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FOFOA-I-VAO-‘ESE:

THE IDENTITY JOURNEYS OF

NZ-BORN SAMOANS

MELANI ANAE

PH.D THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

1998
PROLOGUE

FOFOA-I-VAO-’ESE

Salamasina, queen of Samoa, gave this name to her first child (a love child) a baby girl, because she was conceived in the forest during a pigeon-catching expedition "āfuafua i le vaomāoa". It had been arranged for Salamasina to marry a high chief from Savai‘i, but knowing she was pregnant with her first love’s child, she was hesitant to go through with it. The marriage took place nevertheless, and although Salamasina’s husband knew the child was not his, he raised Fofoa-i-vao-‘ese as if she were his own…

(O se Tala‘aga o Samoa. Brother Fred Henry, 1980:120-129. Bilingual, Bicultural Education Project of American Samoa, Pagopago. This publication contains Samoan version only. The translation above (provided by the Rev. L. & L. Tanielu) is a considerably shortened version of the tala.

***

From this Samoan tala--a love-story, I have chosen the name Fofoa-i-vao-‘ese for the thesis. Its literal meaning is fofoa-conceived, i-in, vao-forest/bush, ‘ese-foreign or alien--‘conceived-in-the-foreign-forest’. Vao as forest or bush is the source of food and nourishment that is outside of the village. It is in the forest that plantations are cultivated, coconuts and bananas are harvested, and birds are caught to provide sustenance for the people of the village. In this sense vao can be extended to refer to the metropoles of Australia, United States of America, and in the context of this thesis, New Zealand--places outside of Samoa where contemporary Samoans are born, live and work, to provide sustenance for their ‘aiga in Samoa through their remittances, letters and visits. By accepting Fofoa-i-vao-‘ese as his own child, this tala also depicts the significant link that Samoans who are born outside of Samoa still have with their ‘āiga in Samoa and their homeland.
ABSTRACT

This thesis constitutes a site for New Zealand-born Samoans to explore issues of ethnic identity. The emphasis is on the process of the Samoanising of christianity, and hegemonic identity discourses of not only the dominant society but of island-born Samoans and elders, and how this contributes to New Zealand-born Samoan self perceptions. A socio-historical overview provides an understanding of the process in which New Zealand-born Samoans have been positioned. The stories and narratives of a group of New Zealand-born Samoans concerning their life experiences provide valuable insights into their ‘identity journeys’--the construction of ethnic identity through experimenting with subject positions over time, as a result of challenges to their perceived self-identities. For some, this journey ends with a secured identity--a self-satisfying ethnic identity as a New Zealand-born Samoan--others remain in a perpetual state of conscious or subconscious identity confusion.

More specifically the thesis seeks to provide an understanding and an interpretation of the way fa’aSamoa, church, and life in New Zealand impacts on life choices and on the construction of the self, and secured identities. The identity journey is analysed as a ritual and a series of rites of passage in order to expose the structure of identity confusion, and to examine the dichotomy of chaos and conflict within an apparently ordered society, experienced by New Zealand-born Samoans during their identity journeys.

The thesis is therefore underpinned by Samoan conceptual frameworks involved in this identity journey, and aims to consciousness-raise and emancipate by exposing, understanding and reclaiming the links between fa’aSamoa, church, and a New Zealand-born Samoan identity.

The thesis represents an ‘ie toga, because like a fine mat being woven, the strands of Samoan history, fa’aSamoa and Samoan contemporary lifeways, and their interaction with ‘others’ interconnect to inform Samoan identity. It is thus presented with respect, gratitude, deference, recognition and obligation, a tangible symbol of an alliance and an exchange with all Samoans and others. As the wellspring of my Samoan identity, in its creativity in design and fineness of weave, I hope that this ‘ie toga will be received as a source of identity, history and wealth.
Faʻafetai

Faʻafetai i le alofa o le Atua ua faʻaiuina ma le manuia laʻu suʻesuʻega sa feagai ai. Faʻafetai firstly to those whose contributions form the heart of the thesis: Rev. Leuatea Iusitini Sio, my faifeʻau, my tamā faʻalelagi, and friend who started me on this journey, you will always have a special place in my heart; the English Speaking Group who gave so freely of their time and experiences, and the ekālēsia of the Newton Church community who will always be a part of my life. I am especially deeply grateful to the members of the English Speaking Group for welcoming me into the group, validating my research, and allowing me to use our shared experiences in this way. I look forward to our continuing relationship and can only hope that you share some of the insights and conclusions that this thesis embodies. If the thesis helps or inspires anyone then it is because of you. Faʻafetai tele lava.

There are others of Newton Church that I must also thank. To the ministers and elders which I talked to during the first phase of my research--Rev. Lagaua Talagi, Tuilutufuga Fereti Atiga (Samoan Elder and former Secretary 1962-1982), Tanuvasa Yandall (Samoan Elder), Ropati Simona (Tokelauan Elder), Ataua Ropati (Cook Island Elder), Ben Revatai (Cook Island Elder), Owen Fisher (former Treasurer 1958-1991) and Ruth Hartnell. It was a privilege and an exciting learning experience talking to such a wise, lively, learned and insightful group of elders. Faʻafetai tele lava. To the teachers and leaders of the Sunday School, Bible class, ‘autalavou, and combined elders Session, for tolerating my presence at meetings and classes, faʻafetai foʻi. Special thanks must also go to Tommy Iʻiga (current Secretary) for always being at the Church Office when I needed information from him, and for making the archival research enjoyable.

I am extremely grateful for the various funds and grants received over this period: a PhD Graduate Scholarship 1992-95; grants from Auckland University Research Council and University of Auckland Research Fund; a Lottery Science grant; a grant from the Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, Canterbury University; and a Davidson-Te Rangi Hiroa
I am indebted to my supervisors, Drs Judith Huntsman, Cluny Macpherson and Malama Meleisea. Judy has been my inspiration and is responsible for my continuing fascination with what Anthropology in the Pacific can mean for those of us from the Pacific. Without her mentoring, fantastic editorial assistance, guidance and support over the many years that I have been part of the Anthropology Department, I would not have been able to accomplish this thesis; Cluny from whose excellent work with the Samoan community in New Zealand I have drawn extensively, and whose encouragement and excitement in my project, has bolstered my enthusiasm also; and Malama who has provided inspirational ‘insider’ insights from his detailed and exemplary scholarship on the history of Samoa, whose quiet advice and encouraging words of "It’s only a thesis!" just helped to push me over the last hurdle of the thesis writing process. To all of you fa’afetai tele lava. Especially for having faith in me in allowing me to present the first draft of the completed thesis as your first reading of the thesis au naturel, and for your poignant comments and remarks.

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This thesis is dedicated to those many people mentioned above. Above all it is a tribute to my grandmother, Ane McKenzie (who passed away in 1970), the matriarch of our ‘āiga in New Zealand--daughter of Tosomaletagi and grand-daughter of Sipa‘u and Lima Pua’aefu (Seumanutafa) of Apia, and my parents, Lucy (who passed away in July 1970) and my father, Lupematasila Afaue Liliva Anae who is now aged seventy-seven.
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GLOSSARY

The following Samoan words, expressions and phrases are based on Pratt's *Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language* (1893), Milner's *Samoan Dictionary* (1966), Glossaries in Meleisea's publications (1987), and my own knowledge of colloquial Samoan in the New Zealand and Newton Church context. Some of the Samoan words/phrases have been recorded 'as spoken' and this accounts for their sometimes 'unorthodox' appearance. Thus I have included both colloquial and orthodox versions of the words containing the frequent interchange of ‘t’/‘k’, ‘n’/‘g’ (orthodox/colloquial respectively) where applicable.

*afakasi*  
half-caste Samoan (usually half-white)

*‘aiavā*  
pooling together items of food and valuables for formal presentation to guests - this usually takes place at night

*‘āiga*  
family, extended family, descent group or kinship in all its dimensions; transnational corporation of kin

*aiku*  
*ailu*, a spirit/ghost

*aise‘e*  
to beg food at a feast

*ali‘i*  
one of the two orders of *matai*, a 'high chief' as opposed to an 'orator chief, also polite word for men - 'gentleman/men'

*aalo‘a*  
love

*a‘u*  
I, me

*aualuma*  
society of unmarried/widowed/separated girls and women belonging to a village by birth, attendants to the *taupou*

*aufa‘alupega*  
church *fa‘alupega*

*aufa‘ipese*  
choir

*aualotu*  
parish

*aumāgā*  
society of untitled men, an institution in every *nu‘u*

*aualavou*  
young generation; young people (usually referred to in context of church)

*‘autaumafai*  
christian endeavour group

*‘autoea‘ina*  
advisory council (in context of church)

*‘ava*  
a ceremonial drink made from root of *piper methisticum*, called *kava* outside of Samoa

*efakasa*  
Ekalesia Fa‘apotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa (EFKS), the Christian Congregational Church of Samoa

*fa‘aāiga*  
to incorporate non-relatives into ‘āiga

*fa‘aalalo*  
ocourtesy, respect, honours, regard highly and treat with respect

*fa‘aulafalega*  
church openings

*fa‘akali*  
*fa‘atali*, to wait for

*fa‘alavelave*  
a ceremonial occasion (weddings, funerals, etc.) requiring the exchange of gifts, anything which interferes with ‘normal’ life and calls for special activity

*fa‘alupega*  
a formal expression of recognition associated with a *matai* title. Each village and district has a set of *fa‘alupega* which acts as a constitution by expressing the rank and by alluding to the historical/genealogical origins of the senior titles

*fa‘amaualalo*  
(*fa‘amaualalo*) to be humble, to humble oneself, be low, be subservient to, to act below one’s station

*fa‘amaualuga*  
proud, to be high, conceited, to act above one’s station

*fa‘apālāgi*  
European ways, like a European, according to the ideas/customs of Europeans

*fa‘aSamoa*  
in the manner of Samoans, the Samoan way; according to Samoan customs and traditions
fa'asinomaga direction, the right path
fa'akali fa'atali, to wait
fa'atuau to contend for the privilege of being spokesman, being the first speaker in an assembly
fa'atuatua to hope for something promised
fagaa fanua, land
fai'ai dish consisting of coconut cream baked in banana-leaf packages either plain or with ingredients eg. octopus, yam
faife'au pastor, minister
fa'atuatua to hope for something promised
fa'atuatua to hope for something promised
feagaiga covenant between a brother/sister and their descendants, currently used to refer to covenant between minister/congregation; a contract
fe'au thing to be done, business, errand, work, household chores
fiafia joyful, to be joyful, to rejoice, to be delighted
fiapâlagi ape the ways and manners of Europeans
fiapoko fa'aafiapoto, (be) conceited, presumptuous
fiasili be high, the best or topmost
fofô to doctor, a doctoring of a disease (includes a variety of techniques including massage, administering of indigenous medicines etc.)
fono governing council, a council of chiefs, a meeting
gafa genealogy
'iie koga also 'ie toga, fine mat (the most valuable and significant object in Samoan custom), finely weaved cloth of bleached pandanus fibres bordered with coloured feathers--usually red. Varieties of 'ie toga are graded and named according to size/quality/appearance/purpose
ita angry, be angry
kalo also talo, taro,; a cultivated plant (colocasia sp.), the corm of which is one of the most important sources of food
kava see 'ava
komiki komiti, committee
lafo contribute money, valuables given from visitors to host, presentation of fine mats/money to an orator
lāfoga tax; subscription, contribution, specified church donations for specific occasions
lalaga plait, weave, fine mat(s), category of fine mat (as one with wider strands than is considered desirable for 'finest' fine mat
lau afioga term of respectful address preceding the title of many ali'i titles (others may be preceded by the address susuga (e.g., Lau Susuga Malietoa)
lāuga speech, sermon, preach
lotu to worship, church
lu'au dish made with young taro leaves and coconut cream/water/salt, young leaves of taro plant used for that dish, also palusami
mafutaga companionship, fellowship
magumigumi manuminuni, tangled, crumpled
makua see matua
malae central gathering place of the nu'u, associated with residence of highest ranking chiefs of nu'u, an open space in villages where meetings are held
malaga to visit, a visiting party, visiting 'āiga, ceremonial visit paid according to Samoan custom: journey
mālō the winning side, victors, government, to congratulate
mamona
mana
masi
matagāluega
matai
mātou
matāˈupu
matua
miki
nuˈu
ˈo
onotaga
osoˈoso
ˈouˈou
pālāgi
pāpā
pauā
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saofaˈi
sapasui
Siōvili
sua
tafaˈifā
talā
tama
Tama a ˈāiga
tapuaiga
taro

Mormon
divine power, God's grace
biscuits, usually tins of the Cabin Bread type for ritual exchanges
region
political representative of ʻāiga who holds a title bestowed by ʻāiga, custodian of ʻāiga land and property.
There are two orders of matai - allʻi and tulafale
we, us, our, (exclusive pronoun which involves three or more persons - not including speaker)
subject, theme
(be) mature (but not fully ripe), adult, grown-up, older, elder, be loyal to, parent, root core of a sermon/speech
sound made by pursing lips together and sucking air in, noise made to get one's attention
a polity or village, also guˈu
pre-basic particle, used mostly in utterance initial positions, and having several functions, it is
oˈotaga, present/gift given on death
osooso, jump up and down, skip
you (exclusive pronoun involving three or more persons)
also papālāgi sky-breaker (lit.), white man, Europeans, foreigner, Samoan not born in Samoa in thesis context
High titles and dignities
that’s all, because..., that’s the way it is (coll.)
pair, woman’s two piece costume (also puletasi)
sing, a song
corned beef, salted beef
choir competition of sorts (between churches) at special occasions most usually church openings. Songs are usually original compositions written especially for the occasion
Samoan dance competition (between churches) which takes place at church openings
subdivided church district
ritual installation of people into matai titles
chop suey (Samoan style), dish made with diced meat and chinese noodles/water/soy sauce/salt/onions
early Samoan christian cult (named after a Samoan sailor 'Joe Gimlet' who denounced pālāgi religion, and who decreed that Saturday should be the Sabbath Day) taken over by a woman who used techniques of taulaitu to contact 'new' God, and prophesied the coming of a new God from the sea which would bring about the end of the world, also known as 'Sailor's lotu'
a presentation to a chief (usually food eg. baked pig) with accompaniments
Hold four titles which (together) give full royal status. Sa ~ Salamasina: S. held the four (royal) titles.
dollar/dollars
child; tanā - father. In this context the latter ‘sons of the families’, the term used to refer to the four titles now recognised as being of paramount rank nationally, Malietoa, Tupua, Mataʻafa, Tuimalealiʻifano.
the forms of spiritual worship
talo, a cultivated plant (colocasia), the corm of which one of the most important sources of food
tātou we (inclusive pronoun) involving three or more persons, including speaker, you and we, all of us
taualuga dance, the last dance (traditionally by village maiden)
taulaga offering to church, sacrifice by priest (trad.)
taulāitu a medium for spirits/ghosts
tauleʻaleʻa (of untitled men and other dependants) serve a mātai, carry out orders of; those who stand behind those in authority
tau tua shrub, the red ginger, the ginger lily

Teuila mother
toea‘ina elder (referring to men), Senior ministers of EFKS and PIPC
tofiga an appointment/position, council of pastors and deacons who control pulega, tofiga tele = district representative body; a profession/occupation.
to‘ona‘i main Sunday meal
tuabacks sl. for the interior; 'back' villages regarded as more traditional/conservative and therefore more 'backward' in comparison to Apia

tulāfale orator, talking chief
tupu King
tupu‘aga origin, descent/ancestors
tusigaigoa collection of funds (for a particular purpose) including a feast and a publication of a subscription list
uapou (C.I.) Cook Island style church singing/group
umu earth oven, food cooked over heated stones

vā referring to the distance/position of two people/places/things in relation to each other/their relationship, separate yet closely connected

PHRASES

aʻea i sasaʻe ma le aʻe i sisifo conquest of the hills to the east and west
afio mai lau afioga welcome Sir! (greeting spoken to mātai)
ā oga ‘amata see ‘aoga Samoa
ā oga Samoa Samoan language nest; Samoan preschool
ā oga siva school of Samoan dance, to learn Samoan dance
ʻēkālesia church body, communicant members of church
ese le malie! How amusing/really funny!
faʻafetai tele lava thank you very much
faʻakele laʻu pili aa (I have) plenty bills huh!? (I have) plenty bills huh!?
faʻasamoa mo Samoa the Samoan way for Samoa(ns)
faʻavai i le atua Samoa Samoa is founded on God, Samoa’s motto
fono tele General Assembly
‘ie lavalava also ‘ie sulusulu (carelessly wrapped), ‘ie solosolo (cloth with floral design), cotton wrap-around, worn like a skirt

kafaovale tafaovale, do no work, be idle
keke puaʻa pork buns (steamed)
komiti eseʻese various committees
komiti faʻatonu toeaʻina advisory council made up of (prominent) Elders of church

lima mālosi strong hand (lit.), strength, power
loto alofa a loving heart, full of love
lotu pope  Catholic church
lotu ta’iti  London Missionary Society-based churches incl. EFKS and PIPC, Tahitian church (lit.) ie. church brought by 19th century Tahitian teachers
lotu toga  Weslyan church, Tongan church (lit.) ie. church brought by the 19th century Tongan teachers
mafutaga tinā  women’s committee of Samoan group, PIPC
ma’i āiku  ma’i aitu, sickness of/brought on by spirits/ghosts
ma’i Samoa  Samoan sickness (lit.), referring to ma’i aitu
mea alofa  gift, present
‘0 a’u  It is I
o le ala ‘i le pule, le tautua  the way to power/authority is by serving
o le lau‘avā  the wife’s
o le si‘i  the move, removal of, carrying
o le lafo  the lafo
o le sua  the sua
o le pasese  the fare (lit.), passenger
o le fa’aoso  temptation, incite, egg on
o maga o le matupu  divergences in themes, questions, problems of a matua or root verse of a sermon
o ‘oe se Māuli?  Are you a Maori?
si‘i alofa  gift of love, carrying love (lit.)
sili le oti i lo le mā  death is better than shame
tama failotu  tahitian teachers, leaders/conductors of worship (lit.)
tautala fa’aSamoa  speak Samoan (fluently)
tautala NZ-born  speak English, understand fa’aSamoa language and culture
tautua fia matai  serving purely to become a matai
tautua pa’u  lit. fallen service
ua ka’u i le pālagi?  have you told the pālagi?
ua sau le pālagi  the pālagi is coming
ua tofa i vai, ai ala i ‘ai  though the present is bad, better times are ahead
vā fealoaloa‘i  the relationships of mutual respect in socio-political and spiritual arrangements
vā tapuia  the sacred relationships in the socio-political and spiritual arrangements
Va’ai le keige pālagi lale!  Look at that pālagi girl!
Va’ai le pālagi  Look at the pālagi!
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<thead>
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<tr>
<td>AGGS</td>
<td>Auckland Girls’ Grammar School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIT</td>
<td>Auckland Institute of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>APWF</td>
<td>Association of Presbyterian Women’s Fellowship</td>
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<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNZ</td>
<td>Born in New Zealand/Bank of New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCCS</td>
<td>The Christian Congregational Church of Samoa (also EFKS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDM</td>
<td>Christian Dance Movement (ESG initiative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co.</td>
<td>Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>CUNZ</td>
<td>Congregational Union of New Zealand</td>
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<td>EFKS</td>
<td><em>Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Keristiano Samoa</em> (also CCCS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESG</td>
<td>English-Speaking Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOB</td>
<td>Fresh Off The Boat (Also FRESHIE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>info.</td>
<td>information</td>
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<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMS</td>
<td>London Missionary Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Master of Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAGS</td>
<td>Mt. Albert Grammar School</td>
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<tr>
<td>MBC</td>
<td>Management Board Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIRAB</td>
<td>Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCB</td>
<td>National Certificate of Business</td>
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<tr>
<td>NZI</td>
<td>New Zealand Insurance</td>
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<td>PCANZ</td>
<td>Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCNZ</td>
<td>Presbyterian Church of New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>Pacific Islander(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIC</td>
<td>Pacific Islanders’ Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>PICC</td>
<td>Pacific Islanders’ Congregational Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIPC</td>
<td>Pacific Islanders’ Presbyterian Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presby.</td>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
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<tr>
<td>re.</td>
<td>regarding</td>
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<tr>
<td>rep.</td>
<td>representative</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCHOOL C</td>
<td>School Certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPINDA</td>
<td>South Pacific Island Nations Development Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>TECH.</td>
<td>Technical Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>TROPICS</td>
<td>ESG missionary outreach programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UE</td>
<td>University Entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
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<td>UNI.</td>
<td>University</td>
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LALAGA O LE ‘IE TOGA: THE THESIS

My purpose in this thesis is to examine contemporary notions of Samoan identity in New Zealand. I develop the idea that contemporary NZ-born Samoan identity is one that must be associated with the ‘church’ or ‘lotu’. Much has been written in the literature about how Christianity was absorbed and localised in Samoa (Gilson 1970, Gunson 1976, Meleisea 1987b, Wendt 1965). Today this process has resulted not only in an eclectic blend of practice and belief—a continuing source of confusion for Samoan people about the relationship of fa’aSamoa and church, Christianity and culture and issues of identity, but also draws our attention to the persistence of Samoan identity embodied in the fa’aSamoa across time and space.

That Samoan people have Samoanised Christianity is evident today, but merely stating this given does not explain what this actually means and how this state of affairs came to be. How has this Samoanised Christianity come about? Have particular historical influences played a significant role in this process, and if so, what are they? Are there any underlying themes or concepts in the Samoan worldview that inform this matter? What traditional elements of the fa’aSamoa have been retained today? What makes people who are born beyond Samoa’s shores still identify themselves as Samoan sometimes even when they have never been to Samoa? What is the relevance of church and Christianity for Samoans in New Zealand today? How does this phenomenon impact on issues of retention of fa’aSamoa and identity? What elements of the fa’aSamoa have changed, been retained or discarded? These questions are explored in this thesis.

The thesis focuses on the narratives that a people or community use to define their identity, and is therefore concerned with what Bateson (1958) calls ethos—the characteristic spirit or sentiment of a people or community, the emotional emphases on culture. In particular it is concerned with understanding the enduring cultural ethos that binds a people together from one generation to the next.

Central to the thesis are the subjective experiences of a group of NZ-borns, where I allow the voices of the members of my focus group to speak. In it, a particular recurring theme in all members’ narratives concerning identity is expressed most forcefully as follows:
I am - a Samoan, but not a Samoan...
To my ‘āiga in Samoa, I am a pālagi
I am - a New Zealander, but not a New Zealander...
To New Zealanders I am a ‘bloody coconut’, at worst, a ‘Pacific Islander’, at best
I am - to my Samoan parents, their child

In the thesis I have called these lines the ‘identity verse’ for the following reasons. First in its literal sense, in the context of this study, it resembles both a metrical composition, and a short numbered division of a chapter in the Bible or other scripture, in the sense that it was constantly articulated and expressed almost religiously (though not in these exact words) by many members of my focus group when talking about their identity journeys. In this study, identity journey represents the experiences of constructing an ethnic identity by experimenting with subject positions as a result of challenges to members’ perceived self-identities--it is a search for the satisfactory self. The identity verse therefore expresses the core shared experience of the group and this thesis is an exegesis of it. Secondly, I use verse more in the Samoan sense of matua or matā’upu (root, core verse of a sermon). The thesis thus constitutes the site where o maga o le matā’upu (the divergences in themes, problems, questions, i.e., all different sides of the root verse) can be explored, so that a comprehensive understanding of the identity verse can be achieved. The identity verse therefore forms the heart of the thesis and subjective analysis of the condensation, the narratives of identity journeys, which are at its core.

The western theoretical frameworks and analytical concepts I have used in examining the emotional content of identity and culture have been provided in the first instance by Epstein (1978), Spicer (1971) and his concept of ‘opposition’ contained in ‘persistent identity systems’, and the psychocultural approaches of De Vos (1982,1990) which emphasise the experiential aspects of identity. Following from Spicer’s theory of opposition, De Vos perceives ethnicity as a source of considerable conflict. He sees ethnic identity as based on a self-awareness that is informed by a recognition of past affiliation, saying that this notion of self and ethnicity may come into conflict with present situations and that presumably these conflicts are resolved through some forms of manipulation.

I have discovered, however, that the most useful analytical tool for exploring the experience of identity in a ‘distanced’ framework may be drawn from structuralist theory.
In this regard, I continue the notion of opposition at another level, to explore and analyse personal identity journeys as *rites de passages* (rites of passage) using structuralist concepts which when applied to my research shift at a crucial point.

Contrary to typical structuralist analysis, I focus on the power of human consciousness (of persons and groups) to understand and effect change, not only ‘in the mind’, but also in the real world. As my research deals with individuals and a group who are caught between conflicting interests and systems of meaning, I hope to show how structures are transcended by self-reflection on categorical oppositions inherent in the identity journey, i.e., an individual’s transcendence of or at least overt confrontation with usually unconscious cultural structures. I therefore espouse the diachronic notion of structuralism whereby diachrony is there at the outset, thus involving transformation in the sense of ‘progressive change’ (Hooper and Huntsman 1985:6).

A ‘native’ insight is drawn from my own ‘ways of knowing’, as a NZ-born Samoan woman. Thus I have placed the people who are my focus group, NZ-born Samoans of the English-Speaking Group (ESG) of Newton Pacific Islanders’ Church (PIC), and *their* views, *their* concerns, *their* experiences, *their* ideologies at the heart of my enquiry. In doing so, I use an eclectic blend of intra- and inter-disciplinary theories and perspectives, subjective and objective analyses, multiple Samoan and western epistemologies, to explore them.

In talking about Samoan people and their journey across space and time, I draw upon Samoan concepts of *alofa* (love), *tautua* (service, to serve), *feagaiga* (special covenant/relationship between brother and sister), *usita‘i* (obedience, to obey) and *fa‘aaloalo* (respect, deference), and make recourse to historical materials, political economy and structural-functionalist perspectives, as well as culturalist perspectives involving interpretive and structuralist models. More importantly I take on Kondo’s challenge in attempting to "enact our theoretical messages…” by asking how selves are constructed variously in various situations, and how these constructions can be complicated and enlivened by multiplicity and ambiguity, and how they shape and are shaped by relations of power (1990:43).

The ‘ie toga thus plaited weaves a structuralist approach, empirical data and a native insight into what Marcus (1982:602) calls a ‘new Polynesian synthesis’. I hope my research
findings will contribute to a growing contemporary Polynesian scholarship which deals with indigenous views of how the person is culturally perceived and constituted in their own societies, how emotions are organised and expressed in social relations, how personhood is revealed in expressions of identity in stages of the life cycle and gender relations, and how all this is manifested in observable patterns of interpersonal and intergroup exchange, in the expressed narratives and experiences of natives themselves. The great advantage of this synthesis is that it draws not only from historical explanations, but also directly from material gained from fieldwork among contemporary Samoans and Samoan communities, and thus provides important insights as to why Samoan culture and lifeways have remained so vitally Samoan in the contemporary, increasingly globalising world.

On the one hand, the conclusions that I reach are not definitive statements of a universal NZ-born Samoan identity. Rather, they are my conclusions based on narratives and experiences—the identity stories—of a particular group of NZ-born Samoans. Yet, on the other hand, this study is intended to contribute to global scholarship on the regional processes of migration, urbanisation, ethnicity and the negotiation of identity, with the subjective experience of identity as the focal point.

**Thesis outline**

*Lalaga o le ‘ie toga: The Thesis*, is the preface to Part One and outlines the construction of the thesis.

**Part one** of the thesis is titled ‘Settings’ and is broadly concerned with locating myself in the work. Chapter One, titled ‘*O a’u/I: my journey*, deals with my own identity story, as well as taking a critical look at my own relationship with Anthropology. It also recounts my actual ethnographic experience. Why and how I chose Newton as the site for my research and how the Rev. Sio started me on my journey. Why and how the simple question of ‘Why are our young people leaving the church?’ spilled over into issues of the relationship between *fa’aSamoan* and church, culture and Christianity, and how these impacted on a New Zealand-born Samoan identity represented by my focus group, the ESG of Newton Church. In accounting for how I dealt with methodological issues, I begin with a critical reflection on the relationship between anthropological practice and anthropological
theory and proffer my redefinitions of native and insider anthropology and anthropologists. Secondly, I describe my interaction with the Newton Church community and the ESG, and how interview sessions became more a reciprocal sharing of information with my role not so much inquisitor but counsellor, advisor and friend.

Chapter Two, titled ‘Anthropological studies of identity’, introduces western analytical concepts and discourses which have helped me analyse my material. I point out the serious flaws in many current theories of ethnicity—the focus on circumstantialist explanations and the relegation of emotional phenomena to primordialist explanations. I claim that circumstantialist accounts alone are deficient, and that primordialist explanations are inadequate, requiring the need to re-examine emotional underpinnings of ethnicity using another paradigm. I attempt to do this by focusing on the subjective experience of identity. The works of Spicer and De Vos are particularly illuminating in identifying opposition and conflict as the crucial element in examining ethnicity and identity, rather than the more popular theories (e.g., Barth 1969) which stress cohesion, co-operation and equilibrium.

Chapter Three, titled ‘Christianity, church, identities’, is divided into two parts. The first, ‘The Samoan context’, examines the historical record and looks at how the London Missionary Society (LMS) came to Polynesia, its consolidation in Western Samoa, the development of the Christian Congregational Church of Samoa, also known as Ekalesia Fa‘apotopota Kerisiano Samoa (EFKS), and the process of the Samoanising of Christianity. The second, ‘The New Zealand context’, follows this theme through and examines the continuing Samoanising of Christianity in the development of the institution of the Pacific Islanders’ Presbyterian Church, Newton. In this section a detailed account is provided of the origin of Newton Church, its present structure, and future developments. Incorporated into this account is an examination of how Christianity, church and fa’aSamoa in the New Zealand context have become inextricably interwoven. It ends with a detailed account of the formation and structure of the ESG.

Part Two is the substantive portion of the thesis consisting of the ESG narratives—the content of encounter conversations and individual interviews—which express members’ identity journeys. It is divided into two chapters. Chapter Four deals with the subjective experience of members’ identity journeys, and is analysed by exploring the identity verse. "I am a Samoan…but not a Samoan" is organised under the headings of fa’aSamoa
(according to Samoan customs and traditions), Samoan language, ‘āiga (family, extended family), matai (ali‘i or tulafale titled representative of ‘āiga) system, church and discipline. "To my ‘āiga in Samoa…I am a pālagi (alien, foreigner, European)" deals with images of Samoa, visits to Samoa, being called fiapālagi (wanting to be like the papālagi), coping mechanisms of ita (anger), fa‘amaualuga (arrogance, conceit)/fiasili (to be the best), and fa‘amaulalo (humility, subservience), and notions of home and homeland. "I am a New Zealander…but not a New Zealander", outlines members’ experiences of the New Zealand education system, and traces their educational achievement. "To New Zealanders…I am a bloody coconut, at worst, a Pacific Islander, at best" is organised under the headings of opposition to not being considered a New Zealander and explores themes such as experiences of racism and the process of becoming politically aware, the relationship with tangata whenua (original people of the land), the assertion of Samoan identity and the commitment to helping other Samoans and Pacific Islanders as a coping mechanism. "To my Samoan parents…I am their child" looks at parents’ and grandparents’ reasons for coming to New Zealand, their expectations of their children and grandchildren, their liberal tendencies in some cases, and generational relations. The chapter ends with an analysis of what some ESG members describe as a "secured identity".

The subjective analysis of ESG narratives continues in Chapter Five, and outlines how Newton Church is involved in the identity journeys of NZ-borns. "The Church is…the battleground of change", examines the perceived dominance of Samoans within the multicultural Newton Church resulting in inter-ethnic conflict, and also explores the oppositional relationships between NZ-borns and island-born Samoans and younger people and elders within Newton Church’s Samoan community. This conflict often leads to NZ-borns ‘leaving’ the Church or having ‘time out’ periods and this phenomenon is examined in detail in this chapter. Chapter Five ends with a consideration of the paradox represented by the relationship between culture and christianity and offers a redefinition of a ‘coconut theology’ as a theology of fa’aaloalo (respect) and tautua (service).

Part Three, titled ‘A ‘distanced’ analysis of the identity journey’, provides a theoretical excursion into structuralist discourse which examines the identity journey at another level. The identity verse, when viewed literally, appears to present us with a contradiction, that of chaos or confusion within an ordered structure and society. The lines
of the verse express both an affirmation and denial of on the one hand a Samoan identity, and on the other a New Zealand identity. This dual paradox lends itself to the structuralist analysis attempted in Chapter Six.

Chapter Seven, titled ‘Construction of a NZ-born Samoan identity’, continues the theme of a ‘distanced’ analysis of the identity journey and considers how identity ‘of the group’ is shaped. In this Chapter, I examine the concepts of "NZ-born" and a NZ-born "subculture" and the realisation of the ESG as a sixth ethnic group within the structure of the proposed Newton Church PIC Synod. I argue that for NZ-born Samoans the desire to be identified not as papālagi or New Zealanders but as Samoan, or NZ-borns, is evidence of a Samoan persistent identity system, and that the ethnic solidarity of this particular group of NZ-borns is a result of opposition mounted by island-born Samoans of the Church community. The strengthening of ethnic solidarity in this instance is achieved by the construction of a NZ-born Samoan identity to effect structural change within the institution of Newton Church.

The final section, titled ‘Outou, mātou, tātou (You, We, Us): conclusions, implications and considerations’, sets out the conclusions I have arrived at from my research. Broadly, there are three major findings. First, my focus on intra-ethnic ethnicity rather than confining my study to intra-ethnic generational studies has provided new insights into NZ-born Samoan ethnicity. Secondly, at a theoretical level I claim that the redefinition of ethnicity as a ‘persistent identity system’ (Spicer 1971) provides a dynamic interaction of both primordial and circumstantial views of ethnicity. Thirdly, I progress towards the definition of ethnicity not only as the shared experiences of an ethnic group but also the shared experiences of an ethnic group of a particular persistent identity system, of a particular time, and of a particular place of birth.

Style

The written style of the thesis reflects and continues the metaphor of `ie toga in that the strands of a subjective writing style, prevalent in my own reflections and the narratives of the focus group, interweave with the objective writing style of academic conjecture, to
integrate both subjective and objective perspectives. This style perhaps more importantly provides the reader with insight into the workings of my own New Zealand-born Samoan mind, in illustrating the way in which I think and express myself, flowing easily across and in and out of both formal and informal writing styles reflecting both papālagi and Samoan thought and metaphysical processes.

Language

Having deliberately emphasised the perspective of the native insider, although this thesis is written in English, I allow the Samoan voice to pervade the text since it is the Samoan lived experiences in a Samoan context that I am dealing with. Usage of Samoan terms is thus deliberately intrusive, translations of words and phrases being provided in the Glossary. The Glossary also consists of Samoan words ‘as they are spoken’. Therefore the use of consonants of ‘t’ and ‘k’, ‘n’ and ‘g’, which reflect differences between formal and colloquial language, have been treated as freely interchangeable. I have also treated as interchangeable pālagi and papālagi. The former is by far the most colloquial and common rendition, while the latter is the more formal and commonly used in written academic scholarship. Italics are used for all Samoan words and phrases, and other non-English words. English words in the narratives and elsewhere are italicised or capitalised to reflect emphasis placed on them by the speaker. One reservation must be stated here. Samoans who are well informed in their own language need neither the glottal stop nor the macron to facilitate their reading and understanding of Samoan words and phrases, and I am aware of past Samoan legislation prohibiting the use of the macron and glottal stop in contemporary Samoan orthography. However I am also aware that as this is a doctoral thesis I must provide strategies to enable non-Samoan speakers (NZ-born Samoans included) to also make sense of the Samoan words and phrases contained herein. I therefore use the macron and the glottal stop to highlight the fact that in their absence some words have completely different meanings. I also provide an individual English gloss for each Samoan word at its first appearance, and a comprehensive Glossary which provides translations of all Samoan words and phrases as they appear in the text.