Aspects of Samoan Literature I
The Structure of the Samoan Single Story Form and Its Uses
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Abstract. - Polynesian literatures are important in themselves and as a means of understanding Polynesian cultures. As a first step in the study of aspects of Samoan literature, the author analyzes the structure of the single story form on the basis of a wide reading in the published Samoan-language texts. That structure is found to consist of a title or titular sentence, an introduction, an optional time reference connection to the narrative, a narrative, an optional conclusion, and an optional terminal phrase or sentence. This form, found also in Hawaiian literature, can be used in a wide range of genres and can be identified within larger complexes, making possible a closer analysis of their construction. [Polynesia, Samoan literature and language]

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Literature is one of the most important elements of Polynesian culture. It is used in a wide range of activities, employs a large number of literary forms, and is considered a prestigious social accomplishment.

Polynesian literature is of very high quality, employing many literary devices and requiring a good deal of education, training, and expertise. The finest achievements of Polynesian literature are comparable to the classics of other literatures and are therefore worthy of worldwide recognition.

Moreover, Polynesian literature was the favored medium for the expression of personal emotions, social relations, political and religious sentiments, and views of the world. Literary works are primary sources for understanding and perpetuating Polynesian culture.

Literature is also the means of transmitting historical traditions, which are primary sources of both precontact and postcontact history. Also, postcontact changes in literature—both modification of precontact elements and the assimilation of foreign ones—are valuable for the study of culture contact and change.

Polynesian literatures are therefore important subjects of study because of their intrinsic quality, their importance as sources for understanding the cultures in which they are created, and as means of perpetuating those cultures.¹

Traditional Samoan literature is available in a wide range of publications extending well over a hundred years. Moreover, it is still being practiced: chants and songs are composed and performed, tales are told, proverbial expressions used, speeches given, and genealogies recited. Among old and new works are many that command respect for their artistic quality and expression of human thinking and emotions.

Literature is of exceptional importance in Samoan culture, and a more adequate understanding of it is valuable for a wide range of fields, such as anthropology, history, religious studies, and comparative literature. For instance, the similarity between Samoan and Hawaiian story structures adds a further argument for the close connection between Polynesian literatures and cultures. The contents of Samoan prose and poetry provide numerous points of interest, many of which may not be available elsewhere, such as differing conceptions of the land of the dead.

Even more important, literature is crucial. I would argue, for a better understanding of Samoan thinking. A consciously literary people, Sāmoans understand themselves, each other, and even foreigners through literary forms. When I told a chief that an anthropologist had told me he did not need to study the Samoan language because he was doing his research on agriculture, the chief replied, “They do not know their own literature, and they want to understand us.”

In a review of “Transformations of Polynesian Culture” (Hooper and Huntsman 1985), George E.

¹ The above paragraphs were written with the aid of Futa Helu, ‘Atenisi Institute, Tonga, for a proposal on Polynesian literature.
Marcus offers important criticisms of the authors' approaches to Polynesian studies: "these papers do not place in the foreground concerns with genres, narratives, the conditions for the production of knowledge, or the like as being problematic" (Marcus 1988: 115). Of one author he writes, "Without turning his full attention to rhetorical, performative, poetic aspects of Maori discourse, about which he has hedged, the kind of genuine rethinking he calls for is not likely" (118). Whereas classical studies enjoy "a deep and sophisticated historiographical tradition that any scholar must assimilate, if not master, in entering these fields; significantly, no such tradition bars the gate as a prerequisite for structuralists who enter the field of ethnology devoted to primarily oral cultures" (113).

Polynesian literature is being used without being studied. But if sources are to be used correctly, they must first be accurately understood. This involves all the work on language, texts, literary devices, genres, settings in life, and so on, recognized as indispensable for other literatures. Such work is necessarily microscopic, but it is the prerequisite for macroscopic projects.

The oral character of much Polynesian literature cannot be used as an excuse to proceed with less rigor than demanded in other fields. Methods have been devised for dealing with various aspects of oral literatures and of the written literatures based on them. Much work has in fact already been done in the field.

The student of Samoan literature is fortunate in the quantity and quality of the texts available to him. Early German scholars, such as Augustin Krämer (1897: 77 f.) and Werner von Bülow (1898a: 6; 1898b: 258 f.), were convinced of the importance of native-language texts and collected, translated, and published much valuable material. Information on informants, performance, collecting, translating, and editing was sometimes provided. Such information is of course provided in modern publications. Along with internal evidence, this information enables the student to evaluate the fidelity of the published texts to oral performance and the extent of the subsequent editing process; editing usually made necessary by the pronunciation changes of the Samoan language. For instance, O. Sierich's texts retain the frequent replacements of n by g and overcorrections or replacements of g by n. I would place Sierich's texts along with those of Richard Moyle and Hovdaugen at the more faithful end of the spectrum and Krämer's at the more edited end. Oskar Stuebel's occupy a middle position. Bülow's vary. In fact, the similarity of the edited to the more faithful texts is remarkable for the points under discussion in these articles; and of special interest for the transition of oral Samoan traditions to a written literature (Charlot 1988a: 206 f.). I concentrate on Samoan-language texts, using foreign-language ones only for additional support.

Texts will be reproduced as published — that is, usually without diacritical marks — except that the different marks used for the long vowel have been regularized to a macron and the italics used by Bülow for some accented letters (not words) have been romanized. When the acute accent appears to mark final stress rather than lengthening (as well as in a few ambiguous cases), it is retained. Spelling variations and misspellings are common in the texts; I have used "sic" only when necessary, but have occasionally supplied corrections in brackets.

When discussing a text, I retain its spelling except for well-known names and titles, such as the Tuli, Fe'e, Mālieoa, and Nāfanua, and often-used words, such as māvaega, fānau, and agāga. Words will of course be regularized when they are being referred to themselves or reference is not being made to a single text. Students of Samoan literature badly need a reference work in which place names, personal names, and titles are provided with their correct diacritical marks.

All translations are mine, unless otherwise noted. For example, glosses in single quotation marks are mine; those in double quotation marks belong to the source cited. In translations, name forms will follow the text — capitalized names in roman and non-capitalized in italics — with the exceptions noted above. In some cases, the use of more than one form has been unavoidable — for example, Aîmusaesæ and aî míaesæ — but...
the reference should be clear in the context. Any available information on sources of the Samoanlanguage texts is given in the works in which they appear.3

I have tried to use ordinary language, avoiding technical terms and specialized senses, and to define the few I need; for instance, the noun narrative, as opposed to narration, is used in the special sense of the part of a story structure after the introduction and optional transition and before the optional story conclusion. To avoid confusion, I sometimes use the clumsy non-narrational instead of non-narrative.

I have provided more references than will be needed by most readers, but hope they will help those interested in particular points to find their way through the profusion of available, but possibly unfamiliar, materials. Moreover, I felt it important to show that the structures studied are found in a wide range of sources and are not the accidents of collection or edition. Finally, I have confined myself largely to a detailed analysis of some aspects of a limited number of texts to the neglect of more general themes, theoretical concerns, and controversies to which they might pertain. My training in New Testament exegesis has convinced me - I repeat - that such microscopic work on primary sources must be done before macroscopic subjects are broached.

1. The Structure of Samoan Single Story Forms

In this article I will identify the structure of the Samoan single story form and discuss various elements that constitute it. I use the word story in a broad sense because the structure discussed is found in a variety of genres, including historical accounts. The range of the use of the structure will be discussed below.

The methods I use to identify and describe the structure and its uses are those of Form and Redaction Criticism, which I have already applied to prose and poetry in other Polynesian literatures (Charlot 1977, 1983, 1985, 1987a). Put most simply, those methods enable one to identify the literary forms and describe their structures in a given literature and to analyze how they are used.

I will demonstrate from a wide variety of texts that the basic structure of the Samoan single story form can consist of the following elements: title or titular sentence, introduction, time reference connection to the narrative, the narrative itself, one or more conclusions, and a terminal sentence. Simple working definitions of these terms are:

1) Title or titular sentence: a phrase or sentence that announces the work about to be told by mentioning it or naming it; e.g., "This is my story." "This is the story of Nāfānua," or "The Story of Nāfānua."

2) Introduction: a section that provides general information necessary for the understanding of the work, such as characters, names, positions, location, historical situation, and habitual activity.

3) Time reference connection to narrative: a phrase that connects the general information of the introduction to the particular events narrated.

4) Narrative: a section in which the action or the events of the story are recounted.

5) Conclusion: a section that states the point or the usually abiding results of the action narrated.

6) Terminal phrase or sentence: a sentence that states that the story is finished or a phrase that expresses the same point.

All these structural elements can be expressed with the aid of traditional, stereotyped expressions.

I have already identified and defined these elements in Hawaiian literature (Charlot 1977). All the above elements need not be present in a single text, but they occur frequently enough to be recognized as traditional. Their presence in texts collected from around 1835 (Pratt 1889: 447) to today and their use even in a nonsense story7 demonstrate their importance.

Story forms and structural elements are used in a story-telling process that is creative, that is, they are subject to personal and even idiosyncratic variation. The description of an individual's use of forms and elements is an important part of the definition of his or her style. One of Even Hovdhagen's informants, Moi Afata, uses a traditionally formulated introduction delimited by a time connection to the narrative; whereas Hovdhagen's main informant, Ali'ima'elumau Falē, groups his introductory material in the traditional place, but can formulate it with unusual informality. A story-teller can also adapt his tale to his audience.

I will give first some short, simple examples of story forms and then discuss each structural element in more detail. The reader is asked to consult the original texts along with this article; I will

5 For the texts collected by Powell, see Editors 1892: 273; Fraser 1898: 28 f.

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6 Movie 1975: 244; the first sentence is the introduction followed by the narrative.
usually quote only the Samoan, but translations are provided in the references.

Moit Afaia’s “The story about Tagalatangi and Pava” contains an introduction (“O aoa lā ... ma Pava”), time reference connection to narrative (O na o le taisi aso), narrative (“ua soi; lona aitii’i”), and conclusion (“O le asa ... a o Sama”), with terminal sentence (la, ‘o lea) (Hovdhagen 1987: 99 ff.).

“Der Aitu Soesá i Aleipata / O le aitu Soesá i Aleipata” contains a titular sentence (O le tala ... Soesá), introduction (O saesá ... o le samatanauma), time reference connection to narrative (ona sau lea), narrative conclusion (ona fa ‘apea a lea), and conclusion (la lea ... o le sausali; note the typical stereotyped phrase ua oo mai lava i ona po nei ‘until today’ or ‘to this very day’) (Stuebel 1896/1973: 173/13).

“O le gofa o Talaga ma Tiitii” contains a long introduction (O Talaga ... i talo Taloga; note that the actions described are habitual, masani), a time reference connection to the narrative (na o le i le taisi aonu [alou] ai lea), narrative (ona fa ‘apea a [ai lea] o Tiitii ... motumotu i laau), and conclusion (o le nea lea ... pea sia; ‘o le nea lea ‘Therefore’ is a traditional expression in conclusions) (Stuebel 1896/1973: 227/61).

“O le uluga [alii] Salaiiva” contains a short introduction (O la igoga o Lea ma Lea), a narrative (Ua la faaloalo ... sa sau ai nei le malaga), a conclusion (ua toru lava ... lava lena faie; note the stereotyped expression ua oo mai i ona po nei ‘until today’), and a terminal sentence (Ua iu le tala).

“Die Geschichte von Lautiuvina und Leutelele’s ‘ite (O le tala a Lautiuvina ma Leutelele’s ‘ite) contains an introduction (E toa lau ... Lautiuvina), a time reference connection to the narrative (Ona [alou] lea), narrative (ona lau [leau] o Lautiuvina [sic] ... ‘o Leutelele’s ‘ite leni), and conclusion (ona fa ‘apea a lea Leutele ‘ua mua lona igoga o Leutelele’s ‘ite; the conclusion thus identifies the preceding as an origin of the name story) (Krämer 1902: 302 ff.).

“Die Geschichte vom Bruderkrieg (O le o le a le taoa o le uso) contains an introduction (Sa sofou ... latoa diga), a time reference connection to the narrative (‘Ua o le le taisi aso with ona fa ‘apea mai lea), and narrative (ona fa ‘apea mai lea) ‘O Saiga till the end) (Krämer 1902: 217 f.).

“Die Geschichte von Tu’ulemava ‘aga (O le lea ia Tu’ulemava ‘aga) contains an introduction (‘O le taufai ... feafaga; note the emphasis on habitual activity, ‘as i ‘una ‘every day’), time reference connection to narrative (O na o lea i le taisi aso), and narrative (‘O le a fā’a’a’e to the end).”

Discussion of Individual Elements

I will now discuss in more detail the structural elements of the single story form, with attention to their regularity and use of stereotyped phrases. I will include examples of these elements as used in a wide range of genres, a subject discussed below.

1) Titles and Titular Sentences

Titles and titular sentences are found widely, are easily recognizable, and have been noted by collectors. Stories are often referred to by title in Samoan-language discussion.

All the stories collected by Hovdhagen from Ali’imalemanu have a titular sentence (Hovdhagen 1987):

20. ‘O le tala leni ‘ele’ao o fale ‘ala ‘o le tala i le mafaga ‘i ‘o Oto ma Lau “This story which I am going to tell is the story about the couple Oto and Lau.”

24. ‘O le tala leni ‘ite ‘o le tale [sic; tale] i Nafanua “This is the story about Nafanua.”

46. ‘O le tala leni ‘ite ‘o le tale ‘o ‘o Papara.

54. ‘O le tala leni ‘ite ‘o le tale ‘o ‘o Papa.

68. ‘O le tala leni ‘ite ‘o le tale ‘o ‘o Sāpapali.

The stereotyped character of these titular sentences is apparent. Of the seventeen stories published by Richard Moyle, seven have easily recognizable titles.

The regularity of use of titles and titular sentences is greater in these exactly transcribed oral performances than in earlier, more edited texts, suggesting that in the latter they may have been cut or modified before publication. Titles and titular sentences can, however, be found in earlier publications.

For instance, Stuebel 1896/1973: 167/77, O le tupuga o niu o Samoa uma; 170/17, O le tala i le aso o Malietoa; 173/13, O le tala i le aitu i Aleipata e igoga o Soesá and O le tala i ‘a fea; 177/17, O le tala i le Gége; 179/37, O le tala i Manono; and Sierich 1904: 101, O le Fagogo ia Tafofoa ma Ogafo ma la tama.

In many cases, I would argue that the title or titular sentence of the original Samoan text has merely been published in the format of a Western title, thus introducing an element of doubt as to its authenticity. Augustin Krämer seems regularly to absorb the titles of his Samoan texts into a Western format. The problem is compounded

9 Moyle 1981: 19, 29, 35 ff. Moyle prefers not to call them “titles as such.”
10 Moyle 1981: 50, 56, 110, 196, 264, 274, 284; 90, ‘O Tuiala lea ma Tuaini mai could be a title or part of the introduction.
11 Sierich 1900: 230, 232; 1902: 167; note that the first sentence of the text in its present format is senseless without the title – this is often the case in earlier published texts; 169, the last two words of the “title” are in fact the first two words of the next sentence. Bilot 1898: 112, “O le mavaega a Fepó’i; 1900: 62, “O le tupuga a fale fāga’aga a Safone”; Stuebel 1896/1973: 181/21, the first sentence of the text makes sense only as an explanation of the title.
12 E.g., Krämer 1903: 245, a perfect Samoan title printed as a Western one: 156, the first sentence makes sense only in reference to the title – this is significant for all the accounts in this section: similarly, 175, 199, 201.
when a mixture of translation and Samoan text seems to have been used. But the undeniable evidence of the authenticity of Samoan titles and titular sentences permits us to judge most such examples as either part of the original text or only slight modifications of it.

2) Introductions

Introductions are used in all but a very few Samoan stories (several examples of such exceptions will be analyzed below). All the stories in Moyle (1981) have introductions. I will identify and characterize them briefly and note some of the stereotyped elements used in them.

Moyle himself has called attention to stereotyped phrases - o le ulugali'i, fā nau la la fā nau, o le teine 'o Sina - and examples of the same can easily be found in earlier publications. Examples of more such phrases can be found in the literature. For instance, parents can be introduced with the formula: [name] ma [name] la leinesi. Similarly, parents can have the same or corresponding names. Moreover, the same names are used widely in Samoan literature.

The introductions in the stories of Moyle (1981) are usually quite clear and are especially valuable as records of the oral tradition:

100. 'O le ulugali'i, fā nau la la tama 'o le teine 'o Sina. Māsani o le tanaloa e usu laiina lava ia i le fa'ase'e ae nonofo o le fafa ma la tama i le fa'e. "There was a couple who had a child, a girl called Sina. It was the man's practice to get up early and go surfing, while the woman stayed home with her child. The characters are introduced along with their habitual activity, Māsani and nonofo.'

182. 'O le ulugali'i 'o la la fā nau 'o Sina. "There was a couple, Tala'ilemanu and Tala'ilevao; Tala'ilemanu was the man and Tala'ilevao the woman. They had three daughters; the eldest girl was Mele, the second was Felita, and the third was Sina." The characters are introduced, and the introduction is clearly delimited by time reference, 'O ona pō ia.'

56. 'o lana tama ... nonofo lea; delimited by time reference connection to narrative, i le isi aiso. The names of the characters are provided - the name of the parent is given in the preceding title - along with their habitual activity, nonofo. The name of the mother is explained, an unusual element.

90. Ona nonofo lea 'o nei uso; unusually short. The following reference to their planting of a banana plant I would characterize as narrative because it is the planting of an individual plant, not a habitual activity. Names and relations are supplied in the preceding title. Phrases similar to 'o nei uso can be found elsewhere, e.g., O le uso and Le uso (Sierich 1904: 110; 1905: 182, 184).

110. na'o lā'au extending without clear limit to the first line of second paragraph, as indicated by the time reference connection, i le isi aiso. That is, the introduction slips formally into narrative. The names of the characters are given in the preceding title. Their nature and habitual activity are described, nonofo, Nonofo.

120. 'O le ulugali'i ma la la fā nau ... Ona nonofo a lea, nonofo, nonofo. The characters are introduced along with their relation to each other and habitual activity.

144. 'O le lo'omata'ao ... o leine teine 'o Sina. The characters are introduced, and the name of the daughter's beauty is mentioned.

152. 'O le ulugali'i ... ma la la tama ... fo'i le teine. Characters are introduced with habitual activity, nonofo. An unusual element is the saying mentioned to characterize the daughter's behavior.

162. 'O le ulugali'i ... nonofo ... ma la la tama. The characters are introduced, and the scene is set by the mention of the fact that they are on a trip.

196. 'O le ulugali'i ... ma la la fā nau. The characters and their location are given along with mention of their living together, nonofo.

208. first paragraph. The characters are introduced and characterized. The mother's disposition of their work, ofaga, is used to create a situation rather than as a particular narrative action or event.

209. 'O le ulugali'i ma la la fā nau ... o lā'o moana; delimited by 'iu o oina; characters and habitual activity, 'O le ola, nonofo.

254. 'O le ulugali'i ... lo la lā'o āiga; characters and habitual activity, nonofo, nonofo, ola'.

284. 'O le ulugali'i ... la la tama; delimited by O'o lea ina. A genealogical introduction of characters and their habitual activity (the repetition of tai).
Introductions in traditional formulations can also be found regularly in the earlier published literature. The following are selected examples from Stuebel 1896/1973:

164/4, *O Mataiteite o le afäine ia o Tagaloalagi (complete)*; the characters and their relation to each other.
165/5, *O Talago ... lona tama, delimited by *sa o o i le isi aso; characters and habitual activity.
166/6, *O le Ulagalii ... o la la tama ... matafofe a Sina; characters and the beauty of the daughter.
170/10 f., *o le Alii nei ... aai lavo i tagata; delimited by *sa o o foi ina; characters and exceptionally long description of habitual activity.
194/34, *O le ali nei ... i aigofofe; delimited by *sa o o i; characters, blindness of one, habitual activity, i aso uma, masani; an exceptionally large amount of material.
227/67, *O Talago ... ala u lalo Talaga; delimited clearly by *sa o o i le isi aso; characters and habitual activity, masani.
227/67, *O Sava ... Falealupu; time reference, ona ... ai lea; characters and place.
229/69, *O le tagate ... Sepo; the subject and his origin.
230/70, *O la iiga o Lea na Lea (complete); characters and their names.
230/70, *O Saoleiova ... Asau; delimited by ona ... ai lea; the subject, his nature and habitual activity.

Examples from other publications demonstrate, I emphasize, the regularity of introductions and also their traditional formulations:

Pratt 1889: 455, *O Paa ... le ulaga ali ... tamalos; characters.*
Fraser 1897: 118, *O la la fanau ... Massi-a-a-'eie; the introduction seems to depend for the name of the parents on a title that has been provided only in an English version; the characters are introduced along with their relation to each other.
Fraser 1898: 21, *E taulua ... taulua; characters.*
23, *O Tui-Toga ... Toge; characters, relation to each other, and place.
Fraser 1900: 128, *O Veu ... i Fiti-uta; characters, parenage, place, and situation.
Bülow 1898a: 80, *Ona po ... manu; time, place, characters, and situation.*
Bülow 1898c: 112, *O le Fepo ... o le Aiogeti; characters, relation to each other, and the fact that one is blind.*
Bülow 1900: 67, *O Tigi ... o le ulaga ali; Fanau o la tama...tama tane; delimited by time reference, Ona ... lea; characters, genealogical introduction.
Sierich 1900: 232, *O Malu ... Aulega; delimited by time reference, Ona 'o'o lavo lea i le isi aso; the names of the four brothers are given; the introduction seems dependent on the title, which provides the information that they are brothers.*
Sierich 1902: 170, *O le la (complete); perhaps the shortest introduction possible; only one character is mentioned.
185, *O le se o taulua ... le uga; characters.*
196, *O Soa'agapatua ma ... la teneti, O le uga taulua; characters and their relation to each other.*

Sierich 1904: 98, *O Paa ... le teler; characters and their relation to each other.
110, *O le fia ... manaula; characters and their relation to each other.
Sierich 1905: 182, *O le usal ... Vea; characters and their relation to each other.
184, *Le wa ma le pea ma le isuma (complete); the text may be defective; characters and their relation to each other.*

The sentence published as a title in Krämer (1903: 201) appears to be an introduction. That is, the same problems of identification can arise with short introductions that have been found with titles and titular sentences.

I have mentioned already a type of introduction I call genealogical. These could be considered as narrative because they can refer to the events of becoming pregnant and giving birth. But genealogies constitute a separate literary form in Samoan literature, and their special terminology and expressions can be found in genealogical introductions. Indeed, some of them are simply small genealogies. Moreover, genealogical introductions can be identified by their position in a story, their use of stereotyped expressions of introductions, and their division from the narrative by the traditional structural element of a time reference connection. These characteristics can be found in numerous examples from a wide range of sources.

Bülow 1898a: 7, *O le ali ... Sina; delimited by time reference, Ua ... lea; genealogy expressions, usu, etc.*
Bülow 1899: 141, *O le ulugaalii ... Ua fanau o la la tama ... pipiti; typical introduction expressions and information provided.*
Bülow 1896: 326, *Hier ist Taifoafi ... Sina; in German.*
Sierich 1900: 230, *O Taifoafou ... Malu'samaoa; delimited by time reference, la ona 'o'o lavo lea ile isi aso (sic: aso: I will not make further note of spelling in Sierich's texts); uses typical introduction expressions.*
233 f., *O Vi ... Sinataua; delimited by time reference, la ona 'o'o lavo lea ile isi aso; use of genealogy expressions.*
Sierich 1901: 15, *O Taifoafou ... Sinofagafofa; delimited by time reference, Ona ... lea; genealogy expressions.*
Sierich 1902: 167, A o Safua ("title") ... Sina; delimited by time reference, Oga ... lea; offspring identified by number.
169, *Taifoafa (title) ... o le fia; delimited by time reference, aga ... lea; introduction expressions used.*
174, *O Luago ... o Sina; genealogy expressions.*
181, *Ogapelafofe ... Ta ita ilia; with description of child.*
Sierich 1905: 185, *O Taifoafou ... anu; genealogy and introduction expressions.*
Krämer 1902: 114, *Usu ... Samata; uses genealogy expression anu ... iia; delimited by time reference, Oga ... lea.*
131, *O le ulugaalii; O Vi ma Vi, Ona fanau lea 'o la lona tama 'o la teine e igoa ia Sirinuimagi (complete).*

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18 E.g., Bülow 1900: 67; Moyle 1981: 50, 220, 284.
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204. Ua fua nei, e o le faga'i, i le lulelele nei; genealogical introductions; introduces characters, place, and political situation.

Genealogical introductions can be turned easily into narrative. For instance, the circumstances of the conception or birth can be narrated. A simple sequence of births could form part of a genealogy, but if the first child eats the subsequent ones, the narrative results.

A number of stories begin with the travel of the protagonist(s) to a certain place, that is, their travel is mentioned before their names or any other introductory material. Such beginnings can be found in Hawaiian literature (e.g., Charlot 1977: 489 f.; 1987a: 39), and I would argue that they are traditional.

Stories can be found of the circumstances of the original announcement of a māvaega, an oral last will and testament of an historic chief. Some of these are in the ordinary story form or have conventional introductions. Other stories belong to a separate type with a different sort of introduction: they begin with the statement that the chief was sick, often mention the location, and then narrate the circumstances of the announcement — the gathering of the extended family and sometimes the district representatives, and so on — and provide the māvaega itself and its historical consequences or results. The initial statement seems to be a special type of scene-setting introduction. The fame of the chief is such that his name suffices to identify him. This type of story is distinctive enough to warrant a label, the māvaega-story, and can be recognized as a unit inserted into complexes, as will be seen below. Moreover, its distinctive beginning can be used even when the māvaega is not central to the story, as in that of the origin of kava and sugar cane inserted into a complex, ona ma'i ai lea (Stuebel 1896/1973: 168/8).

In a small number of published stories, no introduction can be found. This may at times be the result of editing. "Die Geschichte von Lefaso" in Krämer begins with a stereotyped time reference, Na o'o le isi aso, that could have connected an omitted introduction to the following narrative.

But in other cases the text seems intact and the reason for a lack of introduction can be sought. Introductions may be omitted when the title suffices. In two stories in Krämer a boat is mentioned in the title, and the next sentence begins, 'Ua fua le va'a i ... or Na fua i ...'

The protagonists of a story might be so unimportant in themselves that no special introduction is required, as in an animal story. On the other hand, the characters and the story may be so well known, especially in the social setting of the storytelling, that an introduction would be considered otiose. "Die Bestimmung der Familie Satalo" (Krämer 1902: 310) reads almost like a legal brief or a case abstract; that is, the personages, their relationship, and the story that recounts its origin are so well known that they can be presented in extremely summary form.

Samoan story-telling is naturally personal and creative, not mechanical, and so even an important structural element like an introduction is subject to

20 Stuebel 1896/1973: 163/3, O le ʻuŋaali ... nono fo fanaʻu la la tamu ... Tapuitia, the introduction: toe fanaʻu ... Seeua, uses genealogical language but interrupts it by narrating the eating of each birth by Tapuitia. See also Sierich 1905: 186, Taʻihoia ... toe fanaʻu, aa ai Liiava'a.
21 E.g., Krämer 1902: 261, Na o mai ... 'Ua ni' o le Soʻopi o le alii ... 263, Na a o le manu ... 305, Na sau le alii i ... 354, Na sau le fouaqa ... Fagaʻi; 357, Na sau le fouaqa e le uʻatua e toʻalua ... i Toa Te Tai Ofa (note use of introduction expressions): 427, Ona foua laea 'o le va'a ...: 452, Na o mai sasa i ... see also 119 f., and cf.: 253; Krämer 1903: 200, Na sau leafoa ... Samatau; 245, Ona lau laea 'o le va'a ona tahua e toʻalua ... na o i i ... Tula; Stuebel 1896/1973: 173/13. O le fe'o e le alii e su i Fiti aa taumata mai i Aita ... Bülow 1899: 144, Usu o le maloaga ... i Fiti; the text may not, however, be intact; Fraser 1897: 114, Usu o mai le toula ... Fale'a'ula; Fraser calls this one of two "fragments." 113. The above is different from the mention of travel within a regular introduction, Moyie 1981: 162. John Mayer felt travel was conventionally associated with certain figures, such as Tuiulitai, Tuifoga, and Tianaifuga.
22 For a complete convention, see Stuebel 1896/1973: 186/26, Krämer 1902: 255. For māvaega-stories with conventional introductions, see Bülow 1898c: 116, O Tanaseʻe i i Luafu (cf. 112, O le Felipo ... Aitioa and the non-story account, 113 f.; contrast 1900: 69, Sa faʻi ... Fetheilu), Māvaega can also be used as part of larger texts; e.g., Krämer 1902: 114 f.

23 Krämer 1902: 217, Na gasese Taufaʻa: 310, Ona taʻoto lea o le gasese o Salamasina i Malafisi i Lotofaga (this is the story of the origin of a certain privilege, apparently an extension of the genre); cf. 207 f.; Bülow 1896c: 114, Sa tanu o le gasese o Salamasina i Lotofaga. Usu o taʻiku a le tupu ...: 115, O Galumatemana sa mai, sa taiao i le faelono i Maluʻiua i Luafu; cf. Krämer 1902: 118 f. John Mayer stated that the relative fame of the persons mentioned could generally be a factor in the length of the introduction. Moreover, certain names raise expectations in the audience because of their conventional associations.
24 Krämer 1902: 308; cf. 249; Stuebel 1896/1973: 226/66; the first piece seems to be the introduction to the second, which begins appropriately with a time reference.
26 Sierich 1904: 90; an introduction is, however, provided for the animal story on 110.
27 Krämer 1902: 118, 197, 203; cf. the mention of Sina within the narrative, Sierich 1904: 93.
negligence and manipulation. At the beginning of two stories in Bülow, genealogical information is
presented in narrative form rather than in that of a
genealogical introduction. 28 I have noted above
the ease with which the genealogical introduction
form can be turned into narrative; in these two
cases, that is done with the unusual omission of
standard introduction elements. This was probably
a stylistic decision, perhaps with the purpose of
entering more rapidly and smoothly into the action
of the narrative.

The omission of an introduction may be one
reason for the displacement of introductory ma-
terial (e.g., Krämer 1902: 214). Such material can be
supplied when a person or an object is first men-
tioned 29 and at the beginning of an appropriate
episode or passage. 30 One example of displace-
ment seems to be the result of the combination of
a regular introduction with a travel beginning. 31

Most examples of introductory material being
provided later in a text are due, I would argue,
to Samoan methods of constructing larger stories
or complexes. As in Hawaiian literature, such
complexes can be constructed by joining originally
independent stories by various devices; some of
the structural elements of the stories are retained
with or without modification inside the complex,
especially introductions and conclusions (Charlot
1977: 483–490). The same methods can be used
as artistic devices in presenting a sequence of ep-
isodes. In "O Saoleva" the narrative of the killing
of the travelling party ends with the conclusion, o
le mea lea ... una po. This is followed by a new
introduction, O le tanā ... Mataufutu, clearly
delimited by time reference connection to the next
narrative, ua oo i le taeao. 32 The construction of
such complexes will be discussed briefly below.

3) Time Reference Connection to the Narrative

A number of usually stereotyped time reference
connections to the narrative have already been
mentioned. The device is found frequently in mod-
ern recordings – for instance, in eleven out of the
seventeen stories of Moyle’s collection 33 – as well
as in the older published literature. 34 Its use
seems to have been a question of style, as, for instance,
in the precision of Sierich’s informant, Caeclalia
Anae. 35 Such time references are used frequently
to link episodes, 36 even in non-story contexts. 37

A less often used time connection does not
refer to a particular day or moment; rather it
describes in narrative terms the new situation from
which the narrative will develop: the child or
children grow up or the parents become sick or
die. 38

4) The Narrative

The narrative of which I have already identified
a large number, is naturally an indispensable
structural element of a story. Narratives can be
performed with varying degrees of fidelity to tradition
and of personal style, as a comparison of different
versions of the same story demonstrates. Most ob-
viously, stories can be told short or long. 39 In fact,
Samoan stories can include a very large number of
incidents.

33 Moyle 1981: 56, i le tasi aso; 110, i le isi aso (somewhat
irregular, as seen above); 144, la, ona ... lea; 152, Ona ..
tasi; 182, ‘O ona po tasi; 196, ‘ua o o’o loa’i ina; 220, ‘a, o o’o
loa’i le isi aso; 254, ‘Usi o i le tasi aso; 264, ‘ua o o’o
ina; 274, ‘A ona po’i ina; 284, O o’o lea ina.
34 E.g., Stuebel 1896/1973: 156/5, ua oo i le isi aso; 167/7, ua
oo i le isi aso; 171/11, ua oo o’o ina; 180/20, ona oo lea i
Isi o ona po ona ... ai lea; 186/25/6, ‘ua oo o ma ina; 227/67,
ua oo i le isi aso [ona ... ai lea] and ona ... ai lea; Krämer
1902: 349, Ona o o’o lea i le tasi aso; contrast the preceding
expression of habitual activity, ‘ua fa’o o lea e tele.
35 Sierich 1900: 236, ‘la ona o o’o lava lea i le isi aso (sic: aso);
223, ‘O ona o o’o lava lea i le isi aso [ona ... lea]; 234, ‘la ona
‘O o o’o lava lea i le isi aso [ona ... lea].
Bülw 1898: 11, 15, 18, 1898c: 113, 1900: 68; Sierich
1900: 236 f., 232, 234, 236 f.; 1902: 180, 182; 1904: 92,
101, 104; 1905: 186; Moyle 1981: 124, 190, 210, 236, 278.
37 E.g., Krämer 1903: 51, 63, 72, 93, 182, 189, 199, 234.
38 E.g., Stuebel 1896/1973: 171/11, ua oo o ina maunu o le
ala net; 194/34, ‘ua o o mana maunu; Moyle 1981: 100, ‘O
maunu la lea lea tei; 196, ‘ua o o’o’o loa’i ina va’ava va’ava ina;
264, ‘ua o o ina ‘ua maunu ‘ua mana; 274, Ma e nei la
le a ‘ua maunu mana; 284, O o lea ina ‘ua maunu.
39 Compare Krämer 1902: 302 f. to 343–348. Note the extreme
abbreviation of the last paragraph of Sierich 1902: 195.
Despite this inescapable creativity, various traditional literary devices can be found in narratives, such as motifs, symbols, and dialogue, presented with and without introductory phrases. Other literary forms, such as chants, genealogies, sayings, and māvaega "testaments or last or parting words," can be incorporated into a narrative by traditional means. There are also devices that help unify a sometimes very long narrative, such as story patterns (e.g., Moyle 1981: 45 ff.).

A particularly clear unifying device is the series, which can be found also in Hawaiian literature. A sequence of events is structured as a series by such devices as using the same pattern for most or all of the events, using words such as toe ‘again’ and fo ‘also,’ and using the same or similar language in narrating each event. Series using chants or variations of the same chant are frequent in fāgogo as are series of short episodes with conclusions discussed below.

Series can themselves be structured, often as a set of three sometimes leading to a climax. Several series can be used in a single work. Whole complexes can be structured as series (e.g., Krämer 1902: 443–446). Series can also be used in chant (Krämer 1902: 417 f.).

An unusually extensive and symmetrically constructed series can be found in the account of Pili’s moving from Manu’a to ‘Upolu and Savai’i, a section of the complex, “Die Einführung des Kava. Die Geschichte des Pili. / O le tupuga o le ‘ava. O le tala ia Pili.” The four-part series takes place in Manu’a, Tutuila, ‘Upolu, and Savai’i. In each place, much the same events are related. Pili arrives (he is already in Manu’a), marries the daughter of the holder of the highest title (but not on Tutuila), and performs gigantic feats of horticulture and fishing (‘Upolu). The chiefs of the place beg him to accept the highest title and offer to serve him (not on ‘Upolu). He refuses, but then accepts. The population, however, proves incapable of satisfying him by understanding and using properly the tools, now traditional, required to provide him with his needs (Bülow 1898a: 12). Pili scolds them and departs in anger (he seems to leave ‘Upolu because of the fear of the highest chief). On Savai’i, Pili arrives, farms, and accepts the title, and dies. His marriage seems to be assumed in the later mention of his children. The parallelism of events is expressed in extensive verbal parallels. The travel transitions are the same – ona teva [mai] ai lea o Pili i . . . – as is much of the expression of the action in the different locations. I quote only those verbal parallels at the beginnings of the sections: ona nofo ai lea o Pili i . . . (Manu’a and Tutuila); ua faia mai ana ava o le afafine o . . . and ona faia mai ana lea o ia i le afafine o . . . (Manu’a and ‘Upolu); ona faia lea o lea o lana faaotaga (Manu’a, Tutuila, Savai’i); ‘Upolu: ona faia ai lea o ona maumaga; ufiuta, uma (Manu’a and Savai’i); ona filifili ai lea o aliili o . . . (Manu’a and Tutuila; Savai’i: ona filifili ai lea o Aopo).

The discussion of further devices used within narratives goes beyond the subject of this essay.

5) The Conclusion

The conclusion is usually easily recognizable because it breaks the narrative, contains informational material, is often begun by an expression that means ‘Therefore’ – such as, ‘o lea, ‘o le mea, ‘o lea lava, or ona . . . ai lea –, and often contains an expression meaning ‘up to the present time’ – such as, i ona pō nei or ua o’o mai i ona pō nei.


A number of other devices can be found in narratives, such as explanatory flashbacks: Bülow 1896/1973: 168, the māvaega of Tutuila; 237/77; the orders of Matuna to the children. The parallel to the latter, 234/74 f., ua pesei ... taho, is placed in the middle of introductory material, which necessitates the repetition of the account of Nāfanua’s arrival, ua sau le teine . . . ua sau le tamaitai.
The following selection of conclusions notes their limits, points made, and traditional phrases:

Pratt 1889: 463, Lelà lava le i Matapalapa le au-a-mala (complete); the fish-hook of adversity is still there at Matapalapa.

Stuebel 1896/1973: 173/13, ua lea ni taega ... ua oo mai lava i ona po nei ... samali; human beings no longer live at Malaela.

174/14, o le mea lea ... ua oo mai i ona po nei; the origin of a custom.

177/17, o lana maveaga fai oo mai lava i ona po nei ... na faio e Gege; the origins of some stones and a custom.

181/21, ua taunus lena maveaga ua oo mai i ona po nei (complete); the conclusion of a historical account; the parting words have been operative up to today.

181/21, o le upu lea ... ua oo mai i ona po nei; as above.

227/67, o le mea lea ... sia; the origin of fire from rubbed wood.

230/70, ua tuau lava ... ua oo mai i ona po nei ... lava lata fue; the origin of an unusual plant phenomenon.

231/71, ua igova i ona po nei ... Laata ma ma; the origin of a name and some stones.

234/74, ua i ai fai le muagagana ... i ona po nei ... faatasa lea; the origin of a saying.

Bulow 1898a: 14, ua e i ai lava nei onapò (complete); current condition.

18, O lena tofoa tofoa oo lava i ona po nei (complete); current condition.

Bulow 1898b: 81, I le faamanau ... i Samoa; the origin of a name.

Bulow 1900: 64, O le mea lea ua tua ai ... Safusue; the origin of a name.

69, Ua e i ai i Amoa i nei onapò ... o Ae, the origin of a land feature (cf. Bulow 1895: 365, 366, origin of a name and a practice in a German text).

Kramer 1902: 197, A o le a Tufugapule ma Tufugato atama'i (complete); the origin of the names.

209, o le tua lei nei na fa ato a maua ai le igova ... uso; the origin of a name.

261, O le mea lena ... fa atafusa; the origin of a name.

303, Ona fa aapea ai lea ... Leeteleite iter; the origin of a name.

305, O le mea lea ... i ona nei lena masani ... pua'a; the origin of a custom.

306, O le tana leni nei fa ato a maua ai le igova o Lufilufi (complete); the origin of a name.

309, E i ai le 'upa ... ni mis;i; the origin of a saying.

355, E pei ona tu ... e fa aapea lava i ona pò nei; the origin of a custom.

Kramer 1902: 247, E o mai i ona pò nei ... ma Tuitui; the origin of a practice.

Hovdaaguen 1987: 38, lea 'ua igova ... Nafana; lea is short for 'o lea 'therefore (compare Sierich 1900: 231); the origin of a name.

The conclusion is a frequent, but not a necessary structural element. A story can end simply with the completion of the narrative (Sierich: 1900: 230 ff.). A known conclusion can be omitted in the telling of a story or can be mentioned after the story has been told.48 A conclusion can even be presented dramatically in performance (Sierich 1904: 100, note 13).

Some story genres are more conducive than others to the use of conclusions, such as origin stories. A conclusion such as Ona matua ai lea 'o le igova o le nu'u 'o Fiiuta 'Therefore originated the name of the village, Fiiuta,' seems most appropriate and satisfying as an ending and recapping of the story (Kramer 1902: 420). On the other hand, fāgogo seldom have conclusions, but some story-tellers seem to have developed an appropriate type: some reference to the characters "living happily ever after," so to speak, or to the present state of affairs (Moyle 1981: 150, 160).

John Mayer (personal communication) has argued in conversation that the point or moral of a fāgogo is implied in the narrative and its results, even if no explicit conclusion is provided.

More than one conclusion can be given at the end of a story. In a text published by Bulow (1898c: 115 ff.), two conclusions are clearly differentiated from each other: O le igova o Aloalii ... ua oo lava i nei ona pò (the origin of a name) and Ona pò nei foi ... faatasi i ai o latou (the origin of a custom).

Very characteristic of Samoan literature is the use of conclusions at the end of episodes within the narrative:

Bulow 1898a: 9, [inga] o le mea lea ua ... a au; the origin of a name.

Kramer 1902: 198, Ona matua ai lea ... Sanameaua; the origin of a name.

199, ona fa ato a igova ai lea ... Tamaleciagi; the origin of a name.

202, o le tumoega na fa ato a maua ai le igova Mata 'uiua fa atotou ou (complete); the origin of a name.

204, no maua ai fo'i le tofoa ... Tuasamoa; the origin of a saying.

208 ff., O le mea lea ... tumua; the origin of a name.

244, Ona matua ai lea ... ma te 'ie; the origin of a name.

408 ff., O le mea lea na igova ... ma le 'ava; the origin of a name.

Such episode conclusions can be given in series, often in stereotyped form.50

48 Bulow 1899: 138; see also Kramer 1902: 209 and note 7. John Mayer believes that the conclusion is often omitted when the story is told to knowledgeable adults.

49 Sierich 1902: 183, 184, 186 (cf. 180, where the ending of the story itself is supplied after the performance); 1905: 184.

50 Stuebel 1886/1973: 231/71 ff., O le mea lea ua igova ai le aau e iata i; Faamua; ona le mea lea ua igova ai le aau e iata i; ... Lafa 'ulu; o le mea lea ua igova ai le aau e iata i; ... Aaufase; ona le mea lea ... puni faga; ona faatonga ai
Just like other structural elements, the conclusion is an opportunity for the story-teller's creativity. Conclusions or rather conclusion materials can be given in narrative form (Bülow 1900: 63) or in dialogue (Sierich 1902: 168; 1905: 184). Two conclusions can be combined, for instance the origin of the name and the origin of the genealogy or provenance of a famous fine mat. One conclusion seems to be based on a New Testament story ending of the fame of Jesus' actions spreading throughout the surrounding countryside, a rare example of Western influence on stories. A curiosity is the use of typical concluding language as the first line of an introduction.

6) Terminal Phrases or Sentences

Terminal phrases and sentences occur even more regularly than titles and titular sentences. For instance, of the stories told by Ali’imalu to Hovdaugen, all but one end with a terminal sentence or expression. Of the seventeen stories published by Moyle (1981), all have terminal sentences, the formulaic character of which is evident:

Moyle 1981: 54, la, le fāgogo 'ua 'uma.
98. 'O le i'uga o le tala; i'a sofou io i'ata ao.
108. ona 'uma mai ai lea i 'i le fāgogo.
118. la, ona pae lea o le fāgogo.
142. la, 'ua 'uma.
150. 'Ua 'uma le fāgogo.
160. la, 'ua 'uma le fāgogo.
180. 252, 272, fa, 'ua 'uma le tala.
194. fa, o le tala 'ua 'uma.
206. la, 'ua 'uma ia la tātou tala.
218. la, 'ua 'uma mai ai ma le fāgogo.
262. la, 'ua 'uma nei le tala.
287. la, ma 'o le fāgogo 'ua i'u.
296. la, 'ua 'uma mai ai 55

This regularity and formulaic character can be found in some older publications, although others seem to have regularly suppressed this structural element. Stuebel (1896/1973) carefully separates the terminal sentence and places it where one would expect “The End”: Ua iu (170/10, 181/21, 229/68); Ua iu le tala (229/68, 229/69 [twice], 230/70 [twice], 231/71 [twice], 232/72 [thrice], 233/73). Krämer (1902) records the very similar 'Ua iu le tala ia Sina (127) and Ona pae ai lea 'o le tala ia Lata (455). Sierich (1904) records Ua uma le fāgogo (94) and Ua uma ai leni Fagogo (104). More complicated terminal sentences can of course be devised. Two recorded by Bülow resemble titular sentences.

2. The Identification of Stories within Larger Complexes

The recognition of the structural elements of a story makes possible its identification when used within a larger complex (Charlot 1977: 482 f.). I list selected examples from Stuebel (1896/1973):

1644. the complex consists of the story, which ends at the terminal sentence that refers back to it, O le fāmata-
laga lena ... Taputea, and explanatory material that has been added at the end.
194/34. “O le tala i tagata sa nofo i Aete o lona iga o Feepo;” conclusion, ua fa'a pe'a lena ... ma ona po ne ... ma le fāfetai; the last paragraph reports on a particular instance of the use of the proverbial saying discussed.
230/70 f., the story ends with the stereotyped expression ua oo mai lave i ona pā ne'i. A short explanation is then added, nei sa te'e ... ma Sāmoa.
232/72. “Die neunköpfige Taueh / O le lupe u'uliva,” the first paragraph provides information before the story, which begins with the titular sentence, O le tala ... faapea; introduction, O le ali'i ... ona ula; time reference connection, ona ... lea; narrative, [ona] tēva [le'a] ... malosi o ia; and terminal sentence, Ua iu le tala (cf. 232/72 f.).
233/73. a story is enclosed within an account of the entrance to the underworld; it can be delineated by its titular sentence/introduction, o le tasi tala ... Tofiofipu and the end of its narrative, ... tee sola o'c.

The earlier identification of the māvāega-story enables one to recognize such a form when inserted into a complex. In “Tamaifāgā. Malietoa Tavita,” the story of Le’itaua’s māvāega begins with ona gasegase ai lea, quotes the māvāega, and ends with na malo Leitaua’s Le’itaua died” (Suebel 1896/1973: 175/15 f.). Later in the same complex (177/17) the story of Malietoa Tavita’s

Bülow 1898c: 113. O le uga lea o le ugi. 116. O le māvāega a Gālia’imalumea lena. See also the previous note.
māvaega begins with ua vaivai o Tavita and ends with the last words of his testament, o le a Ma\-lietoa. The story of the famous māvaega of Pili is attached by a time transition, Ua oo lea i se isi aso, to its complex, begins with ua vaivai ai o Pili, quotes the testament, and ends with the conclusion, O lena tofoa tofoa oo lavi i ona po nei "Those four assignments have lasted to the present day."57

This delineation of stories is important in the analysis of complexes constructed from originally independent stories (Charlot 1977: 483-490). For instance, in "Die Geschichete von Talaga und Titi. Die Aitu Mafui'e, Fe'e und Salevao. Das Reiben von Feuer / O le tala ia Talaga ma Titi. O aitu: o Mafui'e ma Fe'e ma Salevao. O le s'aga o le afi" (Stuebel 1896/1973: 216-217) can be found two distinct stories with an added paragraph on firemaking: introduction, O Talaga ... lona atalii; delineated by the second time reference, ua oo i le isi aso (the section after the first use of the phrase is an account of habitual action and thus a part of the introduction); narrative, which continues until the end of the paragraph, le saafetai i lona atalii. A time transition leads to the next story, Ua oo i le isi aso; introduction, sa i ai ... aove ijo e ai; narrative, ma ia ua iloa ... o le aitu o Saelevao; conclusion, o le mea lea a agi ... o Titi. The last paragraph is an account of traditional Samoan methods of making fire. Many examples of such complexes can be found:

For instance:

Krämer 1902: 349 ff., "Die Geschichete von Magea (i'O le tala ia Magea)," consists of two independent stories with the same hero: introduction, Sa nofo Magea ... ua fa'aopea i aso e te le (habitual activity); time reference, Ona o'o lea i le tasi aso; narrative, 'ua alu ane le tana ... faalii 'oe; time transition to next story, Ona [sau] i lea; p. 350, § 1, could be narrative or, more likely, a scene-setting introduction; narrative reaches until 'ua pogā i vao, a e li'isi i aia. This is the saying derived from the story, Brown 1914: nr. 75; Schulz 1985: nr. 104, here presented as dialogue. The last sentence of the complex is an explanation of the saying.

Krämer 1903: 201 ff., consists of two separate stories, each of a different chief trying to catch the same fe'e. The published title seems to include the introduction to the first story: "O le tasi fo'iti ai na fe'e na i Siumu; 'o Ta'avoo, le izoga o le ali'; narrative, Na alu lona paapao ... 'ua soila i wa; I would argue that 'Ua ola o ia is a conclusion, providing the result of the action. A time transition leads to the second story: Ona

3. The Range of the Use of the Story Structure

I have taken my examples from a wide range of genres, from those which most Samoans would consider fictional, fāgogo, to those which most would consider historical.58 Even non-story accounts and descriptions were seen to be formulated with the structural elements of a story.59

This sharing of structural elements among genres is important for understanding Samoan thinking. For instance, not just the story structure but story interests and emphases can be found in Samoan historical traditions. An account of the war between Tongans and Samoans can be told as a complex of trickster and aitu 'god,' stories and episodes (Stuebel 1896/1973: 218-220). Fabulous elements, such as raisings from the dead, can be added (Bulow 1895: 365 ff.). A story that contains an important māvaega, 'testament,' can have the origin of a name and title as its main point (Krämer 1902: 255).

In an opposite tendency, narratives can be so subordinated to introduction and conclusion materials that the resulting text is more of a description than a story; that is, the narration of the sequence of events has been so subordinated to the description of the relations, consequences, and so on, connected to those events that a new, if related, genre is created.60 The same process will be described below for aitu descriptions developed from aitu stories.

This over-arching unity of means of expression may be one reason why such a heterogeneity of materials can be found in traditions like those of Pili, which combine — for Western thinking —

58 E.g., Stuebel 1896/1973: 170/10 ff., 181/21, 186/26 ff.; see also 183/20 ff.: introduction, O ono po ... tuputaqo; time reference, Ona oo lea i isi ona po [ono ... ai lea]; narrative, [ono] sau [ai lea] ... nonofo Samoa; conclusion, ua 'aaniu iena mavaega ua oo ma i ona po nei. Cf. Charlot 1977: 495-498.

59 For another example, see Stuebel 1896/1973: 233/7, "Foge and Toafa, die Regen-Aitu / O Foge ma Toafa, o aitu o le itimu."

60 E.g., Bulow 1898c: 113 f. Krämer 1902: 342, 454 f., 452 ff., appears transitional between the two. Cf. below, aitu descriptions as opposed to aitu stories; the historicity of Samoan texts on historical subjects will be discussed in the third article in this series.

57 Bulow 1898a: 18. See also Krämer 1902: 339, Ona vaivai lea 'o Gaoteote ... Ona iiga o lea 'o Olomana ia Gaoteote; the last sentence is a good example of a conclusion for a māvaega-story. The next sentence leads to the closing genealogy.
4. The Identification and Description of Literary Forms

A complete study of Samoan literary forms is clearly a vast undertaking. A number of incomplete lists and short remarks can be found in the earlier literature, but the only extended studies, to my knowledge, have been published by Richard Moyle. A number of Samoan genres are obvious, have long been recognized, and are provided with Samoan names. In other cases, a careful examination is needed to identify them.

For instance, there are a large number of texts that include aitu—a word with many referents, from major gods to family gods, ghosts, and spirits, and even to human beings with an aitu, an ‘aitu side’ to their family. These texts include historical accounts in which aitu are mentioned, multigenerational complexes with one or more aitu figure, and stories in which an aitu is not the center of interest. A common and – as suggested by its wide distribution – archaic type of aitu text is a single story that has an aitu as its main character. These stories can be divided into those of an aitu – its etiology – and those about one. The former can provide its background, origin, name or names, the key events that established its character, its current or habitual activity, and the customs surrounding it (e.g., Stuebel 1896/1973: 173/13 f., 177/17 f., 229/69 f.). Once the aitu exists, stories can be told about it: its relations with other aitu, its appearances to human beings, and so on (e.g., Stuebel 1896/1973: 227/67 f., 229/69).

The amount of non-narrative information about the aitu can vary widely in such stories, increasing to the point that it intrudes on the narrative (Stuebel 1896/1973: 230/70 f.). I would argue that a new genre is created – an aitu description rather than an aitu story – when narrative elements are either completely suppressed or clearly subordinated to the non-narrative information of the text.

The structure of these aitu descriptions often is a practical grouping of all personal information at the beginning and habitual activity and customs at the end. Information about customs and prohibitions related to an aitu was so useful that it could be expanded even to the point of raising the suspicion that the aitu has been displaced as the center of interest. Aitu descriptions can be grouped redactionally in a complex, either through the traditional coupling of the aitu (Stuebel 1896/1973: 232/72) or through some chosen theme. For instance, the first line of an account of Nifolao and Sauma’cafe states that they are two aitu currently known in Sāmoa; the two aitu descriptions are then simply set side-by-side (Stuebel 1896/1973: 178/18 f.).

Aitu descriptions belong to the large, general category of Samoan literary descriptions: of customs, words, ceremonies, and so on. Such descriptions were not invented merely for foreigners, but are important means of cultural transmission and instruction among Samoans themselves up to the present day. The abstraction and separation of description from story is an important intellectual achievement (Charlot 1977: 490; 1985: 179 f.).

A large number of texts can also be found that include muagagana ‘proverbs’ or ‘proverbial sayings,’ a major form in Samoan literature. For the purpose of this discussion, muagagana can be divided into those formulated from narrations and those from non-narrative sources, such as observations and customs (e.g., Bülow 1899: 131–135).
The explanation of a *muagagana* of the latter type is exemplified by “Das Fafā in Falealupu” (Stuebel 1896/1973: 164/4): two sayings are cited, the social situation in which they are used is described, and the special terms employed are explained. This simple and practical form has been used by Samoans to explain *muagagana* to me – at times with a fuller discussion of the possible interpretations – and underlies, I believe, much of the non-Samoan literature on proverbial sayings.\footnote{E.g., Tumer 1884: 22–77, who omits information uninteresting to his non-Samoan readers, such as genealogies, and expresses a Christian perspective.}

Such explanations are useful for Samoans themselves because *muagagana* are often obscure and their connections to their sources unclear.

Proverbial sayings formulated from narrations are often quoted when the relevant story is told.\footnote{E.g., Stuebel 1896/1973: 169/9, nei of Pū, 236/76. Examples are numerous.} In such cases, the *muagagana* quoted is clearly subordinate to the whole narrative and does not noticeably interrupt it.

A story can, however, be told for the express purpose of explaining a *muagagana*. In “Die Geschichte von Lelei und Leaga und dem Aitu im Aoa-Baum / O le tala i Lelei ma Leaga ma le aitu i le aoa,” the title in the Samoan text reads, *O sina tala i le muagagana e faapea sei mamalu mai pea le Atua i le aoa* “A tale about the saying: ‘Let the god in the banyan tree continue shining.'”\footnote{Stuebel 1896/1973: 174/14 f. The given sense of *namalu* is not listed in the dictionaries, but is used in the German translation, 77, and is clear from the narrative, *ua pupula tele mai le aitu e pei se masina i le aoa* ‘The aitu shone brightly like a moon in the banyan tree’; *na ona mamalu lave o ia le aoa* ‘it only shines in the banyan’ (see also text). High Chief Togiola Piuga, who spoke from a different version of the story, explained to me that the *aitu* perched in the tree with the moon (or sun) behind it so that it seemed to be shining. *Mamalu* can mean to overshadow or protect, which would fit the context of the narrative. High Chief Togiola’s interpretation seems to combine shining with shadow. For an example of the story without the emphasis on the *muagagana*, see Herman 1953: 40. For a different story with a similar emphasis on a *muagagana*, see Stuebel 1896/1973: 194/34.}

The long narrative is then given in detail. At the point in the narrative from which the saying was formulated – *ua pupula pea le aitu i le aoa* ‘the aitu continued to shine in the banyan tree’ – the story-teller states as an episode conclusion, *o lea lea e fai i ai le muagagana a fai lauga o Samoa e faapea ia mamalu mai pea le Atua i le aoa* ‘For this reason, the saying is used when Samoans orate, thus: “Let the god in the banyan tree continue shining.”’ The narrative is clearly based on the saying, but the more common *aitu* and *pupula* have been substituted respectively for *aitu* and *mamalu*. An explanatory expansion is provided: *a e fai pea upu o lo tatou iu malo* ‘but the words [decisions, orders] of our district will continue to be done’ (this may be the traditional completion of the saying as used). The emphasis on the proverb in this case clearly goes beyond the mere citation found in narratives in which a saying is subordinate. At the end of the narrative, two further *muagagana* are explained by their connection to the final section of the narrative and by the social situation in which each is used.

I would argue that the shift of emphasis from the story to the *muagagana* formulated from it can be so extreme as to constitute a new genre: Proverb Stories, similar to Proverb Explanations. In “Sina und Tiame,” a cursory narrative precedes a detailed discussion of the derived saying: its ancient character, formulation, two situations in which it is used, possible interpretations, and analogical character.\footnote{Stuebel 1896/1973: 233/73 f. For a version of the story with less emphasis on the proverbial saying, see Herman 1955: 8.} Despite the abbreviated presentation of the narrative, details are still provided that are not relevant to the saying, as in the story discussed above. That is, Proverb Stories remain stories despite their non-narrational emphasis.

The predominant interest in proverbial sayings is clear in “O le tala faa-Samoal”\footnote{Herman 1955: 2.} They are mentioned in the title: *O le tala ua i ai upu taua faa-Samoal* ‘The story in which there are important Samoan words/sayings.’ Five are then listed and numbered. A conventional introduction follows, *O Pulotu . . . Tama uma,* providing information on place and characters and using stereotyped expressions: *o le ulugali lea and la laua fanau.* A stereotyped time reference, *Ua oo i le tasi aso,* connects the introduction to the narrative, which consists of episodes with conclusions of the origins of the previously listed words or sayings. The narrative continues past the last listed to a summary version of the story of the origin of the names of the Samoan islands.

“Die Geschichte von Lelei und Leaga und dem Aitu im Aoa-Baum” and “O le tala faa-Samoal” have similar structures: a title expressing the emphasis on the sayings or words, a narrative with elements irrelevant to the emphasis, and episode conclusions of the origin of the sayings or words. This is another example of a very practical Samoan form.
This article is the first in a series of three; it will be followed by "Genealogies, Multigenerational Complexes, and Texts on the Origin of the Universe" and "Texts on Historical Subjects and Bodies of Literature." These articles — as well as Charlton 1987b, 1988a, and 1988c — are the results of my stay in American Sämoa from August 1972 through July 1973, first as Curator of the Museum of American Sämoa and then as government Scholar-in-Residence. In the latter position, I concentrated on Sämoan literature, conversing with knowledgeable chiefs, collecting tapes and manuscripts, leading a Seminar in Sämoan Literature at the Community College of American Sämoa, and editing an all-Sämoan language reprint with introduction of Oskar Stuebel’s “Samoische Texte”: “O Tu ma Tala Faa-Samaoa mai le Tusi a Oskar Stuebel 1896” (1973). I also composed a book on Sämoan literature and art, which I completed on my return to Hawai’i. I have now thoroughly rewritten the chapters of that book on the basis of my later work in Hawaiian and Tahitian literature and have divided them into the separate articles mentioned above. Unfortunately, some materials, such as Moyle 1988 and the later work of Thomas Bargatzky, reached me after I had completed my work.

I wish to thank all those who helped me in Sämoa, especially the members of my seminar, the staff of the Library of American Samoa, and those chiefly families that allowed me to learn something of their traditions. One of the great experiences of my life was hearing from High Chief Togiola Fuaga the tale of Taemä and Tilafiga that his grandfather had told Augustin Krämer, while we were seated next to the very sands of Sa’ilele on which those goddesses had landed. I have learned also from my Sämoan students in Hawai’i, especially Dixie Crichton Samasoni, Happy Williams, and Fatu Taofi.

I thank John F. Mayer of the University of Hawai’i for his comments on a draft of this article; all references to him are personal communication. Mayer also showed me portions of J. W. Love’s unpublished dissertation, which discusses a number of pertinent issues, but which I was unable to use. In that dissertation and in another communication, Love proposes the use of Vladimir Propp’s work for the analysis of Sämoan story structures. He suggests briefly some possible lines of approach in the typescript I was shown, and I have seen two student papers that use Propp’s work. I have, therefore, no published materials to which I can respond and feel it unfair to come to any firm conclusions without being able to study a full-scale, completed, and professional attempt to use Propp’s work in the field. My initial reaction is negative. Propp’s analytical tools seem so general and flexible that they can be applied arbitrarily. They depend more on content analysis than actual language, which is my own basis of analysis. Propp’s work would have to be adapted to Sämoan literature rather than imposed as it is from Russian folk literature (for which the usual claims made for it strike me as inflated; see also Pavel 1989: 105 ff.). This is particularly clear in the case of Sämoan origin stories and multigenerational complexes. Certainly folk stories do not exhaust the forms of Sämoan literature, and even in those, a general pattern of, say, transgression, punishment, and restoration of equilibrium cannot be found universally without some special pleading; that pattern is itself so common in world literature that Propp’s work does not appear necessary for the point. A wide variety of proposed approaches is available for the study of oral and oral-based literatures. I prefer to derive my analytical tools from a direct examination of the literature in question, using secondary materials eclectically and only when necessary.

Mayer himself emphasized especially the influence of the social setting and audience at the story-telling performance and also the relationship of the single story structure to different literary forms; for instance, the story introduction resembles the naming of participants and statement of purpose in a formal speech (which can become as formal as a fa’alupega).

Even Hovdhaugen gave me valuable criticisms and comments (such as his remarks on final stress) on all three articles and was unfailingly supportive. Michael Macmillan proofread the articles with his characteristic acuity.

Finally, I would like to thank all those interested and knowledgeable about Sämoa who helped, criticized, and encouraged me in my work, especially Horst Cain, Thomas Bargatzky, and two anonymous journal referees.

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