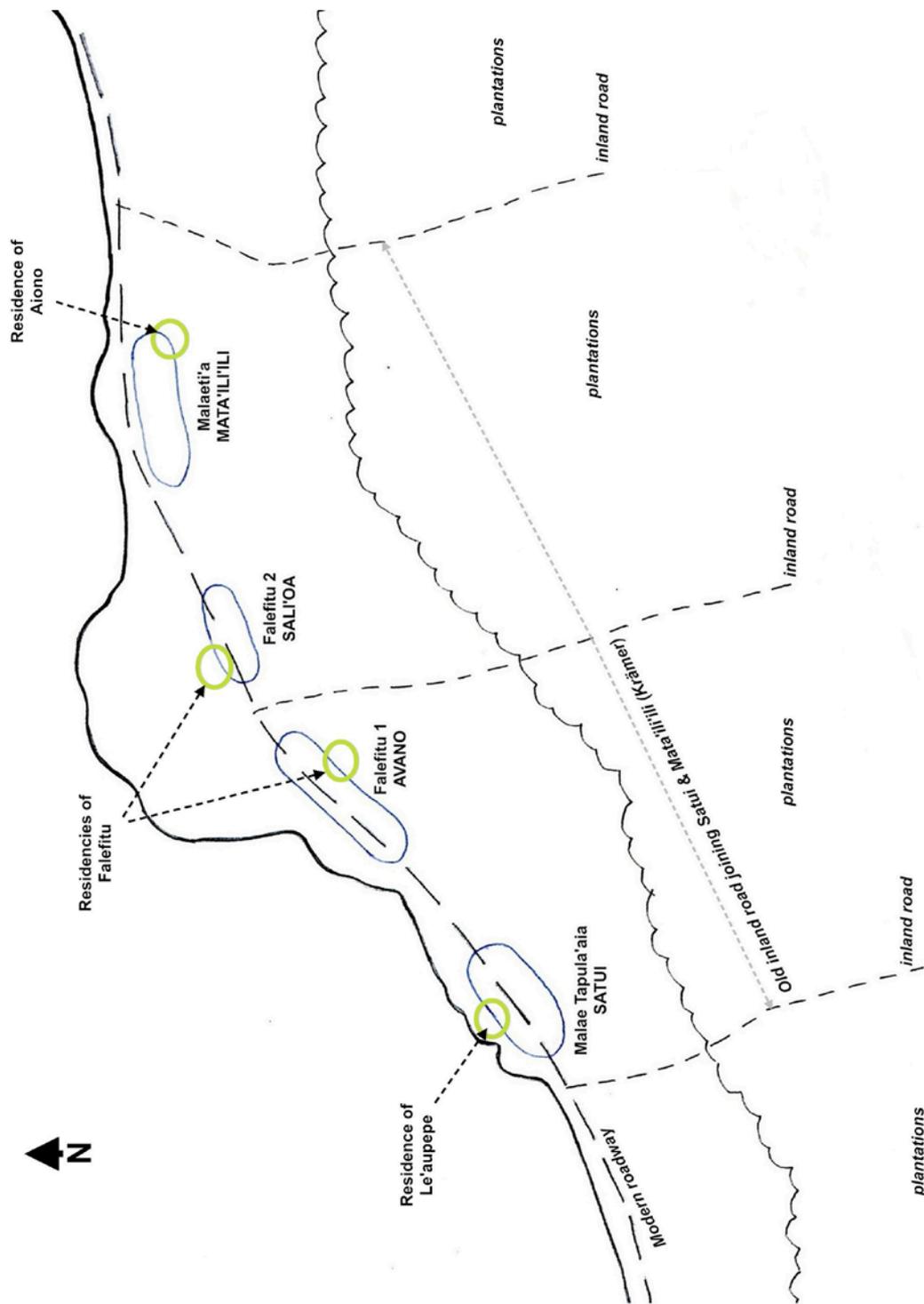


Figure 13  
Plan of Fasito'outa with location of main *fua'iala* and *malae*

## Fa'alupega

Connectivity in Samoan thinking is literally a 'line' or *ala* strung between a person and his or her ancestor. The extension of *ala* as pathway provides the image of an invisible thread passing between people in the past and in the present, which is materialised when enounced in the *fa'alupega*. The *fa'alupega* of Fasito'outa village for instance, fixes the location of the main *ali'i* in their sitting places on the *malae*, or within the *faletele*. In the Polynesian system of inherited names and titles, the *matai* is linked to the principal ancestors in a direct way, usually to the first-born chiefly line, and in an indirect way with the rest of society. By comparison, the access of ordinary people to the main deities is mediated by the *matai*.<sup>387</sup> But more than a diagram of relation within a *nu'u*, all *fa'alupega* connect all *nu'u* to a national *fa'alupega* (see, Figure 17). To begin with, I am going to demonstrate how these *fuaiala* pathways pass from local connections to national schema using Fasito'outa's *fa'alupega*.

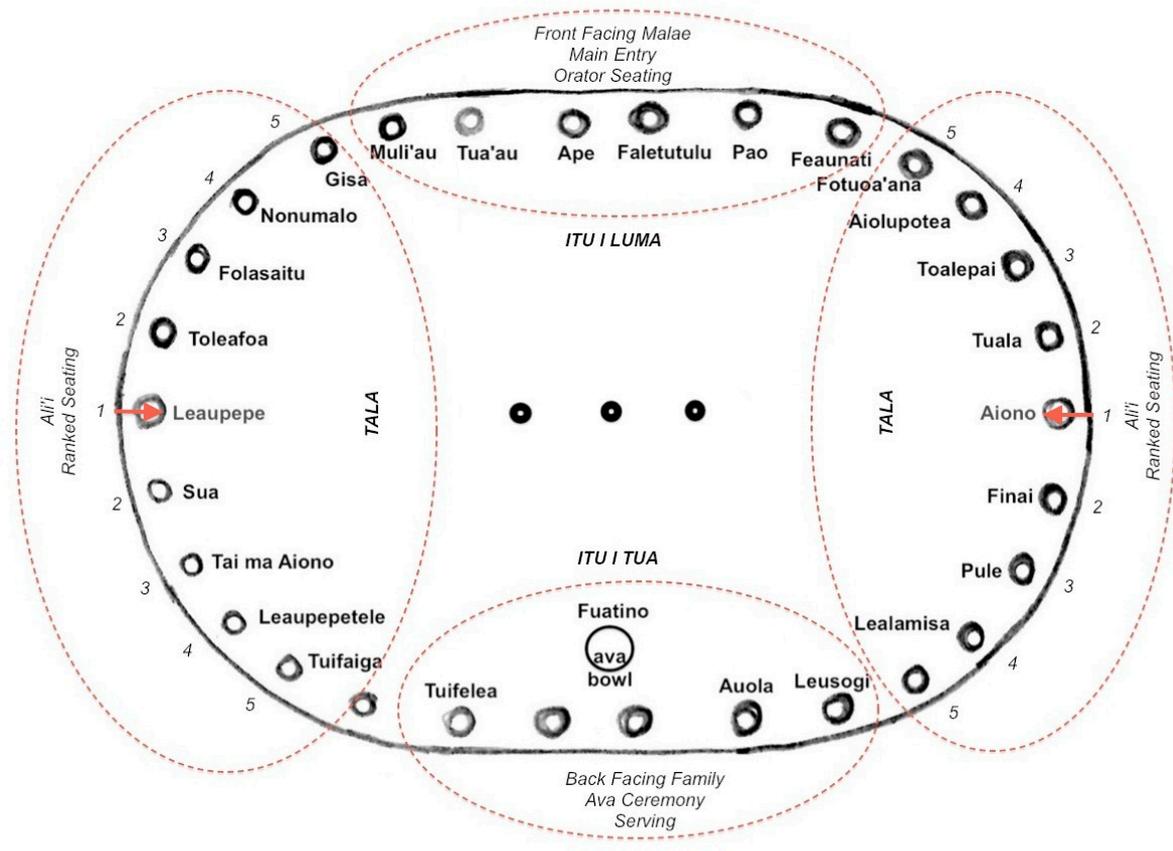
At every important village occasion, the Falefitu orator group will call a village *fono* and, at the start of the meeting, the following *fa'alupega* will be announced:

Tulouna 'oe Ape	Salute to you Ape
Tulouna 'oulua nai ta'i	Salute the two who lead
Tulouna 'o le Falefitu	Salute to the House of Seven
Tulouna le aiga Satuala	Salute to the family of Satuala
Sūsū mai lau susuga Aiono	Welcome to your mightiness Aiono
Afio mail au afioga Leaupepe	Welcome to your highness Leaupepe
Tulouina lau afioga Toleafoa, 'o le tapa'au fa'asisina	Salute your highness Toleafoa, your wise and capable hands
Sūsū mai lau susuga Su'a	Welcome to your venerable Su'a <sup>388</sup>

---

<sup>387</sup> (Thomas, 1990, p. 29).

<sup>388</sup> This version is from (Krämer, 1994, p. 201) who collected his *fa'alupega* in 1897, combined with my translation of the Samoan official book of *fa'alupega* published by the London Missionary Society (1958), which has a longer and modern version of Fasito'outa. Importantly, in the last 50 or more years individual *nu'u fa'alupega* have changed and evolved at a greater rate because of the nature of the mobility of *matai* in the Samoan diaspora. This has not been reflected in the official Samoan *fa'alupega* contained in the books above, which have gone on to become official documents signalling village land ownership.



**Figure 14**  
Sitting plan of the *fono matai* of Fasito'outa

The diagram above (Figure 14), shows the seating arrangement of a typical *fono* (council) of the *fa'amatai* in Fasito'outa, with each *matai* taking up a post around the perimeter of the house. The *fa'alupega* determines their importance in terms of rank and location in the seating plan. Two *tala* (curved roof sections) are reserved for *ali'i matai* (Leaupepe and Aiono) who are both equal in importance. The *matua tala* (places numbered "1" in the diagram) are reserved for the highest ranked *ali'i*, and from there, the *ali'i*'s importance gradually diminishes in proportion to the distance from the *matua tala* (from 1 - 5). The Falefitu *tulafale* and the master of ceremonies are located at the *itu i luma* (front entrance), which faces the *malae*. Opposite, at the back entrance of the house, sits the *taupou* Fuatino of the Leaupepe and Aiono clans, who presides over the *ava* ceremony.

Fasito'outa's *fa'alupega* salutes the main founders of the village and helps locate their 'sitting' positions (*tofi*) within the *fono*. The sitting for the inter-village *fono* is carried out on the *malae* but the *fa'amatai* circle, which includes only *matai*, is usually conducted in a *faletele* with one, two or three central posts (see Figure 14 for the sitting plan).

Each *matai* title in Fasito'outa is held continually by a member of each *aiga* or clan, so there is uninterrupted continuity in the line starting from the *nu'u*'s founding; more members were added to the *fa'alupega* as it expanded over the years.<sup>389</sup>

Ape is mentioned first ('Salute to you Ape') in Fasito'outa's *fa'alupega* because he was mainly responsible for setting up the Fasito'outa's *fono*. In c.1500, Ape and his brother Tutuila from Fasito'otai<sup>390</sup> 'stole' a *tamasā* (scared child) from the Sāfata district so that the A'ana, where Fasito'outa and Fasito'otai ('Salute the two who lead') are located, could have a king who was connected to all the important families of Samoa. The child Tamalelagi, meaning 'son from heaven', became Tui A'ana (king of A'ana). Tamalelagi first son Tuala ('Salute to the family of Sātuala') became the forebear of the Sātuala family and ancestor of Leaupepe ('Welcome to your highness Leaupepe') and Aiono ('Welcome to your mightiness Aiono'). Ape is the head of the orator group of Falefitu ('Salute to the House of Seven'). Next in line is the Toleafoa title ('Salute your highness

---

<sup>389</sup> For current see, (London Missionary Society, 1958).

<sup>390</sup> Fasito'otai and Fasito'outa villages are named after two brothers who founded the villages, the names originated from the rod (*to'o*), which their father used as a float to swim from Fiti. When the brothers were born he gave each a piece (*fasi*) of the rod and one went to live near the sea (*tai*) and the other inland (*uta*).

Toleafoa your wise and capable hands'), an ancient title connecting Fasito'outa and Fasito'otai, followed by Su'a ('Welcome to you Su'a) who is the leader of the Aumaga (*ava* chewers and male workforce of the village).

The founding *ali'i* and orators have the most decorated names in the circle of *matai*, which the *fa'alupega* perpetuates with the following terms: *tulou* meaning to salute by "bowing ones head to a venerable person"; *afio*, "in the presence of a great lineage", and *sūsū*, "shining *mana*".<sup>391</sup> The words address the presence of the *mana* within the person or sitter in the *fono* who has inherited the *matai* name of his or her ancestor. The sitting plan is known to every sitter. A *matai* is first conferred a title in this arena by an initiation ceremony, the *saofaiga* (literally, "the sitting"), having inherited a name, with an already prescribed location in the *fono* (therefore a 'sitter' is already inscribed a place in the circle of *matai*).

The *fa'alupega* helps to clearly articulate the territorial make up of a *nu'u*; names and titles aligned to genealogical lines define ownership of land and properties in a village. There are two meanings of *fa'alupega*; the first is to be decorated (the meaning of *lupega*, to be like the *lupe* or native pigeon with colourful feathers and most sought out in the sport of *seuga lupe* 'fishing for *lupe*'); secondly, the word *lupega*, when shortened '*upega*', means a fishing net made up of many looping and connecting lines. Therefore, *fa'alupega* carries the connotation of a meeting of those with the most decorated and alluring names, where those with the highest *mana* are addressed first – followed by the lesser titles.

## **Conclusion**

*Mavae* and *tofiga* structure the lines that unfold and bud along pathways (through time and space) that show how the person, as an agglomeration of lines, connects to place, which extends to encompass the world and the cosmos. Embedded in the structure is the potentiality for the person to *mavae* thus extending his/her sphere of influence everywhere by making connections. The person also has the potential to accumulate and fortify relationships by identifying oneself to and with particular places - *tofiga*. I will explore this in the next chapter to show how spaces are structured to incorporate spatial concepts that allow Samoans to define notions such as residency and dwelling. I will also explore how these structures are connected to provide a total network of relations creating a Samoan polity.

---

<sup>391</sup> (Krämer, 1994).



## Chapter 6

### Residency and occupation

*O le eleele o le tofi, ma le faasinomaga o le Samoa*

Land is the designated place of a Samoan

(Samoan proverb)

#### **Introduction**

In Chapter 3 (pp. 64ff), I have explored the cosmological origin of *mavae* and *tofiga*. Now, I will examine the ways in which social life forms around these two ideas in the built environment. To that end, I will analyse the role of *fono* and the *paepae* in place-making, signalling a family's residency and occupation of a sacred place. I look at the *fono* in relation to the idea of *alofi sã*, the knotting together of lines, where connections are activated, played and maintained. I intend to show that the layout of the *fono* explores the idea that each person who sits in the *fono* takes up an appointed place within the system of *tofiga* as *matai*. They, in turn, as sitters in the *fono*, are connected to lines which encompass the main families and genealogy of all of Samoa. The attempt here is to show the *fono* as the nexus towards which the lines of connections from the *aiga* (family clans) converge, and where a cosmic relationship between the ancestor gods, ancestral founders of the village and *matai* (representing the family clans) are maintained. I examine in particular the *fono* of the village of Fasito'outa below to show the connections between the *fono matai* (circle of *matai*) – *nu'u* (village) – *fanua* (land) – *itumalo* (district) – and *malo* (Samoa polity).

*Tofiga* is important here as the concept that structures, maintains and holds together the Samoan polity from the *fua'iala* and *nu'u* to the *malo*. An understanding of this structure

contextualises the Samoan concept of *vā*<sup>392</sup> as social space structured by concepts that defines relationships and connectivity – *mavae* and *tofiga*.

### **Nofo mau: Residing**

*Tofiga* and *mavaega* are concepts connected to the cosmogenesis – they are integral to the birth of the Samoan universe which are principles constituting the rights of land tenure and occupation in the Samoan *matai* system.<sup>393</sup> Tui Atua proposes that the *matai* system works in a tripartite structure of ownership: resident, residence and residency.<sup>394</sup>

*Resident* designates someone with the rights to land instituted by a *matai* title,<sup>395</sup> who is connected to the founding ancestor and initial settler of the land. *Residence* is the title of the domain (which includes land, *paepae* and house), which is either a *maota* (an *ali'i* house of residence) or a *lāoa* (a *tulafale* orator's house of residence). All three, resident, residence and residency, are signalled by the *faletele* (council house), which *malu* (shelters or protects) the *ali'i* and the *aiga* (extended family) under its roof. *Malu* relates to the concept of *mamalu* (dignity), which is always accompanied by *pa'ia* (sanctity) – these two notions define the *mana* of the *aiga* dwelling in a residence of importance.<sup>396</sup>

---

<sup>392</sup> For traditional Samoan use of *vā* see, (Leaupepe, 1995); (Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, 1997); (Tui Atua, 2012); (Aiono Le Tagaloa, 2003). For a diasporic understanding of *vā* see, (Wendt, 1996); (Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2004); (Tuagalu, 2008); (Anae, 2010b).

<sup>393</sup> *Tofiga* in this sense is the appointment of duties – an example being *matai* titles bestowed on a person; *mavaega* means that the appointments that are given (*tofiga*) are divisions that are final and cannot be altered – once something is parted and branched off, it will remain in that condition and cannot be reversed (Meleisea & Meleisea, 1987); (Tuimaleali'ifano, 2006); (Lau Asofou So'o, 2007).

<sup>394</sup> Tui Atua calls 'residence' the person who holds the *matai* title, 'resident' is the *matai* who tends to the political affairs connected to the place of his/her title, and 'residency' refers to the status of the titleholder within the village polity. A residence always has a name connected to the founding ancestor, the name centres on the *fale* and its *paepae* belonging to the titleholder. Traditionally, the full power of residency required the existence of a residence, and the performance of actually being resident in the residence. The tenure as a titleholder is for life. *Maota* is the general name for a resident belonging to an *ali'i*, and *lāoa* for *tulafale* (Tui Atua, 2010a).

<sup>395</sup> The *matai* as a 'titled head' or title-holder' is the person chosen by the group to carry the name of the founding ancestor – the first settler of the land on which the resident and titleholder resides. See Tcherkézoff's exposition of the history of *matai* as a term for titleholder and related adaptations (Tcherkézoff, 2000); for more recent changes see (Tcherkézoff, N. Scott/2005).

<sup>396</sup> Tui Atua centres his 'resident, residence and residency' argument of his two prominent *maota* residencies Sepolataemo, Nofoli'i and Mulinu'u, Lufilufi, which are significant places in Samoan pre-contact history (Tui Atua, 2010a).

Residency, as Tui Atua explains, denotes a *matai*'s responsibility to tend to village affairs: he or she must have a presence in the circle of *matai* in the village. For this reason, the *faletele* becomes the embodiment of the *matai* and takes on his or her characteristics in the presence of others. The *faletele* uniting the principles of resident, residence and residency is, like other important houses in the village, located on the edge of the *malae*. In fact, a residence is possible only with reference to other residencies on the *malae*.<sup>397</sup> Since the house and its *paepae* represent the face of a particular *aiga* within the larger face of the *nu'u*, the house on top of its *paepae* literally *feagai* (faces) the other house-faces surrounding the *malae*.<sup>398</sup> The roof (*fale* – see discussion of this below, pp. 195ff) signals the *mamalu* of the family dwelling underneath it. Just as the erection of the central posts symbolically links those who dwell on the *fanua* (land) to Papa below, Tui Atua believes that the central post links man to *Papa* and *Eleele* and this connection is enacted in the burial of each family member's *pute* (umbilical cord) and *fanua* (placenta) in the land connected to the founding ancestor.<sup>399</sup> Accordingly, the element of occupation that encompasses the residency rights of an *aiga* is the *tulaga fale* (foundation) – the heaping up of stones forming the *paepae*. Every person within the Samoan polity is connected to at least one *tulaga fale* and *paepae*. The Samoan concept of dwelling advanced here is through the tripartite system of residence, resident and residency.

### ***Tulaga fale* and *paepae*: marking residency and making an altar**

Every residence has a *tulaga fale*;<sup>400</sup> it signifies continual occupation of ancestral land by descendants. *Tulaga fale* are usually located within significant landmarks – for instance an ancient *malae* or water spring. *Tulaga fale* as a term is connected to the word *tulafale*, commonly used to mean an orator. *Tulafale* is an abbreviation of the term *tulaga fale*, whose function Tui Atua sees as being “executive or temporal authority” that mediates between “the mystical power of the *alii* (which derive from *Papa* and *Eleele*) and the mortal desires of man, portrayed by the phallic symbol of the post/posts”.<sup>401</sup> A *tulaga*

---

<sup>397</sup> (Tui Atua, 2010a)@96}.

<sup>398</sup> *Feagai* means to face another person of equal rank – literally, ‘the exchanging of glances’.

<sup>399</sup> (Tui Atua, 2010a, p. 95).

<sup>400</sup> *Tulaga fale* which means the foundation of a house is similar to *tulaga vae* (foothold); both terms describe the place or places of an *aiga* to which a person belongs. The term also designate the *aiga* whom he/she is serving.

<sup>401</sup> (Tui Atua, 2010a, p. 95).

*fale* is embodied in the *tulafale* as the agent of the *ali'i paia* (paramount chief) in the everyday affairs connecting to the world outside the *fale*.<sup>402</sup> On one hand it designates the foundation of a family, on the other its ritual qualities are invested in the *tulafale*.

*Tulaga fale*, as the foundation of an *aiga's* rights to occupy land, is a type of residency better understood as a unit within a 'tribal' structure (or segmented organisation), the example being the *fua'iala* or *nu'u*. Marshall Sahlins proposes that tribal structures are networks of unspecialised multifamily groups, containing segments of residential units connected to larger units.<sup>403</sup> They form a conglomeration of "people that settle or wander together in a given sector of the domain and that separately exploit a sector of strategic resources".<sup>404</sup> For Samoa, these residential segments or *aiga* are small localised common descent groups, referred to ceremonially as *Sā*.<sup>405</sup> While these are not political units, they are part of the village and district organisation, which includes many *Sā* and aggregates related and unrelated groups. According to Sahlins, then, the structure of a Samoan village is the accumulation of families strung along *Sā* lines, all participating in the local political forums, the *fono*, as the living faces, or the latest manifestations, of the ancestors.

The fundamental political units are village aggregations of unrelated (excluding affinal ties) groups. Each village is ruled by a council of titled men [sic], the titles being held by leaders of the descent lines. The standing of a local line depends on which title in the village hierarchy it has captured, and its success in raising the prestige of that title ... The villages are grouped in districts ruled by councils formed by the same principles.<sup>406</sup>

The *paepae*, the raised platform next to the *malae* (alongside other *paepae* of other residences) is the most prominent symbol<sup>407</sup> for these residential segments that are

---

<sup>402</sup> The *tulafale* commands the *paepae* and the *itu* (middle section) of the house, where he or she sits and guards the entrance to the *malae*. There are two *itu* of the *fale*, under which the entries to the house are located; one faces the *malae* (this is where the *tulafale* sits by the posts along the front of the house); the other is located on the opposite side (this is where the *taupou* sits). The *itu* make up the two elements that secures the *mamalu* of the residence – the *tulaga fale*.

<sup>403</sup> Sahlins uses the term 'tribe', which is slightly different for Samoa where it is closer to the notion of 'clan'.

<sup>404</sup> (Sahlins, 1961, p. 325).

<sup>405</sup> (Sahlins, 1957, p. 292).

<sup>406</sup> (Sahlins, 1957, p. 293).

<sup>407</sup> Stair recorded that, in the mid-1840s, "Upon the marriage of a chief with a lady of rank, the site selected on which to build their house was formed into a *fanua-tanu*, or paved ground ... By

made up of the tripartite of residence, resident and residency. The *paepae* as a mound is part of the architectural construction system of stereotomy or stone construction. Their origins, as Gottfried Semper wrote, are the “noblest symbols of society and civilization – the *hearth*, [and] the highest expression of the same cultural idea, the *altar*”.<sup>408</sup> Their use is “to *detach* something from the earth and the world as a whole: a *consecrated place* detached to some entity”.<sup>409</sup> The mound thus figuratively represents the ‘whole world’ as “bearer of form contrasts with the *agalma proper* (the consecrated object) resting upon it, and at the same time it works it into a whole (completes it) by detaching it symbolically from the world”.<sup>410</sup> This separation as space ‘cut off’ or demarcated falls within the Samoan understanding of *tapu* or *tapui*, as consecrated and bounded space (see Chapter 8 for further discussion).<sup>411</sup>

Semper’s description of the origin of architectural<sup>412</sup> constructional systems expresses succinctly the function of the *paepae* as an elevated platform acting as a threshold<sup>413</sup> between the world of *noa*, below, and the divine realm, above. The *paepae* takes on and houses the divine relationship between the ancestor gods and their descendants who form the circle of *matai*. The *fale*,<sup>414</sup> built on top of the *paepae*, shelters and protects the altar-like platform – the meaning of *paepae* as a ‘place for spreading things out’ is apt here.<sup>415</sup> *Toga* (fine mats, tapa cloths) and other goods considered *measina* (treasures)

---

this means a raised terrace of stones was formed from fifty to seventy feet square, and often many feet height, on which the house was built. This widespread custom prevailed throughout the whole group, not only in the case of dwelling-houses, but also in sacred edifices or buildings, *fale-aitu*, houses of the gods. These also were always built on *fanua-tanu* by the people of the district or settlement”, (Stair, 1897, p. 111).

<sup>408</sup> (Semper, 2004, p. 726).

<sup>409</sup> (Semper, 2004, p. 726).

<sup>410</sup> Semper further describes how on top of the mound were built structures made from woven techniques (textile) and carpentry (tectonic), (Semper, 2004, p. 726).

<sup>411</sup> (Wagner, 1987, p. 233).

<sup>412</sup> The Roman *templum* had this function that conflated and marked out the cosmos by an augur onto a *temenos* “a piece of land defined by boundaries and devoted to a particular purpose, a shrine” (Rykwert, 1989, p. 2); also “The piece of ground that was cut out of the city or of arable land to be moistened and greased, the *temenos*, as the bones of the earth: rocks” (Rykwert, 1996, p. 147).

<sup>413</sup> The *paepae* in the Māori wharenuī is the threshold to the mahau (open space) between the door and the *marae atea*. It is closer to the ground than the *paepae* in Samoan architecture, which has an extended vertical threshold.

<sup>414</sup> The *fale* is discussed in Chapter 8 in relation to Semper’s notion of tectonic (carpentry) and textile (woven structure).

<sup>415</sup> *Paepae* is the place to scatter things on (Tregear, 1891, p. 297); (Pratt, 1893).

become sanctified after they are paraded and spread out on the *paepae* in front of the circle of *matai*. So its separation from the ground is an important function of the *paepae* as it lets things be elevated and deified in a manner that allows them to be *measina*, treasures or things that are processed by bleaching and smoothing rid them of their roughness.<sup>416</sup> They gain their status as prestige objects when they ascend and are revealed (*teu*) on top of the *paepae*.<sup>417</sup>

It is often the case that a *paepae* will remain in place even without a house. In villages of old, dilapidated *faletele* are familiar sights: they were left to rot on top of a *paepae* following the death or absence of a *matai* who was once responsible for land and house. On the other hand, the *paepae* can sometimes be moved and placed elsewhere, just as graves of ancestors can be dug up and shifted to a new place. A *liutofaga* ritual has to be performed to make this happen. Therefore, even though there is on and in the *paepae* a connection with the land, its nature may change with circumstance, for instance according to dispute over ownership of titles and in times of warfare. The *paepae* and things attached to it therefore do not always signal permanence, habitation does not remain forever. Houses can be shifted and sometimes abandoned. What remains, though, are always the names of ancestors connected to the land. Names have a permanence that can transcend materials and objects.

### **Loops and knots: forms of congregation**

In the system of *mavae* and *tofiga* things are formed into clusters and become bounded, but also have the ability to diverge and flow and to be connected elsewhere. Even if things are bounded, there is always under *tapu* the possibility of their release. Under *tapu* they become looped and knotted. As proposed above, with the system of personhood (see diagram on p. 112), the *matai* (and each post representing the *matai* in the *fale*) becomes the location where *alaga* lines of connection converge and are looped

---

<sup>416</sup> Semper points out that in Assyrian architecture foundations are carried out in rough stone blocks marking their separation from the smooth and dressed timber edifice on top (Semper, 2004, p. 726); see also my discussion of whiteness and smoothing of materials related to the *fale* (Refiti, 2009).

<sup>417</sup> For instance, the Tufuga-faufale Tataufaiga Faiga from Saipipi relayed to me that the *fale* of Leiataua Tamafaiga who ruled most of Samoa in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century had the posts of his *faletele* decorated with skulls of the dead. Also the skeletons of ancestors were sometimes wrapped in *tapu* and placed on the rafters of the house. - *Paepae* and *fale* are, as it were, architectural forms that fall within Semper's description of the altar and temple as consecrated ritual forms, detached from the ground, which enable their connection to the divine via sacrifice. Pers. comm. Tataufaiga Faiga, *talanoa*, 15 February 1998.

and knotted and held in place for the duration of the *fono*. Without the *fono*, the *poulalo* posts of the *fale* appear as a silent reminder of the places where lines can be looped and knotted. This is why when the *fale* is unoccupied it appears as the perfect diagram of the Samoan system of belonging.

The *paepae*, as a *tapu* element, also has a looping quality – as a threshold across which things pass back and forth, it allows things to pass between Lagi and Papa. Further, a residency's *tulaga fale* and *paepae* form a loop around which an *aiga* congregates, according to the *alaga* system of belonging above (see p. 112). Each *tulaga fale* is anchored to the *malae* of a *fua'iala* which, like a major 'knot' in the connective system, is the principal reference point through which each family belongs to an *alaga*. Each *malae* and its *fono* constitute an *alofisā*.<sup>418</sup> *Alofisā* has the expressed meaning of a sacred ring formed around the *ava* ceremony,<sup>419</sup> a bounded ring that forms a political unit, which takes care of the affairs of a village and relates it to a district.

### **Charged space: *vā*, *fono* and *malae***

When the *fono* is in session, it is a 'charged space', which Lemi Ponifasio believes is identical to the space of the *vā*.<sup>420</sup> He describes it as a space in a continual whirling motion, which connects the person to the natural environment, and the past and present. If one were to stand in the centre of the *fono* space, one would be torn apart. That is why, in Ponifasio's view, the *tulafale* at the beginning of his oratory stabs his *to'oto'o* (talking staff) into the earth, to 'claim' and to hold the *vā*. Thus, for Ponifasio, speech enables the flux of the *vā* (as time and space folded together) to be held and joined to the present. The *matai* in this situation are those with the ability to hold and claim something from the *vā*. Felix Keesing observed that good oratory is carefully

---

<sup>418</sup> From *alofi* meaning a circle of chiefs sitting in a house and *sā* the word for sacred, (Pratt, 1893). *Alofisā* is the sacred circle located at the centre of the Samoan polity. An old story about the origin of the *ava* ceremony tells of Pava's son who disturbed the *ava* ceremony between Pava and Tagaloa. The child was cut in half by Tagaloa but was later resurrected. Thus the *alofi sā* marks the circle of *matai* as being dangerous and not to be disturbed, and also hints at a connection with sacrifice. (Turner, 1884, p. 42); (Krämer, 1994, p. 553); Le Tagaloa suggests the origin of the spilling of the *ava* from the chief's cup before drinking commemorates the killing and sacrifice of Pava's son (Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, 1997, p. 25).

<sup>419</sup> The *ava* bowl is called the *tanoa alofi* meaning a vessel of the sacred ring (Stair, 1897, p. 113).

<sup>420</sup> Personal communication with Ponifasio, 6 August 2014.

channelled because “words have points that are sharp as spears”.<sup>421</sup> Thus, the *matai* are those who sit and commune with the world of the ancestors with *laua* (speech), who cajole and sing into the present their world, as well as to *tapua* ‘i (wait, pray and anticipate) an outcome.

The *fono* is thus an *alofisā*, for which Koskinen suggests the etymology “to join and unite” in an assembly where “different currents of *mana* unite”, especially in times of the ritual election of *ali*’i.<sup>422</sup> I have suggested above that the circle of *matai* established in the spatial arrangements of the *fono*, with its hierarchically assigned sitting places, constitutes the re-enactment of the prehistorical first *fono* in Lagi (see p. 72).<sup>423</sup> Stair, remarked that representatives participating in *fono* held on the *malae* “sit in little groups, each group having its proper position assigned to it”; he commented on “the precedence it took in addressing the meeting, which arrangement was scrupulously adhered to”.<sup>424</sup>

Within the *fono*, a *fa’alupega* is announced, which ‘draws’ all the local *ala* (pathways) together. The lines of belonging, via every *aiga*’s *ala*, reach the most important part of the network of relation in the *fono*; the *paepae* becomes the plateau signalling this highest level where the lines of belonging ‘terminate’. The *matai* of each ‘*aiga*’ becomes the focal point (or, more appropriately, a kind of loop or knot) through which each family is anchored to the village *fono* plateau (see Figure 15). A loop is an apt metaphor, because

---

<sup>421</sup> (F. M. Keesing & Keesing, 1956, p. 6)

<sup>422</sup> (Koskinen, 1960, p. 128); he also describes the origin of *fono*: *fono* seems to refer to “gathering together”, many derivatives of it might be associated with some religious or magic ritual. In Tikopia, *fono* is a ritual address, recited annually in the *marae*. In Hawaii again *hono* means a kind of *kapu* (*tapu*) requiring every man to hold his hands in a particular way. It was a ceremony celebrated during the building and dedication of the greatest sort of *heiau*. During the ceremony, all partaking were seated on the ground in front of the drum house. The priests, chiefs, and people, all held the palms of their hands turned upwards. The service was tediously long, and during the time the pigs offered were baked. Probably, in these cases, the word *fono* is used of the collective action, in which ritual is believed to be extraordinarily effective as different streams of magic influence thus concentrate (Koskinen, 1960, p. 129).

<sup>423</sup> On this occasion, the Tufuga were bequeathed the honour of becoming bearers of a sacred tool bag, the *tufugaga* (Powell & Fraser, 1892, p. 179); (Krämer, 1994, p. 540). The *fono*, according to Allesandro Duranti, “refers to the whole body of village *matai* – both chiefs and orators – as a juridical and legislative institution [and] a necessary process through which to maintain or re-establish village harmony and the dignity of village leaders” (Duranti, 1981, p. 28).

<sup>424</sup> (Stair, 1897, p. 84). This adherence to arranged positions on the *malae* was so entrenched that, Stair observed that at times, a “young man from each” family took the family orator’s staff, and proceeded to the *nofoā fono* (seat of the family orator), on the *malae*, where, driving the staff upright into the turf, he sat down beside it and waited the arrival of the orator represented by the staff. (Stair, 1897, p. 86).

the lines do not stop on the *paepae*. Rather, they continue beyond the local *fono*, passing towards the *itumalo fonu* (district council) (Figure 16). A knot is also a fitting metaphor, because the *matai* holds the interest of the *'aiga* in place at the local *fono*. The *fono* circle has in its centre a focal point, where all the *mata* (faces, eyes) of the *matai* meet to form the largest possible central 'eye' which sees all the lines and threads them together in a co-belonging. This central eye (*mata*) opens to the divine. And this is precisely how the *matai* emerges as a leader, sitting in the *fono*, on the platform, holding and manipulating all genealogical lines connecting the people in the *aiga*, the district and the whole country.

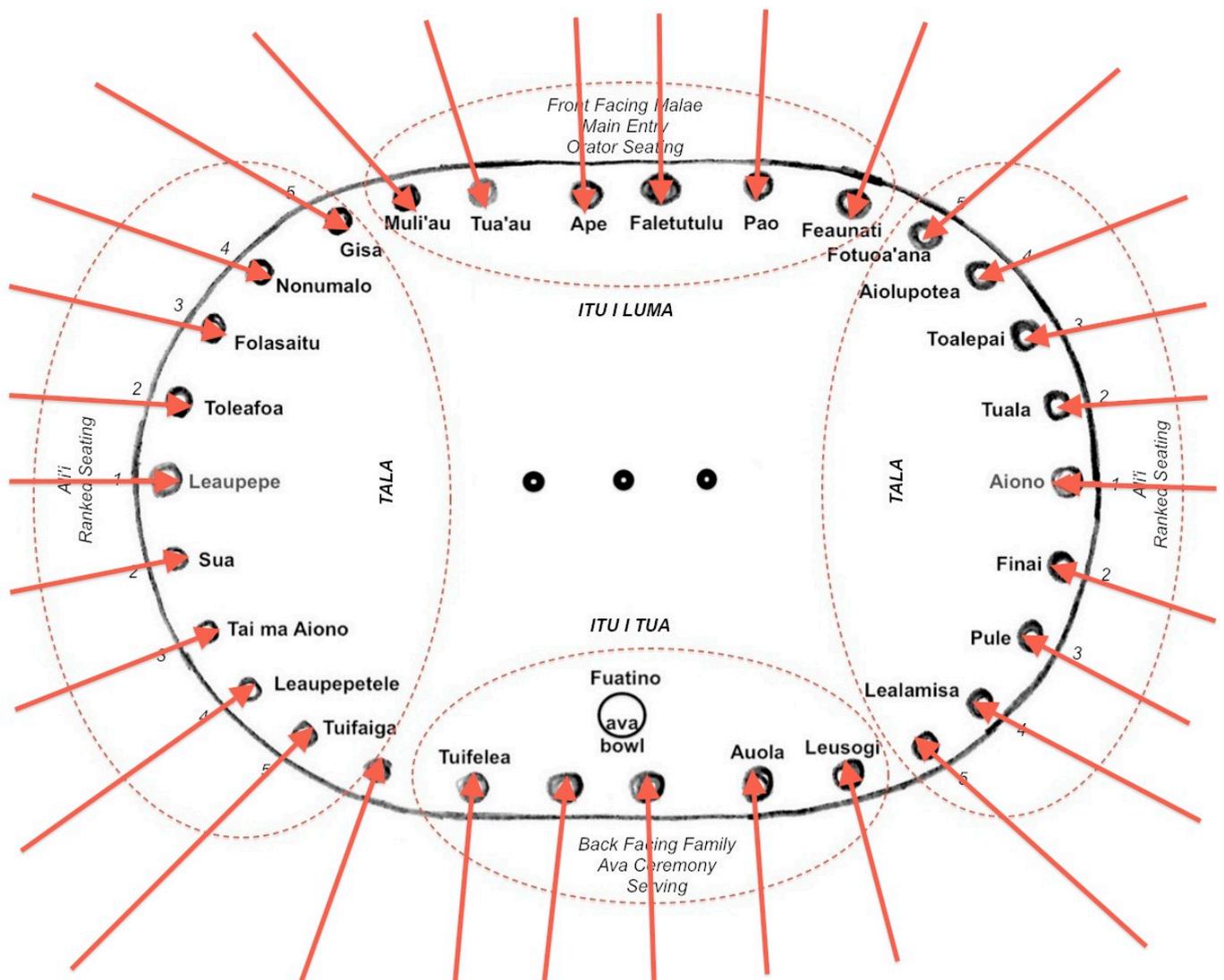


Figure 15  
Maximal lines meet in the *fono* as shown in the sitting plan of the Fasito'outa village

Every genealogical line reaches its highest efficacy in the face-to-face meeting of the ancestor titles. It is not surprising, then, that the *matai* is the pinnacle role every citizen in the Samoan world aspires to. The word ‘chief’ is often used to (inadequately) translate *matai*. As Tcherkézoff and others have pointed out, *ali’i* properly translates as chief, whereas an accurate translation for *matai* is, “being ‘the best’, ‘the best through personal skills’, a ‘master’ in a craft activity”.<sup>425</sup>

The sitting position of every *matai* in the *fono* recreates the first *fono* and original *vā* relation, or *vā tapua’i*, between the ancestor gods in Lagi-tua-iva. In the meeting of ancestors, in the never-ending cycle of face-to-face encounters, each line that is knotted and tied to a *matai* is also connected to a loop which connects to lines extending outwards to the *aiga*. If the line is to be effective, it has to be well maintained, and this is expressed sometimes in the metaphor ‘*teu le vā*’,<sup>426</sup> meaning that the lines of relations should make a well-tuned sound if they are played properly. The term for a well-tuned line is *tātau* – *tā* means a ‘striking action’ and *tau* ‘apt’, or the achievement of the proper level of intensity. *Tātau* importantly also means a line strung and held between two or more points/places, which describes properly the notion of a well-tuned relationship. “*Matai*”, then, has connotations of loop, knot and holding station. In this context, *tau* stands for the conductivity of good relations between the present (in the everyday activities of a village) and the past (in the revisiting and reactivating of inherited positions of ancestral power and order). This is *vā* in its strongest sense.

At the same time, *vā* describes a system of relations that connects people of different status as lines of relations that are maintained within the *aiga*, the extended family or the village. *Tausi le vā* refers to the cultivation and awareness of one’s *vā* with those of

---

<sup>425</sup> “Polynesian *ali’i/ariki*, etc. was not a chief because he was “the best” in some context. He held the first status in his group (positions taken in the meeting house, respect paid to him, etc.) because he held a position defined as the locus where any individual made to “sit” there (*nofo*) becomes the embodiment of the founding ancestor and of his powers. While a *matai*, was *the best in his activity, like a master in a craft activity*. This is the reason why, in Samoan, the word designated the master *tufuga*, and it is also the reason why, in compound words, this base brought the meaning of ‘best’ within a set of things or people” (Tcherkézoff, 2000, p. 178). Green & Kirch indicated that *mata* may have corresponded to the Proto-Polynesian word *sau* (*sā* in Samoa), which indexed as a “larger society” (Green & Kirch, 2001, p. 235)

<sup>426</sup> ‘*Teu le vā*’ is used properly amongst those of equal status, for example if it is used within the circle of *matai*. In the context of those of unequal status, the person of lower status uses ‘*tausī le vā*’ and the person of higher status would use the word *tuaoi* rather than *vā*.

higher status.<sup>427</sup> *Vā* also describes the relationship between those of equal status, especially amongst *matai*, as *teu le vā*, which carries the connotation of adorning and embellishing relationships.<sup>428</sup> The meaning of *vā* is therefore context dependent, and within the *alofisā* it tends to stress the potential to deify, beautify, and embellish relations and things within it.

One of the most important functions of the *alofi sā* was the *vā tapua'i* (encircled relations)<sup>429</sup> or *fono ma aitu* (gathering with spirits),<sup>430</sup> a gathering at night between the circle of *matai* and the spirits in which all the blinds are drawn except one. The men sit and wait for most of the night in anticipation of a sign regarding an important decision related to village affairs.

*Vā* relations as connections between *aiga* and *nu'u* are like threads that are looped through the *matai* who also embodies the relationship between the present and the past as titleholder of ancestral names, allowing him or her to take up a place in the village *alofi sā*. These ancestral titles in turn are connected to titles belonging to major families of Samoa. That is why the motto *Samoa o nu'u ua uma on tofi* is interpreted as "Samoa is a meshwork of lines that are connected together".

### **District and national lines**

Felix and Margaret Keesing in 1956 identified three planes in which Samoan major socio-political dimensions operate:<sup>431</sup> a) The local community or *nu'u* village, b) traditional district structures, and c) all Samoan structures of national character. They illustrated this system with the diagram below (Figure 17).

The titles *Leaupepe* and *Aiono* in *Fasito'outa* are examples of how lines and pathways find their route beyond their local unit, via the paramount lines of descent instituted in

---

<sup>427</sup> Leaupepe Pita points out that *vā* starts with relations within the *aiga – vā totonu o le aiga*, (Leaupepe, 1995).

<sup>428</sup> Allesandro Duranti reports that he first heard *teu le vā* in the context of an disagreement in the *fono* when a *matai* was heard calming the argument with the phrase (Duranti, 1981).

<sup>429</sup> *Vā tapuia* entails sacred covenant relationships or *feagaiga* which are between brother and sister and Christian minister and circle of *matai*, and those between the circle of *matai* and the ancestor gods, (Simanu, p. 127 ); (Simanu, 2001, p. 35).

<sup>430</sup> (Aiono Le Tagaloa, 2003, p. 43).

<sup>431</sup> (F. M. Keesing & Keesing, 1956).

major *ali'i* titles. They are connected to the *itumalo* (district alliance) of A'ana, a connection that comes about through the Sātuala clan, whose members trace their ancestry to Tui A'ana Tamalelagi, the fourteenth-century king of A'ana.<sup>432</sup>

The diagram of connections in the A'ana district above contains the main titles and places that constitute the Sātuala family, in a tiered system on three planes. The Aiga Sātuala family line, connecting to the Tui A'ana Tamalelagi, is positioned on the top plane, the ideal stage in the hierarchical Samoan system of *ali'i*, sacred chiefs of divine descent from Tagaloa-a-lagi.<sup>433</sup> The second plane shows locations of *malae* and *fono matai* for each *nu'u* relating to the Sātuala line. The connections between them are grounded in the local politics of *fua'iala* and *aiga*. The third plane shows the *tulafale* groups who are responsible for the main circulation of influence within the system. They broker the movement of alliances and valuable goods in the system.

The Sātuala clan diagram (Figure 16) and Samoan socio-political lines of influence diagrams (Figure 17) illustrate how extensive these lines of connections and relationship within the Samoan system of belonging are. With this, we return to the fundamental belief of Samoans, contained in the *lauga* (oratory) and uttered at the beginning of every *fono*: “*Samoa o nu'u ua uma ona tofi*” (Samoa is a village with inherited *tofi*).

---

<sup>432</sup> Importantly, from the point of view of the Fasito'outa *fono*, the *tulafale* orator Ape and his brother Tutuila from Fasito'otai played major roles in the mythological deeds of the district line. They were responsible for kidnapping the infant Tamalelagi from the southern district of Safata and later installing him to the Tui A'ana throne, thereby fabricating the current lines of descent for all major families and political alliances in Samoa. Tamalelagi's daughter Salamasina became the undisputed ruler of Samoa in the 15<sup>th</sup> century from which all modern lines of major families trace their lineage (Krämer, 1994, p. 262); (Meleisea & Meleisea, 1987, p. 32); (Tuimaleali'ifano, 2006, p. 39).

<sup>433</sup> Tamalelagi's connection to Tagaloalagi appears in generation 8 of the Tui A'ana genealogy recorded in Krämer (Krämer, 1994, p. 221). Tamalelagi appears in generation 20, which places him around the 1350 AD.

TUI'A'ANA 'KING' OF A'ANA ALI'I TITLE  
& AIGA SATUALA FAMILY KIN ALIGNMENTS

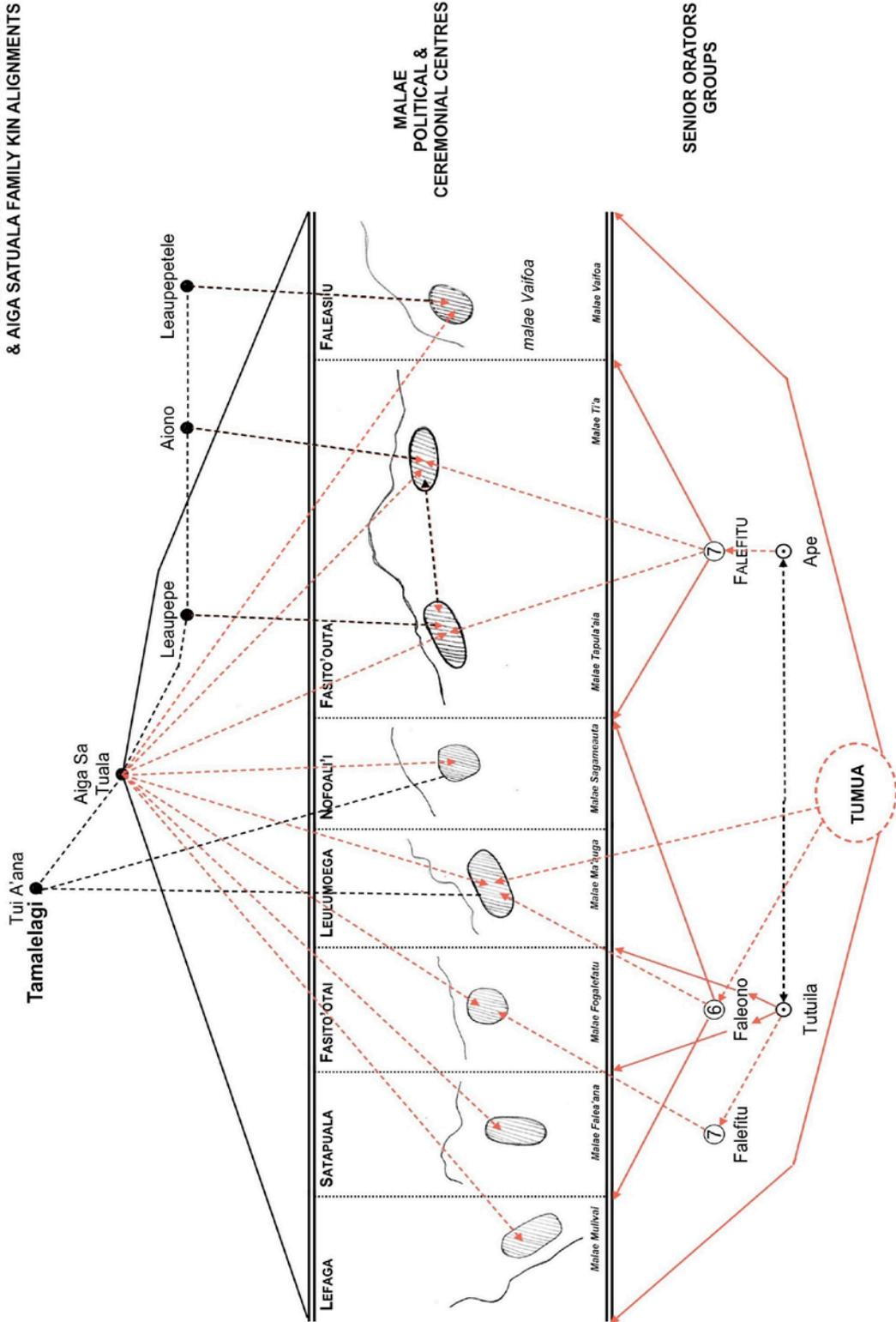


Figure 16  
District lines of Sātuala clan, A'ana district



### **From mythology to planes, peaks and territories**

Figure 13 is adapted from Felix and Margaret Keesing's schema describing the "three peaks" of "god-descended senior lines".<sup>434</sup> These are genealogical connections through three main lines, the Sā Malietoa and Sā Tupua lineages of Savai'i and Upolu, and the Tui Manu'a of Manu'a. Between them, they hold the highest *ali'i* titles: Tui A'ana and Tui Atua relate to the Sā Tupua; Gatoaitete, Tamasoa'ali'i and Malietoa to the Sā Malietoa; and Tui Manu'a, the oldest title, descended from the Sā Tagaloa of Manu'a. These "peaks" on the top plane reach out to the heavens; they are literally the interface between the human world and Lagi, the home of the ancestor gods. As the highest order of *ali'i* titles, they are closer to Lagi.

This schema may be read as the earthly complement to the cosmogonic schema presented in Chapter 3 (see p. 59). The chiefly realm on the top plane shows how titles, as embodiment of *mana*, are connected to several places or districts in Samoa, with each title forming the *Sā aigā* of important families. The top plane therefore comprises objects of most *mana* and *pa'ia* which are connected genealogically to Lagi and the ancestor gods (all the way to Tagaloa and Vānimonimo), and then to the land and properties shown on the second plane, where alliances are founded and forged. This second plane comprises resources and materials belonging to villages that connect to the titles. The system of production and distribution relating to these goods are ordered in terms of their transformation from their roughness and rawness which requires vigorous labour to transform them. They shift towards the centre of the village where they acquire their prestige value when paraded in front of the circle of *matai*. This plane is where we find Papa (see Chapter 3, pp. 62ff), the earthly rocks and dirt (*'ele'ele*), and gardens controlled by titles and families who make up the districts' population and production hubs. The *tulafale*, the management class required to control this system, are shown in the bottom plane. This includes the senior orator groups controlling the circulation of sacred people and blood through arranged marriages, but also the rituals bestowing sanctity on people, objects and relations. If *mana* as sacred and divine power emanates from *ali'i* and sacred women, it is the *tulafale* or *fale'upolu* (the orator classes) who capture and control the circulation of all titles and prestige goods in the system.

---

<sup>434</sup> Felix and Margaret Keesing described these as Sā Malietoa and Sātupua lineage of Savai'i and Upolu, and Tui Manu'a of the Manu'a Islands (F. M. Keesing & Keesing, 1956, pp. 21-22)

The configurations arising from residency and occupation close the loop connecting the cosmogony and earth, Papa and *paepae*, Tagaloa-a-lagi and the *matai*. On the *paepae* on which the *faletele* stands, the meeting with the divine takes place in the *fono*, the endless face-to-face meeting between the ancestors and the ancestor gods (see p. 126). During the *fono*, through the lines that are held by the *matai*, the *mana* of the ancestors and ancestor gods is distributed to the communities. The *faletele* itself, as a reflection of the Samoan cosmogony, and as the apparatus structuring and restructuring social relations, comes into being through the actions of figures that do not belong and stand outside of this system: the Tufuga-faufale, who are the subject of the following chapter.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has been an analysis of the spatial structure of the *fono* as being important to the establishment of the *paepae* (raised platform) in placemaking, and occupation of a sacred place. The *fono* is explored as the binding together of the *alofi sā* in which knotting lines of relations and connections are activated, played and maintained. I show that the layout of the *fono* in which each *matai* takes up a place, is also the appointment or *tofiga* of each *matai* as a link that embodies every person within a village, thus the *fono* is a place inscribed with loops and knots of belongingness. I show in particular the *fono* of the village of Fasito'outa, which shows directly the connections between the *fono matai* (circle of *matai*) – *nu'u* (village) – *fanua* (land) – *itumalo* (district) – *malo* (Samoa polity).

In conclusion, the spatial exposition of the Samoan cosmogony identifies that *mavae* and *tofiga* gives rise to a spatial schema that orders the Samoan structure of relations in lines that connect the cosmogony to Samoan identity – from to the person, the village and beyond.



## Chapter 7

### The Tufuga-faufale and building technology

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapters (Chapters 3 to 6) concerned the spatial exposition of the Samoan cosmogony, providing the context for the articulation of space in Samoan thought, the structuring of social space, and lived experience. In the following two chapters, I will address the realisation of built form in the Samoan environment.

This chapter explores the emergence of the Tufuga-faufale guild in Samoa's technological history, paying close attention to the techniques and the tool system used. An account of the archaeology and history of tools relating to the settlement of the Pacific and Samoa provides a view from a different angle, in support of the spatial exposition carried out so far. I hope to show how the development of tools over time relates directly to societal and cultural changes in Samoa. Tim Ingold has formulated the development of tools and tooling systems to explore the history of human endeavour as,

(The) *relations* (my emphasis) in the evolution of human anatomy, between brain and body; in the evolution of techniques, between perception and action; in the evolution of language, between speech and writing; and in the evolution of art, between imagination and practice.<sup>435</sup>

My approach to the question of how the Tufuga organised the technical system to produce the Samoan *fale* is developed in several ways. First, by considering how the

---

<sup>435</sup> (Ingold, 1999, p. 413). Ingold uses and expands on the work of Andre Leroi-Gourhan on the development between human gestures and language and the link with 'tecnicity'. (Leroi-Gourhan, 1993).

development of Samoan cultural technology produced a milieu and context for the Tufuga's practice; secondly, by tracing the evolution of a technical system that was introduced to Samoa, and the later integration and evolution by the Tufuga into a comprehensive technological and constructional system as we know it today; thirdly, by an exploration of the material organisation and the measuring system used to produce the architecture of the Fale'ula, *faletele*, and *faleafolau*; and, finally, by carrying out a spatial exposition of the cultural and ritual contexts, which the Tufuga operated within the *nu'u*. I also explore the relationship between technology and the role of enchantment in the making of the *fale* as an idea related to the waxing and waning of the Tufuga-faufale's reputation as a craftsman/magician.

### **Archaeology, technological culture and the coming of the Tufuga**

How was the Tufuga-faufale's technological knowledge and technical schemes<sup>436</sup> maintained and passed on? Why has this particular way of construction persisted to the present, even though modern tools and ideas present new ways to make houses? Though these are complex questions, I suggest that the answers can be found in the history of technology<sup>437</sup> and particularly relating to the circumstances of the Tufuga-faufale's emergence as an organised workforce. The Tufuga guild came from Lagi with the Sā Tagaloa clan<sup>438</sup> and settled in Manu'a approximately 800 years after the first Lapita migrants arrived in Samoa (see Figure 20 for this time period).<sup>439</sup>

The sequence of the settlement of Samoa is closely linked to the development of technology in Samoa and Polynesia in which the Tufuga emerged as specialist. Their emergence is recorded in the Samoan cosmogony (see above, pp. 53ff) in which the

---

<sup>436</sup> 'Technical scheme' is a term generally used by French cultural technologists to describe the dual process for technological culture made up of, (a) knowledge composed of mental representations formed from concepts and catalogues of actions and gestures, and, (b) know-how existing as conceptual skills and 'psychomotor' know-how for programming gestures and actions (Audouze, 1999, p. 279).

<sup>437</sup> Technology as discussed here is not to do with the phenomenon tied to technical progress, by which the material conditions of life and production of 'others' are to be evaluated. Technology is "the social, embodied and meaningful dimensions associated with technical activities" (the sum of practices, materials, tools, knowledge, etc.), and as "the *science humaine*, a humanistic discipline studying technical activities", (Coupaye, 2009).

<sup>438</sup> The original Tufuga from Manu'a were as Sā Tagaloa or family of Tagaloa, until the guild branched out into other guilds.

<sup>439</sup> Most Pacific archaeologists date this between 3100 and 2700 years ago, (Green & Kirch, 2001); (Addison & Matisoo-Smith, 2010).

Tufuga were given the tools and techniques for making houses and boats. In the following section I explore the archaeological context relating to the Tufuga-faufale's emergence in Samoa as craftsman to weave another narrative from an archaeological perspective.

### **First Lapita Settlement of Samoa ca.700 BC**

Pacific archaeology shows that the ancestors of Polynesian people emerged in Near Oceania region around 3100 years ago.<sup>440</sup> These people travelled to the east, first to the Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, and the Fiji Islands, finally reaching Samoa and Tonga by 700 BC.<sup>441</sup> The migrants to Samoa were “a canoe load of closely-related people”, who lived in small settlements, operated subsistence economies of small-scale husbandry of crops and fowl, supplemented by fishing and the hunting of birds, which were numerous inland.<sup>442</sup>

Excavations found remains of Lapita decorated pottery with distinct markings, which were produced and utilised by these early settlers.<sup>443</sup> The Lapita (the name they are known today) shared a common ancestor and cultural complex spanning a vast area of

---

<sup>440</sup> Near Oceania encompasses the area first settled in the Pleistocene: Greater Australia and Melanesia to the end of the main Solomon Islands chain. Remote Oceania takes in all of Polynesia Triangle and all of Micronesia. “The initial settlement of Near Oceania involved the peopling of greater New Guinea followed by colonisation of the Bismarck archipelago by 31,000 BP and the Solomon Islands by 29,000 BP ... The introduction of the Oceanic subgroup of Austronesian languages is associated by many with the appearance of the Lapita cultural complex in previously uninhabited coastal sites and on small off-shore islands in Near Oceania at 3,500–3,300 BP. (Matisoo-Smith & Robbins, 2004). The Lapita cultural complex is currently identified by the distinctive “Lapita” pottery and other artifacts. (BP denotes before present dated to around 1950).

<sup>441</sup> (Wallin & Martinsson-Wallin, 2007a); accounting for Lapita archaeological, biological and linguistic evidence and arguments for Polynesian settlement is summarised by David J. Addison and Elizabeth Matisoo-Smith (Addison & Matisoo-Smith, 2010). A comprehensive study of ancestral Polynesian society using archaeology, linguistic and biology can be found in (Green & Kirch, 2001).

<sup>442</sup> (Houghton, 1980).

<sup>443</sup> The Lapita cultural complex is currently identified not only by the distinctive “Lapita” pottery and other artefacts, (Bedford & Sand, ‘Lapita and Western Pacific Settlement’, (Bedford, Sand, & Connaughton, 2007, p. 1), but also by the introduction of a number of plant and animal species, including the Pacific rat, *Rattus exulans* (Matisoo-Smith & Robbins, 2004).

the Pacific, from the north of Papua New Guinea right across to Samoa and Tonga.<sup>444</sup>  
 The Lapita Cultural Complex, (as it is known), is thought to have originated in the vicinity of the Bismarck Archipelago.<sup>445</sup>

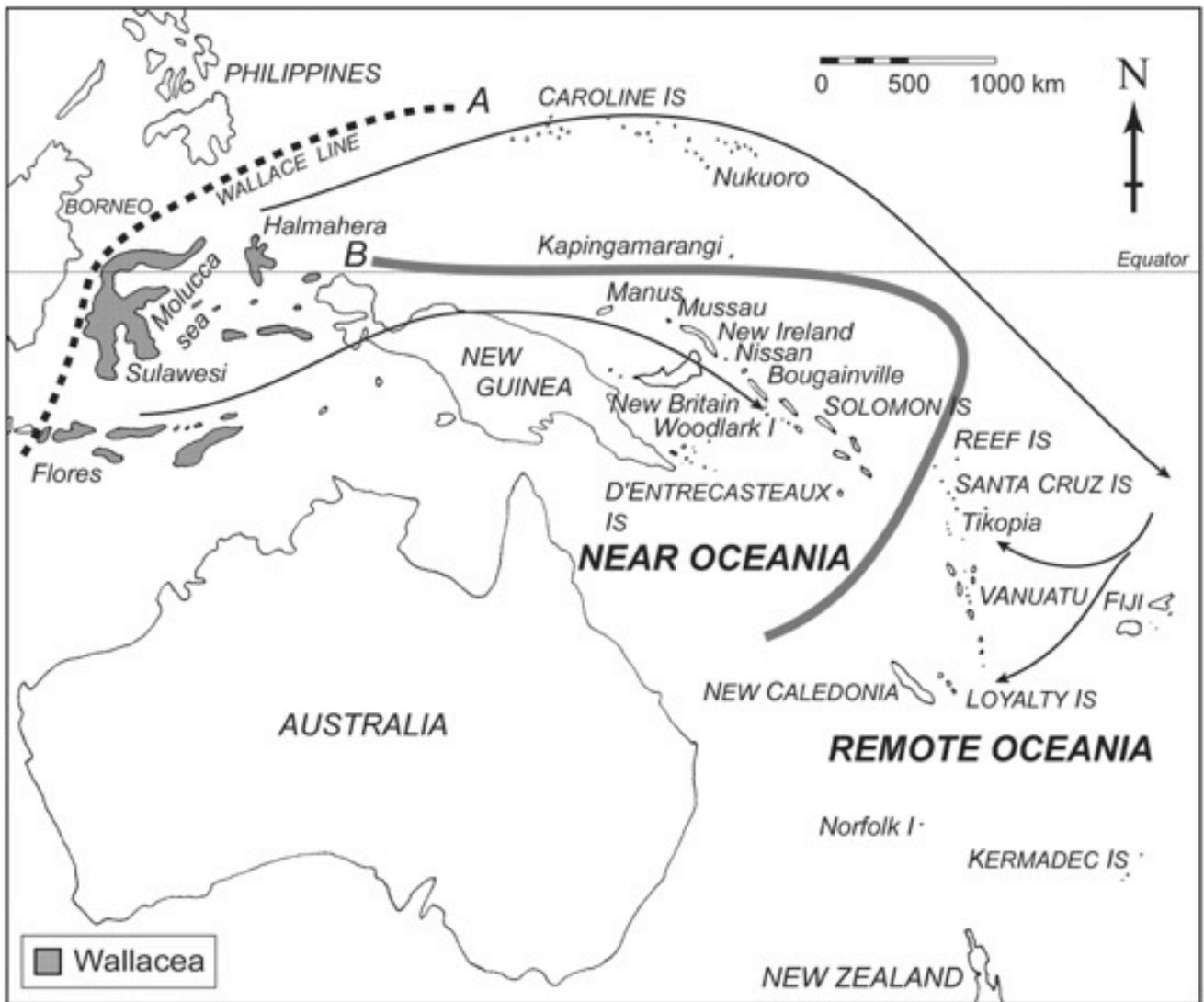


Figure 18  
 The distribution of the Lapita Cultural Complex and origin and dispersal of Pacific people

<sup>444</sup> Decorated Lapita pottery were found in Mulifanua, Upolu in the early 1960s (Wallin & Martinsson-Wallin, 2007a).

<sup>445</sup> (Lilley, 2006, p. 5).

Samoa is located at the eastern edge of the area known as Remote Oceania, which consists of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa, the last places in which decorated Lapita pottery were found. They define the edge of the Lapita expansion and the beginning of a new cultural complex now known as the Ancestral Polynesian Society: *Hawaiki*, homeland of the Polynesian people.<sup>446</sup>

A 'long pause'<sup>447</sup> in the migration saw the development of ancestral Polynesians who remained in the area possibly as long as 1,000 years, during which the uniquely decorated pottery slowly gave way to a plainer style of pottery without decorations.<sup>448</sup> For reasons unknown, pottery disappeared altogether from the Samoan and Tongan region. The Ancestral Polynesian Society developed a shared Proto Polynesian (PN) language, new cultural material traits and tooling system, and a social structure based on the *ariki/ali'i* chiefly system. These all combined to form what became the Polynesian cultural complex.<sup>449</sup>

### **Second settlement ca.300 AD**

A second wave of migrants arrived sometime around 300 AD, which superseded the earlier Lapita migrants' settlement of 700 BC. David Addison and Elizabeth Matisoo-Smith suggest this second population moved out of Asia sometime after 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, and brought a new genetic strand of people, dogs, rats and chickens, through the previously uninhabitable low islands of the Carolines, Kiribati and Tuvalu to Samoa and then, eventually, out to East Polynesia.<sup>450</sup> These people had typically Asian-derived physical characteristics, which have been traced biologically to a hill tribe in Taiwan.<sup>451</sup>

---

<sup>446</sup> *Hawaiki* was also known by a number of other names: Savai'i (Samoa), Tahiti (Society Islands) and Hawai'i (Green & Kirch, 2001).

<sup>447</sup> (Irwin, 1996, p. 71).

<sup>448</sup> The change from Polynesian plainware to aceramic deposits occurs simultaneously throughout West Polynesia, (Burley & Clark, 2003).

<sup>449</sup> The emergence of the Ancestral Polynesian Society is the topic of Green and Kirch's book *Hawaiki*, the most comprehensive survey on the emergence of a Polynesian Cultural Sequence (Green & Kirch, 2001).

<sup>450</sup> A triadic schema called the "Triple-I" theory has been used to analyse the sequence of events resulting from this later migration to settle the Pacific. Triple-I stands for 'Intrusion—Integration—Innovation' and describes how a more recent cultural complex firstly 'intrudes' and then 'integrates' with the initial cultural complex and later evolves or 'innovates' new distinctive cultural forms, artefacts and new shared language (Addison & Matisoo-Smith, 2010, p. 5).

The new migrants settled West Polynesia (Samoa, Tonga, Fiji). Addison and Matisoo-Smith link them with the emergence of the Sā Tagaloa in Manu'a<sup>452</sup> and Samoan oral traditions supports this theory.<sup>453</sup> These migrants introduced new mtDNA<sup>454</sup> lineages of commensal rats, dogs, and chickens, new plants, new material culture, and new ideas, that they had intense and complex interactions with the existing Lapita-descended populations as they spread over West Polynesia, and that the result was Ancestral Polynesian Society/Culture.<sup>455</sup> The Polynesians then dispersed both east into the previously uninhabited islands of East Polynesia and west to the Polynesian outliers, where they subsequently interacted biologically and culturally with the indigenous populations.<sup>456</sup>

This second arrival coincided with a number of changes in Samoa: the beginning of the loss of decorated pottery, the introduction of new construction techniques and technology giving rise to the Tufuga clan and the prominence of building crafts (houses and boats), and the development of a societal order based on *ariki/ali'i* chiefdom.<sup>457</sup>

### **Ancestral Polynesian Society technology**

The first Lapita settlers possessed a furnace technology that controlled low-temperature firing for making pottery in small volumes, and required skill, technical know-how and experience to control temperatures between 500-700 degrees Celsius.<sup>458</sup> Pottery associated with cooking, food preservation and crop farming and different skills were required for these tasks. Green believes that women would have manufactured these,

---

<sup>451</sup> Some historians proposed that the Tagaloa 'cult' were migrants from the Sangir Islands north of Sulawesi: where the word *tagaloang* in their language signifies 'open sea' or 'ocean', (Denoon et al., 1997, p. 71).

<sup>452</sup> (Addison & Matisoo-Smith, 2010, p. 8)

<sup>453</sup> A chant from Manu'a suggests this (see above, pp. 64ff).

<sup>454</sup> Human Mitochondrial DNA, shortened mtDNA humans, is inherited solely from the mother and traces the biological lines of human evolution and dispersal.

<sup>455</sup> A system developed by Roger Green to account for the archeological process of *intrusion intergration* and *innovation*. (Green, 1991).

<sup>456</sup> (Addison & Matisoo-Smith, 2010, p. 7).

<sup>457</sup> (Sahlins, 1958); (Kirch, 1996).

<sup>458</sup> As Leroi-Gourhan suggested technicians "are masters of civilization because they have mastered the furnace crafts" (Leroi-Gourhan, 1993, p. 176); early Samoans, like their ancestors in Near Oceania and Papua New Guinea, would have had to master the art of producing and maintaining high temperatures in their furnaces to temper the pots properly (Rye, 1976, p. 112).

men were responsible for containers made of wood.<sup>459</sup> The operational sequence<sup>460</sup> of pottery-making saw the use of tools for digging and collecting raw clay, then forming, shaping and decorating, and finally firing the pots in enclosed or open ovens. These were then used to store, heat and transport food-stock and especially for religious use. What is known is that the first Lapita settlers were coastal dwellers that did little or no inland farming.<sup>461</sup> The technology of later migrants was different. Their arrival is associated with changes in pottery, which became less and less decorated to plainware until finally it was completely abandoned.<sup>462</sup> It meant that after 1000 years, furnace technology gave way to new modes of preparing and storing food. Around 1700 years ago, a crucial feature of the first settlers' cultural technology began to be transformed. Explanations for the loss of pottery pointed to the manner in which social roles that pottery once played were replaced or abandoned for other activities in which pottery was not required.<sup>463</sup> Other explanations are that there were fewer adequate sites for clay supply in Samoa<sup>464</sup> and the widespread adaptation of wooden vessels for food preparation and storage.

An intriguing recent view pointed out the increasing use of the *umu ti* ovens. Food was placed in large ovens of heated stones covered with leaves and left to cook for a few hours or up to a day. This was the method widely used in Polynesia from this period on.

The development of adze technology was also on the rise. This is shown by the increasing activities recorded at the basalt quarries in Tutuila, Savai'i and Upolu,<sup>465</sup> which point to the efficient and widespread manufacture of adzes. These were used by the Tufuga to make sacred houses and domestic objects such as carved bowls that replaced pots. More significant to the narrative of Polynesian migration, was the development of maritime technology and know-how that would eventually result in the ability of the Polynesians to migrate eastward. Double-hull sailing vessels appeared and

---

<sup>459</sup> (Green & Kirch, 2001, p. 168).

<sup>460</sup> Operating sequence or *chaîne opératoire* (Leroi-Gourhan, 1993, p. 253) is a way to trace and map out the interrelationship between tools, action and the making process.

<sup>461</sup> (Green & Kirch, 2001, p. 121)

<sup>462</sup> (Green & Kirch, 2001).

<sup>463</sup> (Green & Davidson, 1974, p. 253); (Kaeppler, 1973); (Carson, 2002, p. 360).

<sup>464</sup> A view discounted by Winterhoff suggesting that there were adequate clay soils in Tutuila for instance (Winterhoff, 2007, pp. 13-15).

<sup>465</sup> Current archaeological data put the figure at 19 sites: one in Upolu, 16 in Tutuila and two in Manu'a (Winterhoff, 2007, p. 182).

became increasingly prominent around this period, allowing for frequent contact between islands in the Western Pacific.

This period was thought to be the moment when the stone quarries in Tutuila came into production and the lithic adze-head trade in Western Polynesia and the Outliers Islands became very active.<sup>466</sup> The result was the accumulation and consolidation of wealth, under a new societal order with the emergence and evolution of the *ariki/ali'i* elite system.<sup>467</sup> Ernest Winterhoff concludes that the Samoan guild system emerged from this period.

as societies become more stratified, craft specialization becomes an increasingly important strategy for leaders to gain control over the economy. To create the surplus needed to finance emerging elites, craft specialization has the ability to increase production levels by either developing more efficient techniques or by monopolizing the skills needed in the manufacture of products.<sup>468</sup>

The upsurge in production of lithic crafts led to a rise in tool production and a corresponding increase in the development of the technology in making bigger and more efficient sailing vessels, leading to the great migration and dispersal to Eastern Polynesia and the Polynesia Outliers.<sup>469</sup> This was also a shift in technological development, away from furnace related materials towards woodworking and carpentry in which the Tufuga would come into their own.

The Tufuga emerged from this period and from an archaeological perspective this rise in their prominence coincided with new developments in adze technology. The formation of the Polynesian adze kit started with the Samoan adze typology, and it is important because the emergence of the triangular adze corresponded with the period of Ancestral Polynesia and the rise of the Tufuga clan in Samoa.<sup>470</sup> The tools of the period were made largely of stone used for chopping, cutting, drilling, and shaping things, including adzes

---

<sup>466</sup> (Best, Sheppard, Green, & Parker, 1992).

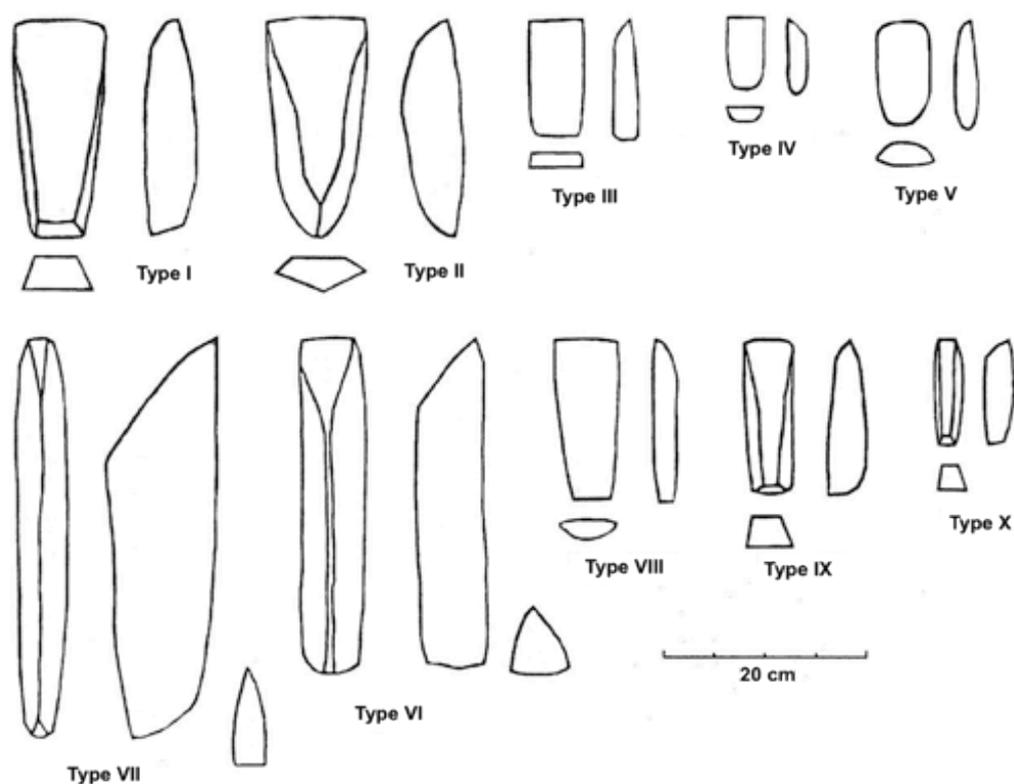
<sup>467</sup> (Sahlins, 1958).

<sup>468</sup> (Winterhoff, 2007, p. 182).

<sup>469</sup> Green and Kirch believe that "Pottery manufacture in Polynesia ceased shortly after the break-up of Ancestral Polynesian culture and the movement of populations into the northern atoll islands of Western Polynesia, the Outliers, and central Eastern Polynesia" (Green & Kirch, 2001, p. 168).

<sup>470</sup> Formulated first by Peter Buck (Buck, 1930, p. 333); further developed by Green and Davidson, (Green & Davidson, 1974, pp. 131-150); see also (Green & Kirch, 2001, p. 177).

or axes, chisels, gouges, files, whetstones and grindstones, drills, wedges, and simple basalt, obsidian, and chert flake tools. Chief among these is the Ancestral Polynesian adze kit from which the later adze types of both Eastern and Western Polynesia were derived. The diagram below (Figure 19) shows the Samoan adze typology, which Green and Davidson developed from Buck's extensive analysis of adzes in Samoa and in the Bishop Museum collection.<sup>471</sup>



**Figure 19**  
**The Samoan adze typology (adapted from Green and Davidson 1974)**

The chronology of the emergence of the types in Figure 19 above shows the move from Lapita large quadrangular adzes (type I & II) to the prominence of the triangular types (IV, V, VII) in the Plainware period, while types I and VI increased in the Traditional Samoa period.

---

<sup>471</sup> Initiated by Buck (Buck, 1930, pp. 333-370) and developed by Roger Green and Janet Davidson (Green & Davidson, 1969, pp. 21-32).

Adzes were employed both as utilitarian items for subsistence and as wealth-generating goods by craftsman guilds. For utilitarian adzes, *individual production* was conducted by part-time independent producers at dispersed households for intra-valley distribution. For guild adzes, *nucleated workshops* were organised by master craftsman or elites for wider distribution for purposes of wealth accumulation: here, attached specialists worked part-time at centralised workshops.<sup>472</sup>

The diagram below (Figure 20) sketches out a timeline sequence of these developments to provide a 'context-picture' aiding the analysis of when the constructional and crafting system emerged in Samoa.

The previous analysis of Samoan oral history and mythological accounts (see above, pp. 54ff) is included here to weave a comparative contextual picture showing the estimated time of arrival of the Tagaloa clan as being ca.1800 years ago.

The first, second and third technological orders, coincided with migration sequences. The diagram aligns together the sequence between different arrival and settlement periods, matched to the three technological orders, which falls within three periods. The first technological order began with the first Lapita migrants who brought pottery technology that was used for making simple and plain vessels for storing food and water and also for fermentation,<sup>473</sup> while decorated pottery was used mainly for religious rituals. The second technological order falls into the period when the Tufuga arrived with the Sā Tagaloa clan in Manu'a. We see the establishment of different technological schemata in the increasing use and trade of adzes. This was due to the rise in adze manufacture at stone quarries in Tutuila. Pottery disappeared from manufacture and use altogether perhaps because of changes in the rituals and religious ceremonies of the new arrivals. Also the manner of cooking changed from the use of clay pots to the heated stone method of the *umu*. The third technological order emerged after European contact in the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

---

<sup>472</sup> (Winterhoff, 2007, p. 50)

<sup>473</sup> Storing fermented fish in large coconuts was a common method to make delicacies, which was still being used right up to the 1960s.

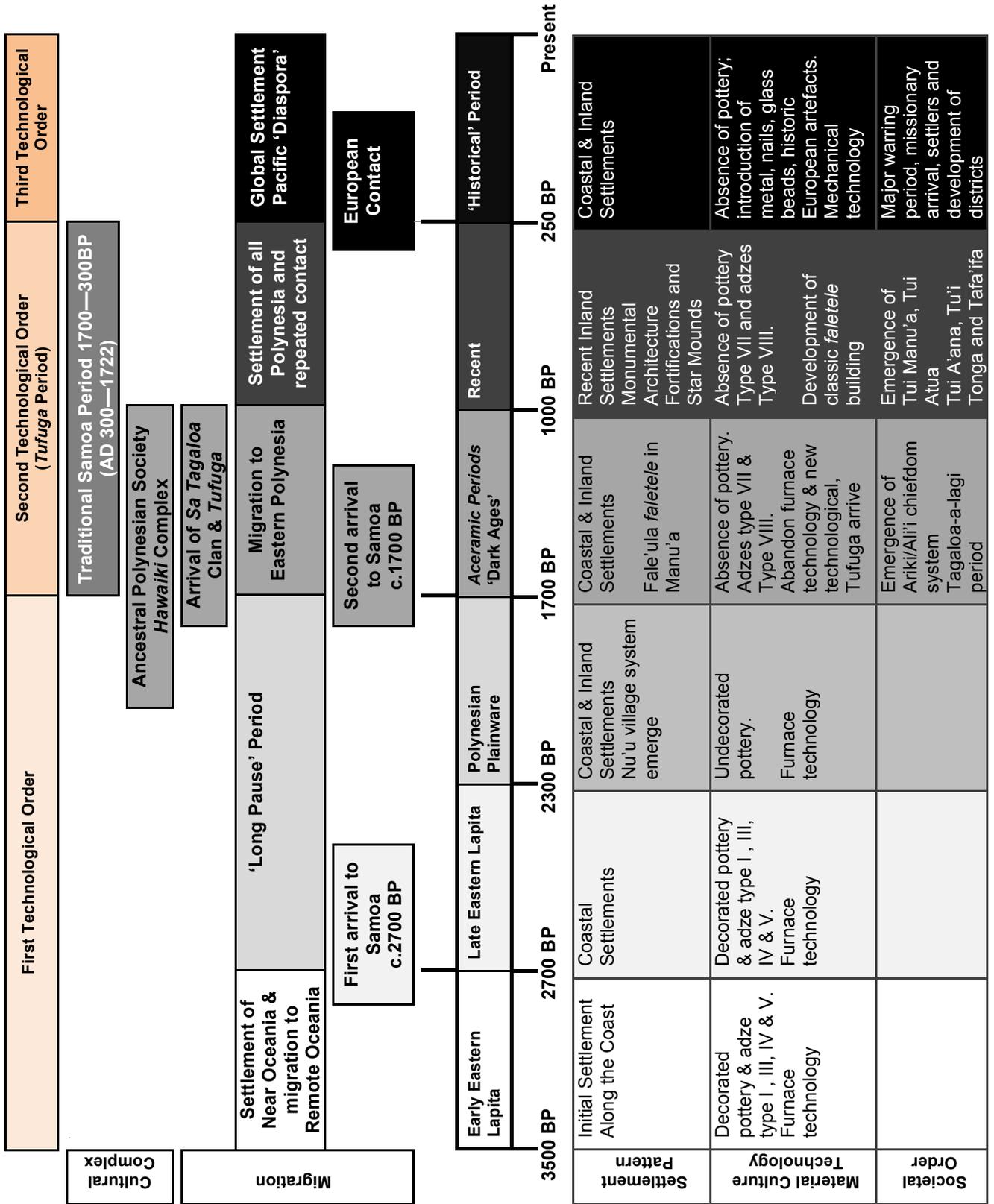


Figure 20  
Timeline illustrating the Samoan Cultural Sequence

The understanding of space initiated by the Samoan cosmogony in which *mavae* and *tofiga* became operative concepts (that structured and ordered Samoa society as we know it today), emerged in the second migration sequence and coincided with the development of the second technological order. The Tufuga at this period built the first Fale'ula in Manu'a, which became the model of Samoan guest and meeting houses thenceforth.

### **Pre-historical settlement pattern**

Davidson observes, "it seems likely that for much of Samoa prehistory, Samoans lived dispersed over their lands, taking advantage of both inland and coastal situations".<sup>474</sup> When European explorers first arrived they saw dwellings the majority of which were round huts in settlements, which would indicate that they were in the form of the *faletele*. La Perouse for instance visited a village that he described as,

charming ... situated in the midst of a wood ... orchard loaded with fruit. The houses were placed upon the circumference of a circle, of about a hundred and fifty *toises*<sup>475</sup> in diameter, the interior forming a vast open space.<sup>476</sup>

La Pérouse described the classic organisation of settlements of chiefs' *maota* (residences) grouped around the *malae*, the houses on their *paepae* platforms were described as round in the *faletele* style. Archaeological evidence suggests that the open *malae* was found mainly in the coastal areas.<sup>477</sup> Inland settlements contained cleared areas that were also *malae*, but it was most likely that ritual and ceremonial grounds were located on raised *ti'a* platforms or mounds because there were few areas where the classic *malae* cleared ground could be located.<sup>478</sup> Most of the surrounding areas in inland settlements shown in Figure 21 below were covered with raised stone pathways and roads.

---

<sup>474</sup> (Green & Davidson, 1974, p. 243).

<sup>475</sup> *Toise* is a unit of measure for length, area and volume originating in pre-revolutionary France.

<sup>476</sup> (La Pérouse, 1798, p. 71).

<sup>477</sup> (Wallin & Martinsson-Wallin, 2007b).

<sup>478</sup> The Pulumele'i mound for instance is surrounded by a complex system of pathways and roads, there is little evidence of a cleared ground except on top of the mound itself. The only place for a *malae* is near the coastal part of the site where the village of Palauli is now located, see (Wallin & Martinsson-Wallin, 2007b, pp. 84, 87).

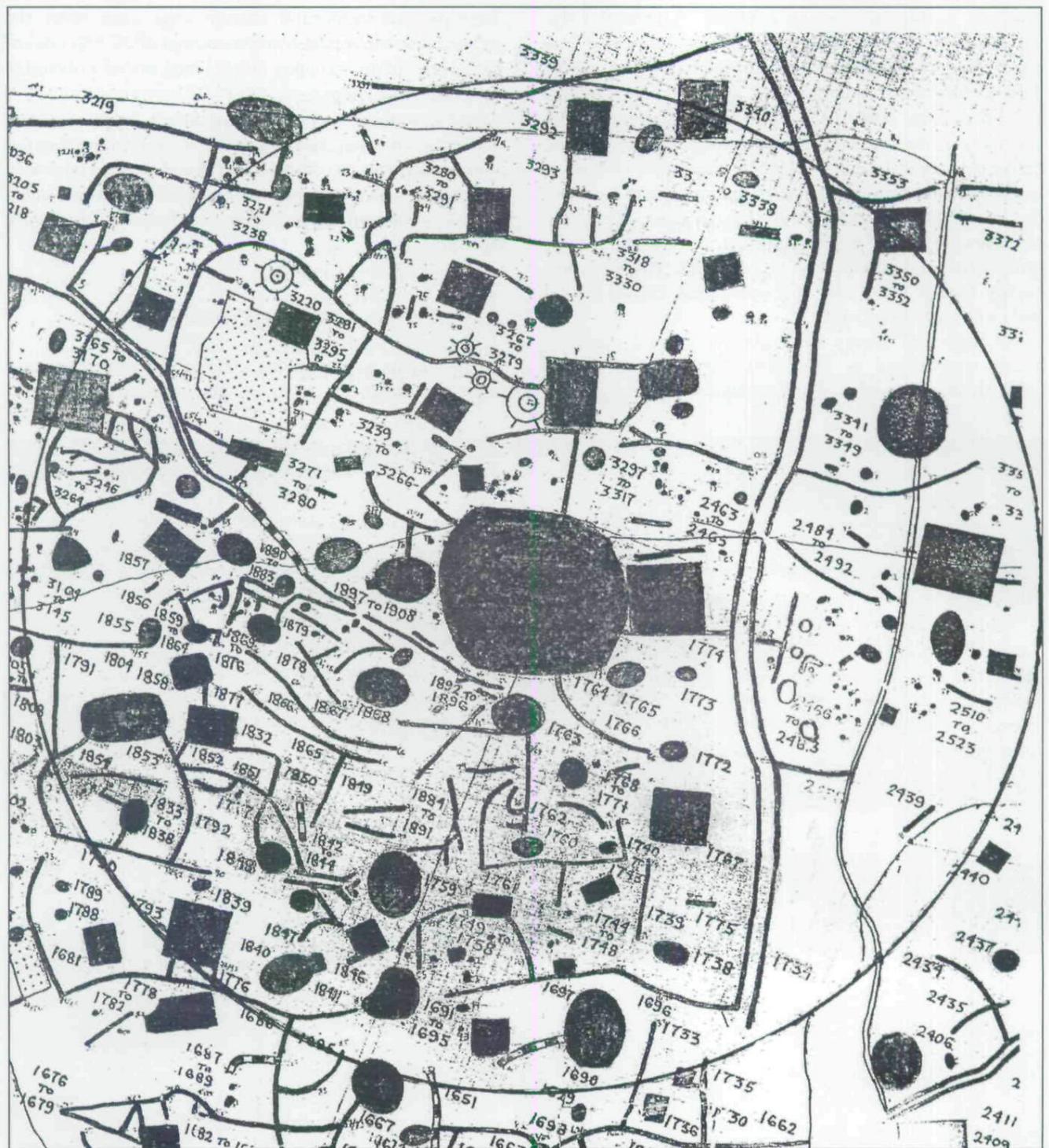


Figure 21  
Detail of the Letolo site in Palauli showing the Pulemele'i mound in the centre  
(in Jennings et. al 1982)

A number of these inland settlements were very large and were grouped around the prominent mounds, which meant that a well-organised workforce with resource constructed them from earth and stone.<sup>479</sup> The mounds varied in shape and size, from large to small, irregular platform-type to star-shaped (*tia 'ave*) mounds.<sup>480</sup> These are dated to the Monumental Building Period being from 1000 to 250 years ago.<sup>481</sup> Similarly, prehistoric house platforms ranged from small rectangular platforms to large low pavements and large high mounds, and included some round and oval structures.<sup>482</sup> This diversity among house platforms is a feature that continues to the present.

Wallin and Martinsson-Wallin have established from archaeological data that the stable long-term settlement pattern for Samoa could be described as household units comprising a few individual house platforms and a cooking area. This unit was usually separated from other units by walls or walkways, possibly with a garden area within the enclosure. Several household units made up a *pito nu'u* (village ward). Within this area was a larger platform, which is indicative of a chief's dwelling. These *pito nu'u* made up a *nu'u* (village) with a *malae* (village green) and a *faletele* (community house).<sup>483</sup>

The structure described here by Wallin and Martinsson-Wallin in which prehistoric Samoans ordered their settlements, can be seen in play in Chapter 5 (pp.114ff) and Chapter 6 (pp.125ff), in which the *fua'iala* is the older form of the *nu'u* with several households forming a *pitonu'u* (village ward).<sup>484</sup> What is of interest is that the inland settlements that were grouped around mounds (Pulemele'i being an example), had ritual grounds that were not the typical *malae* open form sited on levelled ground.

---

<sup>479</sup> Wallin and Martinsson-Wallin believe that the large Tapuitea and Laupule mounds in Vailele are the largest man-made earth structures in Polynesia (Wallin & Martinsson-Wallin, 2007b).

<sup>480</sup> The mounds were called *ti'a seu lupe* (mounds for snaring pigeons) – an elite sport played by *ali'i* who use the mounds as platforms from where small nets on long poles were hoisted into the air to catch wild pigeons alive. Tamed pigeons were used as lures to attract wild pigeons to the snare, (Herdrich & Clark, 1993); (Herdrich, 1991).

<sup>481</sup> (Clark & Martinsson-Wallin, 2007).

<sup>482</sup> (Green & Davidson, 1974, p. 227); (Wallin & Martinsson-Wallin, 2007b, p. 14).

<sup>483</sup> (Wallin & Martinsson-Wallin, 2007b, p. 21).

<sup>484</sup> Jennings, Holmer and Jackmond identified *fua'iala* clusters in their diagrams (Fig. 23) as “high status platform clusters” (Jennings, Holmer, & Jackmond, 1982, p. 90); Wallin and Martinsson-Wallin called them *pito nuu* (Wallin & Martinsson-Wallin, 2007a, p. 21); I've elected to use *fua'iala*, which was what Krämer called them – see Chapter 5 *Mavae and fua'iala: connecting outwards*.

Current evidence points to a different configuration where ritual grounds were located on the mounds themselves and the *fua'iala* units were grouped around these raised platforms. Figure 23 below shows the Pulemele'i mound in the Letolo plantation in Palauli, a settlement layout that shows clearly the demarcation of *fua'iala* grouping around several small mounds (diagram on the right in Figure 23 below).

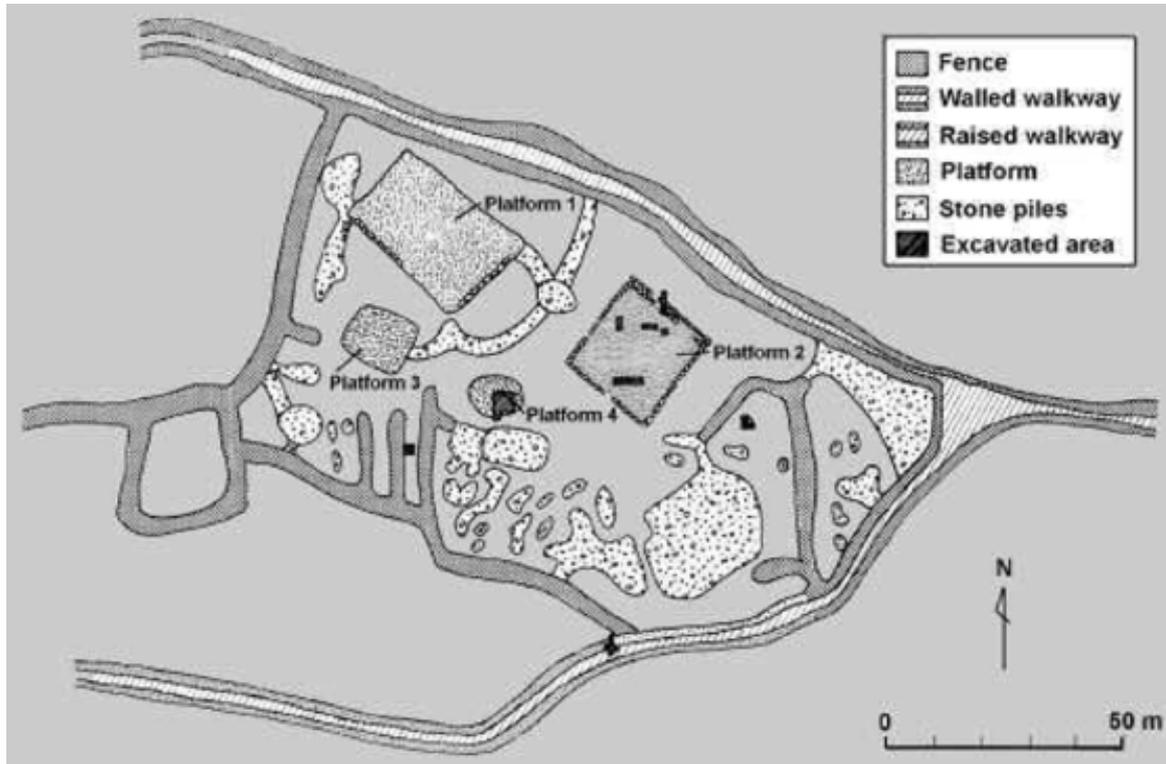


Figure 22  
Pre-historic Household unit from Apulu at Mt. Olo (in Jennings et. al 1982)



**Figure 23**  
 Map of Letolo settlement (left) and map of *fua'iala* clusters (right) (in Jennings et. al 1982)

I have established above the archaeological context of the settlement of Samoa and the creation of a unique cultural and technological system over a long period of time before the arrival of Europeans in the late eighteenth century. The contextualisation is an attempt to show that the archaeological data can help provide the connection between the material manifestations of real events in time and concepts and ideas about space in the Samoan cosmology set out in the previous chapters. It is a way to identify with some certainty the context in which the Tufuga-faufale came to be, in Samoa. The next section is an attempt to widen this context to show how technology as a system can be used to locate and explain the object for which the Tufuga-faufale were known for – the *fale*.

### **Technological structure and the Tufuga**

The Tufuga are a traditional organised work force involved in craft specialisation. Craft specialisation is a feature of development within any technological system in which a

particular set of skills produces and transforms raw materials and/or components into usable objects. Cathy Costin suggests that a number of operations is required to differentiate specialised from non-specialised production: first, the amount of time spent in the activity; secondly, the proportion of subsistence obtained from the activity; thirdly, the presence of a recognised title, name, or office for the person or the activity; fourthly, the payment in money, goods or in kind for the products of the specialist.<sup>485</sup> This is a highly regulated and institutionalised craft production system in which producers depend on extra-household exchange relationships, while consumers depend on them for the acquisition of goods they do not produce themselves.<sup>486</sup> A product that has a high number of producers in relation to consumers will have a low degree of specialisation, while a product that has relatively few specialists in proportion to consumers will have a high degree of specialisation.

In Costin's matrix the pre-contact Tufuga were an organised specialist group that falls into the 'Individual Retainers' category of individual artisans usually working full-time, producing for elite patrons or governing institutions within an elite or administered setting. The Tufuga were initially restricted to working for Tagaloa-a-lagi<sup>487</sup> the patron of the Sā Tagaloa clan: they were 'attached specialists' who produced goods of key importance within the political economy and the status, power, or control of the society.<sup>488</sup> Tufuga were able to control the production and circulation of the *fale* as a prestige object in an exclusive patron-client relationship in that they were able to determine the timing and availability of the *fale*.

In the Samoan polity, basalt tools were used as political wealth because adzes were used in the manufacture of high-status craft items, employed as specialised tools by a formalised carpenter guild, and were manufactured within a politicised geography. Tutuila was an important area in which large-scale quarries and lithic workshops were located that contributed to the trade in lithic tools that extended to Tonga, Fiji and the Polynesian Outlier Islands.

---

<sup>485</sup> Costin calls these as Generalised or Domestic Mode of Production (Costin, 1991, p. 3).

<sup>486</sup> (Costin, 1991, p. 4).

<sup>487</sup> The *Solo o le Vā* recounted that the Tufuga were exiled from Lagi because they built a Fale'ula for the King Tui Manu'a without Tagaloa-a-lagi's knowledge (see above, pp. 67ff).

<sup>488</sup> Costin proposes that because control over production translates into straightforward control over distribution, active sponsorship of production may be an effective way to limit the distribution of emblems of power and prestige, maintain a monopoly of force, or prevent the growth of competition if the goods are a source of revenue (Costin, 1991, p. 13).

Technical relations are embedded in social relations with technology as that which embraces all physical interactions, and which leads to the transformation of matter. It is not something outside culture and society, but an intrinsic part of it.<sup>489</sup> Technique is a locus that brings into play materials, sequences of action, tools including the body, and know-how or skill that is steeped in cultural representations of 'reality'.<sup>490</sup> Technical knowledge can be passed from generation to generation, imbued with value and significance, and reaffirmed through systems of kinship and apprenticeship. Technology in this sense is dynamic and social to the core.

Cultural technologist Pierre Lemonnier suggests that "any technique, in any society, though, be it a mere gesture or a simple artefact, is always the physical rendering of mental schemas learned through tradition and concerned with how things work, are made to be made, and to be used".<sup>491</sup> Lemonnier identified three ways that techniques form a system of operations for the body/society and tools to produce this. First, as loci of multiple interactions and constant adjustments of techniques together with the action animating them, which builds up a knowledge system of effects. Action here is constantly adapted to transformations in the material worked, to the characteristics of the tool and the evolution of skills and technical knowledge and in turn it takes account of the available tools, the effective action, the material worked, and so forth. Secondly, techniques create among them 'multiple relations of interdependence' in the way that their operational sequences or technical principles can be exchanged, referred to and inform the procedures of other techniques and vice versa. Thirdly, the manner in which cultural representations and classification of techniques by a given group adds to its 'particular' operational and systematic character with its own techno-cultural trait.

By taking into account the three-way analysis of technique between the conditions of coexistence and of the reciprocal transformations of a technical system and of the socioeconomic organisation of the society it operates in, produces an understanding of the relations between a material culture and a society. Techniques are first and foremost social productions connected

---

<sup>489</sup> (Lemonnier, 1992, p. 7); see also Ingold where he observed, "technical relations are embedded in social relations, and can only be understood within this relational matrix, as one aspect of human sociality" (Ingold, 2000, p. 314).

<sup>490</sup> (Lemonnier, 1986, p. 154).

<sup>491</sup> (Lemonnier, 1993, p. 3).

permanently to a 'technical phenomenon' and social reality. It is therefore 'correlations' which cultural technology seeks to establish.<sup>492</sup>

The production of a Samoan *faletele* requires the human body to be both a tool that utilises gestures and movement to achieve a task and an agent applying the force driving other tools (for instance, adzes and scrapers). So, an analysis of a technical system for making a *faletele* must involve the analysis of the *chaînes opératoires*<sup>493</sup> or 'operational sequences' of the progress of its tooling system in making a *faletele*. In this way, bodily techniques and gestural schemata can be compared to their relative displacement in space and time during the construction period and we can match this with the geographical ranking of space in Samoa culture. This should allow us to articulate the coincidence of techniques of making related to action and body schema with the social dimension of Samoan society.

The sequence of five events tracing the actions are as follows (based on Lemonnier's five main areas of 'choice' within any technology):<sup>494</sup>

1. Raw materials from which the building is made, in the case of Samoan houses they are timber, coconut fibre, coconut palm leaves;
2. Tools used to shape the raw materials – adze, scrapers, drills, needles, ropes, scaffolding;
3. Energy sources used to transform the raw materials and power the tools – manpower, sliders, ropes, sun to dry material;
4. Techniques used to orchestrate the raw materials, tools and energy to achieve a particular goal;
5. The sequence (or *chaîne opératoire*) in which these acts are linked together to transform raw materials into consumable products – this includes the order of the techniques, the frequency with which they are repeated and the locations at which they take place.

### **The operational sequence and gestures for creating a *faletele***

Knowledge and bodily action adapts to the physical evolution of the material being worked. It allows the body to develop the ability to compose a sequence of gestures with

---

<sup>492</sup> (Lemonnier, 1986, p. 154).

<sup>493</sup> See footnote 460.

<sup>494</sup> (Lemonnier, 1986, p. 154).

controlled movements giving effect to a 'technicity' in which tools, once liberated from the body, are able to construct a system that produces a human-centred environment:

Techniques are at the same time gestures and tools, organized in sequence by a true syntax which gives the operational series both their stability and their flexibility. The operational syntax is generated by memory and is born from the dialogue between the brain and the material realm.<sup>495</sup>

The concept of *chaînes opératoires* was first developed by Leroi-Gourhan to account for given actions in a series of step-by-step processes in analysing the making of artefacts via the transformation of raw materials towards a manufactured or finished product.<sup>496</sup>

Ludovic Coupaye describes the process as a way to imply and create a relationship between "the mind, the eye, the hand, the tool, and the actual physical qualities and properties of the material being worked upon" with the actor positioned as "seated, bent over, or be turning around his or her work, as he or she is progressing, evaluating, judging, making decisions".<sup>497</sup> Once recorded, the sequence is then described in a series of diagrams listing actions taken in chronological order along with requisite information on time, space and tools. As Françoise Audouze writes,

(To)day the term *chaînes opératoires* refers to a method that is an analytical grid, nothing more. But it is a very complex grid that allows one to relate the different stages of production to each other and to order them along with related factors, including physical and economic ones, terminology, places, social relations, symbolics, etc.<sup>498</sup>

An important ingredient in the operational sequence is the subset of tools needed and guided by the techniques involved. For Ingold, "an object *becomes* a tool through becoming conjoined to a technique, and techniques are the properties of skilled subjects".<sup>499</sup> For pre-industrial societies like Samoa, tools are links in a chain of personal rather than mechanical causation, and serve to deliver intentional action and not merely physical or bodily force. Tools here include the body, bodily extensions like adzes, pulleys, mallets, scrapers, check for repetition drills, and needles which are required for the construction of a *faletele*, but importantly, tools are also the techniques learned,

---

<sup>495</sup> (Leroi-Gourhan, 1993, pp. 114, 230–234).

<sup>496</sup> Suggested initially by Marcel Mauss in his studies of 'Techniques of the Body' (Mauss, 2007) and developed by Leroi-Gourhan (Leroi-Gourhan, 1993) and later Lemonnier (Lemonnier, 1986).

<sup>497</sup> (Coupaye, 2009, p. 439).

<sup>498</sup> (Audouze, 2002, p. 287).

<sup>499</sup> (Ingold, 2000, p. 320).

retained and driven by the bodily actions of which a skilled craftsman are more than capable.

The construction of a *faletele* is a complex set and subset of actions. The following analysis has been simplified to reflect the overall coincidence of operational sequences of the techniques for constructing the *faletele*. The analysis is a conflation of data from a number of sources that contained relevant information of the constructional sequence of *faletele*.<sup>500</sup>

The context for an operational sequence of the *faletele* is coded already by a Samoan social cultural schema, which places the construction site within a village setting where the house becomes part of the *malae* ceremonial ground. Only certain actions and gestures are permitted by cultural protocols within the vicinity of the *malae*. Thus techniques are determined by cultural protocols and techniques are coded according to their proper cultural location. Techniques are skilled actions that allow an objective to be reached and the *faletele* therefore is an object that is achieved by actions that are orchestrated and given particular orientation necessary for the cultural product to be made. The sequence of actions required for the making of a *faletele* falls agreeably within the layout schema that is considered *fa'a Samoa* and is highlighted by the shift from an unrefined persona towards the most refined behaviour (see section 2.2.1). This schema is illustrated by Shore's 'concentric dualism model' of Samoan social behaviour relative to the location of the *malae*. As shown in Figure 24, there is an increased formality to people's behaviour and physical actions and gestures as they move closer to the centre of the village where the *malae* is located. The *faletele* are chiefs' houses that border this open space; this directly influences the gestural behaviour and actions of any activity relative to the working of the materials gathered for the construction of the house. Gestures that are violent or vigorous are confined to *gauta* (inland) and associated with

---

<sup>500</sup> These are Augustin Krämer, Samoa Islands: Volume 2, Part VI., Section C - House Building, 1905/1995 who collected his data from a number of interviews carried out in 1899; E. S. Craighill Handy & W. Handy, Samoan House Building, Cooking, and Tattooing, 1924 who in 1923 observed a number of houses in various stages of construction, and also interviewed a Tufuga living in Apia; Peter Buck (Rangi Hiroa), Samoan Material Culture, 1930, who interviewed a number of Tufuga in Tutuila, Savai'i and Upolu in 1928 and also witnessed a number of houses being built; UNESCO Office for the Pacific States, The Samoan Fale, 1992, a partly photographic and ethnographic study which accumulated already published materials from Buck and from interviews with prominent Tufuga from Upolu; Anne E. G. Allen, Space as Social Construct: The vernacular architecture of rural Samoa, Ph.D., 1993. Allen wrote mainly on the notion of Samoan social space via the use of numerous published sources and an interview with a Tufuga from Savai'i.

*vao* (bush), the regions that are 'undomesticated' by *teu* or embellishment. This is opposed to the centre of the village and *malae* location, which requires more refined actions that tend towards *teu* (embellishment or orderly behaviour).

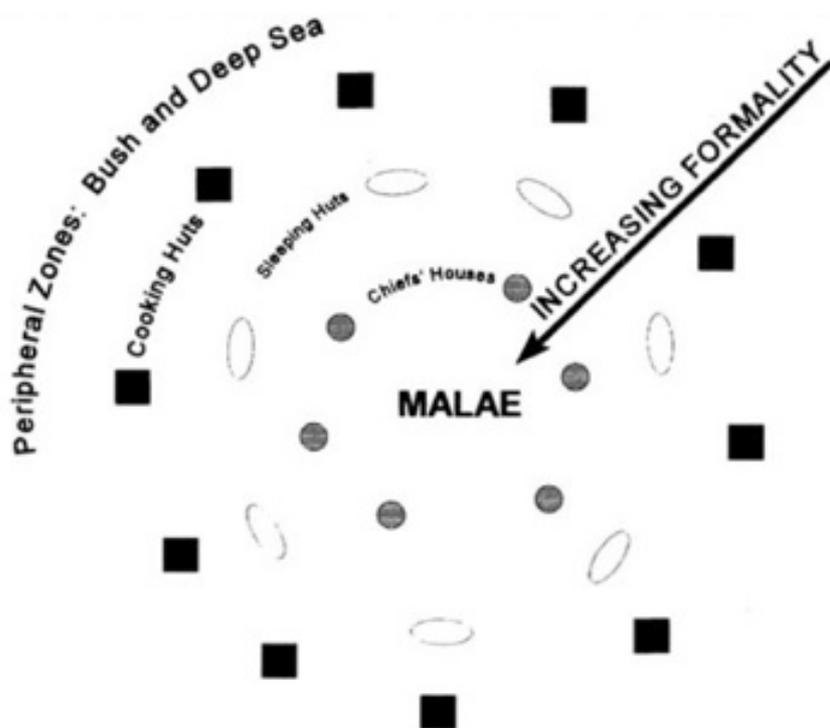


Figure 24  
Diagram of the Concentric Dualism structure of the Samoan *nu'u* (in Bradd Shore 1996)

The layout of the sequence of locations and direction of materials with coordinates of their requisite gestures are shown in Figure 25, with the construction site bordering the most sacred and formal part of the village – the *malae*. The way the movement of raw materials proceeds is from *gauta* (bush) where tree felling and chopping of large trees for posts is carried out, as well as small preparatory timber and *fau* binding for the scaffolding. These are dragged to the *faleta* (workshop) located next to the house under construction, and worked by cutting, scrapping and smoothing until they are adequately processed so that they can be placed, fitted and lashed in place.<sup>501</sup> One can clearly see the trajectory of the construction sequence from the bush to the village centre as one of refinement and ordering.

<sup>501</sup> (Refiti, 2009).

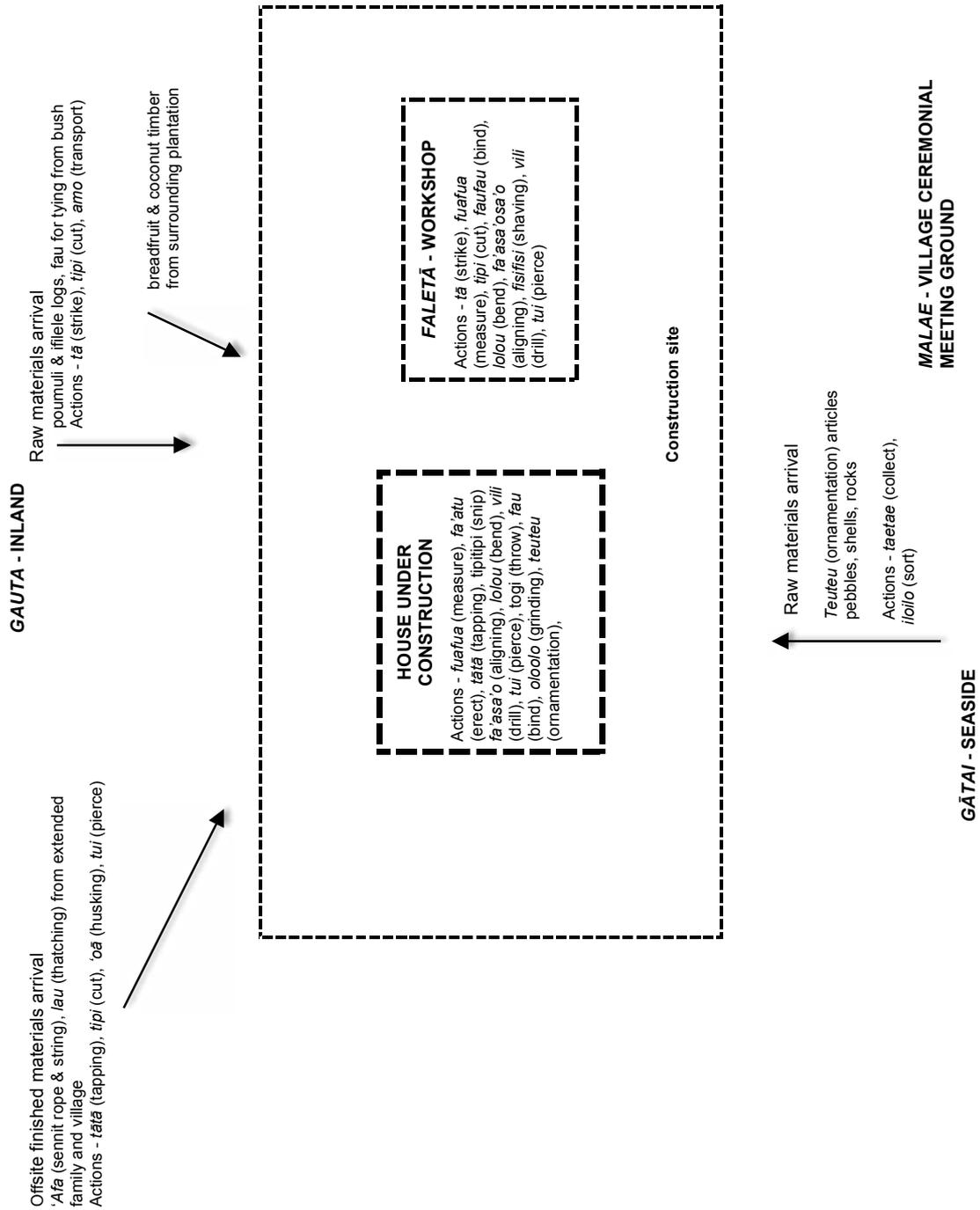


Figure 25  
 Construction site layout and schema of materials and the location of actions required

The house is considered a *measina* ('treasured-thing')<sup>502</sup> a refined and embellished object that is to be placed at the centre of the community and embodies the *mana* of the *matai* and the entire *aiga*.<sup>503</sup> So, the movement from raw to refined material is important and is mirrored by the actions required at the beginning to transform the large and unworked raw materials with requisite greater force, into smaller and refined components, which require greater attention in crafting. They are installed, tied and woven together to create the finished house.

The Figure 26 shows the operational sequence tracking the stages of the work against the gestures and actions required for each process. The Head Tufuga's (H) work rate is less frequent but involves the most important aspects of the construction. These tasks are connected to the ceremonial phases of the work and payment periods which mark the formal termination of each stage of the process, namely, the installation of the '*au'au* (ridge beam), lashing the *talitali* (boat-like ornament strapped to the central post) and the trimming of the thatch (the final task for the project). The other tasks are the key moments when the building needs to be measured, which is done either by sight (setting of the *fatuga*) or by using strings for setting out the distance between main structural elements.

The Head Tufuga gives verbal instructions throughout the building process and would carry out measurements mainly by sight but would rarely carry out any work physically.<sup>504</sup> His labour epitomises those actions that are considered more dignified and refined. His rank, *Matua Faiva* (expert) or *Matai Tufuga* (chief architect), affords him the role of a professional who measures and distributes the proper order in terms of proportions embodied in his person by instructions alone. My informant, *Tataufaiga Faiga*, indicated that the building takes form from instructions, which he dispenses as though he speaks the building into life. Thus, in almost removing his physical labour from the process, he is in some way creating the building by instruction. His role of *Matai Tufuga* therefore is very similar to that of a *matai* sitting in the circle of *matai*. Sitting still and speaking takes place inside the circle of *matai* in contrast to the world outside the circle, where action takes place only from instructions given from within the circle. The Head Tufuga works in a similar way, speaking and instructing without physical action.

---

<sup>502</sup> There are two types of *toga* usually made by women, including fine mats and tapa cloths.

<sup>503</sup> As discussed above (pp. 96ff).

<sup>504</sup> *Tataufaiga Faiga* pers. comm., see also (Buck, 1930, p. 33).



### ***Fale* construction sequence**

The Tufuga apprentices, who can number as few as four or as many as ten depending on the size and duration of the contracting period, carry out the rest of the work. The family members are involved in gathering raw materials and bindings (sennit and *fau* bark used for temporary ties). They do most of the digging, transporting raw materials to the site, helping to erect the *fatamanu* (scaffolding) and finally constructing the *paepae* platform at the conclusion of the project. The Tufuga's role in the activities recorded above shows that the builders' actions and gestures are closely tied to the tools required for construction: for pre-contact/preindustrial Samoa, these are adzes of different gauges, drills and scrapers.

When all materials<sup>505</sup> arrive on site they are smoothed and cut to fit, then hoisted upwards to be tied in place. The nature of construction here becomes a form of performance where the men assemble the structure. The Figure 27 below shows the construction sequence moving through stages 1–5 with the sequence moving vertically from bottom to top to illustrate that the building is built mainly 'in-the-air'. Stage 1 shows the erection of the main post and *fatamanu* from the ground and concludes with the ceremonial lashing of the 'au'au ridge beam (1d) to the posts (see discussion of lashing below, pp. 214ff). The roof is the main constructional element of the building and is carried out above ground. Stages 2, 3 and 4 for instance are done in this way, the men having to climb and teeter on the *fatamanu* to build the structure from the inside out. Stage 2 is an important stage in which the Head Tufuga sets the curve of the *fatuga* (2e, 2f), standing to the side instructing the apprentices to prop the *fatuga* line (made of pliable timber) to the right curvature, after which the shape of the *itu* (middle section) is fixed and horizontal *so'a* (props) are put in place (2g). Stage 3 is the setting of the *fatuga* of the *tala* section (rounded end) of the roof (3j) and the *fau* (curved beams) are fashioned to the right curvature<sup>506</sup> on the ground (3i) and hoisted up and fixed in place (3k).

---

<sup>505</sup> The timbers most frequently used in the construction of Samoan houses: *poutu* (central posts) and *poulalo* (outer posts) – Ifilele, Poumili, Asi, 'Ulu, Talia, Launini'i, Aloalovao, all durable. *Fau* (curved beams) and *faulalo* (bottom plate) – 'Ulu, Fao, Niu. Aso and paeaso – Niuvao, Ulu, Matomo, Olamea. *So'a* (horizontal props), 'au'au (ridge beam) and *talitali* (boat ornament on the central post) – Ulu and Niu.

<sup>506</sup> For detailed sequence of how to these are made see (Buck, 1930, pp. 47-49); (UNESCO, 1992, pp. 36-38).

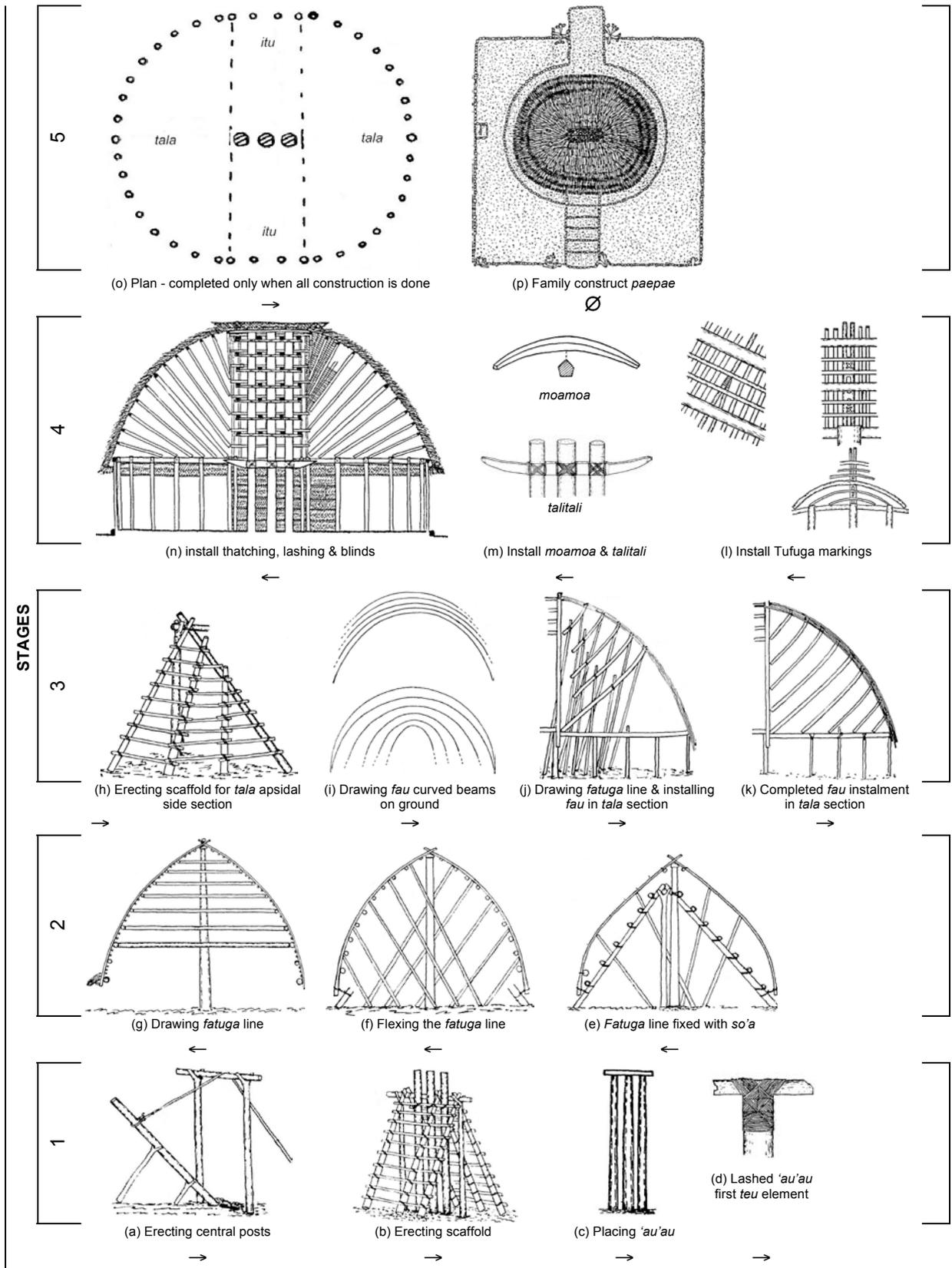


Figure 27  
*Faitele* constructional sequence

Ceremonial aspects of the construction (which are related to the payment schedule see, pp. 204ff) are the most ornamental features of the building – the lashing of the *'au'au* (1d) celebrates the connection between Papa (below) and Lagi (above); the installation of the curved *moamoa* (4m) marks the sealing over of the joints separating the *tala* (two rounded parts of the roof) from the *itu* (middle section of the roof);<sup>507</sup> the *talitali* are lashed to the front and back of the central posts just above eye level and marks the centre of the *fale*. Other ornamental markings in the building are the signature of different Tufuga clans (4l). Thatching completes the roof (4n); the last things to be installed are the *poulalo* (outer posts, 5o) marking not just the *nofoaga* (places for sitters), but also commemorating the *matai* names of the founders of the *fua'iala* or *nu'u*. The main load of the roof rests on the *poutu* (central posts) and the *poulalo* tie the roof to the ground providing lateral support. The importance of the *poulalo* rests in their symbolic function as places where genealogies converge and are tied (pp. 128ff). Every person in the Samoa polity aspires to a sitting position in front of them because to take up a place here, is to take on the 'face' and name of one's ancestor in the circle of *matai*. This is why it is the family's responsibility to put the posts in place and to construct the *paepae* providing a stage for the politicking that will eventually take place inside the house. What is important to note is that the visible plan of the *fale* is the last thing to be set in place once all the vertical posts and the *paepae* are installed (5p). The Tufuga builds the house in a process where a pre-drawn plan is not required.

### **Tools and measurements**

Tools consisted primarily of different blades hafted to short handles. Several sizes of blades can be lashed with sennit to the haft of these small hand-adzes. *To'i meleke*<sup>508</sup> is an axe with a long straight handle for felling timber. *To'ifafau*, the short adze with angled haft, is used in the final shaping of the curved purlins (*fau*), the thatching *aso* (listels), and the *fatuga* (wood battens). The *sila* is distinguished from the *to'ifafau* by its narrower and longer blade. It is used to make the slanted joint of the curved end rafters. The handles for the adzes are shaped differently depending on the kind of job to be done.<sup>509</sup>

---

<sup>507</sup> In certain situations this also marks the moment where some Tufuga walk off the site after an *itu* section has been completed (usually due to disagreement with the family) leaving it to another Tufuga clan to complete the *tala* – the *moamoa* marks the change and transition point between Tufuga.

<sup>508</sup> My translation from Samoan of Benedict Friedländer's 'Notizen über Samoa' (Friedländer, 1899, p. 11).

<sup>509</sup> (UNESCO, 1992).

The units of physical distance are calculated in terms of a person's body thus fingers, arms and feet become tools for measuring that intertwine the constructed object (*fale*) with the Tufuga's body. Measurements are related to *gafa* – the outstretched arms (six feet); *vali fatafata* – one outstretched arm beginning at the fingertips to the chest is a half *gafa*; *vaeluaga o le lima* – extends from the fingertips to the elbow, (a quarter *gafa*); *aga* – the span of the outstretched hand from thumb to index finger.

### **Material technology**

Gottfried Semper's study of the development of the technical and tectonic arts shows that formal development of textiles is closely connected to the way we use and transform the natural world by borrowing directly from nature. Techniques were developed to transform natural materials, which saw stringing and binding being developed for instance, to transform fibre and plant to create forms that are predominantly linear or planimetric.<sup>510</sup> Planimetric technique requires the weaving together of many fibre strands to produce surfaces that cover, protect and enclose.<sup>511</sup> Floor and fine mats, and *tapa* cloths were produced in this way. They are related to the development of cordage techniques of knotting, binding and weaving natural fibre, found in abundance in Samoa.

Semper suggested that the tectonic framework<sup>512</sup> was work achieved by carpentry, which is the work of timber construction, and here the Tufuga were adept at making and fabricating timber structural systems in the *fale* from smaller timber pieces fitted together and then lashed. Thus, the Tufuga in Semper's view would be a carpenter who works with tectonic structures and weaving, which lashes and ties the structure together. In this way the Tufuga's work is better described as being an assemblage of parts, the parts being made and prepared beforehand, fitted and joined together on site and finally lashed.<sup>513</sup>

---

<sup>510</sup> (Semper, 2004, p. 113).

<sup>511</sup> Also included are the use of skins to make coverings, but due to the absence of large animals in the Pacific, it is unlikely this was the case here.

<sup>512</sup> Semper for instance suggested that in Chinese carpentry the tectonic framework supports and keeps in place the interior ceiling, on the one hand, and the outer roof, on the other, which he says is a "style of dressing", (Semper, 2004, p. 262).

<sup>513</sup> Interesting to note here that Tataufaiga told me that the men who lashed the houses were 'day workers' and were not properly Tufuga.

The house is therefore literally made in pieces – this is why it sometimes has the appearance of a woven structure. The Tufuga though are not necessarily the lashers of the structure.<sup>514</sup> A number of oral traditions<sup>515</sup> show that the *fau'afa* (lashing experts) were journeymen who were brought in to lash and tie the house together. This accords with the Polynesian tradition of making things *mana* or sacred – you needed the hands or blood of foreigners to sanctify ritual objects, *mana* being the force from outside that provided *manū* (grace).<sup>516</sup> *Fau'afa* were thus most likely to have had a ritual function in former times, they were not chiefs or orators but were somewhere between a Tufuga-faufale and priest labourer. They were not that important by the time Europeans arrived. At the time of European contact the Tufuga were lashing houses themselves.<sup>517</sup>

## Conclusion

Manu'a oral stories inform us that the Tufuga were of the Tagaloa clan who settled for a time on Manu'a.<sup>518</sup> They came with their technical prowess from Lagi where they built a magnificent house, the Fale'ula,<sup>519</sup> for Tagaloa-a-lagi in Lagi-Tua-Iva, the blueprint for subsequent sacred houses in Samoa. It was at the 'ava ceremony in their honour that they were gifted the *tufugaga*, a sacred tool-bag from which they took their name Tufuga.<sup>520</sup> The name Tufuga conveys the notion of *tu* – to stand, or to hold oneself, and *fuga* – to blossom or to unfold. *Tufugaga* has the suffix 'ga' to stress the activity of unfolding. The etymology of the name Tufuga therefore suggests that tools in their

---

<sup>514</sup> The few times they used *afa* (sennit) was when they had to measure components of the house, (Buck, 1930).

<sup>515</sup> 1998 interviews with Tataufaiga from Saipipi and Faivaaiga of Sa'anapu; see also (Buck, 1930).

<sup>516</sup> (Sahlins, 2008); Tcherkézoff noted also that strangers and outsiders in the form of the *papalagi* (European) were taken to be super-beings because of their 'luminous' appearance which promised that the (re)production of life would be guaranteed through connections with them (Tcherkézoff, 2008, p. 121).

<sup>517</sup> Now there are no longer specialist *fau'afa* in Samoa and that is probably why Tui Atua brought in Filipe Tohi, a Tongan *lalava* (lashing) expert to lash his house in Nofoli'i. The art of *fau'afa* has not disappeared from Samoa but it has become an everyday skill that every *taule'ale'a* knows using the 'sumu' lash and other very rudimentary patterns.

<sup>518</sup> (Krämer, 1994);

<sup>519</sup> (Powell, 1887, p. 152).

<sup>520</sup> Subsequently all other craftsmen use Tufuga as a prefix in their names to designate their status as an expert, follow by the area of expertise eg. Tufuga-tātatau (tattooist) etc.

unfolding or blossoming must be carried by a person who holds the responsibility as guardian of the tools and is therefore the source of the technological know-how. Tools in their potential to make or create are to be held or controlled (meaning here of *tu*) because they have the potential to ‘erupt’ or *fuga*. A more appropriate term to describe this ability of tools to produce is better described by the word *tupuga* or self-motivated growth or fecundity.

This notion of technological know-how connected with tools and attached to a designated specialist group has a link with Polynesian societies’ obsession with the institutions of *tapu* making. *Tapu* as explored above (see, pp. 128ff) is a state of contact with the divine that endowed people and objects with the power of *mana*, a form of prestige.<sup>521</sup> This is carried out with what Shore proposes as rites characterised by binding, tying, and containing in an effort to channel divine potency for human ends. *Tapu* puts in place conditions that control and harness the power of fecundity to be productive. The Tufuga and persons considered specialists in craft and religious aspects of the society were able to harness and control this unbound potency in the natural environment or connected to the ancestors or the progenitor. This is why for a long time the Tufuga were able to control the production and circulation of the *fale* as a prestige object. This ability to control the *fale* has now almost disappeared for the traditional Tufuga-faufale. In Samoa, the clans from Saipipi and Sa’anapu<sup>522</sup> have had little work, and what work they have, is only as ‘workers’ to contractors building *fale*-style houses for the tourism industry.<sup>523</sup>

We will explore in the next chapter the architecture of the *fale* and its importance in signalling the gathering and housing of people. The *fale* as an architectural thing will

---

<sup>521</sup> (Shore, 1988, p. 164).

<sup>522</sup> Tataufaiga passed away in 2000, his son and successor Maulupe Faiga Fa’atali Faiga has yet to build a traditional *fale*, although he was involved as an apprentice to Tataufaiga in building the *fale* for the Vaiola school campus in Savai’i (demolished in 2013) in the late 1970s, pers. Comm. Maulupe Faiga Fa’atali Faiga *talanoa*, 9 July 2011.

<sup>523</sup> The main builder of *fale* in Samoa currently is Fonoti Leilua Likisone who was trained by the self-appointed Tufuga – Talama’ivao Niko. Niko is not a trained Tufuga but contracted Tufuga from Asau and Fagaloa to build the *fale* for the old Tusitala Hotel (destroyed in a fire in 2009). Since then Likisone has become the most prominent *fale* builder in Samoa including the National University of Samoa *fale* in Le Papaigalagala campus (Rivers, 2011). Likisone uses architectural draftsmen to draw the buildings which are then built by his modern construction company. His buildings include the Sinalei Hotel in Siumu ((Engels-Schwarzpaul & Wikitera, 2009)); new Vaiola School *fale*; Tanoa Tusitala Hotel.

also be explored in the context of world architectural history and the changes that have taken place since European contact.



## Chapter 8

### The time of architecture in Samoa

#### **Part 1: The relationship between Samoan space and architecture**

##### **Introduction**

Earlier (pp. 60ff), I outlined the idea that space occurs in Samoan thought between two poles that connect, on the one hand, an impulse to diversify, extend and grow (*mavae*) and, on the other, the will to converge and bring things together into a relation, ordering and fixing their positions (*tofi*) in space and time. Here, I will discuss the *fale* as an artefact, its context and its meaning in relation to Samoan society. I will also examine its status as an object within architectural history as a discipline. Particular to Samoan knowledge of architecture is an understanding of space per se, in which things are predisposed to unfold (*mavae*) into rampant diversity. Growth periods are followed by periods of extreme order (*tofiga*), during which every element that was created is oriented towards organised productivity to facilitate relations. *Vā*, the Samoan concept of space, is an image of this 'toing and froing' from divergence to the unitary, from the smooth to the striated, from lines of flight to knots and entanglements. These movements facilitate the coming into being of *tagata* (humans), who are agents of both growth and inertia.

##### **Samoan architecture as pre-historical architectural style**

Samoan architecture can be placed within the frameworks of Bannister Fletcher's *History of Architecture on the Comparative Method*.<sup>524</sup> The category of 'Pre-historic Style' includes building traditions in which men, as soon as they "rose above the state of rude nature", naturally "began to build more commodious habitations for [themselves], and some

---

<sup>524</sup> *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method* was first published in 1895 by Sir Bannister Fletcher and his father, and has been updated in many reissues since.

form of temple for [their] god".<sup>525</sup> Fletcher's project was to construct continuity in the European architectural tradition by tracing it, as an historic development, to Egyptian architecture – he terms this 'historical architecture', which he differentiates from pre-historic and non-historic architectures. The historical style emerges during the shift in construction development from the use of timber to stone as building materials. Fletcher writes that "the wooden hut or cabin formed from posts set in the earth, and covered with transverse beams and rafters" developed "into the *prodomus* of the Greek house" and was in this transition copied into stone.<sup>526</sup> Fletcher clearly privileges stone over timber assemblage because, he reasoned, stone allowed for the "growth of the art" and the development of advanced technical skills, which were required to achieve "the refinement in detail" necessary to embed order and proportion properly into the architecture. This becomes evident when "[d]ecorating a column, and the part it supports, *i.e.*, the entablature".<sup>527</sup> Fletcher's clearly is an evolutionary system, which hypothesises a cruder version of architecture as the (pre-historical) origin point from which a tradition grows<sup>528</sup> and finally comes to fruition in a refined (historical) architecture, based on a geometrical paradigm of order and proportion. The pre-historical does not even figure on Fletcher's 'tree of architecture diagram' (Figure 28 below). If there is a place for a pre-historic architecture, it will have to be within the root system underground, together with geography, geology, climate, religion, social and political and history.

Fletcher's evolutionary system no longer holds currency in today's globalised architectural discourses,<sup>529</sup> but I would like here to rehabilitate it as a 'beginning' to locate an entry point and a contextual history for Samoan architecture. However, my purpose is not to use Fletcher's categories to distinguish lesser from greater architecture, but to contextualise the opinions of early nineteenth century Europeans and Samoans as they encountered each other's material cultures. Their perceptions set the scene for what

---

<sup>525</sup> Fletcher constructs an historico-evolutionary system that sees a prehistorical period of architecture evolving out of the need for shelter, using caves and grottos, to the development of huts and temples, until a need to build monumental structures by Egyptians and Greeks began a period of historical architecture, which saw the timber examples copied into stone (Fletcher, 1905, pp. 4, 5, 605).

<sup>526</sup> (Fletcher, 1905, p. 5).

<sup>527</sup> (Fletcher, 1905, p. 5).

<sup>528</sup> Non-historical styles are made up of Peruvian, Mexican, Egyptian, Assyrian, Indian, Chinese and Japanese architecture (Fletcher, 1905, p. 602).

<sup>529</sup> (Nalbantoğlu, 1998); (McKean, 2006).

would become the 'ground-zero' of a cross-cultural architectural development in Samoa. Interestingly, Fletcher's arboreal architectural framework allows for the construction of a 'submerged history' of Samoan architecture with a tendency to live underground, in the root system of the history of architecture.

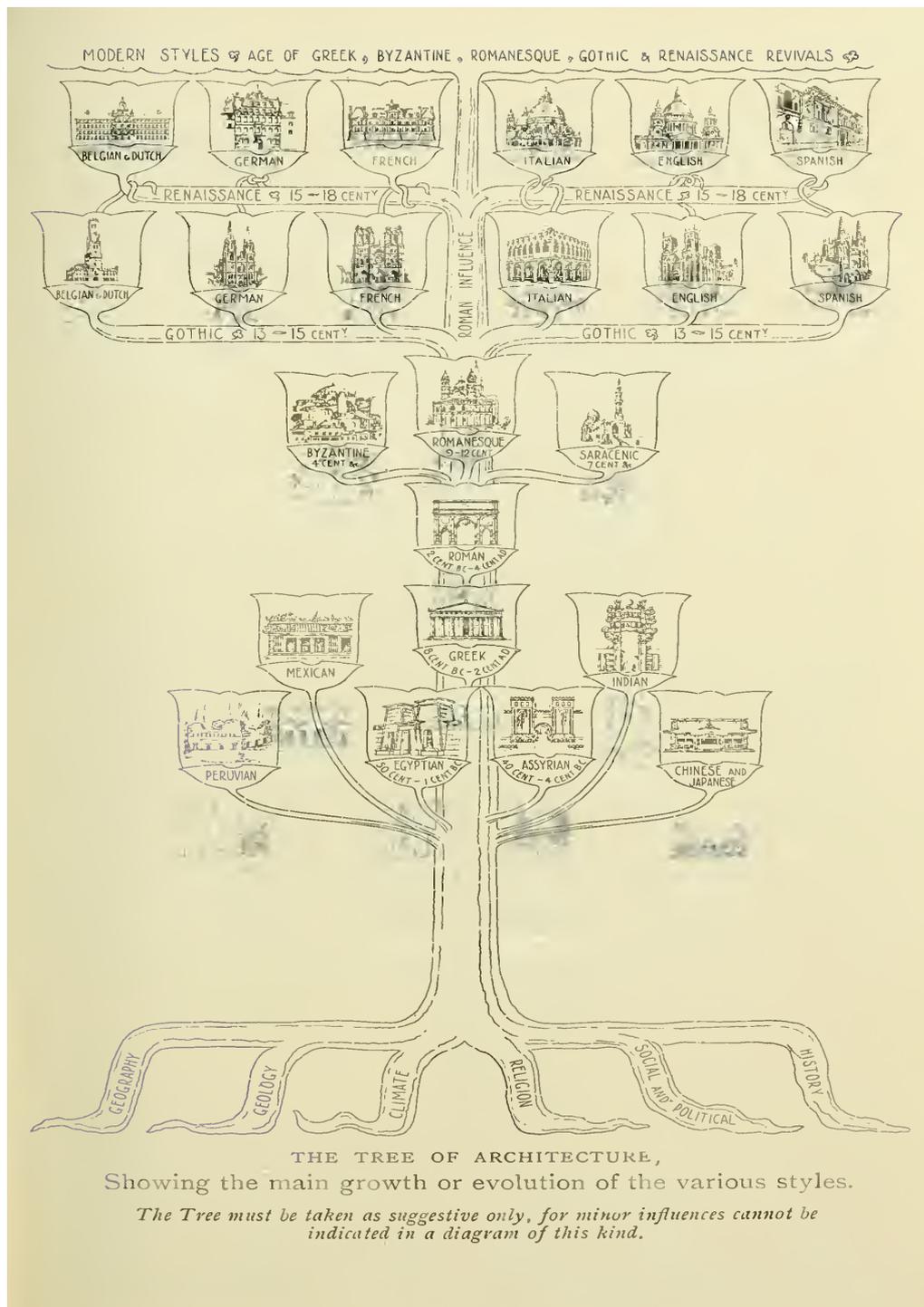


Figure 28  
Bannister Fletcher's 'tree of architecture diagram' (in Fletcher 1905)

In Fletcher's schema, Samoan architecture belongs in the category of wooden assembly; it is predominantly carried out with the skills applied to timber construction and the assemblage, through tying and lashing, of small wooden pieces to form a whole. This skill set required a range of complex technological developments in handling and tooling, very different from those associated with stone. Fletcher's historical style required the translation of a timber hut (built by assembling and fixing together pliable tectonic elements) into a stone temple (by heaping and carving of stony mass) for his architectural kinship relationships to develop.<sup>530</sup> The value of Fletcher's historical project in my context is that, when it takes on a 'perspectivism' (see above, pp. 34ff), it can be made productive for a Samoan 'history' of architecture. For Fletcher's historical style to experience a 'view' of Samoan architecture it must 'see' it from the gap between its own frame of reference and that of another (like the spatial exposition of Samoan architecture I advocate here), which is steeped in its own complexity and elevates its own particular architectural form – one that remains relatively unchanged over a long period of time and is carried along by the history of ebbs (*tofiga*) and flows (*mavae*) of Samoan social history.

### ***Faletele and faleafolau***

Samoan architecture is made up of a number of building types based mainly on post-and-beam-type construction.<sup>531</sup> Te Rangi Hiroa (Peter Buck), Augustin Krämer and others have written in detail about the various kinds of building,<sup>532</sup> but this work focuses on the *faletele* (chiefly meeting house or the guesthouse). As Te Rangi Hiroa observes, "the *faletele* is a *fono* house in which public meetings and the reception and entertainment of visitors take place" and it is also "[i]nseparably connected with the ceremonial distribution of kava".<sup>533</sup> *Kava*, or 'ava in Samoan, is associated with most important rituals and like, the *faletele*, was brought to Samoa by the Sā Tagaloa Clan. The *faletele* is therefore a paramount architectural type in Samoa.

---

#### 530 See

Figure 28, 'Tree of Architecture' diagram in the opening pages of *The History of Architecture* (Fletcher, 1905).

<sup>531</sup> The *faletele* (oval guesthouse), *faleafolau* (long guesthouse), *faleo'o* (sleeping house); *faleumu* (cooking house), *faleta* (carpenters workhouse), *afolau* (canoe shed), *falevao* (outhouse).

<sup>532</sup> (Krämer, 1995); (Handy & Handy, 1927); (Buck, 1930); Roger Neich (1985); (Allen, 1993); (Van der Ryn, 2012).

<sup>533</sup> (Buck, 1930, p. 23).

*Faletele* are mostly sited on the most important ancestral lands, located at the centre of village settlements bordering a *malae*. Right up until the 1950s, they were the most visible and dominant structures in the topography of Samoan traditional life. They had an important role to play in Samoan notions of space pertaining to *tū ma 'aga* (custom and practice). As a type, the *faletele* had its origins in Lagi-tua-iva (Ninth Heaven), the ancestral home of the Samoan progenitor Tagaloa-a-lagi, and the building is still built by the traditional Tufuga-fau-fale, the architects and builders of the first *faletele* named Fale'ula.

Another type of meetinghouse, the *faleafolau*, gained prominence only in the mid-1880s, a period marked by a cultural shift, the rise in population numbers and the conversion of most Samoans to Christianity. Before contact, only titled men and women were allowed to sit in the meetinghouses, as custom only allowed the most important people with divine lineage to ascend to a *matai* title.<sup>534</sup> The meetinghouses and guesthouses were small and varied in size from 23 square metres to 45 square metres.<sup>535</sup> After contact, there was a rise in the creation of (mainly) *tulafale* (orator) titles, which increased the number of sitters in the house around the *itu* (front entry). As a consequence, the house grew bigger and longer in the middle section, but it remained much the same in the *tala* (where *ali'i*, high ranked chiefs, sit). The *faleafolau* type could be easily be enlarged by increasing the length of the *itu* (middle section), which was not possible in the *faletele* type. There was also a the rise in status of the *faleafolau*, as the preferred building type for the London Missionary Society churches, because it was, in its elongated processional layout, similar to traditional Christian churches and already in use in Tahiti, Tonga and the Cook Islands.<sup>536</sup> This view is held by Roger Green and Shawn Barnes, who made a compelling case for the introduction of the *faleafolau* from Tonga by the missionaries.<sup>537</sup> This proposition is supported by an earlier study of

---

<sup>534</sup> This was because of the increasing influence of trade with Europeans and the increasing influence of the London Missionary Society that saw the decline of traditional status (*pa'ia*) of the most important lineages, the result being the increasing number of *matai* titles being created with the expansion of new streams of wealth from non-traditional trading.

<sup>535</sup> (Davidson, 1974, p. 234).

<sup>536</sup> The Reverend John Williams who arrived in August 1830 in Savai'i recommended to the Tahitian native missionaries that they employ local Tufuga to build a chapel near the sea in Sāpapali'i to be modelled on the architecture of the *faletele* which he greatly admired (Moyle, 1984).

<sup>537</sup> (Barnes & Green, 2008); Janet Davidson earlier had expressed the same view. (Davidson, 1974).

Samoa settlements before contact, by Janet Davidson, who found that old house settlements in Upolu showed a profusion of oval shaped *paepae* (house platform) associated with *faletele* in comparison to the absence of longer *paepae* required for *faleafolau*.<sup>538</sup>

### **Samoa architecture at the time of European contact**

In 1787, the French explorer La Pérouse gave the first account of Samoan architecture, in which he described the *faletele* as “the handsomest of huts ... which belonged to a chief [with] a large cabinet of lattice-work, as well executed as any of those in the environs of Paris”.<sup>539</sup> He described the aesthetic qualities of the form and the delicate workmanship used, which he compared to those of European architects:

The best architect could not have given a more elegant curve to the extremities of the ellipsis that terminated the building; while a row of pillars at five feet distance from each other formed a complete colonnade round the whole. The pillars were made of trunks of trees very neatly wrought, and between them were fine mats laid over one another with great art, like the scales of a fish, and drawing up and down with cords, like our Venetian blinds. The rest of the house was covered with leaves of coco-palm.<sup>540</sup>

In 1839, American scientific explorer Charles Wilkes identified the *faletele* as a “council house where *fono* or public meetings are held”.<sup>541</sup> He noted their “elliptical form” on raised terraces and observed (incorrectly) that they probably imitated those of the “Friendly Islanders”, or Tongans.<sup>542</sup> He described the interior, which was accompanied by an illustration (see p. 32 and Figure 1):

---

<sup>538</sup> Janet Davidson argued that the archaeological data showed the *faletele* is the older, “It seems reasonably clear that the *fale afolau* diffused from Tonga to both Samoa and Fiji (where it was known as *vale vakatoga*) in the nineteenth century” (Davidson, 1974, p. 236). This view was disputed by Tufuga Tataufaigā Faigā whom I interviewed in 1998. He wrote to me a story about the Tufuga brothers Leifi, Moe, Solofuti and Segi who came from Fiti (Fiji or Fitiuta in Manuā) to live inland from Faleolo where they built a *faleafolau* that came to the attention of Tui A’ana Lilomaiava who desired one for himself, pers. comm. Tataufaiga Faiga, *talanoa*, 15 February 1998. Tui A’ana Lilomaiava interestingly does not figure in Krämer’s genealogy of the Tui A’ana line but the title Lilomaiava originated in Savai’i and figures prominently in Samoan pre-contact history (Krämer, 1994, p. 12).

<sup>539</sup> (La Pérouse, 1798, p. 72).

<sup>540</sup> (La Pérouse, 1798, p. 72).

<sup>541</sup> Wilkes, Charles (1855: 208).

<sup>542</sup> (Wilkes, 1855, p. 210). A flawed observation since the *faletele* was made only in Samoa with the curved elliptical roof whose origins came from the first house the Fale’ula.

In the centre of one of these houses, there are several upright posts, varying in number with the size of the building, from twelve to fifteen feet high, upon which a ridgepole is laid and firmly secured by lashings of sennit. Rafters, fastened in the same manner, reach from this pole down to the outer circle of posts, about four feet in height, upon which are extended long sticks or plates. The rafters are connected with centre posts, nearly half way down, by a network of cross beams and braces. The roof is thatched, beginning at the top and working downwards, and projects from twelve to eighteen inches, like eaves. Bamboo, hibiscus rods, and the small branches of other trees, wattled together, form the siding.<sup>543</sup>

The *faletele* remained much the same in the late 1890s, when Augustin Krämer was in Samoa and later, in the 1920s, when the Bishop Museum ethnographers E. S. Craighill Handy and Willowdean Chatterson Handy (1923) and Te Rangi Hiroa (Peter Buck, 1927) carried out their fieldwork. Krämer, a German-trained medical doctor, had access to Samoan informants,<sup>544</sup> who relayed to him the building process and, in particular, important intervals of construction when the Tufuga were paid during the ceremonies.<sup>545</sup> He also collected a large amount of mythology, oral histories and important rituals connected with the houses, especially Fale'ula, the first sacred *faletele*.<sup>546</sup> Detailed descriptions of the building itself, including diagrams, became available with the work of ethnologists Craighill and Willowdean Handy and Te Rangi Hiroa in the 1920s. By then, Samoan houses had already been shown in exhibitions in the United States of America and Europe, where the *faletele* (or at least typical parts of Samoan houses, like *pola*) became part of the exotic scenography for Samoan performing troops.<sup>547</sup>

---

<sup>543</sup> (Wilkes, 1855, p. 210).

<sup>544</sup> Krämer, a doctor, treated his informants who were knowledgeable orators, in exchange for their considerable cultural and genealogical knowledge (Krämer, 1994, pp. 5, 6).

<sup>545</sup> (Krämer, 1995, p. 256).

<sup>546</sup> Augustin Krämer devoted a whole section of volume 2 of his *The Samoa Islands* to House Building (Krämer, 1995, pp. 259-280) and a number of legends pertaining to the Fale'ula (Krämer, 1994, pp. 518, 532, 536, 564).

<sup>547</sup> *World's Columbian Exposition* in Chicago in 1893, at the *Wembley British Empire Exhibition* in 1924, and at *Völkerschauen* (ethnographic show) in Hamburg, Frankfurt, Munich and Berlin (Engels-Schwarzpaul & Wikitera, 2009); (Engels-Schwarzpaul & Refiti, 2012, 31 May - 3 June 2012).

## Colonial transformations

Contact with Europe and America in the nineteenth century started a shift in the *faletele*'s evolution as a building dominating the Samoan ritual landscape. First, the *faletele*, until then the main focal point of village life, now had to compete with another architectural element on the *malae*, Christian chapels and churches. Secondly, the spatial configuration of the *fale* shifted from that of a space designed for speaking in the round to one in which the audience was to be directed to receive the 'word' of a Christian god.<sup>548</sup>

In 1830, the missionary John Williams, after realising the significance of the *faletele* as a prominent structure in village life, instructed his native teachers whom he left behind in Sapapali'i, Savai'i, to build a chapel in a similar manner:

I gave a decided preference to the Samoa buildings above the Tahitian as being more substantial & being better adapted for a place of worship than the Tahitian houses being long & narrow these nearly round. Beside the Samoa houses are thatched with the sugar cane leaf & require a greater pitch to the roof than is given in the Tahitian construction. In addition to these advantages another is that the natives in all the settlements know how to build houses of their own construction whereas if the Tahitian is adopted the Teachers will not only have to superintend but to do a great deal themselves towards the erection of the building. I advised by all means to plaster it, put doors & windows & cover the floor with mats.<sup>549</sup>

However, the *faletele*, with its centre posts, would have been difficult to use except in the round; which means that the preacher would have had to continually turn around at 360 degrees to engage the congregation. He would also have had to stand with his back to the central posts, which traditionally reached towards Lagi, the abode of Tagaloa-a-lagi. Although the chapel in Sapapali'i was built as per Williams' instructions,<sup>550</sup> the *faletele* as a model for the church did not survive. Elsewhere, the *faleafolau* became the preferred form, because it was easily adapted as a processional space, with the altar at one end

---

<sup>548</sup> I discuss this in detail elsewhere. (Refiti, 2002b).

<sup>549</sup> (Moyle, 1984, p. 141). The 'Tahitian' building type to which Williams refers has an elongated rectangular plan, without apses or *tala*, and a single pitch roof.

<sup>550</sup> Richard Moyle quoted in the footnotes of *Samoa Journals of John Williams* the missionary Charles Barth who witnessed the impressive chapel in 1834 "The [foundation] at Sapalii was erected on a pier built down in the sea, and a large circular Chapel was erected upon it, wattled and plastered, well thatched over with the sugar cane leaf, floored with mats. and fitted up with seats, and pulpit ... there were some other plastered Chapels but inferior to the above"(Moyle, 1984, pp. 141, f.n. 100).

and the entry at the other. This afforded the missionary teacher a commanding presence over the flock from a single focal point whereas. In the *faletele*, by contrast, speaking was considered a form of oratorical debate (the meaning of *fono*),<sup>551</sup> and thus an experience shared in the round. Therefore, a new order in spatial orientation within Samoan sacred buildings began to take shape. To further reinforce this commanding focus, walls were built from coral lime to fill the gaps between the outer posts, enclosing and separating the interior from the everyday world of the Samoans. Samoans were used to houses opening to the outside, with blinds and interior screens drawn only at night. To clearly demarcate the exterior world of the Samoans from the inner spiritual realm of Christianity was a deliberate design strategy on the part of the missionaries – to create an interior sacred reality that countered the traditional religious life of the village. The Christian god was housebound, while Samoan religious life was carried out on the *malae* and the *faletele*. Churches introduced the Samoans to the possibility of imagining for themselves a separate Lagi, which was not the heaven of Tagaloa-a-lagi from whom they were descended, but the heaven of a transcendent god beyond their imagination who was housed in lime-washed walls sparkling in the tropical sun.

The arrival of John Williams and his missionary teachers created a new category in the spatial politics of the traditional *fale*. To ensure that the missionaries and teachers had a place within the village *fono*, Malietoa, the then ruler of Samoa, bestowed a *tofi* or position for the new arrivals, making them *fa'afeagaiga* (a relationship between parties which allows the stronger member to protect the weaker ones).<sup>552</sup> This was a role normally assigned to important women of a family or village as 'covenant' or 'peacemakers' to safely sit in the house, without partaking in the political machinations of the *matai*.<sup>553</sup>

---

<sup>551</sup> Orators often use the word *fa'asoa* meaning 'my share' or 'my offering' before and after making a speech.

<sup>552</sup> The important example of *fa'afeagaiga* (or simply *feagaiga*) is the brother and sister relationship, which makes the brother the protector and guardian of the sister. Missionaries were afforded the same status as the weaker partners in the relationship thus the circle of *matai* became their protector.

<sup>553</sup> (Lau Asofou So'o, 2007, p. 44).

### **The relationship between Tufuga and *faletele***

The Tufuga's status as expert craftsmen began to decrease in the 1930s and 1940s, due to the increasing preference for *fale'apa*-type buildings.<sup>554</sup> These were rectangular post-and-beam timber constructions modelled on the pitched and hipped roof trusses of European construction – *apa* is the word for the corrugated tin used on the roof. By the 1960s and 1970s, only the most prominent families and well-resourced *matai* were still able to afford to commission a *faletele* from the Tufuga guild.<sup>555</sup> As these traditional houses became less and less affordable for *matai*,<sup>556</sup> new *faletele* or *faleafolau* were rarely seen being built in the villages. Most of the examples I surveyed in 1996 and 1998, had been built in the 1960s and early 1970s. In the interim, the Tufuga guild had turned to conventional *palagi* (European-type) buildings for domestic households and the commercial markets for their livelihood. As a result, traditional building skills had begun to disappear and were no longer being passed on to young apprentices. Only the cultural revival industry, propelled by tourism and education ventures, became the site where Tufuga could continue to apply their expertise, and these ventures kept some of them employed for most of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.<sup>557</sup>

A UNESCO-led heritage recovery project in 1990 brought together five Matua o Faiva Tufuga (Head Tufuga) to discuss and photograph Samoan architecture of the *faletele* and *faleafolau*, which led to a publication in 1992.<sup>558</sup> The participating Tufuga were trained in the 1960s, and they represented the last generation of Tufuga-faufale trained within the guild system. The published book, *The Samoan Fale*, was primarily a picture book, with a very accessible text and layout that appealed to non-specialist audiences. It was made available to most school libraries in Samoa, at no cost. The book covered mostly the same material contained in Te Rangi Hiroa's 1930 work, and it also adopted a similar

---

<sup>554</sup> (Allen, 1993); (Van der Ryn, 2012).

<sup>555</sup> Pers. comm. Tataufaiga Faiga, *talanoa*, 15 February 1998.

<sup>556</sup> Costs of hosting and feeding the crew of men and payments during the process became untenable and there developed a system of day workers where Tufuga and assistants would return to their home each day.

<sup>557</sup> Examples were hotels, Tusitala Hotel and Aggie Greys both in the mid- to late-1970-s and a number of institutional buildings, The Samoan Tourism Authority *fale* for instance and district colleges most of whom acquired a *faletele* for their Samoan cultural programmes – most notably Samoa College's *faletele* commissioned from Meleisea Fano from Vaovai by the then principal Albert Wendt.

<sup>558</sup> The Tufuga were Faimaiga Kirifi of Sa'anapu, Meleisea Fano of Poutasi, Tataufaiga Faiga of Saipipi, Levao Polo of Saleaula and Tulima of Taelefaga, see (Mosel & Fulu, 1997, p. ii); (UNESCO, 1992).

style: even the diagrams showing the construction processes for both types of houses were simplified. Not long after the publication of *The Samoan Fale*, a new revival of *faletele* and *faleafolau* buildings took place. The National University of Samoa commissioned a very large *faleafolau* in the mid-1990s, to be the centrepiece of its new campus, and in 1990, Joe Allendale (*matai* in Poutasi) built Sinalei Resort, a tourism resort built as a village-type setting, with a cluster of traditional houses at its core. Most of these buildings were built by a generation of Tufuga who are able to build traditional houses with new tools and technological know-how, using the latest composite materials to deliver a formal structure in the shape of the *faletele* and *faleafolau*.

Starting in the 1980s, these traditional forms were also being built in the diaspora in Honolulu, Auckland, and Brisbane, to house the Samoan and Pacific cultural communities. The particular aim was to use traditional architecture to deliver an iconic form in which the identity of the communities was bound. The *faleafolau* was the preferred type for this task, as witnessed in the Maota Samoa *fale* in Auckland's Karangahape Road and in the Fale Pasifika complex at the University of Auckland.

This brief outline of Samoan architecture shows the evolution of the *fale* as a building initially made by Tufuga, as a topogenic device to narrate the connections between a founding ancestor's settlement of land, on the one hand, and his descendants who remain in the place, on the other. The *fale* were (and still are) sited among other ancestor houses in a group formation surrounding the cleared ground of the *malae*. From the late 1950s, the traditional economy sustaining and maintaining the life of these houses became too taxing on families, who consequently resorted to building simple, rectangular pavilions, with a simple gabled, hipped roof, and sheathed with corrugated tin. By the end of the 1980s, traditional *fale* had almost disappeared altogether from the villages and traditional *malae*. In the meantime, their survival owed much to the 'authentic impulse' of the cultural revival movement in tourism and education, which allowed the knowledge and skills to be maintained until a major revival in building these houses began in the late 1990s.<sup>559</sup>

---

<sup>559</sup> Aiono Fana'afi Le Tagaloa's *faletele* built in the mid 1990's in Fasito'outa by Tufuga-faufale from Sa'anapu, is a good example the revival in *faletele* buildings.

## Part 2: The fale in indigenous Samoan history

### Genealogy of the *faletele* and the Fale'ula

The *faletele* had its origins in the mythological Lagi-tua-iva (see above, pp. 72ff) where the progenitor Tagaloa-a-lagi<sup>560</sup> had the Tufuga-faufale built him a house with a ceremonial title, Fale'ula.<sup>561</sup> It was located on a *malae* known for its tranquil quality, Malaetoto'a<sup>562</sup> The house was celebrated for its magnificent shining qualities ('ula) thatched with red feathers of the *sega* (parakeet).<sup>563</sup> Other stories suggested that it was stained with blood from sacrificial victims.<sup>564</sup> Lagi-tua-iva in Samoan folklore is the ninth division of the Samoan heaven (there were 10 in total) and was the home of the Sā Tagaloa clan before they came to Manu'a (see above, pp. 68ff). The Tufuga-faufale, members of the Sā Tagaloa, built the first Fale'ula for their progenitor Tagaloa-a-lagi, after which the craftsmen were bestowed a gift called the *tufugaga*, from which the men took the name Tufuga. The word *tufugaga* means 'where things sprout from'<sup>565</sup> and it was a sacred tool kit that held the first carving tools. Before this time, the craftsmen were known to possess supernatural powers that allowed them to conjure up spirits from the forest to fell trees and fashion canoes and houses from them. Other accounts suggested that the craftsmen were half human and half animal who felled the timber with their bare hands and gnawed the wood with their teeth to make it smooth.<sup>566</sup> The *tufugaga* gift was an important phase in the narrative of the Tufuga and their craft because it marked the moment when tools and technological knowledge first emerged in the Samoan cosmogony (see Chapter 8, pp. 73ff).

---

<sup>560</sup> Tagaloa-a-lagi (Tagaloa of the sky) is generally agreed to be the senior anthropomorphic god of Polynesia (Green & Kirch, 2001, p. 243).

<sup>561</sup> Augustin Krämer reported that when he was in Manu'a he saw the chief Tufele of Fitiuta "was in the process of having one built, its shape similar to the usual *faletele*, but immense dimensions" (Krämer, 1994, pp. 618, f.n. 672).

<sup>562</sup> (Powell & Pratt, 1890); (Powell & Fraser, 1892, p. 174); (Krämer, 1994).

<sup>563</sup> (Krämer, 1994, p. 537).

<sup>564</sup> Tataufaiga Faiga relayed to me that the famed Tamafaiga of Manono had tried to emulate the Tagaloa-a-lagi's house in the late 1700s and early 1800s (see Tui Atua 2009b: 33); his *faletele* had posts painted with the blood of his victims, and every sitting-post (*poulalo*) had an ornamental feature made of human skulls, pers. comm. Tataufaiga Faiga, *talanoa*, 15 February 1998.

<sup>565</sup> My construction for this comes from Pratt's dictionary which has *tufu* as meaning "a spring below high watermark" and *gaga* – "to give permission," and which I have extended to mean 'to begat' or 'to become', therefore *tufugaga* is an essential notion containing the idea of 'bringing or to spring forth' from a sacred receptacle (Pratt, 1893).

<sup>566</sup> (Stuebel, p. 14).

Because they built the beautiful Fale'ula with all its 'brilliance',<sup>567</sup> the Tufuga were afforded the rights to drink the first cup of 'ava,<sup>568</sup> an elevated honour because custom usually dictated that the first cup went to the highest ranked person, which is normally the progenitor. The Tufuga, who were numerous then descended from heaven to settle in Samoa, a moment recorded in Samoan mythology as the banishment of the Tufuga from Lagi.<sup>569</sup> Lagi, which referred to the sky or heavens (as I have argued above pp. 69ff) may have been more of a physical referent than an indication of a spirit world.<sup>570</sup> The men built a Fale'ula in Manu'a without the permission of the progenitor, and when alerted Tagaloa-a-lagi (the progenitor) came to Manu'a and destroyed the house. The Tufuga were then banished from ever returning to Lagi, their *fono* council disbanded, and the men were scattered to roam the earth without a home. The Tufuga to this day are known for their wandering character in which they go from place to place seeking commissions or patronage from chiefs or kings. Up until the 1960s, the Tufuga were customarily inducted to become family members of a patron for a time while they built a house for them. This familial bonding was called a *feagaiga* (see footnote, 429), and was carried out in a ceremony where the men exchanged gifts of fine mats. Once the men were made 'family', they were then safe from harassment from the villagers,<sup>571</sup> they were also provided with sleeping quarters called *apisā* encircled by a taboo (the word literally means 'sacred sleeping shed') that forbade anyone apart from the men to enter.

According to Krämer the first Fale'ula was built in a bay called Lefagā (now abandoned) on the island of Tau in Manu'a<sup>572</sup> and used as a guesthouse by the Sā Tagaloa family who would often travel down from Lagi to Manu'a. They later conferred the Tui Manu'a title upon one of their descendants after which they withdrew back to Lagi.<sup>573</sup> The Sā

---

<sup>567</sup> See my discussion of smoothing and whiteness in Samoan architecture (Refiti, 2009).

<sup>568</sup> (Powell & Fraser, 1897, pp. 31, f.n. 93).

<sup>569</sup> The last lines of the *Solo o le Vā* recorded this (Krämer, 1994).

<sup>570</sup> (Green & Kirch, 2001, p. 242).

<sup>571</sup> (Buck, 1930, p. 88).

<sup>572</sup> Krämer recorded a story from Manu'a, which related that the Fale'ula was brought down from heaven to Fatufatumealuga, and was again carried to Folauga, and then further down to Laufuti. Pili the demigod later used a ship's mast to climb up to heaven and brought the house down to Manu'a (Krämer, 1994, p. 528).

<sup>573</sup> Krämer gave no reason why the Sā Tagaloa left Samoa, but in a question time discussion in 2005 in which Tui Atua presented a paper, he and the late Roger Green agreed that the Sā Tagaloa left Samoa to travel to East Polynesia towards the Marquesas Islands, a view now

Tagaloa left a legacy in Samoa in the form of the Fale'ula (sacred house) which became the ceremonial temple for the highest-ranked chief in Samoa; the Tui Manu'a title that was passed down through his descendants;<sup>574</sup> the *sega* (parakeet) whose red feathers were highly prized in ceremonial ornaments and the *'aumaga* or *'ava* chewers who prepared the *'ava* ritual at the beginning of every gathering. The group was comprised of teenage men and women who chewed the *'ava* root into a bowl mixed with water and served at the *fono*. The Fale'ula house was and still is an important material embodiment of the connections between Samoa and Lagi and the progenitor Tagaloa-a-lagi. It is therefore a highly valued possession. It is recorded that the house has changed location a number of times (within Manu'a)<sup>575</sup> and a number of houses were given away as gifts. The best-known example being that given to Sina and her brothers<sup>576</sup> by the Tui Manu'a, which is now located in a village on Upolu called Fale'ula named after the house. This house was recorded as being carried to its present location on the shoulders of men who swam from Manu'a to Upolu.<sup>577</sup> The traditional guardian of the house was Tauanu'u, an office with the honorific title meaning the "the keeper of knowledge".<sup>578</sup>

Krämer wrote that the name Fale'ula means the "shining house" or "crimson house", and Powell and Fraser also suggested similar meanings, "bright house" or the "house of joy", or "the house beautiful".<sup>579</sup> Some believed that the house was thatched with red feathers from the *sega*.<sup>580</sup> It was used in Manu'a as a repository for the most important customs spoken of, discussed and passed on to the younger generations and functioned in this capacity much like the *wharekura* in Māori societies.<sup>581</sup> *'Ula* the colour red is

---

supported by the biological anthropologists David Addison and Lisa Matisoo-Smith (Addison & Matisoo-Smith, 2010).

<sup>574</sup> The last Tui Manu'a (Elisara) ceded the islands to the United States of American occupying forces in 1904 bringing the oldest and most sacred of titles in Samoa to an end.

<sup>575</sup> Concerning the locations of the Fale'ula on Manu'a Krämer wrote: "The Fale'ula was brought to Lefagā, the cliffy projecting cape between Fitiuta and Taū. The first Tui Manu'a then took the house from Lefagā to Fitiuta, his home. But when the title was removed from his descendants by force, the Fale'ula was taken to Taū where it remained until this day" (Krämer, 1994, p. 528).

<sup>576</sup> (Krämer, 1994, p. 334).

<sup>577</sup> (Mosel & Fulu, 1997, pp. 65-59).

<sup>578</sup> Tauanu'u was also the Tui Manu'a representative in the *fono* (Krämer, 1994, p. 519).

<sup>579</sup> (Powell & Fraser, 1892, pp. 186, 167).

<sup>580</sup> (Krämer, 1994, p. 537).

<sup>581</sup> Edward Tregear wrote that the Māori legends established that "in some far off country there was a great temple called Whare-kura, the 'Holy House' ... that parliaments or councils sat engaged in discussion on historical or political subjects. The wise men were arranged by leaders into parties according to the branch of knowledge in which each elder was proficient; this

important to the genealogy of the house because it is associated with ‘shimmering’, something that signals a characteristic that subsequent houses tried to emulate. The word ‘*ula*’ for the colour red is like the Māori *kura*<sup>582</sup> and Tongan *kula* the most significant colour element in Polynesian societies because it signifies the highest and brightest of *mana* which is embodied in sacred objects.<sup>583</sup> In Samoa, blood signals the biological matter that connects the present moment to the time of the progenitor, and forms a line that is protected, enclosed by *tapu* and transferred via the blood of sacred women, the *taupou*,<sup>584</sup> whose lineage was highly sought by renowned *ali’i*. This blood connection was celebrated when the *taupou* was married in a defloration ceremony called *fa’amaseiaua*. In the ceremony, the *taupou*’s hymen was ruptured publicly in the *faletele* or on the *malae* surrounded by the two families. The vaginal blood was smeared on fine mats and the faces of her entourage (*’aualuma*), which signalled the important connection of this biological matter to the progenitor<sup>585</sup> and later sealed with the birth of the first child (*tamasā*), who would carry the biological matter on to the next generation. Before she was wedded, the *taupou* resided in the *faletele* carefully watched by her entourage to protect her from being sullied by everyday things including domestic

---

proceeding was called ‘putting into order’ (*ranga*). As time went on dissensions arose, and the troubles became so serious that further meetings were impossible, and then the tribes were governed each by its Ariki, every tribe erecting its temple of learning on the model of the ancient structure. The building was carefully oriented, its front being eastward. On its erection a human sacrifice was slain and the blood used as an offering while a sacred fire was being kindled and then the body of the victim was buried in the sacred place (*mua*). The *Mua* was the holy enclosure surrounding the *Whare-kura* and its most sacred centre was the place where stood an image of *Kahukura*, the rainbow god. The image was of *totara* wood, a cubit in height, representing a human figure without feet. The people of the tribe collected the material for the building, but only priests built the house; every part of it, even to the lining reeds, being set in place to charm and incantation (Tregear, 1904, pp. 374-376).

<sup>582</sup> The New Zealand Māori *wharekura* was “a kind of college or school which anciently the sons of priest-chiefs (*ariki*) were taught mythology, history, agriculture, astronomy, &c. It was a very sacred edifice and the building was attended with many and important religious ceremonies. The teaching was imparted in sessions of about five months’ duration, and the exercises lasted from about sunset to midnight, the daytime being reserved for the physical exercise and amusements of the pupils ... Both the priest who taught and the initiate youth were *tapu*. The *Wharekura* appears sometimes to have been used as a Council Chamber or Hall of Parliament, where the chiefs of tribes assembled.” (Tregear, 1891, p. 613).

<sup>583</sup> Tcherkézoff for instance states that the colour red was used in the “Samoa *’ie ula* (roll of red feathers), as well as the fringes of Samoan fine mats (*’ie tōga*), were made from an accumulation of red feathers. The barkcloth was most often painted with the red-brown dye extracted from the bark of the *’o’a* tree. The heavenly house of the great Samoan creator-god *Tagaloa* was the Red House (*Fale Ula*)” (Tcherkézoff, 2008, p. 26).

<sup>584</sup> Few women were ever chosen to become a *taupou*, which came with an office (bearer of *tama sā* or sacred children) and a title; only families and clans who carried important names (titles) connected to the oldest titles in Samoa were able to be bestowed *taupou* titles.

<sup>585</sup> (Krämer, 1994, p. 39); (Koskinen, 1960, p. 72); (Tcherkézoff, 2008, p. 40).

tasks. She was shielded from the sun sometimes confined indoors until the evening to prevent her skin from turning dark. She was also fed with special wooden tongs to prevent her from touching food and water. The word *taupou* (*tau* is position and *pou* is post) referred to the position that she held in the *faletele*, being seated underneath the main central posts of the house. The Fale'ula was the sacred house in which she dwelled and kept her *mana* blood safely intact before being wedded.

The characteristics of 'brightness', 'joyful' and 'beautiful' are the qualities of *mana* that are embodied in things which are corralled within sacred things like the Fale'ula and anything displayed on the *malae*. These attributes are highly prized in Polynesia and the Pacific where objects have inherent intense desirable qualities. Sahlins pointed to "their brilliance, their shining", that draws people to them.<sup>586</sup> The house and its objects act as 'ritual attractors', the "repositories for maintaining, holding, and augmenting the tangible and intangible property of the 'house' [with] cosmological features linking the dwelling structure and the social group with ancestors".<sup>587</sup> This is the quality that the building is supposed to house in which architecture, as Rykwert alluded, becomes the "art of shaping space around ritual".<sup>588</sup> The relationship is between the architecture as the covering apparatus and the 'thing' that is being housed. The housing motive preserves an *agalma* in which the house becomes the living embodiment of the divine, as a kind of 'cult-statue': a "visible image betokened the presence of the divinity in the shrine ... set up there in order that the god might come and dwell in it".<sup>589</sup> *Agalma*, therefore, is like a precious jewel or an idol that embodies god, as Cornford explained:

Some of the gods whom we honour (the stars) are clearly visible as likenesses (εἰκοναί) of others we consecrate *agalmata*, and when we worship these, lifeless as they are, we believe that the living gods beyond are gratified and filled with good will towards us.<sup>590</sup>

The Fale'ula clearly is a kind of 'cult statue' carefully built as a vessel that signals the main properties of the divine, and whoever possessed the house was thought to be closer to the progenitor.

---

<sup>586</sup> (Sahlins, 1981, p. 31).

<sup>587</sup> (Kahn, 2008, p. 15).

<sup>588</sup> Joseph Rykwert in quoting Frank E Brown on Roman architecture (Dodds & Tavernor, 2002, p. 9).

<sup>589</sup> F. M. Cornford explained that this was one aspect of Plato's notion of *agalma* (Cornford, 1977, p. 100).

<sup>590</sup> (Cornford, 1977, p. 100).

### ***Faletele, faleafolau and typologies***

Peter Buck in 1927 recorded that his Manu'a informants told him that the first house built by the Tufuga-faufale in Manu'a was a *faleafolau* with a longer middle section.<sup>591</sup> The Tufuga Tataufaiga Faiga of Saipipi likewise relayed to me that the first house built by the Tufuga-faufale on Upolu was a *faleafolau*.<sup>592</sup> This version of the *faleafolau* as being an important house in pre-contact Samoa is contradicted by archaeological evidence, which showed that circular and oval houses were the predominant house structures at the centre of settlements. Archaeological data from the eastern part of Upolu for instance showed the absence of the *faleafolau* type houses.<sup>593</sup> Early missionary contact in the 1830's and other accounts<sup>594</sup> suggested late pre-historic Samoan houses were "oval with a short central ridge pole supported by one to three posts, or in the case of smaller houses, lacked ridge poles altogether".<sup>595</sup>

In order to qualify the Tufuga-faufale belief above that the *faleafolau* was the first house to be built in Samoa, we need to look closely at the construction methods themselves. It is assumed that only oval and circular shaped houses have central posts, this however, is not the case.<sup>596</sup> There is a tradition in house construction that dispenses with central posts holding up the ridgepole and instead uses the *faleafolau* middle section with four posts, to prop up a king post lattice system. This system takes the load from the ridgepole to just above the bottom edge of the roof where it rests on beams that spread the load laterally to be supported on four posts that form a portal carrying the load to the ground. The round *tala* remains the same as the *faletele*. This method would not vary

---

<sup>591</sup> (Buck, 1930, p. 20).

<sup>592</sup> Pers. comm. Tataufaiga Faiga, *talamoa*, 15 February 1998. This house was built in an abandoned inland village Afolau in Upolu named after the type of house construction. Seaward from this old village is Faleolo airport located at the old beachfront where the builders stripped and smoothed the bark from the timber and thereby giving the area the name 'Faleolo' meaning 'house made of smoothed timber'.

<sup>593</sup> (Davidson, 1974).

<sup>594</sup> (Moyle, 1984); (Wilkes, 1855).

<sup>595</sup> (Davidson, 1974, p. 232).

<sup>596</sup> Janet Davidson and Roger Green assumed that round and oval house platforms meant that they have central posts, which is not the case. Some of the house platforms from the archaeological materials in their book often showed house sites without post holes in the centre and only external post holes (Green & Davidson, 1974).

the oval or round plan of the house, which essentially retained two round ends with a short middle section.

The *faleafolau* construction system importantly cuts off a straight connection between the ridgepole and the ground and instead the roof is carried independently on a *fata* construction system making it a structure independent of the posts and floor. The *fata* in Tongan houses is symbolic of an elevated platform carried on the shoulders of men, and on the platform the king or the highest noble sat sheltered by a roof.<sup>597</sup> It meant that the house as a sheltering mechanism is mainly made up of a roof that can be mobile and which takes on a symbolical function so that the sacred temple can be taken to from site to site and place to place and is thus not confined to any particular location. In Samoa the Fale'ula was a copy of the first sacred house built in Lagi, and subsequent Fale'ula were supposedly moved and carried to different sites within Samoa.<sup>598</sup> The argument I am making is that the *faleafolau* typology with its *fata* system of separating the roof section from the posts connected to the ground, allowed the roof to be a complete structure that could be carried on the shoulders, a readymade solution allowing houses to be mobile. Contrary to the *faleafolau* type house, the *faletele* system of construction allows the ridgepole to be connected directly to the ground, and therefore the *faletele* has a place-making or place-claiming function – it is rooted to place and firmly locates the *aiga* to their land. The house *paepae* (raised platform) is an enduring reminder of the ritual position where the founding ancestor sat in relationship to the *malae* and other ancestors in the founding of the village settlement in former times.

Barnes and Green suggest that the *faleafolau* with the long middle section was brought to Samoa from Tonga by Christian missionaries.<sup>599</sup> This might well have been the case for the long *faleafolau*, these being in the shape of two round ends and a longer middle section in plan. Accounts from first contacts with Europeans suggested that only round and oval buildings were found at the centre of village settlements. This was because the custom in old Samoa was to limit the number of people who can hold a *matai* title. The *fono* meeting therefore would have had no more than 20 sitters in it.<sup>600</sup> The majority of sitters were *ali'i* (high chief) who sat in the *tala* (round ends) of the house, and a few

---

<sup>597</sup> (Potauaine, 2005).

<sup>598</sup> The well-known example being the Fale'ula carried on men's shoulders while they swam from Manu'a to Upolu (Krämer, 1994).

<sup>599</sup> (Barnes & Green, 2008).

<sup>600</sup> (Davidson, 1974).

*tulafale* (orator chiefs) took up the *itu* (middle section). This agrees with evidence in the predominance of oval and circular houses in the Samoan pre-historic period. The long *faleafolau* was easier to convert into church and chapel, being more suitable for accommodating a large congregation by increasing the length of the middle section, providing a processional space. Missionaries preferred this arrangement because it placed the minister at the head of the congregation, rather than the Samoan *fono* arrangement, which was in the circular form.

Houses were arranged in village settlements according to their importance, the more important houses were located next to the *malae*. Both the *faletele* and *faleafolau* were important houses with ceremonial and ritual functions. The *faletele* belonged to prominent *matai* and their families and because it was modelled on the *Fale'ula* it was used ceremonially as the *fono* meeting house. The *faleafolau* was used for large village meetings and entertainment, and the preferred type for Christian churches. Both the *faletele* and *faleafolau* were used for receiving guests, which is why they were called *falealimalo* (guesthouse). The *faletele* and *faleafolau* were built exclusively by the Tufuga-faufale.<sup>601</sup>

The typology of Samoan houses shown below (Figure 29), follows the logic of types in descending order starting from houses nearer the most important part of the village, the *malae* to the sacred houses towards the edges of the village, where lesser houses are located. The houses bordering the *malae* are the more important *falealimalo* (guesthouse) that each *aiga* (family). Just behind them are the sleeping quarters of the *matai*, in a house called *faletofa*, usually a smaller *faleafolau* or a *fale fa'aivi'ivi*. The Tufuga-faufale built these sleeping houses. The rest of the sleeping houses were simple huts called *faleo'o* made by the families themselves. The remaining buildings were simple huts for cooking and ablution arranged behind the sleeping houses at the edge of the bush or forest.

---

<sup>601</sup> From the 1960's the Tufuga-faufale began to lose control of the houses – thus non experts began to build them as well.

	Meeting & Guesthouses	Spirit Houses & Temples	Sleeping	Canoe House	Cooking	Workshops	Ablution
Malae	Faletalimalo (guesthouse) Falefono (meeting house) Fale'ulu (made of breadfruit timber) Fale'olomea (made of olomea wood)	Faleaitu Malumalu Falesā	Faleo'o Faleto'a Faletofā	Faleafolau	Fale umu Piato Tunoa	Fale tā (carpenters shed) Faleapifagota (fishermen resting house) Faleseu (fowler house)	Faleta'ele (washing) Falevao (toilet) Fale'uila (toilet)
←←← More Important (sacred)				Less Important (noa) →→→			
Type	Faletele Faleafolau	Faletele	Faleafolau Fale'ivi'ivi	Faleafolau	Simple hut	Simple shed	Simple shed
	Ceremonial function		Everyday spaces			Work & Industry	Everyday spaces
	Built by the Tufuga			Built by non-specialists			

**Figure 29**  
**Diagram showing types of houses arranged relative to their importance, from the centre of the malae to the periphery of the nu'u**

### **Smooth and undulating topography: from the *malae* – *maota* – *matāfale* – *faletele***

In Samoa, prestigious things (*measina*) are located within and around spaces considered central to rituals and ceremonies. The *faletele* houses many of these activities, as it is the space used for their public presentation, and where they are ritually exchanged in *fa'alavelave*. The house *matāfale* (immediate front yard) and the *malae* make up a topographical microcosm that facilitates the intersection and criss-crossing of the numerous rituals that sustain and maintain *vā* relationships. The *faletele*, *matāfale* and *malae* act as threshold spaces between the *aiga* (family), the village and visitors. Every *faletele* therefore is intimately connected to a *malae*: there is no *malae* without a *faletele* and no *faletele* without a *malae*. Every *faletele* has a *māota* name,<sup>602</sup> an honorific title surrounding and identifying the house and its *paepae*, which marks the house like a hallowed ring denoting its status as a sacred entity.<sup>603</sup> These related spaces convey the sense of the presence of the 'thing' (*fale*) in the manner in which it is sited on a raised platform next to a sacred ground (*malae*). The house as a hallowed 'thing' stands out from the ordered space of the *māota*, with an open face (*matāfale*) towards the openness of the *malae*.

The *malae* and *matāfale* are spatial conditions connected to the idea of openness, and orderliness, spaces that are smooth and well maintained. The *matāfale*, the area immediate in front and to the sides of the house, is the designated 'face' of the family and house, literally the 'eyes' (*mata*) that address the *malae* and other surrounding sacred houses of the village. *Malae* and *matāfale* are linked with the idea of a 'clear face' or a 'ceremonial surface' in the same manner that Deleuze and Guattari describe the notion of a "formless white wall" in contrast to a "dimensionless black hole".<sup>604</sup> Deleuze and Guattari contrast this seesaw between the depths within the 'holey space' of identity

---

<sup>602</sup> *Māota* is the name given to the *faletele* of an *ali'i* and *laoa* is for the *faletele* of a *tulafale* orator chief.

<sup>603</sup> Each *māota* has its own name connected to nearby landmarks with significant topographical features or with names of important events commemorated by the *aiga* involved. The word *māota* with the prefix *mā* gives us a clue as to why these spatial conditions are connected with a divine force (*mana*) and other words that are interrelated to it, namely *mamā* (clean) and *mamana* (divine or supernatural powers). (Pratt, 1893); (Krämer, 1994, p. 663).

<sup>604</sup> (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 168).

with the glossy surfaces of signs as constituting faciality.<sup>605</sup> The ‘black hole’ beckons one from the interior depth of the *faletele*, an interior influence that is bonded to the lore of the desirable ancestor-line, which summons a person to couple with it. The *matāfale* and *malae* index the orderly allure of positive effects – good manners, harmonious conduct (*malie*), which gloss the surface of Samoan public personae and space, making them smooth and reflective.<sup>606</sup> The two spatial conditions, the ‘white surface’ of the *malāe* and the ‘black holes’ of the *faletele*, are mediated by the *matāfale* as the threshold condition between the two spaces. One may observe at certain moments when there are ritual exchanges (*fa’alavelave*) held inside the *fale* in which a *taulealea* (untitled man) emerges from behind the house, walks around to the side, and chanting, announces to the *malae* the exchanges occurring within the house as if narrating a play occurring on a stage. The chant embellishes the event with a firm and cajoling voice, and thus subjectifies (the voice as an echoing black hole) and signifies (the voice mirrors and reflects the proper protocols) the goings on within the house. The house becomes here as the stage from which emerges the play of affects in which the *malae* encompasses the space of the audience, which monitors and anticipates the rituals emanating from inside the *fale*. The *matāfale* becomes the ambiguous location whence the floating voice of the narrator announces the events taking place inside the *fale* to the *malae*. One can see the *fale*, *matāfale* and *malae*, become animated in this play of affects.

Deleuze and Guattari propose that the play of black hole/white wall is “engendered by an *abstract machine of faciality (visageité)*, which produces them at the same time as it gives the signifier its white wall and subjectivity its black hole”.<sup>607</sup> Thus the black hole/white wall system is an ‘abstract machine’ that produces faces or laws of conduct that present and mirror the spatial politics of a Samoan village settlement – its ordering – claiming a presence that continues to stabilise the work of the ancestor gods (“territorialisation”) and in doing so, destabilises the present (“deterritorialisation”).<sup>608</sup> Faciality operates here as a central focal point or a maximal ‘eye’ (*mata* ‘eye’ or ‘centrality’) that knots together lines and threads of co-belonging in the *fono* (*alofisā*) – the main purpose of the *faletele* and the *malae*. In this configuration, faciality becomes the outer extension or the

---

<sup>605</sup> (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 167). My attempt here is to use Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of faciality (bend it from behind as a form of ‘buggery’, see discussion in *Teuga* and *Methods*, p. 48) as a form of *revengist* in order to ‘claim’ back from philosophy and anthropology indigenous concepts in a reappropriation.

<sup>606</sup> I carry out further discussion of smoothing and whitening elsewhere (Refiti, 2009).

<sup>607</sup> (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 168).

<sup>608</sup> (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 508).

emanation of *mana* from the domain of an ancestral divine force that flows through the space of the *fale* itself. The *fale* in this sense plays the role of conduit for lines that pass from Lagi and the first Fale'ula (with its ceremonial *malae* Malaetoto'a) to persons (*matai*, sacred women) and things submitted to the circle of *matai*<sup>609</sup> located in the interior of the *fale* or on the surface of the *malae*. In the example of the *faletele*, the roof acts like a funnel through which the *mana* or *pa'ia* flows down to the perimeter posts (*poulalo*), granting a sense of grace and honour to the places where *matai* of the *fono* council sit. The posts are sitting places that form an unbroken ring around the perimeter of the house. That is why the *fale* with its woven roof is concerned with fixing, binding and knotting people together. The *malae* on the other hand mirrors the space of the ocean,<sup>610</sup> a smooth conduit and a conductor of events like those of an undulating current where many things and people intersect and connect. The *fale* forms an 'black hole' or interior ring under a woven roof, while the *malae* is an open exterior ring roofed by the bright sky.

To enter the ring into a *faletele*, one has to pass through the *matāfale* and ascend the *paepae* platform; at the border between the edges of the house and its interior, one will have to bow ones head slightly to get under the ring beam above; and then one has to cross over to the interior of the house where suddenly one is transported again into a space that mirrors that of the *malae* outside. The interior is now the exterior, another "faciality machine".<sup>611</sup> To take a place in the ring one must be given a *matai* title, which comes with its own sitting post within the *fono* in a ceremony, called the *saofaiga* – literally the 'sitting ceremony'. The title stems from the name of the very first ancestor who sat in that particular place with its post at the founding of the first *fono* of the village. Every village has its own *fono* or *alofisā*. Ones' sitting place is marked by this ancestral post and allows one to take the place of that ancestor within the ring. As the *nofo* (sitter), one is now incorporated into an interior space from which emerges a complex subject (black hole) that binds one together with the ancestor via the *matai* title. The space-time of the ancestor and the space-time of the sitter are unfolded as a singular face (with variations) inside the house. Ones' face will now also be joined to those of other sitters inside the ring forming a faciality, which makes a powerful 'cultural machine'. These faces therefore constitute a "faciality machine" that makes laws and passes judgements on citizens of the entire village, the effect it creates is like that of a

---

<sup>609</sup> (Tcherkézoff, N. Scott/2005)

<sup>610</sup> (Austin, 2001, p. 17).

<sup>611</sup> (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 168).

pebble dropped in water, making ripples and rings that spread outwards constituting a vibrating and smoothly undulating topology.

### Part 3: What does the fale stand for?

#### *Fale as tapui: enclosure and covering*

For Samoans, the *fale* is a building that stands as an all-embracing symbol of *fa'a Samoa* culture obsessed with generating and making connections, an image of an effective structure of belonging that Samoans actively use to signify the weaving and fortifying of relations gathered under one roof.<sup>612</sup> The *fale*, like the cords and strings that lash and weave its materiality together, also signifies the binding of social and genealogical memories into a powerful symbol that evoke the social bond and collective memories in building, an 'association' or 'congregation'<sup>613</sup> that the ancestor titles (*matai*) would be able to maintain a roof over. The *fale* provides a 'covering' that is stretched and extended over all those who come under the name of a particular ancestor. An important connection made by Powell with the etymology of the name Tagaloa, the Samoan progenitor, offered the meaning of "the encircling Aether".<sup>614</sup> It is this essence of covering and encircling or, more importantly, linking, binding and knotting, that will be explored in this section of the work.

The *faletele*, (literally 'house of plenty') is the primary house of an *aiga* or clan in the *nu'u*. As explicated in Chapter 5 (see below, pp. 113ff), a Samoan village grouping is ordered in a series of interlinked rings or orbiting "dividuals" that are drawn to a place (*maota*) with a 'name' and at the same time they maintain ties to other kin relations that keep a part of them in orbit-like rings that are attached to a main grouping, but are also attached elsewhere by lines of relations (see Figure 11). A family in pre-historical times was described as being strung along a *fua'iala* (see, pp. 113ff),<sup>615</sup> a group of related people that gathered around a *matai* title and connected to a *malae*, which in turn forms a

---

<sup>612</sup> One of the main functions of *faletele* guesthouses is to be utilised as a place of rest by *malaga* travelling parties of kin, allies or courtship visits, in which they are looked after and fed by the hosting family with the expectation that at sometime in the future the debt will be repaid.

<sup>613</sup> (Valeri, 1985, p. 296).

<sup>614</sup> Thomas Powell's etymology of the Samoan progenitor Tagaloa's name shows that dividing it into two parts, *taga* and *loa*, could produce a number of meanings. *Taga* or *taga'i* to 'wind round' like an ulcer encircling a limb, and *ta'aiga* is a 'roll,' of mats or tobacco or the like. *Taga* relates to the Maori *tangai* as the 'bark' or 'rind', or that which 'envelopes', and *takai* or 'wrapper'; in Samoan *taga* is also a 'bag,' that which 'envelopes' or 'encloses'. Powell then suggests that Tagaloa means "'the god that encompasses all things,' 'the encircling Aether'" (Powell & (Powell & Fraser, 1892, p. 167).

<sup>615</sup> Literally "measured along a pathway".

*pitonu'u*<sup>616</sup> as a collective of *matai* and *fua'iala* that are all connected to a larger village structure. The *faletele* becomes a focal point for belonging to a place where one is in residence to provide service to a *matai*. It shows where one must orient one's service. For example, as the diagram (see Figure 25 above) shows, all material production has a directional flow from the periphery of a village to the *faletele* and the *malae* at the central position of every settlement.

The house determines every family member's point of orientation as if it is a link or loop into which one must direct one's production, to be able to be threaded to the larger social structure of Samoa society. The house therefore rises above the *paepae* on central posts that prop up the roof that spreads out to encompass the entire family. The prominence of the *faletele* in Samoa life signals that each family member must direct their service towards the house and to its leader who sits under its roof, the *matai* literally means 'a leader' or someone who stands in front and acts as the 'eyes' or the 'centre' of an entire family. The outer posts are assigned to sitters (*nofoaga*) who must be *matai*, and each sitter faces inwards to a centre inhabited by the vertical posts that carry the ridgepole whence the roof hangs.

*Fale* is the generic name for all types of houses and denotes the idea of a shelter that keeps the rain and the environment at bay. The Samoan term for shelter, *malu*, is important here as it means 'to be covered' or to be protected underneath or inside a spreading umbrella-like shelter.<sup>617</sup> As a word *fale* is cognate with other similar words in Polynesian – *hale* (Hawaii), *vale* (Fiji), *whare* (Māori) – denoting house, shelter or dwelling, and traces its origins to the Proto Oceanic word, *pale*: an "open-sided building" with a specialised function.<sup>618</sup> *Fale* can be first defined as a roofed structure that provides an extended cover over those who dwell within or underneath it, and secondly and more importantly, as a structure that marks the foundation of an extended family or clan within a village to signal its standing in the greater community.

Green and Kirch propose that *fale* is intimately connected to two social systems in Polynesia: *kainanga*, of Proto Polynesian origin, is an extended community led by a

---

<sup>616</sup> Paul Wallin and Helene Martinsson-Wallin describe a *pitonu'u* as "a lineage who reside together in a grouped domicility area" (Wallin & Martinsson-Wallin, 2007b, p. 85).

<sup>617</sup> George Pratt recorded "within, inside, indoors" or "an umbrella" as possible meanings of *fale* (Pratt, 1893, p. 148).

<sup>618</sup> Roger Green & Patrick Kirch recorded that *pale* was derived from the older Proto Malayo-Polynesian term *bilay* (Green & Kirch, 2001, p. 207).

titular head or “priest-chief”;<sup>619</sup> and *kaalinga* (*'aiga* in Samoa), is a closely related kinship group occupying and holding rights to land or estate attached to a *matai* title that descends from the founding ancestor of a place.<sup>620</sup> As a term for food, *kai* relates both to *kainanga* and *kaalinga* (*kai* + *nanga* [feasting place] *kaalinga* [feasting]) and refers to “people of a place”, “to people a place” or simply, “to occupy”.<sup>621</sup> Contemporary scholars have suggested the importance of food and feasting as a sign of hospitality, which always takes place in important gatherings in a *fale*.<sup>622</sup> Fanaafi Aiono-Le Tagaloa has explored the role of the *fale* as a shelter for the *alofisā* (closed meeting) and the *ava* ceremony, which require all participants (*matai*) to drink a ceremonial *'ava* brew in honour of the ancestors. Those gathered for the ceremony drink the *'ava* by first pouring a drip of *'ava* on the foundation of the house before consuming the brew. The house at this moment becomes the ground for the *matai* and their ancestors to belong and ‘to be’ in one space/place at the same time. The *'ava* drinker toasting and saluting with the words “*'ava lenei o le aso*” is translated as “this *'ava* drink is dedicated to this day”, willing that the day’s gathering be an auspicious one. Tcherkézoff reports that for Samoans, “[e]ating is an act performed only when ‘sitting’ (*nofo*), and that attitude is a ceremonial one, in distinct opposition to profane activities which are performed while standing.”<sup>623</sup> Importantly, a chief’s meeting house is called a *fale-talimalo* – *talimalo* is the word for hospitality. In this sense *fale* stands not only for dwelling and shelter but also the symbolic image<sup>624</sup> identified with an enclosed set of closely related groups descended from a common ancestral title, who feast together as *'aiga*, which literally means to eat together.<sup>625</sup> *'Aiga* is the word for a household and for an entire clan who all descend from a chiefly ancestor (*ali'i*).

As an extended clan the *'aiga* is referred to by the term *Sā* to signify being bound together as a ‘closed clan’.<sup>626</sup> *Sā*, like the word *tapu*, means enclosed, and is used here to indicate a ‘marked’ thing or persons as ‘being under’ or ‘given over’ to *tapu*. The image

---

<sup>619</sup> (Green & Kirch, 2001, p. 214); the case for Maori is *hapu*.

<sup>620</sup> (Green & Kirch, 2001, p. 215); the case for Maori is *kainanga*.

<sup>621</sup> (Green & Kirch, 2001, pp. 303, fn. 309).

<sup>622</sup> (Aiono Le Tagaloa, 2003, pp. 81-95).

<sup>623</sup> (Tcherkézoff, 2008, p. 103).

<sup>624</sup> Orator groups for instance are referred to as *Fale'upolu* meaning “houses of orators” (Meleisea & Meleisea, 1987, p. 32).

<sup>625</sup> The residential core of the village is called *'a'ai*, literally feasting (Pratt, 1893).

<sup>626</sup> I belong to the *Sā Aiono* clan of Fasito'outa for instance.

of such a *tapu* is conveyed in the form of a circle or *alofi* indicating a family “sitting round a house” or a clan or a village “sitting in a circle” who all share common ancestors. The circle of *matai* or *alofisā* characterises the political function of the *matai* system.<sup>627</sup> The *fale* here provides an important image of enclosure *alofisā* (sacred circle), a bounded space whose interior is *tapu* or *tapui*, that is to be ‘protected’ or ‘closed-up’. *Tapui* is also the term for plaited and woven coconut poles and posts that act as signs marking the places that are put under restriction.<sup>628</sup> Stair recounted that the houses at the beginning of European and missionary contact were rather ‘closed’ off and protected from access, (this was not the case for Samoan houses at the end of the nineteenth century which were rather open).<sup>629</sup>

The houses of the principal chiefs were formerly surrounded with two fences, the outer of which was formed of strong posts or palisading, and had a narrow zigzag entrance several yards in length, leading to an opening in the inner enclosure, which was made of reeds, and which surrounded the dwelling at a distance of four or five fathoms. Of late years, however, the habits of the people have greatly changed for the better, thus rendering many of the precautions so long adopted unnecessary; hence these enclosures have for the most part disappeared, and the houses of all alike are left open.<sup>630</sup>

*Tapu* in this context is best explained as “mana ordered, arranged, formed, and tamed”.<sup>631</sup> The house provides *tapui* or the ritual encirclement of space that is closed-up and governed by a corporate body or “a kind of fellowship” that has been referred to as having *mana*.<sup>632</sup> In this sense the *fale* is connected with ‘rites of sanctification’ where

---

<sup>627</sup> (Tcherkézoff, N. Scott/2005, p. 248).

<sup>628</sup> George Turner wrote of these woven figures as a “class of curses, which were feared, and formed a powerful check on stealing, especially from plantations and fruit trees, viz. the silent hieroglyphic taboos, or tapui” (Turner, 1884, p. 185).

<sup>629</sup> The beginning of European contact denoted the beginning of the historical period with Samoa’s first encounter with Dutch explorer Jacob Roggeveen in 1722, followed by French explorers Louis-Antoine Bougainville Jean-Francois (1768) and Galaup de La Pérouse (1787). By the end of the nineteenth century, the period of intense colonialism was in full swing and marked the first cross-cultural period between Samoans and the rest of the world, which saw traditional restrictions (*tapu*) beginning to loosen as in the case of houses becoming more open and exposed to the exterior.

<sup>630</sup> (Stair, 1897, p. 106).

<sup>631</sup> (Rosenwith, 2003, p. 369).

<sup>632</sup> (Prytz-Johansen, 2012, p. 76); Arne Koskinen has referred to this fellowship as *hono* in Maori or *fono* in Samoan as a “ritual through which the members of the *fono* transmit a portion of their and their respective families’ *mana* to the one who will be *ali’i*. Koskinen believes the word is used also in the sense of “power and influence”, (Koskinen, 1960, pp. 128-129).

people and things come under the protection of the deities by binding together their properties and resources.

Images of the binding of persons and things pervade Polynesian symbolism. Most common, perhaps, are the ubiquitous restrictions imposed as a matter of chiefly prerogative on the harvesting of productive crops. These bans (*kahui* or *'ahui* [Marquesan], *rahui* [Māori], *fakatapu* [Tikopian], *tapui* [Samoan]) were often accomplished by marking (sometimes by literally encircling with a marker) the resource whose productivity was being tied up. It seems clear that they derive from a common understanding about the channelling of generative power, whether in the land, the sea or in people.<sup>633</sup>

An important connection can be made with an analysis of the name of the Samoan progenitor Tagaloa, which Powell has undertaken. He theorises that the etymology means “the encircling Aether”. This coincides with *vānimonimo*, the shimmering and flickering element that Tagaloa was enveloped in and which is reported in the cosmogony (see above, pp. 60ff). The image here of a wrapped exuberant force coincides with the relationship between *mana* and *tapu* and the covering or enveloping of the body. Techniques of braiding, weaving, knotting, tying and wrapping are associated therefore with precious objects or persons, their shimmering is often signalled with the colours red and white and smoothed materials which can be feathers, coral, bleached hair, whalebone, fine mats and tapa cloth. A direct line can be traced between the cosmological events with Tagaloa the progenitor and Vānimonimo the ‘encircling aether’, and the formation of sacred and divine spaces in Samoan buildings and settlements. As shown above (Figure 25), the propensity for arranging settlements in ringed formation shows the gradual separation of regions, from the bush to the edge of the village, from edge to cooking area, from cooking area to the family compound, from there to the centre of the village where the *malae* and *faletele* are located. The interior of the *faletele* itself is another ring: a highly charged space with a cleared space is occupied by the *poutu* holding up the ornamentally lashed ridgepole. The Samoan settlement has the tendency for its topography to be gradually cleared, in that, as you move from the edge to the centre the surface of the land becomes progressively more ordered with less clutter: the bush is cleared and the grass is cut short, buildings and family compounds are tidy with everything in order. When you finally reach the *fale*, the house is clearly identified and empty of people, unless a *fono* is being held. The power and force of *mana*

---

<sup>633</sup> (Shore, 1988, p. 151).

is clearly identified as being located in the centre of the village, which is provided by an image that shows the transformation of the village topography from rough to smooth.<sup>634</sup>

*Fale* expresses the idea of a cover stretched over and which underneath is gathered a family of related kin. The notion of *fālō*<sup>635</sup> is useful here to describe the act of stretching and pulling a woven fabric over an area, which conveys the image of a cloak that covers and binds a kinship unit together. *Fālō* conveys the idea of the effort and struggle that takes for a community to maintain and observe the appropriate rituals that forges and articulates a cohesive group identity. Covering in the form of a well-made *fale* roof is an important symbolic element that signals the maintaining of good family relations. The thatch of a house, especially a *faletele* or *faleafolau*, is such a symbol, of a family's status of being 'housed' or bounded properly as a unified body. We see this for instance in examples of the unfinished thatching of houses in mythology that act as warnings about the adverse consequences of a family in disunity. Buck recorded a story of a Tufuga-faufale named Imoa-sina (white rat)<sup>636</sup> who built a house for a chief Alo<sup>637</sup> who was allowed to sleep in the house while the carpenters worked at night. He was told not to wake and disturb the carpenters while he was sleeping and one night he stirred in his sleep, thus startling the workers who fled, leaving the thatching unfinished over the *pepe* section<sup>638</sup> of the house. The story gave rise to the proverb "*Lau a imoa*" ("the thatch of *imoa*"), a caution to clan leaders (*matai*) to bind one's kin with care. To bind is not only to gather and demarcate as in making a *fale* as the bounded edifice under *tapu*, but also to

---

<sup>634</sup> Its interest to compare the cleared centre of the Samoan village to the Mekeo village of Papua New Guinea, which Marilyn Strathern observed as being well defined plaza that is treated as an 'abdomen'. What is beyond the village is brought into the village for consumption, and wastes are thrown back into the bush: "[f]ood brought from the bush is cooked and eaten in the peripheral dwellings and the rules of waste disposal mean that in the early morning each villager makes his or her way to the bush, not the remote bush but the peripheral bush just over the fence, to empty their abdomens. When they return, they clean up the village, sweeping refuse into the center plaza. The rubbish is piled up in the center, before being carried to the edge of the village and dumped where human beings have also evacuated. It is as though the abdomen of the village were cleaned out too", (Strathern, 1998, p. 136).

<sup>635</sup> (Pratt, 1893).

<sup>636</sup> The Tufuga here are called '*Imoa*' which means rat, genitals are often referred to as '*imoa*' and the carpenters in mythology wore no clothes during construction. The Tufuga in these stories were described as either demons, rats and/or foreigners, see (Stuebel, p. 14).

<sup>637</sup> (Buck, 1930, p. 65).

<sup>638</sup> *Pepe* is a sitting place between the *tala* and *itu* of the *fale*, and is located between posts where a neutral *matai* or guests are allowed to sit.

observe the rituals and rules, which are set at the limits or borders between the bounded space of the edifice and the village space of the *malae*.

### **Architectural origins and binding**

There is a kinship between ideas around binding and covering in the Samoan *fale* and Polynesia in general, with the discourse associated with the origin of architecture in Europe. This origin is associated with an evolutionary historical perspective that places a 'primitive hut' at the source. The seventeenth-century Abbé Marc-Antoine Laugier in following Vitruvius,<sup>639</sup> proposed an origin for architecture evolving from a simple structure of four tree trunks, still growing and rooted in place, with lintels composed of sawn logs, and branches providing an elementary pitched roof.<sup>640</sup> This "little rustic cabin", Laugier believed, was a most simple model of "true perfection" that avoided all "essential defects" because the structure expressed directly the function of the edifice and nothing more.<sup>641</sup> The origin of architecture from this perspective relied on an idea passed from generation to generation as "the model upon which all the magnificences of architecture have been imagined",<sup>642</sup> and which relied on the compliant form of a triangular roof sitting on post and beam structure. Quatremarie de Quincy would add an epigenetic theory of architectural types based on the tent, the cave and the hut, paralleled by a complementary evolutionary schema of China (tent), Egypt (cave) and Greece (hut).<sup>643</sup>

It wasn't until the mid 1800s with Gottfried Semper that an alternative view of the origin of architecture emerged, which emphasised the importance that "artforms" showed their development in their first motives, the "manifestation of a cultural idea" as being determined by the manner of use.<sup>644</sup> Through systematic analysis, Semper demonstrated

---

<sup>639</sup> Primitive men, Vitruvius believed, were brought to congregate around fires caused by trees set on fire by lightning, and after a time began building huts as dwellings: "Some made them of green boughs, others dug caves on mountain sides, and some, in imitation of the nests of swallows and the way they built, made places of refuge out of mud and twigs. Next, by observing the shelters of others and adding new details to their own inceptions, they constructed better and better kinds of huts as time went on" (Laugier, 1755, p. 79).

<sup>640</sup> (Laugier, 1755, p. 12).

<sup>641</sup> (Laugier, 1755, p. 11).

<sup>642</sup> (Laugier, 1755, p. 11).

<sup>643</sup> (Lavin, 1992, p. 56).

<sup>644</sup> Quoted by Mallgrave in his introductory essay to *Style* (Semper, 2004, p. 18).

that the elementary logic of use requires two essential rules to govern all human fabrication: first the need and necessity which transforms things into necessary symbols of essential forms that are developed through time; and secondly forms are conditioned by the material used in its fabrication. Semper produced a treatise on style published in two volumes of *Der Stil*<sup>645</sup> that was importantly spurred on by an encounter with the Caraib Hut, which he saw in the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace in 1851. Semper's logic was that the smallest constructional unit – the knot – was derived from the co-ordination of human labour in terms of rhythm emanating from the body, as a means of manufacturing and crafting. He traced this linguistically (in German) to 'naht' (seam) and knot, which he associated with 'force' and 'necessity', and also with 'node' or *nexus* (binding), sewing and spinning, and takes this further by suggesting also a connection with "combination", "joining" and "nearness".<sup>646</sup> Semper was obsessed with the knot and all that was derived from the knot in human doings: the daisy chain and the garland, the knotted carpet, all weaving, needlework. All of them were the vast consequence of that first knot which (by an extravagant piece of philology) he designated the first human product. The knot, the node, he argued, was *Knoten* in German; the old German *Naht* or sewing and cloth, which was allied to it, was man's first answer to need. As opposed to the act of covering which supposes that "everything closed, protected, enclosed, enveloped and covered presents itself as *unified*, as collective", Semper advances the proposition that knotting is where everything bound as in a knot "reveals itself as articulated, as plurality".<sup>647</sup>

In Gunter Nitschke's analysis of Japanese *shime*,<sup>648</sup> bundling and knotting are marks that signify dwelling or occupation in Japan> He reveals that the evolution of building in East Asia began when the ancient population were driven by an impulse to transform the unruly landscape. In doing so, Nitschke believed that they differentiated nature from human dwellings, borders were erected thereby turning "chaos into cosmos by setting up occupation marks". In Japan these were known as *musubi* or binding deities.<sup>649</sup> Nitschke described how a ritual for breaking ground for a new dwelling was still being performed in the 1970s; priests would mark out four corners where four

---

<sup>645</sup> Volume 1 was published in 1860, Volume 2 in 1863.

<sup>646</sup> (Semper, 2004, pp. 164, 165, fn. 113); see also (Rykwert, 1982, p. 125).

<sup>647</sup> (Semper, 2004, p. 123).

<sup>648</sup> *Shime*, according to Nitschke, is the only indigenous Japanese written sign still in use – the rest of the written signs being taken from China (Nitschke, 1994, p. 763).

<sup>649</sup> (Nitschke, 1994, p. 766).

bamboo bundles were erected and tied with *shime* cords, while a priest acted out the cutting of grass with a sickle, followed by digging the ground with a spade, and finally enacting the opening up of the ground with a hoe.<sup>650</sup> This is known as ‘the quietening of the land’ ceremony, where the raw energy of the natural environment begins to be transformed by cutting, binding and building. The ritual plays out a kind of rehearsal marking the outlines of the building and indicating the extent of the project to come.

---

<sup>650</sup> (Nitschke, 1994, p. 764).

#### **Part 4: The *faletele* and ritual of building and binding**

In Samoa, the motive for the marking of borders can be interpreted as the beginning of the process of measuring and quantifying the site; this was followed by the binding of architectural elements of the building, which will throw a cover over the raised platform, as it were, like a suspended blanket over a collective body. The analysis of the work of Tufuga-faufale implies that land occupation and building ceremonies were rituals connected with different phases of the construction process, which revolved around feasting and gifting, highlighted by the binding and lashing of the ridgepole to the central posts. The rituals not only marked the presentation of gifts as a portion of the Tufuga-faufale's payment; more importantly, they also marked the stages in which the particular segments of the house were measured and the proportions calculated by the Head Tufuga. This was generally done by 'eye and feel', rather than mathematical calculation.

Te Rangi Hiroa described the first of these events, namely the raising of the central posts, the *fa'atuga* (causing to stand upright), which was integrated with an orchestrated ceremony carried out on the *malae*, which lasted for an entire day. In this ceremony, three groups sat next to the house under construction, being served three meals (*lavata'i*, *fa'atiga* and *fui'ava*) while the men installed the central posts (*poutu*), the scaffolding (*fatāmanu*) and the ridge beam (*'au'au*). Figure 30, below, shows the plan of the ceremony, in which the first group, the Tufuga, take up a position close to the house under construction, facing, to their right, the second group consisting of the family building the house. The third group made up of the villagers takes up position to the Tufuga-faufale's left.

The day begins with the *taufale* (project leader)<sup>651</sup> instructing a man from his family to cook the morning meal (*lavata'i*), Te Rangi Hiroa (Peter Buck) notes that the man "lights the fire, prepares and cooks the food unaided. There must be no noise of interruption. When ready, the meal is conveyed by him to the chief builder and his party, before they commence work."<sup>652</sup> After the meal, the Head Tufuga marks the position of the main posts. The three main posts are then placed in the open holes and raised by pulling the posts upright with ropes resting on a scaffolding portal.

---

<sup>651</sup> The *Taufale* is an orator chief engaged by the family as a project manager and go-between for the family, the Tufuga and the village.

<sup>652</sup> (Buck, 1930, p. 91).

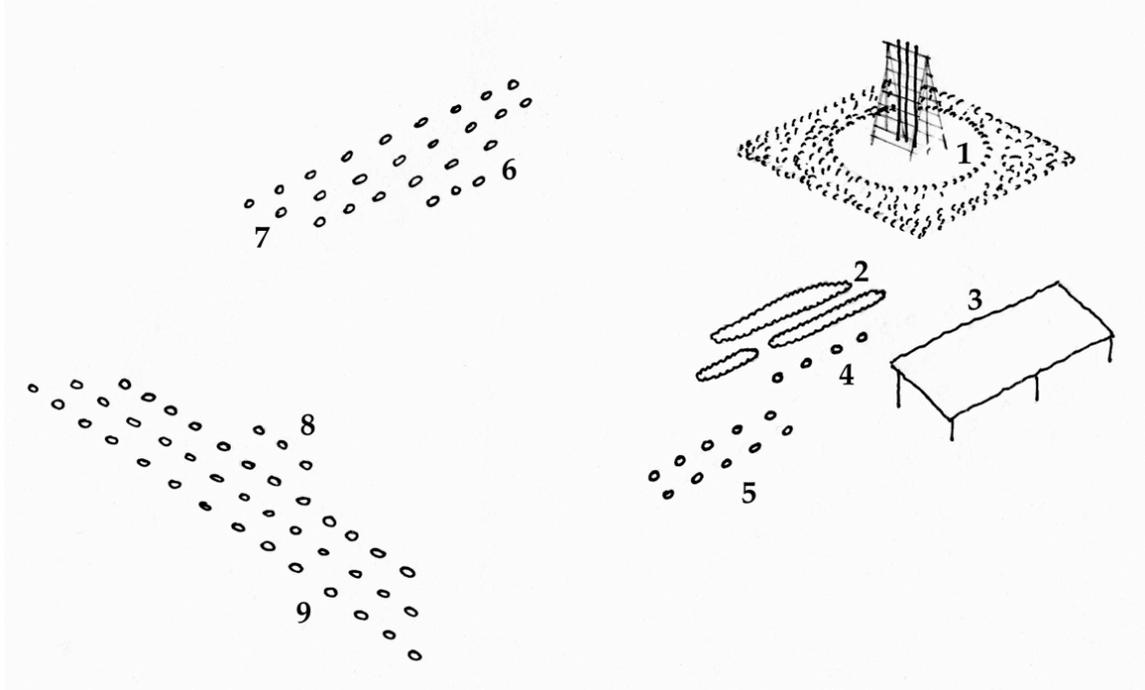


Figure 30

Positions of people at the fa'atuga house construction ceremony (Buck 1930). 1. poutu and scaffolding of new house on an old paepae platform; 2. rows of gifted food; 3. Tufuga-faufale's shed with builders; 4. tulafale orators of the Tufuga; 5. visiting Tufuga; 6. owner and his tulafale; 7. house family; 8. village matai and tulafale; 9. Villagers

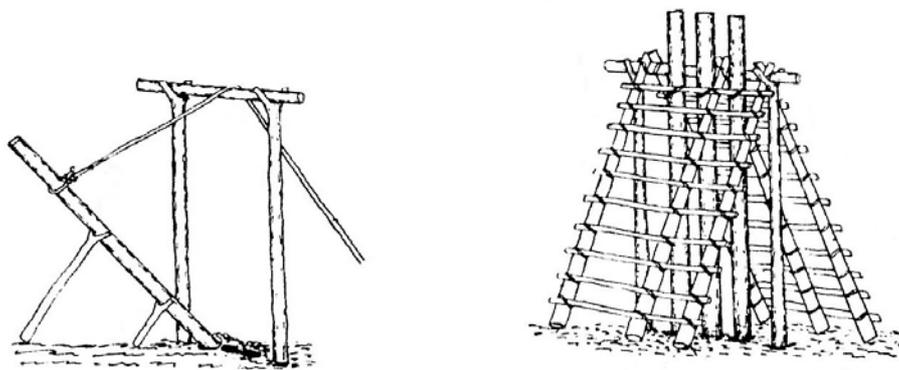


Figure 31

Erection of the temporary scaffolding portal and the poutu (left), and the fatamanu scaffold (right)

The rest of the scaffolding is then erected and the house built around the temporary structure. The assistants build the house from the inside out, while the Head Tufuga stands outside gauging the shape and proportion of the structure. From the inside, the men handle the materials directly, being closer to the process of piecing, fitting and stitching together of the parts. On the outside, the Matai Tufuga uses his pointing stick like a conductor to direct the operations, as if drawing in the air with a remote-controlled baton, while the family and the villagers look on.

### **Proliferation of eyes: joining the ridgepole to the central post**

Towards noon, the upright central posts are set perpendicular and rammed in, the tops levelled and the ridgepole placed in position. Te Rangi Hiroa records that, as the main assistant<sup>653</sup> carries the ridgepole up to the top, the Head Tufuga – distinguished by carrying a coconut wood walking stick (*to'oto'o*) – views the ridgepole from the ground about ten yards away. He calls out a command, and the ridgepole is lifted off, and one of the outer posts is chipped with an adze to lower its level. The ridgepole is again put on and adjusted so that the ends project evenly beyond the outer posts. A wave of the walking stick expresses approval. Coconut husk fibre (*pulu*) is pushed into the spaces where the surfaces do not quite coincide. The under surface of the ridgepole is a little wider than the upper end of the *poutu*. The ridgepole is lashed to the upper end of each main post, with an ornamental but firm sennit lashing called *le sumu o le 'au'au* (ridge beam diamond) or *sumu* lashing. The lashing has to form a sequence whereby the large lozenge motif can become apparent from the front of the house.<sup>654</sup>

The flat bottom of the ridgepole sits on the flattened tops of the central posts. This is done without any notching or finger joints, instead they are butted together, relying on the ornamental *sumu* lashing to bind two perpendicular and independent elements together. As Buck notes, “[n]o steps are taken to fit the post and ridgepole by mortising in any way. The flat under surface of the ridgepole simply rests on the flat upper end of the main posts.”<sup>655</sup> This is a significant constructional element of the *sumu* lashing. All similar butt joints are done in the same way, for example *sumu o le so'a* (lashing of the

---

<sup>653</sup> The Tufuga's assistants all wore *lavalava* waist cloths and limed their hair for the occasion (Buck, 1930, p. 27).

<sup>654</sup> (Buck, 1930, pp. 27, 28).

<sup>655</sup> (Buck, 1930, p. 29).

collar beam), regarded as the “highest development of house lashing”.<sup>656</sup> The *sumu* celebrates the joining of two significant elements: the vertical (*poutū* central post) and horizontal (*‘au’au* ridgepole), the vertical posts as the prop holding together and apart the world of men and Lagi; the horizontal ridgepole signals the spanning cosmos. One of the meanings of *sumu* is a “cluster of stars” known as the Southern Cross,<sup>657</sup> made up of the diamond-shaped *sumu* fish. In Samoan and Tongan mythology, the *sumu* (fish; *humu* in Tonga) and the *toloa* (duck) were taken up together to the heavens and made into a sign,<sup>658</sup> which now forms a place in the night sky that navigators use to position and guide their journeys on the ocean.<sup>659</sup>

The two elements of the horizontal and vertical are joined together in the house and their separation and joining celebrated ritually in the architecture. The central post and ridgepole are ceremonially lashed together, with a joint that not only marks and embellishes the junction but also holds it firmly like a clasping hand. The interlocking strands of sennit create a T-shaped fabric sleeve that follows a system of looped patterns (*‘upeti*) built up around the T-junction so that, when completed, a *malu* pattern (lozenge or diamond-shaped) is given in the overall effect (Figure 32). These decorative figures are known as *mamanu*,<sup>660</sup> meaning crafted decorations made either by carving or arranged with strings, lashed or printed on tapa cloths.<sup>661</sup> Like *sumu*, *mamanu* is also a type of fish, in this case a parrotfish. In *lauga* (honorific speeches) given at the final ceremony to mark the *umusaga* (ceremony to celebrate the completion of a new house), the *‘au’au* was referred to as *‘‘ia sā’* (sacred fish), an ornamental lashing pattern woven

---

<sup>656</sup> (Buck, 1930, p. 42).

<sup>657</sup> Robert Williamson reported that Werner Von Bülow pointed out that “Sumu and another star called Toloa refers to a tradition according to which a former was fish and later a wild duck that risen up to heaven” (Williamson, 1933, p. 130); see also (Pratt, 1893, p. 278); (Collocott, 1922, p. 159).

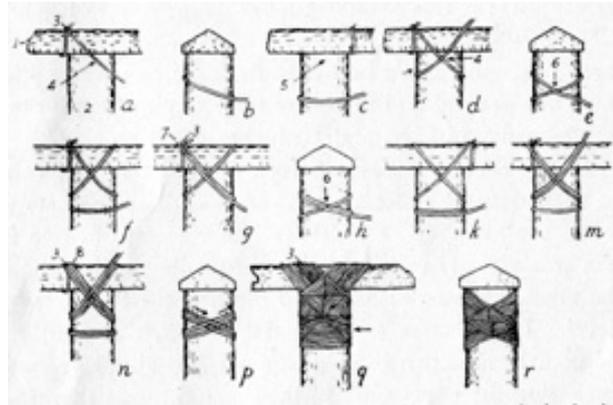
<sup>658</sup> (Krämer, 1995, p. 360).

<sup>659</sup> (Krämer, 1995, p. 284).

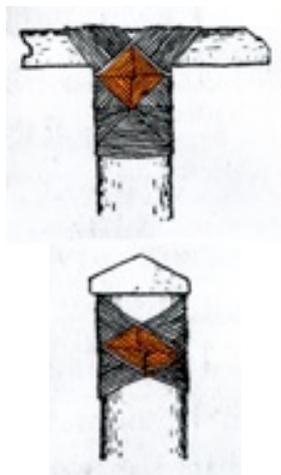
<sup>660</sup> Roger Neich and Mick Pendergrast equated the *siapo mamanu* method with artistic freedom in the manner of painting the cloth ‘freehand’, giving each design a uniqueness, as opposed to the tapa printed using a pattern board or *upeti* (Neich & Pendergrast, 2001, p. 16).

<sup>661</sup> Peter Buck made the link between *sumu* and *mamanu* when he suggested that, “The geometrical figures produced *mamanu* of *sumu* names also applied to sennit designs worked on wall posts, beams, and canoes. They are regarded as important forms of decoration. There is a pride in the voice of a craftswoman when, as she starts a combination, she says ‘Mamanu’. Similar pride is expressed by a man when he points out the sennit design on a wall post or beam, and says, ‘Mamanu’” (Buck, 1930, p. 228).

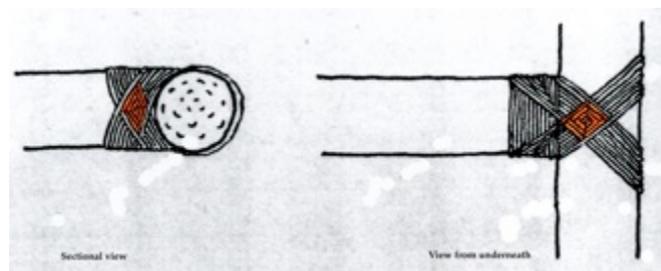
onto the timberwork.<sup>662</sup> The *lauga* identifies the *ia sã* pattern as a totem marking and linking the skills of the Tufuga in creating a beautiful sacred building in which the house signals beautifully and symbolically the binding together with the *sumu* pattern, all members of the 'aiga.



**Figure 32**  
Lashing of the 'au'au (ridge beam) to the poulu (central post) (in Buck 1930)



**Figure 33**  
*Sumu* lashing showing the *malu* diamond pattern (in Buck 1930)



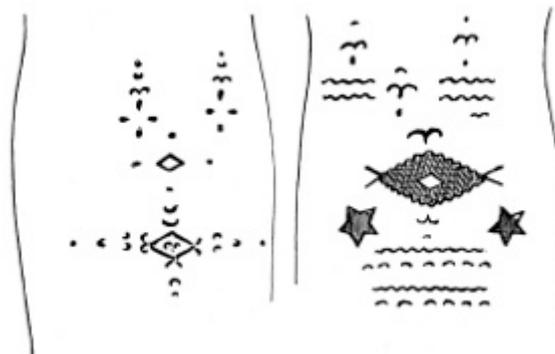
**Figure 34**  
*Sumu* lashing pattern on the collar *so'a* beams (in Buck 1930)

<sup>662</sup> *Tulouna na a le 'au'autele o le maota, ua 'o se i'a sa e taoto le 'au'au o le maota. Tulouna na a la'au matua o le maota, ua 'o se ta'otoga a i'a fe'ai - We salute the upper ridge-pole of the house! We salute the main ridge-pole of the house-there it lurks like the sacred fish! We salute the main purlins of the house - like a school of savage fish!'*, (Buse, 1961, p. 109).

The *sumu* diamond pattern is an important ornament used in a number of Samoan artforms. A woman's tattoo for instance, contains the same diamond pattern of the *malu*, a decoration at the back of the knee that Te Rangi Hiroa observed, "forms a centre from which lines of other smaller motifs radiate".<sup>663</sup> This motif provides the ceremonial name for the woman's tattoo – the *malu*. The *sumu* diamond is not present on the male *pe'a* tattoo, which indicates that it was reserved for women. This means that the *sumu* diamond, like the *malu* pattern, is a joining or bridging element. They mark the areas in the house that are 'go-between' or bridging elements, which are woven into *sumu* patterns covering the joints or more appropriately in the context of *teu* (ornamentation), to celebrate them. These attributes are connected with sacred highborn women (*taupou*) who are expected to carry the heritage to the future via their offsprings. The patterns mark an important link between women's *mana*, fecundity and buildings.



**Figure 35**  
*Malu* diamond of tattoo patterns.



**Figure 36**  
*Malu* pattern located in the hollow of the woman's knee (in Krämer 1994)

<sup>663</sup> A woman's tattoo is called a *malu* after the diamond-shaped pattern behind the knee, it also appeared in numerous places on the male tattoo: "the *malu* forms a centre from which lines of other smaller motifs radiate" (Buck, 1930, pp. 657, 658).

Not only are they symbolic representations for fertility, they are also described as being ‘eyes’ or ‘faces’ according to Krämer, who observed that the patterns can be found on fishing nets where eyes were delineated to demonstrate “that net eyes and human eyes of demonic power increase success in fishing”.<sup>664</sup> Krämer’s analysis shows that these patterns are related; the *malu* diamond he suggested can be traced back to representations of the face and eyes.<sup>665</sup> Eyes and face on the *malu* tattoo are represented by a dot, a circle or spot inside a diamond. Eye motifs are found on many *tapa* cloths from Samoa and Tonga, which can be traced to early decorations on Lapita pottery.<sup>666</sup>

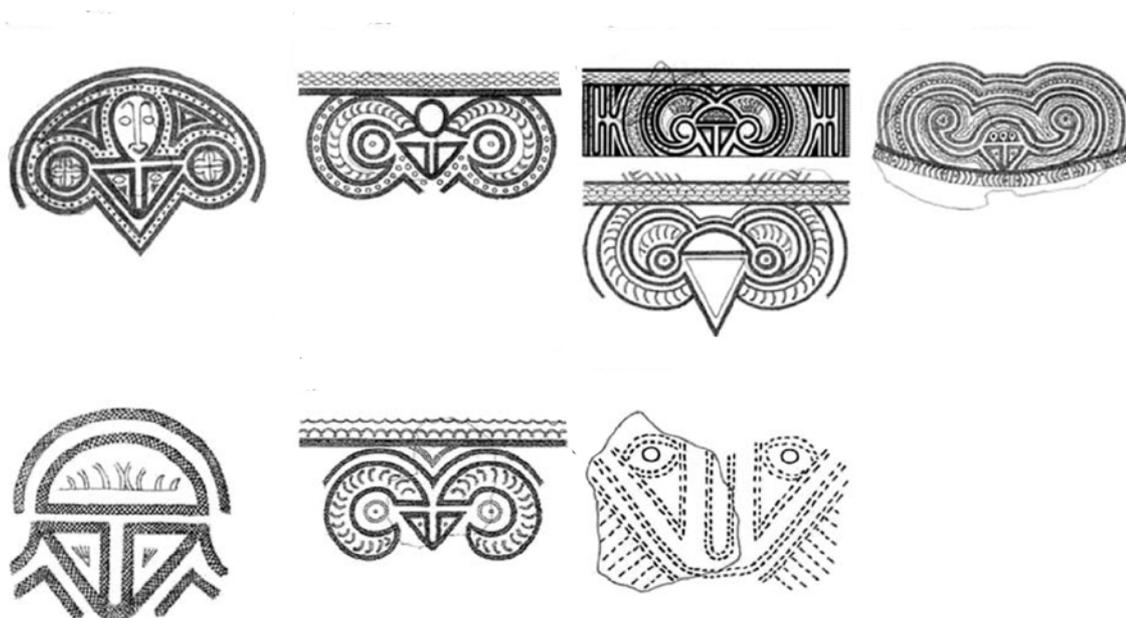
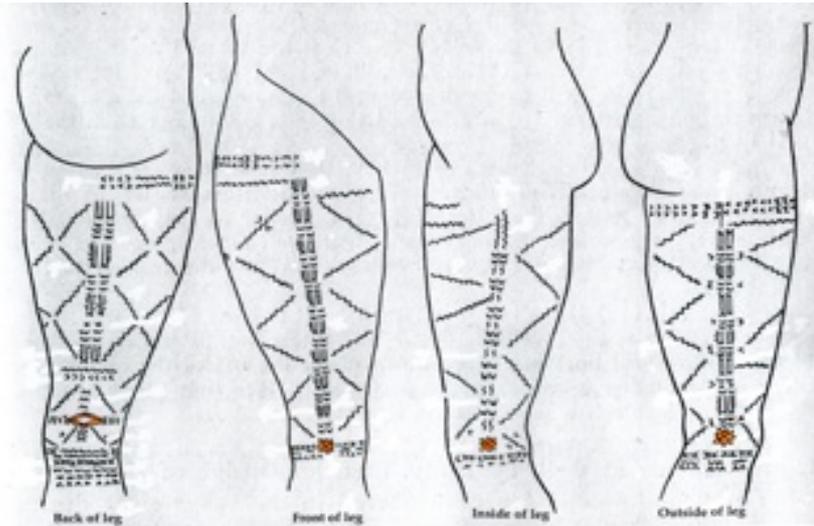


Figure 37  
Face and eye motifs from Lapita pottery (in Chiu 2007)

<sup>664</sup> (Krämer, 1995, p. 357).

<sup>665</sup> (Krämer, 1995, p. 357).

<sup>666</sup> Analysis of the Lapita face consistently showed the triangular motif representing the body of a person or turtle together with small circles for eyes, see (Chiu, 2007); (Terrell & Schechter, 2007).



**Figure 38**  
*Malu* tattoo with *malu* and star patterns

The *sumu* pattern and *malu* pattern are the same motif. Both are located at T-junctions joining two-axis (horizontal and vertical or *mavae* and *tofiga*) that highlight and embellishing connections. To celebrate connections between sides in social situations is to *teu le vā*. Therefore a link can be established between the *sumu* pattern straddling the joints between the horizontal ridgepole (*'au'au*) and the vertical central post (*poutū*), and the *malu* motif located at the junction between the thigh and lower leg of a woman. *Sumu* and *malu* are one and the same motif; they represent the connection between house and body. Thus as Rykwert remarked in his analysis of columns, the body and the building are related magically to each other – both are endowed with the same motif.<sup>667</sup>

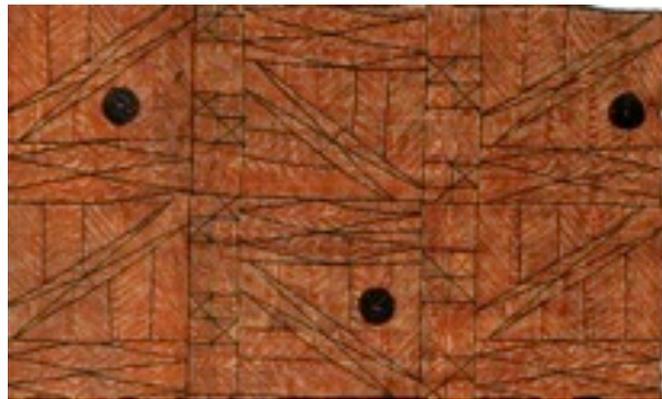
Importantly, the *malu* was usually a tattoo reserved<sup>668</sup> for sacred woman or *taupou* who is chosen by a family *matai* for her beauty, grace and the 'whiteness' of her skin to be his ceremonial daughter who carries out all the ritual duties in the *faletele*. She is the celebrated 'belle' who will attract wealthy and highborn suitors with a desirable genealogy, thus she is the connector of the genealogies between important families. She performs the *palu'ava* or mixing and straining of the *'ava* in the *'ava* ceremony, which signals the beginning of the sitting of the *fono* council and she also dances the *taualuga* that closes the meeting. Her role here in the ceremony bridges the *noa* or everyday

---

<sup>667</sup> (Rykwert, 1996, p. 29).

<sup>668</sup> This was the case before missionaries arrived in Samoa. *Malu* is no longer restricted to sacred women.

world, and the sacred or *tapu* world of the divine ancestors within the *faletele*. The *taupou* means the ‘keeper of the *pou*’, the central post (*poutū*).<sup>669</sup> Therefore the diamond-shaped *malu* (marking the separation of the thigh and lower leg), the *sumu* (forming a sleeve straddling horizontal and vertical lashing) and *taupou* (connecting genealogies and realms of *noa* and *tau*) are one and the same as connectors and in-between interlocutors.



**Figure 39**  
*Siapo tasina* **Samoan tapa** with circular eye motifs transposed on triangles

The *poutū* at the centre of the *faletele* is surrounded by the circle of *matai* and therefore it is the spot that is concentrated the gaze of sitting chiefs. *Matai* can literally mean the ‘leaders gaze’ conveying the idea that those who are *matai* bear the many eyes of those he leads, and thus his ‘look’ incorporates the eyes of many.<sup>670</sup> *Matai* possess a powerful ‘look’, which is concentrated on the central spot of the *fale*, lacerating an empty and inner sacred space in Samoan identity – the *poutū*. There is something in this central position that can never escape the *matai*’s gaze. Rather, it seizes all gazes. Eyes and faces in diamond-shaped *sumu* are everywhere in the lashing patterns of the house. They are

---

<sup>669</sup> Krämer suggested that *taupou* may be related to “*pou* – post and *tāu* – owner, since the *taupou* has the right to have a post of her own as appropriate for a chief” (1994: 46, fn83).

<sup>670</sup> I concur with Serge Tcherkézoff’s hypothesis that *matai* has two levels of meaning pertaining to those who sit in the *fono* in the *faletele*; the first being the *ali’i/ariki* “a sacred chief who only ‘sits’ *nofo*, in order to be illuminated and wrapped around by the ancestral or godly power *mana*, and a leader who ‘works’, ‘does’ things and ‘makes’ things happen” (Tcherkézoff, 2000, p. 179). What I do want to point out is that the second type of chief as ‘leader’ who are “the best in his activity, like a master in a craft activity” (178) are known for their skill for fashioning things with a ‘particular eye’ – they are able to ‘strike’ (with an adze etc.) or align things (by ‘eye’ in fixing the *fatuga* on the *faletele* etc.) in a unique and proper way when they are working. *Matai* here can also mean a ‘skilled eye that leads’ or have the ability to stay and strike true.

fixed there by ornamental lashings that also mark and lacerate the *poutū*. It is no wonder that things of value are hung on these posts, because it is the most visible and safest place to keep them (it is stored here as *teu*, which in this context means an embellishment, as well as indicating that a form of power is being stored up). The centre has an interesting quality in Samoan thought in that it is the most internal of places, but paradoxically, it is also the most public of spaces. Sacred spaces have this paradoxical quality. *Mana* for instance is a concept that contains both the idea of sacred and profane; it requires *mavae* to expand its field of influence (unfolding), and also *tofiga* to gather it into a sanctum (folding) – both are processes of *teu*.

Things are therefore directed towards this central area of the *fale* or the *malae*. *Toga* (fine mats) are *measina* (treasures), which are displayed here where they are unfolded and paraded before the village, the women would sing out: *Sa ō le fa'alalelei* (here come the beautiful things) expressing their elevated quality. This is carried out either in the central space of *fale* or *malae* in which the parade of beautiful things are seen and 'touched' by the eyes of the sitting and gazing *matai*, as well as the eyes of the ancestors (the decorated patterns that lacerate the posts and timber of the house). The eyes and singing bear witness to the presentation of these things, which transform them from objects (and people as mere things) to *measina*, and thus they acquire *mana*. The power to transform them resides in the eyes and faces that are everywhere in the house and concentrated on the spot in which the central post connects to the ridgepole.

I proposed above (pp. 67ff) that the central posts are a ritual representation of Tui-te'e-lagi, the ancestor who propped up Lagi and elevated the cosmos, enabling the human to sense and grasp the world and to differentiate the earth from the cosmos and the firmament. Tui-te'e-lagi as *te'e* (a prop) relates to the Tahitian figure of *to'o*, also a prop or pillar. Alfred Gell observes that *to'o*,

represent mythologically the pillar placed by the creator god to hold up the sky and preserve the *ao* (the world of light and human life) from the encompassing powers of night, darkness, and divinity (the *po*) ... the *to'o* is invested with the god's presence by virtue of contiguity rather than resemblance.<sup>671</sup>

Central posts in the *faletele* are generally called *poutū* but are also known as *to'o*, a term which has the same meaning of 'prop' as in Tahiti. The Māori wharenuī (meeting house) also contains similar posts: the *poutokomanawa*, which props up the *tāhuhu* ridgepole.

---

<sup>671</sup> (Gell, 1998, p. 110).

The *fa'atuga* ceremony, which marks the raising of the main posts of the *faletele*, is also important for the following reasons: marking and measuring the height of the house, and determining the number of central posts. There can be one, two or three *poutu*; the majority of houses contain one or three. They mostly signify the social structure of the village or the status of the *aiga*. *Faletele* with a single post represent the rule of a single *matai ali'i* or high chief; three posts denotes the tripartite structure that organises the village: the circle of *matai* and their *fono*, the *'aualuma* (women's group), and the *'aumaga* (untitled men's group).<sup>672</sup> The *fa'atuga* ceremony also marks the first significant payment to the Tufuga. During the ceremony, the Tufuga stands up point his walking stick to instruct his apprentices to position and then level the ridgepole while all the attendees watch from their position on the *malae* (see Figure 30). The lashing of the ridgepole to the central posts commences using the *sumu* pattern to mark the joining of Lagi to Papa and the celebration of the connection between heaven (home of Tagaloa-a-lagi and the ancestor gods) and the home of *tagata*. The ceremony is an important one and thus witnessed by the many eyes of those gathered (the village *matai*, Tufuga and workers and the family commissioning the house). The participants are witnesses (with their many eyes) to the consecration of the house, and thus all become attached and belong to the birth of the building; eyes that see the event also metaphorically touch and weave belonging into the fabric of the house. The building with decorated motifs and patterns (drawn in space and performed in place) achieve something akin to Gottfried Semper's interpretation of the Greek word *Kosmos*, which he says is a type of "twofold signification of both 'decoration' and 'world order' [in which] the object of adornment becomes a micrograph of the visible world, as well as a 'dynamogram' of the invisible forces of the universe".<sup>673</sup>

### **Springing and measuring the curvature of heaven**

When the *'au'au* is lashed to the *poutū*, the ridgepole becomes a place<sup>674</sup> where the roof literally springs from the ridgepole, as the foundation from which the heavens are suspended. The *poutu* raising from the *paepae* thus creates an ascending image of a connection, a bridge that rises into the air to meet the *'au'au*; the *'au'au* then forms the levelled platform in the heavens from where the Lagi system springs and sprouts out and downwards in a slow and stretched curve that hovers over the *paepae* below. An

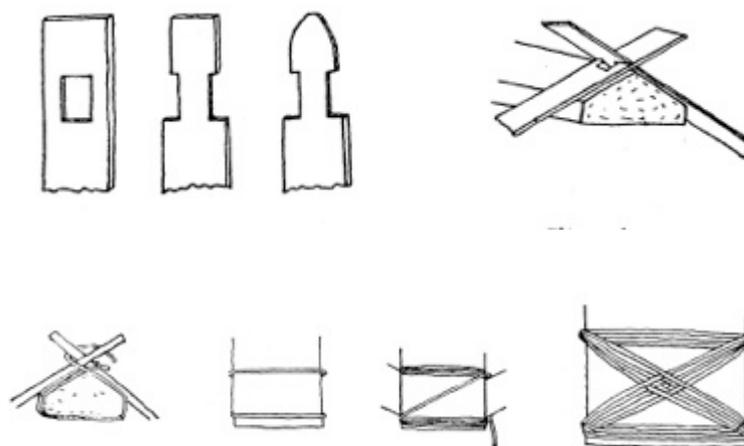
---

<sup>672</sup> (Aiono Le Tagaloa, 2003, p. 81).

<sup>673</sup> (Papapetros, 2009, p. 317).

<sup>674</sup> *'Au'au* is also called *taualuga* meaning to reach the top. I was also told by the late Aiono Leulumoga Sofara of Fasito'outa that the *'au'au* is sometimes referred to as *malae*.

important meaning of 'au'au connected with fertility is implied here: 'au also means the stalk of a plant, a handle or the joining end of a bunch of bananas or fruit.<sup>675</sup> Thus, the au'au functions as an origin point, a levelled ridge from which the arch of Lagi originates in four *fatuga* lines (made of timber battens) that are gathered and knotted there. This is the significance of the construction and meaning of the *fatuga*.<sup>676</sup> Te Rangi Hiroa notes that the connection of the *fatuga* on top of the 'au'au requires the pair of rafters to be joined in what would seem to be a method reserved for weaving flax, by interlacing pieces of timber held together on an edge. This is done with four long timber pieces extending from the 'au'au to the ground (four inches wide and one and a half inches thick with the inner surface flat and outer surface slightly convex). Two *fatuga* are joined together by cutting an eyelet into one, and the other shaped so that it could be threaded through the eyelet and twisted into place (Figure 40 below) The top surface of the 'au'au is slightly angled to provide a line that will gently project the *fatuga* to meet the *amopou* (perimeter posts) below.



**Figure 40: Two *fatuga* in a joint on top of the 'au'au threaded together in a 'knot-like' fashion and lashed to the 'au'au.**

Once they are lashed to the 'au'au (with the *sumu* pattern), the pair of *fauga* are hung down for the curve of the roof to be set by the Head Tufuga. The *fatuga* are fashioned from coconut timber, which has straight and long fibres making it very flexible and

<sup>675</sup> (Pratt, 1893).

<sup>676</sup> Peter Buck called the *fatuga*, principal rafters (Buck, 1930, p. 29).

pliable for bending. Te Rangi Hiroa describes how the Tufuga forms the roof (at the *itu* [middle section of the roof]) by bending the *fatuga* into a curve, a task performed by the Head Tufuga by waving his stick from the side while his assistants bend arcs into the air. This is principally different from the architectural convention of using drawings (the inscription of lines on paper) to determine the building and its measured components before it is built. It is also different from the way in which European guilds constructed medieval cathedrals using templates as full-scale measured representations to shape materials and to organise the form of the building.<sup>677</sup> By contrast, the Tufuga enacts a performance that inscribes very precise lines in the air, a type of linemaking that is a combination of drawing and performance.

Te Rangi Hiroa and his assistants from the Bishop Museum witnessed such a performance in 1927:

The head builder, with his wand of office, took up a position about ten yards away from the end of the framework. The second in command executed his orders regarding the frame from the scaffolding, and directed those below with the struts. The head builder called to lift up the rafter at the first purlin. This was done by a carpenter getting his shoulder under it and straightening his back. The second in command placed the end of a long strut under the rafter, and directed the strut bearer as to the placing of the lower end on the ground. When the weight was released, if the strut proved satisfactory, the head builder waved his walking stick in approval. In this way, 5 struts were placed commencing with a longest strut. The lower ends were pushed outwards toward the rafter until taut. If too long, they were shortened with an adze stroke. I stood behind the head builder as he issued his orders. He judged entirely by eye, and left nothing to be desired. In this way the long rafter was bent to the right curve as shown in the figure. Its lower end was, of course, still fixed by the tie to the scaffolding, but it was readjusted to suit the curve.<sup>678</sup>

The line the Tufuga draws in the air is a type of ‘trace’ in Tim Ingold’s taxonomy of lines, which connects it with the acts of walking, weaving, observing, singing, storytelling, writing – they “all proceed along lines of one kind or another”.<sup>679</sup> Tataufaiga Faiga’s words, which I touched on earlier (see above, pp. 1ff), that “there are to be no drawings” now makes sense to me. He and his apprentices performed the building into life; their movements and body gestures are lines drawn in real time. They perform lines into the void of possibility. I am reminded here of the characteristics of

---

<sup>677</sup> (Turnbull, 1993). (Rykwert, 2005, p. 3).

<sup>678</sup> (Buck, 1930).

<sup>679</sup> (Ingold, 2007, p. 76).

Vānimonimo explored earlier (pp. 60ff), of a presence that appears and disappears, a presence defined by its absence. The Tufuga-faufale, I suggest, learned to engage with this undefined quality of Vānimonimo. Their bodies draw lines in the air, in a ceremony to solicit the divine into the space of building. With their bodies, the men assemble and stitch together the building, in a performance in which they dance with the ancestor gods to combine materials and to give birth to the house. The men, I now realise, need to dance and sing the house to life.

### **Why ritual and ceremony?**

The Tufuga traditionally used rituals to coincide with periods of gift payments, each followed by a feast. Importantly they marked the moments when the building had to be measured and the proportions set. The rituals reaffirmed and revisited past knowledge, as a way of rehearsing future events in the building process. For the *faletele*, these periods were set and they consisted of the main Tufuga (*matai* Tufuga) taking responsibility for measuring and adjusting parts of the construction only by instructing his assistants with a wave of his stick. Sometimes, he would measure out bits of string by knotting them and throwing the string back to the assistants. The payments were arranged around these measuring events, each constituting a ceremony with rituals attached. The sequence from Te Rangi Hiroa (Peter Buck) follows below.

1. *Tauga* was the first payment, and was made on summoning the workmen.
2. *O le oloa* was paid when the *poutu* was erected, and usually consisted of two mats, one valuable, the other inferior.
3. *O le sā* was given when the sides were finished, and was divided into seven portions, each having a distinctive name, which, as they illustrate a curious custom in house-building may be given in full. One portion was given for measuring, *O le fuafuataga*. A second for digging holes in which to place the centre-posts, *O le elegā pou*. A third for placing in position the ridgepole, *O le fa'aetaga-o-le-auau*. A fourth for preparing the *Fa-tuga*, *O le tau fatuga*. A fifth for cutting the rafters straight along the eaves, *O le vaega-o-le-tulutuluga*. A sixth as a covering or garment for the workmen, in payment for the time spent in cutting timber in the bush. A seventh for lashing the rafters and cross-pieces together, *O le sunuga-o-so'a*.
4. *Umusaga* The fourth distinct payment was given when the house was quite finished and the workmen about to leave. This was the greatest payment of all, and frequently several hundred mats were paid by chiefs in this final payment, besides the large bundles of *'ie toga* and *siapo*, to say nothing of the vast

quantities of food consumed by the workmen and their families during the progress of the work.<sup>680</sup>

These types of buildings are created in vernacular and indigenous practices requiring no prior documentation or drawn blueprints. Therefore, the men are like performers, who have to re-enact previous performances to enable the externalisation of knowledge and situations that are stored within their bodies against the materials and the site.<sup>681</sup>

Architecture in this context is a performative practice, where the 'blueprints' are carried in the gestures and movements that the craftsmen activate with their bodies and the available materials within the given site and/or the ritual or ceremonial situation. It involves the process of knotting in the manner in which the craftsmen re-gathered and rebound elements of the site (the earth and those who dwell on it) with the social rituals of everyday life that mark and celebrate a lifeworld. Architecture here strives to gather and provide a covering, over and around these activities, which is, significantly, the exact meaning of the word *fale* – to cover, to stretch over. The *fale* arguably follows a Semperian constructional logic, which evolved over time from the symbolic articulation of forms via necessity and need. Thus coupled with the emergence and refinement of techniques over time, the constructional logic is determined by the nature and character of materials themselves.

The orderly post-and-beam structure of the *fale*, with the roof propped up and out to create a gentle cover over its occupants, provides an endearing image of dwelling like that of a rustic primitive hut, a model from which Bannister Fletcher's traditional history of European architecture constructed its origins.

Because the *faletele* originated in Lagi, its architect, the traditional Tufuga, was to be rewarded at the final ceremony,<sup>682</sup> which honoured him and all Tufuga-faufale. The ceremony necessitated the handing over of the house from the Tufuga (who made it), to the family (who desired it and will gather and dwell in the completed house). The ceremony marked the completion of the contract between family and Tufuga, and saw

---

<sup>680</sup> (Buck, 1930).

<sup>681</sup> This is the essence of technology covered in Chapter 7 above.

<sup>682</sup> Between the erection of the main posts and the completion of the house, a number of lesser feasts take place. They are celebrations of the completion of various stages. One such feast takes place on the erection of the middle arch (*fau tu*) of the rounded end. (Buck, 1930).

the Tufuga decamp from the site, severing their connection to the family and their architectural object.

### **Conclusion: housing the cosmos**

Samoa architecture conforms and performs to a particular understanding of space and identity: that all of Samoa has been settled and allocated its places (*Samoa ua 'uma ona tofi*), indicating that space or the geography of village land is not empty but comprises already determined places with allotted names and founders.<sup>683</sup> The rites surrounding housebuilding are therefore not so much concerned with re-enactment of land settlement (the binding of the four corners to ritual in *shime* for example) seen in Japanese architecture, but instead, re-enactments of the separation (and connection) between heaven and earth – Lagi and Papa. *Mavae* and *tofiga* provide the motive for Samoan building, as the process that re-enacts the primordial separation and connection of the progenitors (Tagaloa-a-lagi and Vānimonimo) in the construction and erection of new sacred buildings. The name of the ceremony to commemorate a new *fale* (especially a *faletele* or *faleafolau* guesthouse) is *umusaga*, in which an *umu* (traditional oven) is carried out to cook the meal celebrating the birth of a new house. The smoking fire from the *umu* is a signal of the rituals of sacrifice and placemaking that sing to life the building. According to Mircea Eliade, “every territory occupied for the purpose of being inhabited or utilized as *Lebensraum* is first of all transformed from chaos into cosmos; that is, through the effect of ritual it is given a ‘form’, which makes it become real”.<sup>684</sup>

The *fale* importantly re-enacts the connection and separation of Papa and Lagi. Separation (and connection) as re-enacted in the *fale* is played out in the floating roof that signifies a world slightly removed from the present. In the separation, a gap opens up for the ancestors and descendants to take up their places in front of *poulalo* (outer posts) facing the *poutu*. They re-enact a gathering to commemorate the first *fono* in Lagi (on Malae Toto'a), whilst being supported from below and elevated above the ground by a *paepae* that positions the cosmos within the domain of Papa.

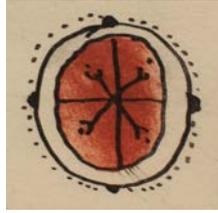
---

<sup>683</sup> See Figure 16 and discussion of this in pp. 108ff above with particular reference to the village of Fasito'outa.

<sup>684</sup> (Eliade, 1959, p. 11).



**Figure 41**  
*Falelele* 'Faleatatātū Maota o Ti'a Lavilavi' in Salelologa, Savai'i built by Faiva'aiga Kilifi of Sa'anapu



## Conclusion

### **Space in Samoan thought**

This study is an attempt to examine how space occurs in Samoan thought. An exposition of the Samoan cosmogony *Solo o le Vā* reveals the primordial relationship between Tagaloa-a-lagi and Vānimonimo as an integrated One, on which *mavae* and *tofiga* operate to structure and maintain all living forms in the world.

*Mavae* is the proliferation of things that grow and extend by finding new pathways and connections. It is the promise, held within things, of *mana/paia* (divine), a potent force that continually circulates, making connections by reproducing and extending outwards. The resulting multiplicity of forms has a way of circling back to the primordial centre. Accordingly, every settlement has a centre, a place that gathers (*tofiga*), but importantly it also has *ala* (pathways) that are like tentacles and branch out to encompass other places. People are expected to belong to a polity, the essence of personhood in Samoa, which controls, maintains and *teu* (refines) the work of the ancestors. *Teu* orders the work of the ancestors, on one hand, but it also makes possible its extension and proliferation, on the other.

There is an overlap between *teu* and *tofiga*. While *teu* performs and orders relationships in a general way, *tofiga* gives direction, locates, gathers, appoints and connects people to place by providing *tulagavae* (footholds). The *faletele* is a prime example of this gathering impulse. Successive generations maintain and repeat this impulse, continually appointing successors to *nofo* (sit) as *matai* (leaders) in the *fono*, thus gathering the *aiga* (family) to this *nofoaga* (place).<sup>685</sup> *Tofiga* locates and secures the appointed place (*nofoaga*) for all *matai* in the *alofisā* (sacred circle of *matai*), and the *fale* materially memorialises their positions in the ring of posts supporting the roof. These positions relate to the titles

---

<sup>685</sup> Important to note how sitting and inactivity are synonymous with those of higher status

that define the *nu'u* (village), and they are enacted every time the *matai* meet in assembly in a *fale*.<sup>686</sup>

The appointed places are *totonu* (inside) of the circle and orientated (in the case of the *faletele*) towards the *poutū* (centre post), which acts as the bridge between the circle of *matai* (as the realm of men and ancestors on earth) and Lagi (the divine place embodied in the 'au'au, the ridge beam, see above, pp. 206). The *fale*, as an apparatus of *tofiga*, visually connects the world of men and Lagi – its 'au'au and roof holding apart and 'in place' the *mana* or *pa'ia* that provides *mamalu* (dignity) and consecrates this relationship (*vā*).

In the diaspora, in new places, the traditional understanding of *mavae* and *tofiga* has been transformed. For example, gatherings are no longer connected to traditional ancestral places in the *nu'u* (village) and *fua'iala* (village segment). In this changed situation, the circle of *matai* therefore cannot exert influence over land and resources. Since there is no direct connection between ancestral land and the circle of the *matai* in the diaspora, the *matai*, as the sacred ring that gathers the past and present, can no longer draw the *mana* of the ancestor to their *alofisā*.<sup>687</sup> In this context, *tofiga* becomes a way for Samoans to create and maintain a Samoan identity that defines them as different and unique. The result is that the mechanics of *tofiga* now extracts meaning from cultural objects (*fale*) and concepts (*vā*, *Fa'afaletui*, *talanoa*)<sup>688</sup> to display them to the community. In the process, their meanings and original value become bonded to cultural identity and, loosened from place and traditional space, they can now float from place to place. The gathering circle of *matai* that drew *mana* to place in the *nu'u* has now become a 'floating signifier'<sup>689</sup> in the diaspora. In this new context, *tofiga* appoints identity within the community, rather than tangibly connecting people to place. In this way, *tofiga* becomes a mobile concept. An example is the *Fale Pasifika* at the University of Auckland, in which the revival of the *fale*, as a form able to corral and represent

---

<sup>686</sup> (Tcherkézoff, 2008, p. 43).

<sup>687</sup> (Lau Asofou So'o, 2007); there are still relationships between *matai* in the diaspora and their ancestral land and circle of *matai* in the villages.

<sup>688</sup> *Vā*: relational space (see Chapter 1, p. 13); *Fa'afaletui*: meeting of educated people (Tamasese et al.); *talanoa*: storytelling, exchange of ideas in conversation (Vaioleti, 2006).

<sup>689</sup> The "floating signifier" is a term used by Claude Lévi-Strauss in his troubled interpretation of *mana*, which he saw as the "expression of a semantic function whose role is to enable symbolic thinking to operate despite contradiction inherent in it ... [within] the systems of symbols which makes up any cosmology, it would be a zero symbolic value" (Lévi-Strauss, 1987, pp. 63-64).

Samoan identity in New Zealand, transforms *tofiga* (and *mavae*).<sup>690</sup> *Tofiga* itself has become an imagined form of Samoan polity, a sign without any relationship to the grounding of identity bounded to land or the place of the ancestor. *Tofiga* as operative concept in this situation turns the *fale* into a 'floating signifier' bereft of *paepae* or *malae* that would connect it to a *nu'u* or *fua'iala*.

These observations raise questions I cannot adequately address within the scope of this thesis, such as: what are the new configurations being created by the relationship between the Samoan community of Samoa and New Zealand, and the Tufuga-faufale, in this reanimation of Samoan architecture in the diaspora? I have only scratched the surface of these complex of issues here, which warrant a future study.

### **Relationship between cosmology, polity and technology**

As discussed in Chapter 4, Samoans have a coherent schema connecting the person to the cosmos; *Solo o le Vā*, the cosmogonic narrative, recounts the creation of the elements that make up the world of humans, as well as their qualities in time and their location *in place*,<sup>691</sup> by which they connect people and their environment. The Samoan polity is a reflection of this schema, in which the Tama'aiga (Samoa's paramount titleholders, Tui Atua, Tui A'ana, Malietoa, and Mata'afa),<sup>692</sup> who descend directly from the ancestor gods, take up their places in local centres within the network of pan-Samoan relations. Anyone who considers him/herself a Samoan can trace connections to the lines leading to these centres. The *fale* especially becomes a venue that encompasses under its roof these connections, between the cosmos, the world of the ancestors, and the *matai*, through whom extends the network of local polities, ultimately encompassing the whole of Samoa.

This network of connected local polities has been transformed in the diaspora,<sup>693</sup> where local *nu'u* polities can no longer operate. Now, the circle of *matai*, for example, operates

---

<sup>690</sup> A process already started in Samoa when the government and education institutes began building *fale* representing the gathering communities.

<sup>691</sup> The notion of emplacement is explored above in Chapter 4.

<sup>692</sup> See (Tuimaleali'ifano, 2006).

<sup>693</sup> The transformation of Samoan society and culture has also been going through considerable changes in the last 50 years, the process of urbanisation especially has seen the break up of traditional polities and the creation of new suburbs around the Apia township, see (Tofaeono, 2000, p. 46); (Lau Asofou So'o, 2006).

through church communities and appears during commemorative events held in some public institutions.<sup>694</sup> In many ways, the Pacific Island churches<sup>695</sup> have replaced the *nu'u*, and circles of *matai* are now enacted by *matai* from diverse *nu'u* who do not share genealogies.<sup>696</sup> In some cases, Samoan communities have adopted elements of the *fale* form in the design of their churches.<sup>697</sup>

### **The transformation of the role of the Tufuga-faufale**

Tufuga-faufale are the original members of the Sā Tagaloa, who built the first *fale*, Fale'ula, for the progenitor god, Tagaloa-a-lagi. This house, one of the most sacred objects in Lagi-tua-iva (the ninth heaven), became the model for all *faletele* since then. The Tufuga-faufale brought the house to Manu'a without Tagaloa-a-lagi's permission, who expelled consequently from Lagi-tua-iva. Thereafter, these men roamed Samoa as itinerants, building *fale* for any *tupu* (king) or *ali'i* (chief) who wished to house, feed and pay them for their sacred work. Tufuga-faufale ever since perpetuated and controlled the circulation of *faletele*.

With European contact and the introduction of new tools, the Tufuga-faufale began to lose control of the *fale*. Metal blades and iron nails were more efficient and easier to use than stone adzes, the trade of which soon decreased. Likewise, the *tapu*, which was part of the trade controlling the manufacture and distribution of stone adzes, declined. By contrast, the new tools, which had no *tapu* restrictions and could be acquired and used by anyone, proliferated.

Concurrently, *fale'apa* or *fale Palagi* (Western colonial-style buildings) were being adopted as guesthouses, replacing *faletele* and *faleafolau* (increasingly called *fale Samoa*). *Fale Palagi* also became desirable amongst Samoan elite families which sought prestige

---

<sup>694</sup> The University of Auckland and AUT for instance have adopted the Samoan *'ava* and Tongan *kava* rituals as a formal welcome ceremony for important dignitaries to their campuses. The New Zealand Labour party have similarly adopted these ceremonies as part of their Pasifika caucus.

<sup>695</sup> They include the Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa (Congregational Christian Church of Samoa) or EFKS, Pacific Island Presbyterian Church, Catholic and Methodist Churches.

<sup>696</sup> This is the case with the EFKS church, see (Va'a, 2006, p. 127); (Lau Asofou So'o, 2006); At the EFKS congregation in Papatoetoe, in Auckland where my parents were members, the congregation had a circle of *matai* who formally conducted *si'i* and *tali si'i* (gift presentations) on behalf of the church especially at funeral *lau'ava*; a *fa'alupega* of the *matai* in attendance would be publicly announced by the orators.

<sup>697</sup> The Congregational Church of Newtown, Wellington is an example.

in the material culture of the Europeans.<sup>698</sup> Enclosed forms and walls now engendered prestige statements that relied heavily on new appropriated foreign forms.<sup>699</sup> These houses were easier to make, requiring only basic carpentry skills, and therefore no contribution by Tufuga-faufale, which significantly simplified building processes. A traditional *fale* was a prestige object, owned and controlled by the Tufuga-faufale. To have a traditional *fale* built, the owners had to ritually adopt the Tufuga-faufale and his workers as family members for many months (up to two years in some cases), feeding and gifting to them what would amount to a small fortune. With the new types of building, by contrast, there was no requirement for the traditional form of contract. Like metal tools, *fale'apa* and *fale Palagi* were *noa* forms of production that were available to for use by anyone, irrespective of rank; they replaced the *tapu* and ritually defined forms of buildings that were part of an economy revolving around the sacred.

The new building technology completely transformed the ways in which building was to be carried out. By the time the *fale Samoa* became the form under which Samoan and Pacific identity gathered in the diaspora, the Tufuga-faufale had already lost their sacred building, and they had been completely discarded in the process themselves. The result is that *fale Samoa* – despite their traditional look – have no recourse to traditional craft and, as a consequence, there are no rituals connected to the soliciting of the house from the Tufuga-faufale, as a sacred building connecting people to their ancestor gods. Traditionally, the Tufuga-faufale structured the construction sequence according to the gift-payment sequence connected to the completion of sections that set in place the overall framing. The setting into place of the ridge beam for instance, was an important moment in the sequence of construction, in which the earth was connected to Lagi. Since then, the ridge beam defining the link with Lagi was discarded and it is now absent in most examples in New Zealand (e.g., Maota Samoa and Fale Pasifika in Auckland); alternatively, its erection is not celebrated. Without the involvement of the Tufuga-faufale, though, the setting of the *fatuga* lines (see above, pp. 214ff) cannot take place. These lines which visually distinguish particular *fale* by their roof shape, were defined by sight by the Tufuga-faufale (who gave them his style in this way) during construction on site. Today, in the diaspora as in Samoa, CAD programs are used to predetermine

---

<sup>698</sup> (Allen, 2007, p. 17).

<sup>699</sup> The indigenous Samoan movement Mau in 1927 for instance, adapted a bandstand designed by German born architect Albert Schaffhausen as their headquarters, the building with weatherboard walls completely enclosed the internal space contravening the use of traditional spaces of the *fale* which had no walls, see discussion in (Allen, 2007, p. 18); (Field, 1991); (Van der Ryn, 2012).

not only the shape of the *fale* roof but also the materials, costs and construction sequence of the building.<sup>700</sup> A team of experts, made up of architects, engineers, quantity surveyors and project managers, is now responsible for the construction of the *fale Samoa* and have, in the diaspora, replaced the Tufuga-faufale. In this situation, the architect is now sometimes referred to as 'the Tufuga'.

In Samoa, the western-style new buildings also introduced new internal organisational schemas that contravened the layout of the village of old. In church building for instance, the two-fold symmetry of the front-to-back (*itu-i-luma* to *itu-i-tua*) and side-to-side (*tala* to *tala*) orientation of the *fale* was discarded in preference of a one-fold symmetrical schema, with a processional axial entry from one *tala*, with the altar located at the other *tala*. This breaks with tradition, where one always entered from the *itu* – the section facing the *malae* (see Figure 14).<sup>701</sup> The new processional layout had one *tala* facing the *malae*.

Where once the *tala* was a sacred part of the house reserved for ali'i, the sacredness is now removed with the *tala* being turned into an entry. The missionaries reserved the place in the remaining *tala* for themselves, at the altar, so that they became the only sacred persons in the *fale*, which now acquired a new name, *fale-sā* – sacred house.<sup>702</sup>

The consequences of these changes are many. To start with, the loose and playful lines resulting from the visually based determination of shape on site and the stitching-together of elements during the construction sequence, has given way to the calculated lines dispensed by the curve-maker tool of CAD computer applications. Whereas *fale* built by Tufuga-faufale, who determined the shaping and forming of the building as an assemblage of parts in an additive process, had lively roof lines, the lines of buildings done in modern methods appear fixed and rigid. The timber of the *pou* (posts) and the curved *fau* (beams) of the *tala* are no longer shaped and fixed with traditional methods; the *fau* are now mostly made of laminated timber, glued and curved to the required

---

<sup>700</sup> This method of construction of *fale* is now widely used in Samoa by the Fagaloa Tufuga Fonoti Leilua Likisone who was trained by Masoe Talamaivao Niko who was the project manager and Tufuga of the original Tusitala Hotel *fale*.

<sup>701</sup> Ceremonially guests enter from the *malae* via the *itu-i-luma* where the orators sit, the *ali'i* who held the highest office sat in the *tala* on the left and right.

<sup>702</sup> In the circle of *matai* the Christian ministers and officials were given the title *fa'afeagaiga* a position usually reserved for high ranking female, it allows them to be seated in the *pepe* section of the *tala*, a politically neutral place.

shape, and strengthened with metal rods that are bolted to the structure. Traditional *fau 'afa* (sinnet lashing) are no longer functional but used as decorations that cover nailed and bolted joints. Metal fixings give the entire building a rigid structure that does not 'give-way', lacking the flexibility of the traditional *fale* which relies on joints tied together by sophisticated *fau 'afa*.

Interestingly, the decorative *fau 'afa* have emerged as a possible link with the lively lines created by the Tufuga-faufale, and they may be a symbolic form of recovery of traditional form. The *fale Samoa* in the diaspora has, in a way, also re-engendered a new social schema. The most important loss in the transition to the diaspora (and this applies partially also to contemporary building in Apia and Pago Pago) is related to the traditional owner of the house, the Tufuga-faufale. The Tufuga-faufale seemingly irreversibly lost control of the building that once gave Samoan culture its connection to the ancestor gods.

### ***Mavae* and the 'afterlife': Samoan architecture in the diaspora**

When I started work on this thesis I had a rough idea of the subject I planned to investigate – the genealogy of Samoan architecture and how this genealogy might relate to Samoan *fale* by the people associated with them. I anticipated that I would lay out an historical continuum, from period to period, and that I would stitch individual elements together under a Samoan understanding of relationships which is exemplified in the motto "*Teu le vā*". The journey has not turned out to be like that at all.

What annoyed me for a long time was a realisation of 'the persistence of form' – the fact that the *fale* as an architectural form kept getting made and remade over many generations in Samoa (by the Tufuga-faufale), and is now remade in the diaspora in New Zealand and Australia (by Tufuga-faufale and architects).<sup>703</sup> It seems the *fale* survives in an 'afterlife', or *Nachleben*, of sorts. *Nachleben* is a concept proposed by Aby Warburg to explain why and how the survival and revival of 'primitive' forms of expression retain a "potency of symbolic forms"<sup>704</sup> by which things retain 'life,' 'force'

---

<sup>703</sup> The iconic shape of the *fale Samoa* has also led to reproductions in contemporary tourist resorts and public buildings in Samoa and in resorts and theme parks overseas (e.g., Germany, Japan and Hawai'i, see p. 117. These reproductions often involve the contributions of Tufuga-faufale.

<sup>704</sup> (Lang, 2006, p. 249).

and impersonal ‘power’.<sup>705</sup> A process like this can be traced, for example, through ornaments in architecture, the decorative and ornamental quality of classical forms that do not have a structural role but, instead, represent the tectonic forces at work in a building. The idea of *Nachleben* is that ornaments are architectural elements that allow for the transformation of the inanimate into a living work.<sup>706</sup> *Nachleben* is a way to reanimate and reimagine how forms, through ornaments, can recharge the potentiality of life, so that they may continue again over time.<sup>707</sup>

I have written in this study about the notion of ‘residue echo’ and the ‘indivisible remainder’ as a way to explain how for Samoans their ancestors are still present in the here and now (see p. 279). They are associated with *mana* and *pa’ia* as residues of what took place in the *vānimonimo* (primordial space of creation), which continues to emanate forth into the present. The *fale* is an apparatus that captures and controls<sup>708</sup> this primordial force in its interior, thus allowing the circle of *matai* to come in contact with *mana*. The parts of the *fale* that commemorate the relationship between the circle of *matai* and the ancestor gods (*poutū, ‘au’au, so’a, talitali, nofoaga, paepae*),<sup>709</sup> conjure up, jiggle in place and sanctify the relationship between the ancestor gods and *tagata*. In this way, the *fale* acts as a ritual attractor, a repository for maintaining, holding, and augmenting the tangible and intangible property of the community.<sup>710</sup>

My conclusion is that, although the house no longer requires the involvements of Tufuga-faufale, the *fale* has gained a new role as a ritual attractor for Samoans and Pacific people in the diaspora in which contemporary Pacific art plays an important role.

---

<sup>705</sup> Warburg intended to create a theory that grants antiquity relevance in the present. See Didi-Huberman (2003, p. 282): “*Nachleben* is impure in much the way *Leben* itself is. Both are messy, cluttered, muddled, various, haphazard, retentive, protean, liquid, oceanic in scope and complexity, impervious to analytical organization. There is no doubt that Panofsky sought to understand the meaning of motifs and images, but Warburg wanted much more: to understand their “life,” their “force” or impersonal “power”— these are the terms (*Leben, Kraft, Macht*) that Warburg used”.

<sup>706</sup> (van Eck, 2012, p. 147).

<sup>707</sup> As I discuss above (see p. 168) a similar notion of ‘residue echo’, which to explain the potency of *mana* that is sought out by Samoans and how Samoan *fale* is a way to corral and hold this quality in place. And the building therefore retains and sustains this value within and around its being. The Tufuga-faufale is responsible for making the object that captures this.

<sup>708</sup> As a ritual attractor which enhances the *fale’s* role as repository for maintaining, holding, and augmenting the tangible and intangible property of the “house”.

<sup>709</sup> See Chapter 8 pp. 138ff.

<sup>710</sup> (Kahn, 2008, p. 15).

At the Fale Pasifika complex at the University of Auckland for instance, Pacific art is used in an attempt to make connections with the crafts that were once associated with Samoan and Pacific architecture. The complex was designed with this in mind, and the commissioned art works were placed in specific locations to reflect their importance to the New Zealand Pacific community, according to principles of Samoan space. Sculptures by Tomui Kaloni, Jim Vivieaere and Tania Short are installed at the entry to and on the *malae* to mark a ritual place connected symbolically to Pacific buildings (Kaloni), birdlife (Vivieaere) and the ocean (Short).<sup>711</sup> The Samoan artist Fatu Feu'u installed a carved post on the exterior, representing the figure of the *tulafale* orator and warrior guarding and addressing the house. In the Fale Pasifika complex, at least, art has become the new ritual attractor, replacing the central posts and the ridge beam in this function. The *fale* dispenses with traditional ritual attractors, having no 'au'au ridge beam that connects the *fale* to Lagi; posts are no longer dedicated to ancestors that ground the house to a place – they don't even penetrate the ground but are inserted into metal sleeves that are bolted to the floor.

Perhaps most importantly, Filipe Tohi lashed the joints of the *pou* and *fau* in traditional *lalava*<sup>712</sup> patterns, reflecting the artistry of the traditional Tufuga-faufale when they used to cover the joints and junctions of the roof structure. This, I believe, may still be a way to refashion a new relationship with tradition. What remains of traditional Pacific architecture in the diaspora today has more to do with a *noa* object that levels and flattens relationships and not the hierarchical structure of the past. It have become a conceptual apparatus for identity formation in the diaspora not the apparatus that gathers and controls relationships within a village polity. The *fale*, and by extension the role of space in Samoan thought, today, functions more like a motif or icon – an image-concept no longer bonding the person to a local polity, instead it is a signal broadcasting a larger Pan Pacific identity in continual formation.

---

<sup>711</sup> 'Faleono Probe' by Tomui Kaloni, 'The Frigate Birds' by JimVivieaere and 'Moana' by Tania Short. The artists were chosen to represent the many artforms practiced throughout the Polynesian world.

<sup>712</sup> *Lalava* is the Tongan word for lashing which is *fau'afa* in Samoa. It was thought that Samoan Tufuga-faufale were often commissioned by the Tongan royal families in the past to build their meeting houses.

## Thesis Contribution

The study makes a number of original and important contributions to knowledge related to the study of space in Samoan thought and Samoan architecture.

First I have developed a conceptual model of *mavae* and *tofiga* from the Samoan cosmogony *Solo o le Vā*. The model gives rise to a creative process that structures a world-making system that is unique to Samoa in which the *faletele* plays an important part. The model draws out a coherent picture of a cosmology (conceptualised within the architecture of the *faletele*) that connects the time of the progenitor Tagaloa and the ancestor gods to the meshwork created by the person and *aiga* loop (body and corporate schema), the *fua'iala* and *nu'u* loop (communal schema), the *itumalo* loop (governmental schema) and the *malo* loop (State schema). They all work to show how *mavae* and *tofiga* is a fractal structure that draws-in the relationship between the person and the extended family with the *matai* as the head, and which draws-out the village structure that defines the political spaces of the *nu'u* (village), and furthermore draws-out the kinship system of all of Samoa.

Secondly, an original reading of the Samoan cosmogony is proposed in which I develop a cosmogram to draw-out successive generations and stages of the *Solo o le Vā* – an image-construction that bridges the world of Samoan mythology and the architecture of the *faletele*. The cosmogram of the Samoan cosmogony proposed here is the element that structures the architecture of the roof of the *faletele* in which the *'au'au* (ridgebeam) connotes the *malae* ritual meeting ground in Lagi from which the successive Lagi strata below are formed as *so'a* (props) and *la'au matua* (purlins). The cosmogram also shows that the *poutu* (central post) is a bridge that holds apart and binds together the world of the progenitor and the ancestor gods above within the roof structure, and the world of *tagata* (people) below on the raised floor of the *fale*. The cosmogram shows clearly that the architecture of the *fale* is essentially an apparatus that holds this relationship together in place.

Thirdly, I propose an original timeframe for the arrival of the Tufuga-faufale in Samoa using sources from archaeology, anthropology and linguistics via Samoan oral history to locate exactly where the first *faletele* was built and to show how the Tufuga-faufale's tooling system and unique construction schema evolved and developed. The study of the construction schema used also reveals how the social relations (*vā*) in villages determine the sequence and type of actions required and also the refining of materials used in the construction of the *faletele*.

Fourthly, the study links the concern with binding, tying and covering in pre-contact *fale* with contemporary *fale* architecture in the diaspora where the same concerns are re-established, which requires that the *fale*'s iconic form be used to signal the collective binding of communities on the move, which are without ancestral ties to their new home. From this analysis of the *fale* in the diaspora I discovered that a study of Contemporary Pacific Art in New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific is required in future to understand properly what has happened to the role of the Tufuga-faufale in the diaspora. It appears that Tufuga-faufale have become transformed into artists in the development of Contemporary Pacific Art.

Finally, the study proposes a new and comprehensive analysis of the Samoan *faletele* that first combines previous ethnological study of the *faletele* by Peter Buck and Augustin Krämer with the linguistic analysis of the origin of the concept of dwelling in the Pacific. It also develops a topological and formal analysis of Samoan use of space, showing the relationship between the *malae*, the *paepae* mound and *faletele*. Further, an analysis is performed of the lashing and binding system of the *faletele* as the embodiment of faces and eyes of the ancestors, which is traced to the patterns used on Lapita pottery. Last, an analysis of the rituals relating to the stages of construction is shown to coincide with the payment schedule to the Tufuga-faufale in which the head Tufuga-faufale becomes an active actor in the making and shaping of the *faletele*.

In summary, I assert that the most important aspect of the *faletele* is that it houses the Samoan cosmos and that under its roof the future is sheltered.

# Appendices

---

## **Appendix 1:**

### **List of indicative topics and questions for interview with informants**

(To be asked in the interviews with professionals and/or community representatives)

Project title: Spatial Exposition of Pacific Architecture, PhD Research AUT University

Researcher: Albert Refiti (PhD Candidate, AUT University)

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 23 May 2011, AUTEK Reference number 11/134.

What do you know of the traditional Samoan **Tufuga-faufale** and their current practice?

What do you know about their history and their status in Samoan culture?

Can you tell me your version of the origin of the traditional **Tufuga-faufale** clan? How many traditional **Tufuga-faufale** clans were there in the history of the clan?

How many of these different clans are still operating today?

Are traditional **Tufuga-faufale** still considered important to Samoan culture (even though they are not the main people responsible for building today)? If so, then why is that?

How are new people recruited to be members of the clan? What will be the main obstacles for recruiting new members?

What are the main traditional protocols and rituals required for the engagement of a traditional Tufuga-fau-fale? Are they still being followed today? If not, can you say why that is?

What do you believe is the future of traditional Samoan architecture?

Who are the clients employing a traditional **Tufuga-faufale** today?

What are the main information's and resources on the traditional **Tufuga-faufale** that you know of?

What do you think the benefits of a research on the traditional **Tufuga-faufale** might be?

## **Appendix 2**

*'O le Solo o le Va o le Foafoaga o le Lalolagi (in Krämer 1994)*

*'O galu lolo ma galu fatio'o,  
'O galu tau ma galu fefatia'i,  
'O le 'au'au peau ma le sologa a peau,  
Na ona fa'afua, 'a e lē fati.*

*'O le peau lolo ma le peau ta'oto  
'O le peau malie ma le peau lagatonu.*

*'O peau alili'a ma peau la'asia,  
'O peau a sisifo mai gaga 'e.*

*'O le peau lagava'a ma le peau tagata  
Ma le peau tautala 'o lona soa  
'ole 'au'au ta'a.*

*Mapu i le lagi tuli mai vasa,  
Tagaloa fia malolō,  
Ta lili'a i peau 'o lalō (a lalo).*

*('O le tala o le fatupese.)*

*'Ofea le nu'u na lua'i tupu?  
Na lua'i tupu Manu'atele,  
Tupu Savai'i, 'a e muli i malae Alamisi  
Ma le atu Toga ma le atu Fiti  
'Atoa le atunu'u itiiti.*

*Alamisi 'o Samataiuta,  
'O le nofoa a Tagaloa ma lona ta'atuga*

*Samataiuta ma Samataitai  
Tagaloa e taumuli i ai.*

*'A e lele i lona atu luluga  
Fuafua ma fa'atatau,  
Le vā i nu'u po 'ua tutusa.*

*Tula'i i lou atu mauga ta'alolo  
Tumau Tagaloa i mauga o Manu'a.*

*Levaleva le vasa i savili,  
E lili'a Tagaloa ia peau alili.*

*Tagi i lagi sina 'ili'ili;  
Upolu sina fatu Iaititi,  
Tutuila sina ma'a lagnosisi  
Nu'u fa'aō e a sisi'i,  
E mapusaga i ai ali'i,  
Tagaloa e ai fa'afei'i.*

*Na fa'aifo ai le fuetagata  
Na fa'atagata ai Tutuila  
Ma Upolu, Atua ma Aana  
'Atoa ma le Tuamasaga.*

*Na ona gaoi fua 'o tino,  
E le alala, e leai ni fatumanava  
Logologo Tagaloa i luga,  
'Ua isi tama a le fuesā,  
Na ona gaoi i le lā,  
E lē vaea, e lē limā,  
E Iē ulua, e lē fofogā,  
E leai ni fatumanavā.*

*Ifo ai Tagaloa i sisifo  
'Ina fetala'iga, 'ua tu'utitino;  
Fua o le fue ni nai ilo,  
Na totoni a 'au fa'asinosino.*

*'O a 'outou loto na momoli ifo,  
Ia malama 'o 'outou tino,*

*E tali ai Tagaloa, 'a e maliu ifo e savalivali.  
Fititele ma lou atu sasa'e,  
Ta'ape mauga, 'a e le 'au'ese,  
E 'aufa'atasi ia Manu'atele.*

*Fanau le papa ma faitau i nu'u  
E fuaselau e fuasefulu.*

*'O fea le nu'u na lua'i tupu?  
'O Manu'atele! E te matafanua  
I le Matasau o Manu'atele,  
Ae mulifanua i 'Ofu ma Tufue'e.*

*Fiti ma Toga, 'o le papa sese'e,  
Male masoā e felefele  
Na pa'ū le lagi, 'a e toe te'e.*

*Savai 'i e lalau fa'ateve,  
E mamalu fua i mauga, 'ina tetele,  
'A e le 'au 'ese, e 'auga ia Fatulegae'e  
I Manu'a ia le Fatumale'ele'ele.*

*Ne 'i ai se nate fa'ata'ese:  
'O le lua'i ali'i ia Alele,  
'O le alo o Tagaloa; na tafa'ase'e.  
Ifoifo i malae o vevesi,  
Lepalepa i maalae o toto'a,  
Sao ai le alofi o Tagaloa, 'a e lomaloma.*

*Fagotalia le tai e Losi,  
To'e i lagi ni ona tafo'e,  
Po'o fono ia o lona alofi?  
To'e i le lagi i'a 'atoa,  
'A e atu le ola a Tagaloa.*

*Satagaloa i (tou) aofia ane,  
I tou fono i malae;  
'O i lagi malae Auasia*

*Ma malae Tafuna'i, ma malae Papa,  
Ma malae o Vevesi;  
Ia lologo ma pule fa'atasi  
'O malae o Toto'a i tou fonon ai.  
'Avamua tufuga i ona ao,  
'A e ola atu le va'a na lalago*

*(Isi oa mou inā 'a'e,  
Pe mua fale, pe mua va'a.)*

*Alāla Tagaloa ma lona ao,  
Tapua'i ifo tufuga ma lona ao,  
Tau 'ave i aofia ane Satagaloa  
Le faletufuga 'ua 'atoa.  
'A 'oai 'ea na lua'i 'oa?  
Na lua'i va'a Tuimanu'a,  
Na fausia e le faletufuga;  
'O tufuga e to'amano  
'A e to'atasi fa'atonuga.*

*Ifoifo le atua gau 'aso,  
Satia le fale na ato!  
Se papa, le tai 'o lua o'o atu  
Ma le masina na solo mana'o  
Ma le lā a sa tupua lē fano*

*Tupu le tai, tupu le vai, tupu le lagi*

*Ifo Tagaloa e asiasi,  
Tagi i si sifo, tagi i sasa'e,  
Na tutulu i le fia tula'i  
Tupu Savai'i ma le Maugaloa  
Tupu Fiti, ma le atu 'atoa;  
'O Manu'a na lua'i gaoa,  
'A e mulimuli nu'u 'atoa.*

### Appendix 3

#### Register of Tufuga-faufale known to me at the time of the study

Mulitalo Faivaiga Kilifi from Sa'anapu (passed away 2007). His sons are still practising. He built Koke 'Aiono's *faleafolau* in Fasito'outa, involved in 'Aiono Fana'afi Le Tagaloa's *faletele* in Fasito'outa. He told me that he helped built the *faletele* 'Faleatatātū Maota o Ti'a Lavilavi' in Salelologa. I interviewed him with Lynda Simmons at his house in February 1998. He is mentioned in the book Mosel, U., & Fulu, M. (1997). *O Mafuaala o Upu o le Fale*. Apia, Samoa: Ministry of Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs.

Tataufaiga Faiga from Saipipi (6 Feb 1933 – c.2000). Father of the Tufuga-faufale Maulupe Faiga Fa'atali Faiga. He built the Tumua and Pule's *faleafolau* in Apia next to the clock tower; he also built the *faletele* for Tofilau Eti Alesana in Lalomalava and the *faletele* in Vaiola (demolished 2013); he built the Maota o Lilomaiava *faleafolau* in Salelologa (dedicated in 1972). I interviewed him with Lynda Simmons at his house in February 1998. He is also mentioned in the book Mosel, U., & Fulu, M. (1997). *O Mafuaala o Upu o le Fale*. Apia, Samoa: Ministry of Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs.

Masoe Talama'ivao Niko from Asau and Salelologa, now retired. He did not train as a Tufuga but he put together and managed teams of Tufuga-fauale from Asau and Fagaloa to build the large Tusitala *faleafolau* in the 1970's (destroyed in a fire 2009). He was one of the first of modern Tufuga who was not trained in the guild system, but worked mainly as a project manager. He trained his relative and current Tufuga-faufale Likisone Fonoti. He was involved in the Sinalei *fale* complex and the first Samoa Tourism *fale* with Fonoti Etuale who is a relative from Fagaloa. He is mentioned in an interview in the book Mallon, S (2002) *O Measina a Samoa*. I interviewed him with Nico Refiti in Salelologa, July 2011.

Leofa Leaina from Salelologa. He was unknown to me until I met him in 2011. He was involved in building the *faletele* at the Maota Fogavaiusu, Vaiusu. He was also involved in building the *faleafolau* in Nofoli'i opposite Tui Atua's *faletele*. He was the Matai Tufuga in the *faletele* with a *fale'ivi'ivi* structure sent to Tropical Islands Resort in Germany in 2004. I interviewed him with Nico Refiti in Salelologa, July 2011.

Maulupe Faiga Fa'atali Faiga of Saipipi. Son of Tautaufaiga Faiga. He was trained by his father, and was an apprentice when his father built the *faletele* in Vaiola. He has

yet to build a *faletele* or *faleafolau*. I interviewed him with Nico Refiti in Salelologa, July 2011.

Fonoti Etuale from Fagaloa and Apia. Qualified architect and engineer who studied for a Master of Architecture in England in the 1990's, and wrote a thesis on Samoan architecture. He was the architect for the Ministry of Works and was involved in the Samoan Tourism Association's first *faleafolau* built in 1980's; he also worked on the Government *faleafolau* in Mulinu'u. He is a relation of Masoe Talama'ivao Niko and Likisone Fonoti. I interviewed him with Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul in April 2008.

Likisone Fonoti from Fagaloa. He is the most active of all Tufuga during the period of this study; Masoe Talama'ivao Niko trained him in the 1970's. His company built the Sinalei Resort complex, and both of the National University of Samoa *faleafolau* (2007 & 2013). He has built most of the *fale* for the Government; he demolished Tautaufaiga Faiga's *faletele* in Vaiola and the important *faletele* for Lands and Titles in front of Parliament at Mulinu'u where the raising of the Samoan flag took place when Samoan gained independence and became a nation. He uses CAD drawings in most of his current work.

Togia'i Kaietano Smith from Safotu and Porirua New Zealand. He had never built a *fale* until he was commissioned by Jeremy Treadwell of the Unitec Institute of Technology in Auckland to put together the *faletele* on the campus. He built the part *faletele* in Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand.

Vitali from Lufilufi whom I interviewed with Tina Engels-Schwarzpaul in April 2008. He was involved in the *faletele* with a *fale'ivi'ivi* structure sent to Tropical Islands Resort in Germany 2004.

Laufale Fa'anū from Sa'anapu. He built Steven Percival's *faletele* in Tiapapata, 2013.

Meleisea Fano from Poutasi, passed away in the 1990's. He was involved in the *faletele* at Samoa College that was commissioned by Albert Wendt in the 1970's who was the principal of the college at the time. Meleisea was also involved in the *faletele* for Tuatagaloa Joe Annandale in Poutasi and the *faletele* for Lands and Titles in front of Parliament, demolished by Likisone Fonoti in 2012. He is mentioned in the book Mosel, U., & Fulu, M. (1997). *O Mafuaala o Upu o le Fale*. Apia, Samoa: Ministry of Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs.

Levao Polo from Saleaula (passed away). He is mentioned in the book Mosel, U., & Fulu, M. (1997). *O Mafuaala o Upu o le Fale*. Apia, Samoa: Ministry of Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs.

Tauiliili Moamau (passed away). He is mentioned in the book UNESCO (1992). *The Samoan Fale*. Apia, Samoa / Bangkok, Thailand: UNESCO Office for Pacific States.

Tulima of Taelefaga (passed away). He is mentioned in the book Mosel, U., & Fulu, M. (1997). *O Mafuaala o Upu o le Fale*. Apia, Samoa: Ministry of Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs.

## List of Figures

---

Figure 1: Papalagi ship in Samoa in 1839 (in Wilkes 1855) .....	33
Figure 2: Relationships between the world of Lagi and the world of <i>tagata</i> as reflected in the <i>faletele</i> .....	58
Figure 3: Samoan cosmogonic schema .....	59
Figure 4: François Caillet’s illustration of the Tuamotu conception of the Cosmos from Paiore c. 1920.....	71
Figure 5: The movement of generation in the narrative of the cosmogony .....	76
Figure 6 Diagram of Samoan village showing the spheres of influence .....	86
Figure 7: The divarication and differentiation of parts in Papa’s birthing process .....	89
Figure 8: Pulemele'i archeological site showing <i>fua'iala</i> (adapted from Jennings et. al. 1982) .....	98
Figure 9: Body segments (adapted from Drozdow-St Christian, 2002).....	105
Figure 10: Schema of the Samoan person and the <i>aiga</i> or the family.....	110
Figure 11: Alaga system of belonging from personal to national context .....	112
Figure 12: Plan of a typical <i>fua'iala</i> .....	115
Figure 13: Plan of Fasito'outa with location of main <i>fua'iala</i> and <i>malae</i> .....	118
Figure 14: Sitting plan of the <i>fono matai</i> of Fasito'outa.....	120
Figure 15: Maximal lines meet in the <i>fono</i> as shown in the sitting plan of the Fasito'outa village. ....	131
Figure 16: District lines of Sātuala clan, A'ana district .....	135
Figure 17: National or socio-political lines of influence and descent of major names and families of Samoa (adapted from Keesing & Keesing 1956).....	136
Figure 18: The distribution of the Lapita Cultural Complex and origin and dispersal of Pacific people. ....	142
Figure 19: The Samoan adze typology (adapted from Green and Davidson 1974). ....	147
Figure 20: Timeline illustrating the Samoan Cultural Sequence .....	149
Figure 21: Detail of the Letolo site in Palauli showing the Pulemele'i mound in the centre (in Jennings et. al 1982). ....	151
Figure 22: Pre-historic Household unit from Apulu at Mt. Olo (in Jennings et. al 1982). ....	153
Figure 23: Map of Letolo settlement (left) and map of <i>fua'iala</i> clusters (right) (in Jennings et. al 1982). ....	154

Figure 24: Diagram of the Concentric Dualism structure of the Samoan <i>nu'u</i> (in Bradd Shore 1996).....	160
Figure 25: Construction site layout and schema of materials and the location of actions required.....	161
Figure 26: <i>Faletele</i> operation sequence.....	163
Figure 27: <i>Faletele</i> constructional sequence.....	165
Figure 28: Bannister Fletcher's 'tree of architecture diagram' (in Fletcher 1905).....	173
Figure 29: Diagram showing types of houses arranged relative to their importance, from the centre of the malae to the periphery of the <i>nu'u</i> .....	190
Figure 30: Positions of people at the fa'atuga house construction ceremony (Buck 1930). 1. poutu and scaffolding of new house on an old paepae platform; 2. rows of gifted food; 3. Tufuga-faufale's shed with builders; 4. tulafale orators of the Tufuga; 5. visiting Tufuga; 6. owner and his tulafale; 7. house family; 8. village matai and tulafale; 9. villagers .....	205
Figure 31: Erection of the temporary scaffolding portal and the <i>poutu</i> (left), and the <i>fatamanu</i> scaffold (right). .....	205
Figure 32: Lashing of the ' <i>au'au</i> (ridge beam) to the <i>poutu</i> (central post). .....	208
Figure 33: <i>Sumu</i> lashing showing the <i>malu</i> diamond pattern.....	208
Figure 34: <i>Sumu</i> lashing pattern on the collar <i>so'a</i> beams .....	208
Figure 35 : <i>Malu</i> diamond of tattoo patterns. ....	209
Figure 36: <i>Malu</i> pattern located in the hollow of the woman's knee (from Krämer 1994).....	209
Figure 37: Face and eye motifs from Lapita pottery (Chiu 2007). .....	210
Figure 38: <i>Malu</i> tattoo with <i>malu</i> and star patterns. ....	211
Figure 39: <i>Siapo tasina</i> Samoan <i>tapa</i> with circular eye motifs transposed on triangles. ....	212
Figure 40: Two <i>fatuga</i> in a joint on top of the ' <i>au'au</i> threaded together in a 'knot-like' fashion and lashed to the ' <i>au'au</i> . .....	215
Figure 41: <i>Faletele</i> 'Faleatatatū Maota o Tī'a Lavilavi' in Salelologa, Savai'i built by Faiva'aiga Kilifi of Sa'anapu. ....	220

## References

---

- Addison, D. J., & Matisoo-Smith, E. (2010). Rethinking Polynesians origins: A West Polynesia Triple I Model. *Archaeology in Oceania*, 45(1), 1-12.
- Aiono Le Tagaloa, F. (2003). *Tapuai: Samoan worship*. Apia, Samoa: Malua Printing Press.
- Allen, A. E. G. (1993). Space as social construct: the vernacular architecture of rural Samoa (PhD). Columbia University, New York, NY.
- Allen, A. E. G. (2007). Modernity and tradition: Western architecture styles in village Samoa. *Pacific Arts*, 6(Special Focus: Pacific Architecture), 14-23.
- Amin, A. (2004). Regions Unbound: Towards a new politics of place. *Geografiska Annaler, Series B, Human Geography*, 86(1), 33-44.
- Anae, M. (2010a). Research for better Pacific schooling in New Zealand: Teu le va - a Samoan perspective. *Mai Review*, 1.
- Anae, M. (2010b). Teu Le Va: Toward a Native Anthropology. *Pacific Studies*, 33(2), 222-240.
- Arendt, H. (1998). *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Audouze, F. (1999). New advances in French prehistory. *Antiquity*, 73(279), 167-175.
- Audouze, F. (2002). Leroi-Gourhan, a Philosopher of Technique and Evolution. *Journal of Archaeological Research*, 10(4), 277-306.
- Austin, M. (1996). Theory on the Sepik. *Interstices Journal of Architecture and Related Arts*, 4, 1-6. Retrieved from <http://interstices.ac.nz/published-journals/interstices-04/>
- Austin, M. (2001). Pacific Island architecture. *Fabrications*, 11(2), 13-19.
- Babb, L. A. (2004). *Alchemies of Violence: Myths of identity and the life of trade in Western India*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Bargatzky, T. (1995). Evolution, sequential hierarchy, and areal integration: the case of traditional Samoan society. In J. Gledhill & B. Bender (Eds.), *State and Society: The emergence and development of social hierarchy and political centralization* (pp. 41-54). London, England / New York, NY: Routledge.
- Barnes, S. S., & Green, R. C. (2008). From Tongan Meeting House to Samoan Chapel: A Recent Tongan Origin for the Samoan Fale Āfolau. *Journal of Pacific History*, 43(1), 23-49.
- Bauman, T. (2009). *Theology, Creation, and Environmental Ethics: From Creatio Ex Nihilo to Terra Nullius*. London, England / New York, NY: Routledge.
- Beckwith, M. (1970). *Hawaiian Mythology*. Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press.
- Bedford, S., Sand, C., & Connaughton, S. P. (Eds.). (2007). *Oceanic Explorations: Lapita and Western Pacific settlement*. Canberra, Australia: ANU Press.

- Best, E. (1928). The Story of Rua and Tangaroa An origin myth: How the art of wood carving was acquired by man. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 37(14), 257-259.
- Best, S., Sheppard, P., Green, R., & Parker, R. (1992). Necromancing the Stone: Archaeologists and adzes in Samoa. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 101(1), 45-85.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London, England / New York, NY: Routledge.
- Buck, P. (1930). *Samoan Material Culture*. Honolulu, HI: Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin.
- Burley, D. V., & Clark, J. T. (2003). The archaeology of Fiji/West Polynesia in the Post-Lapita era. In C. Sand (Ed.), *Pacific Archaeology: Assessments and Prospects* (pp. 235-254). Nouméa, New Caledonia: Département Archéologie, Service des Musées et du Patrimoine de Nouvelle-Calédonie 15.
- Buse, J. E. (1961). Two Samoan Ceremonial Speeches. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, 24(1), 104-115.
- Byrne, K. M. (2005). *Teu-le-vā in the City: An Interpretive Inquiry Into Samoan Organizational Narratives in San Francisco* (PhD). University of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA.
- Carson, M. T. (2002). *Ti* ovens in Polynesia: Ethnological and archaeological perspectives. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 111(4), 339-370.
- Casey, E. S. (1998). *The Fate of Place: A philosophical history*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Charlot, J. (1988). Some uses of chant in Samoan prose. *Journal of American Folklore*, 101(401), 302-311.
- Charlot, J. (1991). Aspects of Samoan Literature II: Genealogies, multigenerational complexes, and texts on the origin of the universe. *Anthropos*, 86(1-3), 127-150.
- Chiu, S. (2007). Detailed analysis of Lapita Face Motifs: Case Studies from Reef/Santa Cruz Lapita Sites and New Caledonia Lapita Site 13A. In S. Bedford, C. Sand, & S. P. Connaughton (Eds.), *Oceanic Explorations: Lapita and Western Pacific Settlement* (pp. 241-264). Canberra, ACT: ANU Press.
- Clark, G., & Martinsson-Wallin, H. (2007). Monumental architecture in West Polynesia: origins, chiefs and archaeological approaches. *Archaeology and Physical Anthropology in Oceania*, 42(Supplement), 28-40.
- Codrington, R. H. (1891). *Melanesian Anthropology and Folk-lore*. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press.
- Collocott, E. E. V. (1922). *Tongan Astronomy and Calendar*. Honolulu, HI: Bishop Museum Press.
- Colombat, A. P. (1999). Three Powers of Literature and Philosophy. In I. Buchanan (Ed.), *A Deleuzian Century? Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press*.

- Comaroff, J., & Comaroff, J. L. (1999). Occult economies and the violence of abstraction: notes from the South African postcolony. *American Ethnologist* 26(2), 279-303.
- Cornford, F. M. (1977). *Plato's Cosmology: The Timaeus of Plato*. Indianapolis, IN / Cambridge, UK: Hackett Publishing Company.
- Corsín Jiménez, A. (2011). Daribi kinship at perpendicular angles: A trompe l'oeil anthropology. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 1(1), 141-157.
- Costin, C. L. (1991). Craft Specialization: Issues in defining, documenting, and explaining the organization of production. *Archaeological Method and Theory*, 3, 1-56.
- Coupaye, L. (2009). Ways of enchanting: *Chânes opératoires* and yam cultivation in Nyamikum Village, Maprik, Papua New Guinea. *Journal of Material Culture*, 14(4), 433-458.
- Culbertson, P., & Caygill, M. (2010). Constructing identity and theology in the world of Tongan and Samoan spirits. In E. M. Wainwright, P. L. Culbertson, & S. E. Smith (Eds.), *Spirit Possession, Theology, and Identity: A Pacific exploration* (pp. 25-60). Melbourne, Australia: ATF Press.
- Davidson, J. (1974). Samoan Structural Remains and Settlement Patterns. In R. Green & J. Davidson (Eds.), *Archaeology in Western Samoa, Volume 2* (Vol. 2, pp. 225-243). Auckland, NZ: Auckland Museum and Institute.
- Deleuze, G. (1988). *Foucault* (S. Hand, Trans.). Minneapolis, MI: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1993). *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (T. Conley, Trans.). London, England: Athlone Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1995). *Negotiations 1972-1990* (M. Joughin, Trans.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1983). *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (R. Hurley & H. Lane, Trans.). Minneapolis, MI: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1986). *Kafka: Toward A Minor Literature* (D. Polan, Trans.). Minneapolis, MI: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (B. Massumi, Trans.). Minneapolis, MI: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1994). *What is Philosophy* (H. Tomlinson & G. Burchell, Trans.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Denoon, D., Firth, S., Linnekin, J., Meleisea, M., & Nero, K. (Eds.). (1997). *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Didi-Huberman, G. (2003). Artistic Survival: Panofsky vs. Warburg and the Exorcism of Impure Time. *Common Knowledge*, 9(2).

- Dirlik, A. (1993). The Asia-Pacific in Asian-American perspective. In A. Dirlik (Ed.), *What is a Rim? Critical perspectives on the Pacific region idea* (pp. 305-329). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Dixon, R. B. (1916). *Oceanic (Mythology)*. Boston, MA: Marshall Jones Company.
- Dodds, G., & Tavernor, R. (Eds.). (2002). *Body and Building: Essays on the Changing Relation of Body and Architecture*. Cambridge, MASS: The MIT Press.
- Drozdown-St. Christian, D. (2002). *Elusive Fragments: Making power, propriety and health in Samoa*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.
- Duranti, A. (1981). *The Samoan Fono: A sociolinguistic study*. Canberra, Australia: Dept. of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University.
- Eliade, M. (1959). *Cosmos and History: The myth of the Eternal Return* (W. R. Trask, Trans.). New York, NY: Harper & Brothers.
- Ellis, J. (1988). Moving the Center: An interview with Sia Figiel. *World Literature Written in English*, 37(1/2), 69-79.
- Emory, K. (1940). A Newly Discovered Illustration of Tuamotuan Creation. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 49(4), 569-578.
- Engels-Schwarzpaul, T., & Refiti, A. L. (2012, 31 May - 3 June 2012). Fale Samoa and Europe's Extended Boundaries: Performing Place and Identity. In R. Agarez, N. Mota, H. Heynen, & J. Gosseye (Chair), Symposium conducted at the meeting of the EAHN European Architectural History Network. Symposium conducted at the meeting of the EAHN - 2nd International Conference of the European Architectural History Network, Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten, Palais Academies, Brussels, Belgium.
- Engels-Schwarzpaul, T., & Wikitera, K.-A. (2009). Take me away ... In search of original dwelling. *Interstices Journal of Architecture and Related Arts*, 10, 42-54.
- Field, M. (1991). *Mau, Samoa's Struggle for Freedom*. Auckland, NZ: Polynesian Press.
- Figiel, S. (1996). *Where We Once Belong*. Auckland, NZ: Pasifika Press.
- Figiel, S. (1999). *Those Who Do Not Grieve*. Auckland, NZ: Vantage.
- Firth, R. (1940). The Analysis of mana: An empirical approach. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 49(196), 482-510.
- Fletcher, B. (1905). *Architecture on the History of Comparative Method for the Student Craftsman and Amateur* (5 ed.). London, England: B. T. Batsford Ltd.
- Foucault, M. (1980). Questions on geography: Interviewers: The editors of the journal *Hérodote*. In C. Gordon (Ed.), *Michel Foucault: Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (pp. 63-77). Brighton, UK: Harvester Press.
- Foucault, M. (1986). Of Other Places. *Diacritics*, 16(1), 22-27.
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and Punish : The birth of the prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). New York, NY: Vintage Books.

- Foucault, M., & Deleuze, G. (1977). Intellectuals and power: A conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. In M. Foucault & D. F. Bouchard (Eds.), *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected essays and interviews* (pp. 205-217). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Fowler, C. (2004). *The Archaeology of Personhood: An anthropological approach*. London, England/New York, NY: Routledge.
- Fraser, J. (1891). Some folk-songs and myths from Samoa. *Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of NSW*, 25, 241-286.
- Fraser, J. (1897). Folk-songs and myths from Samoa. *The Journal of the Polynesia Society*, 6(2), 67-76.
- Freeman, D. (1944). The Vaialele Earthmounds. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 53(4), 145-182.
- Friedländer, B. (1899). Notizen über Samoa. In M. Bartels, A. R. Virchow, & A. Voss (Eds.), *Zeitschrift Für Ethnologie, Organ der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte* (pp. 1-60). Berlin, Germany: Verlag Von A. Asher & Co.
- Gell, A. (1988). Technology and Magic. *Anthropology Today*, 4(2), 6-9.
- Gell, A. (1993). *Wrapping in Images: Tattooing in Polynesia*. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press.
- Gell, A. (1994). The technology of enchantment and the enchantment of technology. In J. Coote & A. Shelton (Eds.), *Anthropology, Art, and Aesthetics* (pp. 40-63). Oxford, England: Clarendon Press.
- Gell, A. (1996). Vogel's Net: Traps and artworks and artworks as traps. *Journal of Material Culture*, 1(1), 15-38.
- Gell, A. (1998). *Art and Agency: Towards a new anthropological theory*. Oxford, England: Clarendon Press.
- Gell, A. (2001). Closure and multiplication: An essay on Polynesian cosmology and ritual. In M. Lambek (Ed.), *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion* (pp. 290-305). Malden, MASS Blackwell Publishers.
- Gibson, J. J. (1986). *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. New York, NY Psychology Press.
- Giddens, A., & Pierson, C. (1998). *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Gill, W. W. (1876). *Myths and Songs from the South Pacific*. London, England: Henry S. King & Sons.
- Goldman, I. (1970). *Ancient Polynesian Society*. Chicago, ILL: Chicago University Press.
- Golub, A. (2014). The History of Mana: How an Austronesian concept became a video game mechanic. *The Appendix*, 2(2). Retrieved from

<http://theappendix.net/issues/2014/4/the-history-of-mana-how-an-austronesian-concept-became-a-video-game-mechanic>

- Green, R. C. (1991). The Lapita Cultural Complex: Current evidence and proposed models. *Indo-Pacific Prehistory*, 11(2), 295-305.
- Green, R. C., & Davidson, J. M. (Eds.). (1969). *Archaeology in Western Samoa: Volume I* (Vol. 6). Auckland, NZ: Auckland Institute and Museum.
- Green, R. C., & Davidson, J. M. (Eds.). (1974). *Archaeology in Western Samoa: Volume II* (Vol. 7). Auckland, NZ: Auckland Institute and Museum.
- Green, R. C., & Kirch, P. V. (2001). *Hawaiki, Ancestral Polynesia: An Essay in Historical Anthropology*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Gunson, N. (1993). Understanding Polynesian traditional history. *The Journal of Pacific History*, 28(2), 139-158.
- Gupta, A., & Ferguson, J. (1992). Beyond "culture": space, identity, and the politics of difference. *Cultural Anthropology*, 7(1), 6-23.
- Handy, E. S. C. (1927). *Polynesian Religion*. Honolulu, HI: Bernice P. Bishop Museum Press.
- Handy, E. S. C., & Handy, W. C. (1927). *Samoa House Building, Cooking, and Tattooing*. Honolulu, HI: Bernice P. Bishop Museum Press.
- Hanson, A. F. (1987). Maori Religion. In M. Eliade (Ed.), *In Encyclopedia of Religion* (Vol. 9, pp. 178-182). New York, NY: Macmillan.
- Helu-Thaman, K. (1997, 28 September - 1 October). *Kakala: A Pacific concept of teaching and learning*. Keynote Address presented at the meeting of the Australian College of Education National Conference, Cairns, Australia.
- Henare, M. (2001). Tapu, Mana, Mauri, Hau, Wairua: A Maori philosophy of vitalism and cosmos. In J. A. Grim (Ed.), *Indigenous Traditions and Ecology: The interbeing of cosmology and community* (pp. 197-221). Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Herdrich, D. J. (1991). Towards an understanding of Samoan star mounds. *The Journal of the Polynesia Society*, 100(4), 381-435.
- Herdrich, D. J., & Clark, J. T. (1993). Samoan Tia 'Ave and Social Structure: Meyhidological and theretical considerations. In M. Graves & R. Green (Eds.), *The Evolution and Organisation of Prehistoric Society in Polynesia* (pp. 52-63). Auckland, NZ: New Zealand National Museum.
- Hocart, A. M. (1914). Mana. *Man*, 14, 97-101.
- Hongi, H. (1907). A Maori Cosmogony. *The Journal of the Polynesia Society*, 16(3), 113-119.
- Houghton, P. (1980). *The First New Zealanders*. Auckland, NZ: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Ingold, T. (1999). 'Tools for the Hand, Language for the Face': An appreciation of Leroi-Gourhan's *Gesture and Speech*. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 30(4), 411-453.

- Ingold, T. (2000). *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on livelihood, dwelling and skill*. London, England / New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ingold, T. (2002). Between Evolution and History: Biology, culture, and the myth of human origins. In M. Wheeler, J. Ziman, & M. A. Boden (Eds.), *The Evolution of Cultural Entities* (pp. 43-66). Oxford, England / New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Ingold, T. (2007). *Lines: A Brief History*. London, England / New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ingold, T. (2011). *Being Alive: Essay on movement, knowledge and description*. London, England / New York, NY: Routledge.
- Irwin, G. (1996). *The Prehistoric Exploration and Colonisation of the Pacific*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Jennings, J. D., Holmer, R., & Jackmond, G. (1982). Samoan village patterns: Four examples. *The Journal of the Polynesia Society*, 91(1), 81-102.
- Kaeppler, A. L. (1973). Pottery sherds from Tungua, Ha'apai: and remarks on pottery and social structure in Tonga. *The Journal of the Polynesia Society*, 82(2), 218-222.
- Kahn, J. G. (2008). Ritual House Posts, and "House Societies" in Polynesia: Modeling Inter- and Intra Household Variability. *Rapa Nui Journal* 22(1), 14-29.
- Ka'ili, T. O. (2005). Tauhi vā: Nurturing Tongan sociospatial ties in Maui and beyond. *The Contemporary Pacific*, 17(1), 83-114.
- Ka'ili, T. O. (2008). *Tauhi Vā: Creating beauty through the art of sociospatial relations* (PhD). University of Washington, Seattle, WA.
- Keesing, F. M., & Keesing, M. M. (1956). *Elite Communication in Samoa: A Study of Leadership*. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Keesing, R. (1984). Rethinking Mana. *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 40(1), 137-156.
- Keown, M. (1992). *Postcolonial Pacific Writing: Representations of the body*. London, England & New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kirch, P. V. (1996). *The Evolution of the Polynesian Chiefdoms*. New York, NY / Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Knoespel, K. (2001). Diagrams as piloting devices in the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze. *TLE*, 19, 145-163.
- Koskinen, A. A. (1960). *Ariki, The First-Born: An analysis of a Polynesian chieftain title*. Helsinki, Finland: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, Academia Scientiarum Fennica.
- Krämer, A. (1994). *The Samoa Islands: an outline of a monograph with particular consideration of German Samoa* (T. Verhaaren, Trans., Vol. 1). Auckland, NZ: Polynesian Press.
- Krämer, A. (1995). *The Samoa Islands: an outline of a monograph with particular consideration of German Samoa* (T. Verhaaren, Trans., Vol. 2). Auckland, NZ: Polynesian Press.

- La Pérouse, J.-F. d. G. (1798). *A Voyage Round the World, in the years 1785, 1886, 1787, and 1788* (Vol. 3). London, England: J. Johnson, St. Paul's Church Yard.
- Lacan, J. (1998). *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (A. Sheridan, Trans., Vol. XI). London, England / New York, NY: Norton and Company.
- Lang, K. A. (2006). *Chaos and Cosmos: On the Image in Aesthetics and Art History*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Laugier, M.-A. (1755). *An essay on architecture; in which its true principles are explained, and invariable rules proposed, for directing the judgement and forming the taste of the gentleman and the architect, with regard to the different kinds of buildings, the embellishment of cities*. London, England: T. Osborne and Shipton
- Lavin, S. (1992). *Quatremère de Quincy and the Invention of a Modern Language of Architecture*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Le Tagaloa, A. F. (1997). *O le Faasinomaga: Le tagata ma lona faasinomaga*. Alafua, Samoa: Lamepa Press.
- Le Tagaloa, A. F. (2000). The rights of the Samoan child. In A. B. Smith, M. Gollop, K. Marshall, & K. Nairn (Eds.), *Advocating for Children: International perspectives on children's rights* (pp. 97-108). Dunedin, NZ: University of Otago Press.
- Leauepepe, L. P. (1995). *Samoa i Lona Soifua i Ana Aganuu*. Auckland, NZ: Pacific Books Producers Ltd.
- Lemonnier, P. (1986). The Study of Material Culture Today: Toward an anthropology of technical systems. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, 5(2), 147-186.
- Lemonnier, P. (1992). *Elements of Technology of Anthropology*. Ann Arbor, MI: Anthropological Papers Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan.
- Lemonnier, P. (1993). Introduction. In P. Lemonnier (Ed.), *Technological Choices: Transformations of material cultures since the Neolithic* (pp. 1-35). London, England: Routledge.
- Leroi-Gourhan, A. (1993). *Gesture and Speech* (A. Berger, Trans.). Cambridge, MASS / London, England: The MIT Press.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1966). *The Savage Mind*. London, England: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1987). *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss* (F. Baker, Trans.). London, England: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Lilley, I. (2006). Archaeology in Oceania: Themes and issues. In I. Lilley (Ed.), *Archaeology of Oceania: Australia and the Pacific Islands* (pp. 1-30). Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.
- Lilomaiava-Doktor, S. (2004). *Fa'a-Samoa and Population Movement from the Inside Out: The Case of Salelologa, Savai'i* (PhD). University of Hawai'i, Honolulu, HI.

- Lilomaiava-Doktor, S. (2009). Beyond “migration”: Samoan population movement (*malaga*) and the geography of social space (*vā*). *The Contemporary Pacific*, 21(1), 1-32.
- London Missionary Society. (1958). *O le Tusi Faalupega o Samoa: Savai'i, Upolu, Manono, Apolima*. Apia, Samoa: Malua Printing Press.
- Low, S. M., & Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga (Eds.). (2003). *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture*. Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Publishing.
- Māhina, O. (1992). The Tongan Traditional History Tala-e-Fonua: a vernacular ecology-centred historico-cultural concept (PhD). Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.
- Māhina, O. (2004). Art as *tā-vā*, ‘time-space’ transformation. In T. Baba, O. Māhina, N. Williams, & U. Nabobo-Baba (Eds.), *Researching the Pacific and Indigenous Peoples: Issues and perspectives* (pp. 86-93). Auckland, NZ: Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Auckland.
- Māhina, O. (2010). Ta, Va, and Moana: Temporality, spatiality and indigeneity. *Pacific Studies*, 33(2/3), 168-202.
- Malpas, J. (2011). Putting space in place: philosophical topography and relational geography. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 30(2), 226-242.
- Marck, J. C. (1996a). First Order Anthropomorphic Gods of Polynesia. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 105(2), 217-258.
- Marck, J. C. (1996b). Was There an Early Polynesian Sky Father? *The Journal of Pacific History*, 31(1), 8-26.
- Massey, D. (2000). Living in Wythenshawe. In J. Rendell & I. Borden (Eds.), *Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social Space*. Cambridge, MASS / London, England: The MIT Press.
- Massey, D. (2005). *For Space*. London, England / Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Matisoo-Smith, E., & Robbins, J. H. (2004). Origins and dispersals of Pacific peoples: Evidence from mtDNA phylogenies of the Pacific rat. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 101(24), 9167-9172.
- Maua-Hodges, T. (2000). *Ako Pai Ki Aitutaki: Transporting or weaving cultures*. Wellington, NZ: Wellington College of Education.
- Mauss, M. (1966). *The Gift: Forms and functions of exchange in Archaic societies* (I. Cunnison, Trans.). London, England: Cohen & West Ltd.
- Mauss, M. (1972). *A General Theory of Magic* (R. Brain, Trans.). London, England: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Mauss, M. (2007). *Manual of Ethnography* (D. Lussier, Trans.). New York, NY / Oxford, UK: Durkheim Press/Berghahn Books.
- McKean, J. (2006). Sir Banister Fletcher: pillar to post-colonial readings. *The Journal of Architecture*, 11(2), 187-204.

- McNeill, W. H. (1986). Mythistory, or truth, myth, history, and historians. *The American Historical Review*, 91(1), 1-10.
- Mead, M. (1924). *Coming of Age in Samoa: A psychological study of primitive youth for western civilisation*. New York, NY: William Morrow & Company.
- Meleisea, M., & Meleisea, P. S. (1987). *Lagaga: A short history of Western Samoa*. Suva, Fiji: University of the South Pacific.
- Memmott, P. (1979). *Lardil Properties of Place: An ethnographic study in man-environment relations* (PhD). University of Queensland, Brisbane.
- Memmott, P. (2002). Sociospatial structures of Australian Aboriginal settlements. *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, 2002(1).
- Memmott, P. (2007). *Gunyah, Goondie + Wurley: The Aboriginal architecture of Australia*. Brisbane, QL: University of Queensland Press.
- Metge, J. (1976). *Rautahi: The Māoris of New Zealand*. London, England: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Mila-Schaaf, K. (2009). Pacific health research guidelines: the cartography of an ethical relationship. *International Social Science Journal*, 60(195), 135–143.
- Morley, D. (2001). Belonging: Place, space and identity in a mediated world. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 4(4), 425-448.
- Mosel, U., & Fulu, M. (1997). *O Mafuaala o Upu o le Fale*. Apia, Samoa: Matagaluega o Aulavou, Taaloga ma Aganu'u; Ministry of Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs.
- Moyle, R. (Ed.). (1984). *The Samoan Journals of John Williams, 1830 and 1832*. Canberra, Australia: Australian National University Press.
- Mullarkey, J. (2006). *Post -Continental Philosophy: An outline*. London, England / New York, NY: Continuum.
- Murray, J. A. H., Bradley, H., Craigie, W. A., & Onions, C. T. (1919). *A New English Dictionary: On historical principles, Volume IX, Part 1*. Oxford, England: The Clarendon Press.
- Nalbantoğlu, G. B. (1998). Toward Post Colonial Openings: Rereading Sir Banister Fletcher's "History of Architecture". *Assemblage*, 35, 6-17.
- Nalbantoğlu, G. B., & Wong, C. T. (Eds.). (1997). *Postcolonial Space(s)*. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press.
- Neich, R., & Pendergrast, M. (2001). *Pacific Tapa*. Auckland, NZ: David Bateman Ltd.
- Nepia, P. M. (2012). *Te Kore: Exploring the Māori concept of void* (PhD). Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, NZ.
- Nitschke, G. (1994). Shime: Binding unbinding. *Architectural Design*, 44(12), 747-791.
- Papapetros, S. (2009). Aby Warburg as reader of Gottfried Semper: Reflections on the cosmic character of ornament. In C. MacLeod, V. Plesch, & C. Schoell-Glass (Eds.),

- Elective Affinities: Testing word and image relationship* (pp. 317-336). Amsterdam, Netherlands & New York, NY: Rodopi.
- Partridge, E. (2006). *Origins: A short etymological dictionary of Modern English* (4 ed.). London, England / New York, NY: Routledge.
- Pollex. Polynesian Lexicon Project Online. <http://pollex.org.nz/>
- Potauaine, S. F. (2005). The tectonic of the fale. *Interstices Journal of Architecture and Related Arts*, 6, 104-109.
- Powell, T. (1887). A Samoan Tradition of Creation and the Deluge. *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute, or Philosophical Society of Great Britain*, 20, 145-175.
- Powell, T., & Fraser, J. (1892). The Samoan story of creation: a tala. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 1(3), 164-189.
- Powell, T., & Fraser, J. (1897). Chaos and Strife – A Solo: Solo o le Vā – A Song about Strife. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 6(1), 19-36.
- Powell, T., & Pratt, G. (1890). Some Folk-Songs and Myths from Samoa (With an Introduction and Notes by Dr. John Fraser). *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of NSW*, 24, 195-216.
- Pratt, G. (1890). The genealogy of the kings and princes of Samoa. In W. B. Spencer (Ed.), *Report of the Second Meeting of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science* (Vol. 2, pp. 655-663). Melbourne, Australia: Australian Association for the Advancement of Science. Retrieved from <http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/50774-page/683/mode/1up>
- Pratt, G. (Ed.). (1893). *A Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language* (3rd ed.). London, England: The London Missionary Society.
- Prytz-Johansen, J. (2012). *The Maori and His Religion: In its non-ritualistic aspect*. Retrieved from [http://www.haujournal.org/index.php/classics/issue/view/Classics\\_Series\\_1/showToc](http://www.haujournal.org/index.php/classics/issue/view/Classics_Series_1/showToc)
- Pulotu-Endermann, K. (2001). *Fonofale Model of Health*. presented at the meeting of the Pacific Models for Health Promotion Workshop, Massey University, Wellington, NZ. Retrieved from <http://www.hauora.co.nz/resources/Fonofalemodelexplanation.pdf>
- Refiti, A. L. (2002a). Making spaces: Polynesian architecture in Aotearoa New Zealand. In S. Mallon & P. F. Pereira (Eds.), *Pacific Art Niu Sila: The Pacific dimension of contemporary New Zealand art* (pp. 208-225). Wellington, NZ: Te Papa Press.
- Refiti, A. L. (2002b). Uneven boudaries that do not flatten easily. In J. MacArthur (Chair), *Queensland University*. Symposium conducted at the meeting of the ADDITIONS to architectural history. XIXth conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand, Brisbane.

- Refiti, A. L. (2005). Woven Flesh. *Interstices: Journal of Architecture and Related Arts*, 6, 53-60.
- Refiti, A. L. (2009). Whiteness, smoothing and the origin of Samoan architecture. *Interstices: Journal of Architecture and Related Arts*, 10, 9-19.
- Refiti, A. L. (2012). A "Psychedelic Method": Spatial exposition, perspectivism and bricklaying. In A.-C. Engels-Schwarzpaul & M. A. Peters (Eds.), *Of Other Thoughts: Non-traditional ways to the Doctorate* (pp. 27-33). Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Rivers, R. (2011, April 2, 2011). Breaking ground at Le Papaigalagala *Savali*. Retrieved from <http://www.savalinews.com/2011/04/07/breaking-ground-at-le-papaigalagala/>
- Rosenwith, B. H. (2003). Francia and Polynesia: Rethinking anthropological approaches. In G. Algazi, V. Groebner, & B. Jussen (Eds.), *Negotiating the Gift: Pre-Modern figurations of exchange* (Vol. 361-79). Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Rye, O. S. (1976). Keeping your temper under control: Materials and the manufacture of Papuan pottery. *Archaeology & Physical Anthropology in Oceania*, 11(2), 106-137.
- Rykwert, J. (1982). *The Necessity of Artifice: Ideas in architecture*. New York, NY: Rizzoli.
- Rykwert, J. (1989). *The Idea of a Town: The anthropology of urban form in Rome, Italy and the ancient world*. Cambridge, MASS / London, England: The MIT Press.
- Rykwert, J. (1996). *The Dancing Column: On order in architecture*. Cambridge, MASS / London, England: The MIT Press.
- Rykwert, J. (2005). Translation and / or representation. *CAA Mellon Lectures*. <http://www.cca.qc.ca/system/items/1944/original/Mellon08-JR.pdf?1241160715>
- Rykwert, J., & Schezen, R. (2000). *The Villa: From Ancient to Modern*. New York, NY: Abraham Books.
- Sahlins, M. (1957). Differentiation by adaptation in Polynesian societies. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 66(3), 291-300.
- Sahlins, M. (1958). *Social Stratification in Polynesia*. Seattle, WA: Washington University Press.
- Sahlins, M. (1961). The segmentary lineage: An organisation of predatory expansion. *American Anthropologist*, 63(2), 322-345.
- Sahlins, M. (1981). *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities: Structure in the early history of the Sandwich Islands kingdom*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Sahlins, M. (2008). The Stranger-King or, elementary forms of politics of life. *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 36(105), 177-199.

- Salmond, A. (1978). Te Ao Tawhito: a semantic approach to the traditional Māori cosmos. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 87(1), 5–28.
- Schelling, F. W. J. (2006). *Philosophical Investigations Into the Essence of Human Freedom* (J. Love & J. Schmidt, Trans., Vol. State University of New York). Albany, NY
- Schoeffel, P. (1999). Samoan exchange and 'fine mats': An historical reconsideration. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 108(2), 117-148.
- Schrempf, G. A. (1992). *Magical Arrows: The Maori, the Greeks, and the folklore of the universe*. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Schultz, E. (1980). Samoan proverbial expressions: Alaga'upu fa'a - Samoa / collected, translated and explained by E. Schultz (B. Herman, Trans.). Auckland, NZ: Polynesian Press.
- Semper, G. (2004). *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts; or, Practical Aesthetics* (H. F. Mallgrave, Trans.). Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute.
- Shore, B. (1977). A Samoan Theory of Action: Social control and social order in a Polynesian paradox (PhD). University of Chicago, Chicago, ILL.
- Shore, B. (1982). *Sala'ilua: A Samoan mystery*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Shore, B. (1988). Mana and Tapu. In A. Howard & R. Borofky (Ed.), . Honolulu, HI: . In A. Howard & R. Borofky (Eds.), *Developments in Polynesian Ethnology* (pp. 137-173). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.
- Shore, B. (1996). *Culture in Mind: Cognition, culture, and the problem of meaning*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Simanu, A. M. 'O si Manu a Ali'i: A text for the advanced study of Samoan language and culture. Honolulu, Hawai'i: Universitu of Hawai'i Press.
- Simanu, A. M. (2001). *Lifestory of a Samoan Educator and Orator in Disapora* (Master of Arts). University of Hawai'i, Honolulu, Hawai'i.
- Smith, D. W. (1997). Gilles Deleuze and Philosop[hy of Difference Towards a Transcendental Empiricism (PhD). University of Chicago, Chicago, ILL.
- So'o, L. A. (2006). Governance and rendered service. In A. So'o, U. F. Va'a, & T. Lafotanoa (Eds.), *Sāmoa National Human Development Report: Sustainable livelihoods in a changing Sāmoa* (pp. 149-172). Apia, Sāmoa: The Centre for Sāmoan Studies, National University of Sāmoa Le Papaigalagala.
- So'o, L. A. (2007). *Changes in the Matai System: O suiga i le fa'amatai*. Apia, Samoa: Centre of Sāmoan Studies, National University of Samoa.
- So'o, L. A. (2008). *Democracy and Custom in Sāmoa: An uneasy alliance*. Suva, Fiji: University of the South Pacific
- Soja, E. W. (1971). *The Political Organization of Space* (Vol. 8). Washington, DC: Association of American Geographers.

- Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the Subaltern Speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Stagoll, C. (2005). Concepts. In A. Parr (Ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary* (pp. 50-52). Edinburg, UK: Edinburg University Press.
- Stair, j. B. (1895a). Floatsam and jetsam from the great ocean: or, summary of early Samoan voyages and settlement. *The Journal of the Polynesia Society*, 4(2), 99-131.
- Stair, J. B. (1895b). Samoa: whence peopled? *The Journal of the Polynesia Society*, 4(1), 47-58.
- Stair, J. B. (1897). *Old Samoa or Flotsam and Jetsam from the Pacific Ocean*. London, England: The Religious Tract Society.
- Strathern, M. (1988). *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with women and problems with society in Melanesia*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press.
- Strathern, M. (1998). Social relations and the idea of externality. In C. Renfrew & C. Scarre (Eds.), *Cognition and Material Culture: The archaeology of symbolic storage* (pp. 135-147). Cambridge, UK: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge.
- Stuebel, C. *Myths and Legends of Samoa: Tala o le Vavau* (B. Herman, Trans.). Wellington, NZ: AH and AW Reed.
- Suaalii-Sauni, T., Tuagalu, I., Kirifi-Alai, N., & Fuamatu, N. (Eds.). (2010). *Su'es'ue Manogi In Search of Fragrance: Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Apia*, Samoa: The Centre of Samoan Studies, National University of Samoa.
- Tamaira, A. M. (Ed.). (2009). *The Space Between: Negotiating Culture, Place, and Identity in the Pacific* (Vol. 44). Honolulu, HI: Center of Pacific Island Studies, University of Hawaii, Manoa. Retrieved from [http://www.hawaii.edu/cpis/publications\\_9.html](http://www.hawaii.edu/cpis/publications_9.html)
- Tamasese, K., Peteru, C., Waldegrave, C., & Bush, A. Ole Taea Afua, the new morning: a qualitative investigation into Samoan Perspectives on mental health and culturally appropriate services. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 39, 300-309.
- Tcherkézoff, S. (2000). The Samoan category Matai ('Chief'): A singularity in Polynesia? Historical and etymological comparative queries. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 109(2), 151-190.
- Tcherkézoff, S. (2005). Culture, Nation, Society: Secondary change and fundamental transformations in Western Samoa. In S. Tcherkézoff & F. o. Douaire-Marsaudon (Eds.), *The Changing South Pacific: Identities and transformations* (pp. 256-257). Retrieved from <http://press.anu.edu.au?p=90711>
- Tcherkézoff, S. (2008). 'First Contacts' in Polynesia: The Samoan Case (1722-1848), western misunderstandings about sexuality and divinity. Retrieved from [http://epress.anu.edu.au/!rst\\_contacts\\_citation.html](http://epress.anu.edu.au/!rst_contacts_citation.html)

- Tcherkézoff, S. (2009). Hierarchy is not Inequality – in Polynesia, for Instance. In K. Rio & O. H. Smedal (Eds.), *Hierarchy: Persistence and Transformation in Social Formations* (pp. 299-329). Oxford, England: Berghahn Books.
- Tcherkézoff, S. (2012). More on Polynesian gift-giving: The Samoan sau and the fine mats (toonga), the Maori hau and the treasures (taonga). *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, 2(2), 313-324. Retrieved from <http://www.haujournal.org/index.php/hau/article/view/hau2.2.016>
- Terrell, J. E., & Schechter, E. M. S. (2007). Deciphering the Lapita Code: the Aitape Ceramic Sequence and Late Survival of the 'Lapita Face'. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 17(1), 59-85.
- Thomas, N. (1990). *Marquesan Societies: Inequality and political transformations in Eastern Polynesia*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Thomas, N. (1991). *Entangled Objects: Exchange, material culture, and colonialism in the Pacific*. Cambridge, MASS: Harvard University Press.
- Thornton, A. (2004). *The Birth of the Universe – Te whānautanga o te ao tukupū: Māori oral cosmogony from the Wairarapa*. Auckland, NZ: Reed.
- Thrift, N. (1996). *Spatial Formations*. London, England / Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Thrift, N. (2006). Space. *Theory Culture and Society*, 23(2-3), 139-155.
- Tofaeono, A. (2000). *Eco-Theology: Aiga - The household of life. A perspective from living myths and traditions of samoa* (PhD). Erlanger Verlag für Mission und Ökumene, Neuendettelsau, Germany. Retrieved from <https://augustana.de/dokumente/promotionen/TOFAEONO.PDF>
- Tomlinson, M. (2006). Retheorizing Mana: Bible translation and discourse of loss in Fiji. *Oceania*, 76(2), 173-185.
- Tregear, E. (Ed.). (1891). *Maori Comparative Dictionary*. Wellington, NZ: Lyon and Blair.
- Tregear, E. (1904). *The Maori Race*. Wanganui, NZ: A. D. Willis.
- Tuagalu, I. (2008). The Heuristics of the Vā. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 4(1), 107-126.
- Tui Atua, T. T. E. (2010a). Resident, residence, residency in Samoan custom. In T. Suaalii-Sauni, I. Tuagalu, N. Kirifi-Alai, & N. Fuamatu (Eds.), *Su'es'ue Manogi In Search of Fragrance: Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi* (pp. 93-103). Apia, Samoa: The Centre of Samoan Studies, National University of Samoa.
- Tui Atua, T. T. E. (2010b). Riddle in Samoan History: The relevance of language, names, honorifics, genealogy, ritual and chant to historical analysis. In T. Suaalii-Sauni, I. Tuagalu, N. Kirifi-Alai, & N. Fuamatu (Eds.), *Su'es'ue Manogi In Search of Fragrance: Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi* (pp. 15-32). Apia, Samoa: The Centre of Samoan Studies, National University of Samoa.

- Tui Atua, T. T. E. (2010c). Samoan Jurisprudence and the Samoan Lands and Titles Court: The perspective of a litigant. In T. Suaalii-Sauni, I. Tuagalu, N. Kirifi-Alai, & N. Fuamatu (Eds.), *Su'es'ue Manogi In Search of Fragrance: Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi* (pp. 153-172). Apia, Samoa: The Centre of Samoan Studies, National University of Samoa.
- Tui Atua, T. T. E. (2010d). Tamafaigā – Shaman, King or maniac? The emergence of Manono. In T. Suaalii-Sauni, I. Tuagalu, N. Kirifi-Alai, & N. Fuamatu (Eds.), *Su'es'ue Manogi In Search of Fragrance: Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi* (pp. 33-50). Apia, Samoa: The Centre of Samoan Studies, National University of Samoa.
- Tui Atua, T. T. E. (2010e). *Tupualegase: The eternal riddle*. In T. Suaalii-Sauni, I. Tuagalu, N. Kirifi-Alai, & N. Fuamatu (Eds.), *Su'es'ue Manogi In Search of Fragrance: Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi* (pp. 200-207). Apia, Samoa: The Centre of Samoan Studies, National University of Samoa.
- Tui Atua, T. T. E. (2012, September 3). *O Samoa o le Atunuu Tofi, e lē se Atunuu Taliola*. presented at the meeting of the NUS Measina Conference, National University of Samoa. Retrieved from [http://www.head-of-state-samoa.ws/speeches\\_pdf/HOS\\_NUS\\_Measina\\_FINAL\\_16\\_Sept\\_2012.pdf](http://www.head-of-state-samoa.ws/speeches_pdf/HOS_NUS_Measina_FINAL_16_Sept_2012.pdf)
- Tuimaleali'ifano, M. (2006). *O Tama a 'Āiga: The politics of succession to Sāmoa's paramount titles*. Suva, Fiji: University of the South Pacific.
- Turnbull, D. (1993). The ad hoc collective work of building Gothic cathedrals with templates, string, and geometry. *Science, Technology and Human Values*, 18(3), 315-340.
- Turner, G. (1884). *Samoa, A Hundred Years Ago: notes on the cults and customs of twenty-three other islands in the Pacific*. London, England: Macmillan and Co.
- UNESCO. (1992). *The Samoan Fale*. Apia, Samoa / Bangkok, Thailand: UNESCO Office for Pacific States.
- University of Auckland. (2005a). *The Fale Pasifika Artists - Albert Refiti video transcription*. Retrieved 28 October 2014, 2014, from <http://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/pacific-at-the-university/our-fale.html>
- University of Auckland. (2005b). *The Fale Pasifika Artists - Jim Vivieaere video transcription*. Retrieved 28 October 2014, 2014, from <http://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/pacific-at-the-university/our-fale/gallery-the-malae.html>
- Va'a, U. L. F. (2006). The Fa'asāmoa. In A. So'o, U. F. Va'a, & T. Lafotanoa (Eds.), *Sāmoa National Human Development Report: Sustainable livelihoods in a changing Sāmoa* (pp. 113-135). Apia, Sāmoa: The Centre for Sāmoan Studies, National University of Sāmoa Le Papaigalagala.

- Vaioleti, T. M. (2006). Talanoa research methodology. *Waikato Journal of Education*, 12, 21-34.
- Valeri, V. (1985). *Kingship and Sacrifice : Ritual and society in ancient Hawaii* (P. Wissing, Trans.). Chicago, ILL: University of Chicago Press.
- Van der Ryn, F. M. (2012). 'The Difference Walls Make': Cultural dynamics and implications of change in Sāmoan architectural traditions and socio-spatial practices (1940-2006) (PhD). University of Auckland, Auckland, NZ.
- van Eck, C. (2012). The Warburg Institute and architectural history. *Common Knowledge*, 18(1), 134-148.
- Vernant, J.-P. (1984). *The Origins of Greek Thought*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Vernant, J.-P. (2006). Myth and Thought Among the Greeks (J. Lloyd & J. Fort, Trans.). In. New York, NY: Zone Books.
- Vernant, J.-P., & Vidal-Naquet, P. (1990). *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece* (J. Lloyd, Trans.). New York, NY: Zone Books.
- Viveiros de Castro, E. (1998). Cosmological deixis and Ameridian perspectivism. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 4(3), 469-488.
- Viveiros de Castro, E. (2004). Perspectival anthropology and the method of controlled equivocation. *Tipiti: Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Lowland South America* 2(1), 3-22.
- Viveiros de Castro, E. (2012). Cosmological Perspectivism in Amazonia and Elsewhere: Four lectures given in the Department of Social Anthropology, Cambridge University, February-March 1998 (Vol. 1). Retrieved from <http://www.haujournal.org/index.php/masterclass/issue/view/MasterclassVolume1>
- Wagner, R. (1986). *Symbols That Stand for Themselves*. Chicago, ILL / London, England: University of Chicago Press.
- Wagner, R. (1987). Taboo. In I. M. Eliade (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion* (Vol. XIV). New York, NY: Macmillan, 233-236.
- Wagner, R. (1991). The fractal person. In M. Godelier & M. Strathern (Eds.), *Big Men and Great Men: Personifications of Power in Melanesia* (pp. 159-173). Cambridge, England / New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Wagner, R. (2001). An Anthropology of the Subject: Holographic worldview in New Guinea and its meaning and significance for the world of anthropology. Berkeley, CA / London, England: University of California Press.
- Wallin, P., & Martinsson-Wallin, H. (2007a). Samoan Archaeology: A review of research history. *Archaeology Oceania* 42(Supplement), 11-27.
- Wallin, P., & Martinsson-Wallin, H. (2007b). Settlement patterns – Social and ritual space in prehistoric Samoa. *Archaeology in Oceania*, 42(Supplement), 83-89.

- Wendt, A. (1991). *Ola*. Auckland, NZ: Penguin.
- Wendt, A. (1996). Tatauing the Post-colonial Body. *Span*, 42-43, 15-29.
- Whiteford, G., & Barns, M. (2002). Te Ao Hurihuri: New Zealand's first time. In W. E. Pentland, A. S. Harvey, M. P. Lawton, & M. A. McColl (Eds.), *Time Use Research in the Social Sciences* (pp. 211-230). New York, NY: Springer-Verlag.
- Wilkes, C. (1855). Narrative of the United States exploring expedition, during the years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842. New York, NY: Alden & Beardsley.
- Williamson, R. W. (1933). *Religious and Cosmic Beliefs of Central Polynesia* (Vol. 2). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Winterhoff, E. H. (2007). The Political Economy of Ancient Samoa: Basalt adze production and linkages to social status (PhD). University of Oregon, Eugene, OR.
- Young, R. (1995). *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in theory, culture and race*. London, England / New York, NY: Routledge.
- Žižek, S. (2004). *Organs Without Bodies: Deleuze and consequences*. London, England / New York, NY: Routledge.
- Žižek, S. (2007). *The Indivisible Remainder*. London, England / New York, NY: Verso.