

FA'ASAMOA: AN AFRO-OCEANIC UNDERSTANDING
OF EPISTEMOLOGY
THROUGH
FOLKLORE AND ORAL HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

Often disconnected from the African diaspora, the Black South Pacific is constantly laid to the wayside. My research works to shed light on the voices of Afro-Oceanic scholars who are fully capable of articulating their own narratives based on their traditional foundational knowledge that may not align with standard western notions of knowledge but in fact create a system or methods of knowledge unique to the Afro-Oceanic community and traditions. The indigenous Afro-Oceanic agenda of self-determination, indigenous rights and sovereignty, integrity, spiritual healing, reconciliation and humble morality, builds capacity towards a systematic change and re-acknowledgement of indigenous Afro-Oceanic epistemologies.

By identifying and analyzing indigenous Oceanic epistemologies, ontologies, and cosmologies, my research seeks to place Afro-Oceanic peoples within the broader African Diaspora. Scholars throughout Afro-Oceania such as Dr. A.M Tupuola, Dr. Vaioleti T.M, and Dr. Helu-Thaman interrogate the intellectual and cultural traditions of Oceanic peoples are interrogating the current conditions of Oceanic peoples and the effects of colonization. Topics such as Fa'aSamoa research methodologies, agriculture, Lapita pottery, aboriginal populations, and totems on Easter Island, for example, are being analyzed in isolation with very little regard to the African retentions throughout Oceanic society. My research is only the beginning of the work that can and should be done linking the similarities of indigenous Oceanic epistemologies, culture and traditions throughout the African diaspora and Africa.

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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to all my ancestors and my family, I could not and would not have done it without you. To my parents, thank you for allowing me to take this journey in discovering my truths. Thank you for being patient with me, sacrificing time and money that we could not afford. This paper is also dedicated to every person who have put effort into sculpting the person that I am.

Shout out to my roomie! Danielle Macon, we started together and we will continue to turn our dreams into reality. This work is specifically dedicated to my grandparents who are waiting for me to return; Agatupu and Taliilagi Lefao and Edward and Hermalene Curran who continue to be by my side until then.

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Fa’aSamoa: An Afro-Oceanic Understanding of Epistemology Through Folklore and Oral History

Glossary:

Aiga: Family

Aitu: Spirit or Ghost

Ali'i: God

Ali'i: Elder male members of the family who help the matai make decisions.

Alofa: Love

Ava: Respect towards something, someone and somewhere

Fa'aaloalo: Respect

Fa'alavelave: Social responsibility, When a social occasion such as a wedding, funeral, or when the extended family needs holistic support.

Fanua: Land

Fia palagi: Acting like a white person or a person of European descent

Ie toga: Traditional sacred woven fine mats. Finely woven mat of Pandanus fibers. Used in social occasions.

Kava: Ceremonial libations made of the Kava root.

Matai: Samoan term for High Chief of the family and/or village

Matai Ali'i: Title of sacred family name, these families are believed to be descendants of the many Afro-Oceanic Gods; only bestowed to members of that bloodline after the Matai Ali'i initiation ceremony.

Matai Pule: Social and political organization of Samoan society.

Matai: Head of the family, orator and family representative

Mealofa: Labor of love, gift

Moana: Spirit or God of Pacific Ocean

Nafanua: Land

Nu'u: Island or Country

Papalagi/ palagi: Foreigner, person of European decent, *Sails in or from the sky- Samoans established the term *papalagi* based on the great ships that the colonizers and missionaries travelled in.

Tala: Talk, words, a form of speech or dialogue between two entities.

Sa: Sacred or holy

Tulafale: Young men who help support the matai, next in line to family name

To'oto'o ma le fue: Traditional Samoan Staff and Flail

Tulafale: Younger male members of the family you carry out duties for matai

Umu: Underground "oven"

Va: an acknowledged "space" or "gap" that recognizes the relationship between individuals and others.

CHAPTER ONE

Talofa Lava,

Tagata Pasifikaⁱ have maintained their African heritage infused with the spirit of Moanaⁱⁱ, which creates a distinct Afro-Oceanic ontology, cosmology, epistemology and axiology. These frameworks and paradigms can be found throughout the Pacific by a variation of names be it; *Fa'aSamoa* in Samoa, *Veiwekani* in Fiji, *Te Katabetabe* in Kiribati, *Ni Vanuatu* and *Wantok* in Solomon Islands to name a few (Mohanty, 2011). Although these forms of being, knowing, and understanding each have their own distinct name throughout the nations within the South Pacific, they are each interconnected and woven together like a basket made of coconut palms. In the islands of Samoa this intangible spirituality, way of being, thinking, moving, speaking, communicating, *va fealoa'i* (space between one another) is known as *Fa'aSamoa*ⁱⁱⁱ. The acknowledgment and exploration of *Fa'aSamoa* is necessary in reconnecting the Black Pacific to its African roots while honoring our ancestors who fearlessly migrated across the Pacific Ocean and settled on islands we know as; Australia, Hawaii, Vanuatu, Tonga, Niue, Solomon Islands, Papua, Fiji, Tokelau, Timor, New Zealand, Kiribati and Mariana islands to name a few.

Studying these island nations in isolation is very important and scholars such as (insert pacific scholars) have thoroughly analyzed a variety of subjects such as the Black power movements in Papua New Guinea and Australia, the effects of Non-Government Organizations in Fiji, the agricultural and marine studies in Tahiti, the voyages and vessels used across the Pacific Ocean and many more (Insert Citation). Most scholars within “modern^{iv}” academia have created a very distinct function of their analysis of phenomena across the south Pacific. However, on a philosophical level, not much work has been done to create and connect indigenous Oceanic epistemological frameworks on a global scale. It is important to explore, analyze and connect *Fa'aSamoa* to the broader Oceania to reclaim and rekindle our traditional relationships that enabled Tagata Pasifika to create intricate and advanced societies.

During my studies within Africology, I began to see the similarities between *Fa'aSamoa* and various African epistemologies such as the Bwino epistemology of the Bantu people across the African continent. I realized that these similarities were much more profound than that and were in fact connections and retentions from our African ancestors. Specifically, when I began reading and learning about African

folklore, songs and oral histories. This paper will explore this Samoan way of knowing and being to make connections between Fa'aSamoa folklore and Bantu folklore via documented oral histories.

Fa'aSamoa for example, is a form of oral, written, physical and spiritual knowledge and wisdom passed down from generation to generation which has maintained the Samoan epistemology, cosmology, spirituality, history and everything in between. As people migrated across the world, they adapted to their environments and tried their best to maintain their culture and traditions by establishing their own forms of satellite communities that mirrored their former society. Aspects such as folklore, libations to honor the ancestors and Gods, ceremonial rites of passage, circumcision, significance of naming, matrifocal organization, community cooperation and maintaining order and balance with principles such as Maat^v and Fa'aSamoa are only a few of the retentions and contributions that the Nile Valley civilization has given to the world (Nehusi, 2015, Browder, 1992). Evidence of ancient Kemetic culture and traditions can be found across the African diaspora in different and similar forms as many Africans travelled far and wide. Some of these African migrations were due to change in climate, out of their own conquest for better opportunities and others were forcefully enslaved or kidnapped against their will.

The unity and interdependency of Pasifika peoples cultivates an essential epistemological database that can be used to combat epistemological violence (Bickhard & Teo, 2011; Rabaka, 2010; Stoler, 2009; Robins. et al., 1991). This research brings indigenous Oceanic scholars such as Dr. Meleisea at the University of the South Pacific, Dr. Anne Marie Tupuola and Dr. Sauni at the University of Auckland as well as many others whose names who were never physically recorded but will forever live on through oral history. This research acknowledges and engages with scholars who diligently and consistently work against the constant epistemic violence against indigenous knowledge and epistemologies outside of Europe.

All of these beautiful island nations make up the physical Pasifika but the spirit of Tagata Pasifika is culturally rich with African histories, migrations, culture, languages and traditions. One of the difficulties within this research is the common denial of and resistance to being or relating to anything African or Black. Throughout the Oceanic, the skin politics regarding the caste system are very much operating due to the vile colonial rape and destruction of the indigenous Oceanic islands, its people and their epistemologies. Colonization severed the relationship between the Oceanic people and the spirit of the Moana by

attempting to dismantle their indigenous ways of knowing and being. The Oceanic islands were divided up amongst recreant European dastards who tried to remove and destroy the histories and identities of the Tagata Pasifika, with hollow promises of Jesus Christ, Western cultural hegemony and capitalism.

In Dr. Asante's *An Afrocentric Manifesto* he explains that Afrocentricity is "a consciousness, quality of thought, mode of analysis and an actionable perspective where Africans seek, from agency, to assert subject place within the context of African history" (Asante, 2007, p. 16). Examining my research from an Afrocentric perspective is pertinent in decolonizing the literature that has been produced regarding Fa'aSamoa. Moreover, using an Afrocentric lens provides a grounding physical location that connects the African continent to the various countries within the African diaspora. Asante argues that "Afrocentricity provides the necessary instruments to transform the condition of the colonized, the victimized, the wretched and the nihilistic" by relocating redefining and cultivating African agency by any means necessary (Asante, 2007, p. 31). In order to re-examine, redefine and cultivate a holistic understanding of Fa'aSamoa, I must use an Afrocentric lens to understand the indigenous African roots of Afro-Oceania. Furthermore, Afrocentricity provides a framework and methodology that asserts and acknowledges African contributions to the global society.

Using Molefi Kete Asante's (Asante, 2007) Afrocentric epistemological framework to examine this Afro-Oceanic phenomenon as well as, Ama Mazama's (Mazama, 2002) understandings and definitions of the Afrocentric paradigm, this essay will explore the epistemological understandings of Fa'aSamoa within an oral historical context and the ways in which these academic understandings, record and analysis of Fa'aSamoa influence the evolution of this Afro-Oceanic way of life. Mazama's Afrocentric Paradigm (2002) clarifies and discusses the definitions and understandings of Afrocentricity and the components of the Afrocentric paradigm. Mazama builds upon Asante's definitions of Afrocentricity and introduces an Afrocentric paradigm that she argues is incomplete without a functional aspect, in which, Afrocentric scholars must "activate our consciousness" and use our academic platforms to liberate our communities (Mazama, 2002, p. 8). Mazama explains that without the functional aspect of the Afrocentric paradigm, our intellectual work as scholars will be incomplete and ineffective for the liberation and growth of African peoples.

Fa'aSamoa then acts as the functional aspect of Mazama's Afrocentric paradigm, it is the activation of Asante's victorious consciousness, acknowledging our African roots, exploring our spirituality, maintaining our humanity, creating and building community. Fa'aSamoa also creates a space and acts as the framework for research methods and protocol developed by Samoan scholars such as Dr. Tupuola's *Talanoa Research Method* and Dr. Sauni's *Ula Model*, which I will elaborate on further in the later chapters. Both research methods and protocol utilize Fa'aSamoa as the foundational framework and authority. This Afro-Oceanic epistemological framework can also be linked to modern African epistemologies and ancient Kemetic principles of Maat^{vi} such as respect and reciprocity to name a few (Karenga, 2004, p. 7).

Fa'aSamoa is more than just a way of life, it is a form of resistance to anything that does not align with our entire spirit. It is our African retentions infused with the spirit of the South Pacific Ocean. During my ancestor's voyage, they became one with the Ocean. Humble, interdependent, vast, complex, powerful, fluid, in sync with a vital life source, water. Fa'aSamoa is the heart of the Pacific, founded upon God, love, respect and reciprocity; loyal to the whims of nature. Indigenous Oceanic stories, folklore, proverbs, histories, triumphs and tribulations are what formulate the unique spirit of Oceanic peoples. These same narratives are woven through every aspect of their lives and can also be found across the Oceania. We must begin and continue to examine Fa'aSamoa as an academic framework, from the Pacific island of Samoa and utilize Fa'aSamoa research methodologies to liberate the minds of Afro-Oceanic peoples.

Ani points out that the African diaspora needs to focus on the African youth who are still in tune with their spirituality and can go against and challenge the binary and linear "illusions of reality" (Ani: 1994, p. 107) which is why this research is so important. Doing so would restore and liberate African minds from Eurocentric indoctrination and false sense of reality which is destroying our planet because of excess use of natural resources, demolition of ancient epistemologies and even the extinction of authentic culture

all over the world. Fa'a Samoa must be activated and maintained to and reeducate people of the balanced ways of existence for the sustainability and continuity of the planet and human existence.

This work is very powerful in ways that may be unfathomable for scholars who have disconnected their mind from their bodies and their bodies from the earth on which they exist. Moreover, scholars who accept their ancestral duties of cultivating, redefining and relocating holistic wisdom and knowledge are not only honoring their ancestors but are in fact reintroducing holistic epistemologies that are linked to infinite ancestors, their experiences, their journeys, their ways of life which have maintained societies for centuries and have been stolen, transformed and dismantled by scholars unable to fully grasp and comprehend physical and metaphysical phenomena simultaneously.

CHAPTER TWO

Honoring our African Heritage

“Bwino bonso ke bwino, bwino I kwikala biya ne Bantu”
“Knowledge is not knowledge; true knowledge is to know how to live in
harmony with our fellow human beings”- Luba Proverb
(Eze, Chukwudi. (1998). African Philosophy: An Anthology. Oxford, UK: Blackwell).

African cosmology, epistemology and axiology have always and will continue to embrace the holistic sense of knowledge and wisdom, which encompasses the physical and metaphysical, relationship between and within the planet earth, human beings and understanding balance; in order to maintain order by practicing various forms of Ma’at (Karenga, 2004). Per Maulana Karenga, Maat was an ideal way in which African peoples maintained balance and order within society by acknowledging and honoring aspects of Maat as an “interrelated order of rightness” in the continuum of life, divine and reality which created a sense of continuity and connection with everyone and everything (Karenga; 2004, p. 7).

Contrast to European forms of thought, Ani discusses the “hostile relationship between “human” and nature, in which the human seeks to control nature”, which is characteristically non-African (Ani: 1994 p. 84). African societies did not wish to control nature because they understood that the God Netcherw^{vii} ultimately was the creator and present within all aspects of life and thus could not be controlled but rather be honored and appreciated. African peoples throughout the diaspora have innate ways of knowing that do not and often cannot be verbally explained but rather are felt and understood within the mind, soul and spirit on both individual and communal levels.

There are many similarities between Fa’aSamoa and Ma’at, which can be linked back to ancient Kemetic civilization by scholars such as Van Sertima, Maulana Karenga, Cheik Anta Diop, George G. M James, St. Clair Drake, Molefi Kete Asante, and Kimani Nehusi and many others. These similarities have survived years of European colonization, economic exploitation, political warfare, displacement, and Christian religion by transforming and adapting to the change of the tides. Principles such as equality, respect, reciprocity, balance, humility and the power of knowledge, combined with the indigenous knowledge and studious observations of animal and plant life, helped to create a deeply related African essence or spirituality.

In the West African Yoruba, spiritual practice of Ifa, the Goddess of the Ocean is known as Yemaya (Otero and Falola ed., 2013). In the edited anthology of Yemoja (2013); Allison Sellers explains that Yemaya is said to be a diligent protector of her children and provides for them in ways the ocean provides a variety of vital life sources such as food and water (Otero and Falola ed., 2013, p. 131). Yemaya the Goddess and protector of the Ocean is known to be essential life source herself, and without her life on earth would be impossible. Similar to Yemaya, is the Samoan goddess of the ocean Moana. Moana is also considered to be the spirit of the South Pacific Ocean, a daughter of Tagaloa; the supreme God of the heavens who helped create the universe with the female God of rocks and land Nafanua (Howe, 2007, p. 27). From my travels and conversations, elders in Samoa still refer to the ocean as Moana rather than the Samoa term used for sea or ocean *Sami*. This deep connection or *deep relation* between the Pacific Ocean and Oceanic people is also evident across the African continent and diaspora (Shilliam, 2015, p. 13).

Water is such a vital life source; it can infuse itself into almost anything while also providing a necessary element for creation. Kimani Nehusi wrote an in-depth analysis of libation and the significance of this African ritual across the African diaspora. Nehusi argues that “before life there was water. The first life forms were resident in water and all life forms for the first stages of their lives or for all their lives, are resident in water” (Nehusi, 2016, p.160). The water Gods Yemaya and Moana signify an essence of all living organisms. Similar to the 70% water found in blood, Fa’aSamoa infuses itself into the mind, body and soul of Samoan people (Howe, 2007, p. 3). My research explores an Afro-Oceanic essence; understanding of self, spirituality, knowledge productions and relationships to their physical and metaphysical environment known as Fa’aSamoa.

African Epistemologies

To correctly examine and comprehend the authentic definitions of Fa’aSamoa, I must interrogate the origins and definitions of epistemology. I could have regurgitated the European understandings of epistemology and its “Greek origins”, however due to the extreme epistemic and physical violence European epistemologies have birthed, I will use the African understandings and definitions of epistemology (Weber, 1864; Foucault, 1988; Sosa, 2017). Furthermore, as an intentional scholar who understands the African origins of Afro-Oceanic peoples, I will begin by unravelling the understandings and definitions of African epistemologies to as a paradigmatic foundation. Within this Afrocentric

paradigm and understanding of epistemology only then will I be able to compare the similarities of Samoan understandings and definitions of epistemology. This chapter will examine the ways in which epistemology and ways of knowing manifested in Africa; connecting the foundations of African epistemology to the components of Fa'aSamoa. These African understandings of knowledge and wisdom are comprehensive and extensive with centuries of tedious cultivation and consistent nourishment.

In the Encyclopedia of Black studies (Asante & Mazama ed., 2005) African epistemology is defined as the following:

“African epistemology is the African theory of knowledge, which includes the African conception of the nature of knowledge, the means used to gain knowledge, the criteria for the assessment of the validity of knowledge, the purpose of the pursuit of knowledge, and the role that knowledge plays in human existence. The adjective African applied to a people implies that that people, given the specificity of their location in the world and their experience in human history, have as African people a specific way of understanding and explaining the world and the complexity of the human condition.” (Asante & Mazama ed., 2005, p. 40)

Mutumbo cultivates this definition of African epistemology and emphasizes an “African conception of the nature of knowledge” by interrogating “the fundamental questions of how and why knowledge is created” (Asante & Mazama ed., 2005, p. 40). He explains that the African understandings of knowledge consists of “the wisdom of oral tradition (...) creation of myths, folktales, and proverbs; the way of seeking truth in social, political, and religious institutions; the work of healer; the avenues for finding guilty parties in traditional justice systems; and the ways of solving family disputes and other social conflicts” (Asante & Mazama ed., 2005, p. 41).

Mutumbo breaks down the components of African epistemology into three major categories: “the supernatural, the natural and the paranormal paths to knowledge.” (Asante & Mazama ed., 2005, p. 41). He explains that the first category in which, knowledge is cultivated and created is through the “cognitive modes of divination and revelation.” (Asante & Mazama ed., 2005, p. 41) These supernatural communication rituals, veneration of, and connection to sacred Gods and ancestors are the first steps towards African “paths to knowledge.” (Asante & Mazama ed., 2005, p. 41) Mutumbo emphasizes that without tapping into and acknowledging different modes of being that is connected to the entire universe, one cannot fully understand the ultimate truth they seek.

The second component of the path to knowledge is the “natural cognitive mode,” this pathway towards knowledge involves the “natural faculties or abilities”, including intuition and reason (Asante &

Mazama, 2005, p. 41). Mutumbo argues that intuition consists of “feeling and insights” that are the product of the human heart and reason is the product of “reality through the human intellect and logical thought process.” (Asante & Mazama, 2005, p. 41)

It is important to recognize that *logic*,^{viii} from an Afrocentric standpoint must be understood from an African perspective. The interpretation and utilization of logic depends on the location of one’s consciousness. Mutumbo clarifies that in an African sense logic or the combination of, “intuition and reason are not mutually exclusive” but rather, when combined create the third component of “paranormal cognition or extrasensory perception.” (Asante & Mazama, 2005, p. 41) The activation of this elevated form of consciousness is a powerful mechanism because when this holistic form of consciousness and understanding is activated and utilized all aspects of the truth can be sought out and understood through natural, supernatural and paranormal forms.

Often referred to as “grey areas” in science or metaphysical phenomena can be explained and are understood from an African epistemological framework; which is holistic rather than dualistic (Smith, 1999, p. 109). Mutumbo provides examples of ancient African epistemologies such as the “Bwino epistemology of Bantu philosophy, and the Ofamfa-Matemasi epistemology of the Akan” (Asante & Mazama ed., 2005, p. 41) which have maintained and incorporated balance in each society. For a group of humans to live in harmony and ensure their existence in the future a society must acknowledge the limited natural resources and control the unlimited human wants. A set of rules and regulations therefore must be established for a society to thrive via honorific spirituality, sustainable living, a code of honor, ethics and interdependency.

Eze Chukwudi also examined African epistemology and identified the eight major characteristics that are within it:

1. *The principle of intellectual humility and non-dogmatism*
2. *Cosomotheandricity*
3. *An ethical dimension with a focus on wisdom*
4. *Rejection of the notion of “knowledge for knowledge’s sake” and “art for art’s sake”*
5. *A holistic perspective focused on the interconnectedness and balance of reality*
6. *Rejection of compartmentalization of knowledge, an integration of various disciplines, and a rejection of the opposition of reason and other cognitive faculties*

7. *Rejection of the opposition of the sacred and the profane, religion and science, knowledge and faith*
8. *Rejection of the opposition of the individual and the community as cognitive agent.* (Chukwudi, 1998, pg 42)

These foundational components are significant because they encompass the three components of African epistemology that Mutumbo describes. These vital characteristics exist within African epistemologies throughout the African Diaspora (Bangura, 2015; Chukwudi, 1998; Nkulu-N'Sengha, 2005). I will use these components of African epistemology as the foundational framework in my definitions of Fa'aSamoa in attempts to link this Afro-Oceanic epistemological concept to the broader conceptions of African epistemology, cosmology and oral history in chapter three.

Chukwudi explains how the Bwino epistemology or “superior level of knowledge” is only attained when the person who seeks and looks for knowledge and wisdom has a “good or pure” heart in order to seek the truth (Chukwudi, 1998, p. 42). This African tradition of maintaining balance between the heart and the mind does not allow room for “grey areas” but rather provides in-depth analysis and observations of the earth and everything that dwells among it, tangible and intangible. This complete pathway to knowledge observation and wisdom production is also maintained and preserved within indigenous Afro-Oceanic forms of thinking. This brief section will overview the Bantu examples of African epistemologies via folklore and oral history to get a better understanding of the manifestation of African epistemology to examine and connect Fa'aSamoa to its true African origins.

Mutumbo describes the Bwino epistemology of the Bantu people of Central Africa. This epistemology is only one of the thousands of various indigenous African epistemologies that influence the lives of Africans throughout the African diaspora. Mutumbo explains that within the Bwino/Bantu epistemology, “genuine knowledge is not divorced from wisdom” which creates a holistic and thorough framework that has been cultivated for centuries passed down for generations via oral histories, folklore, songs and dance (Asante & Mazama ed., 2005, p. 43). This “superior level of knowledge” therefore is only generated and maintained by keen students and eager learners who are worthy of knowledge and wisdom which are not mutually exclusive but in fact interdependent (Asante & Mazama ed., 2005, p. 43). Mutumbo explains that this type of knowledge can only be generated by a person who has “mucima muyampe” or a pure heart (Asante & Mazama ed., 2005, p. 43). Mutumbo argues that a person who understands and

appreciates “the harmonious and peaceful coexistence with all human beings (Bantu) and all things (Bintu) (...) as the fundamental characteristic and criterion of the credibility of knowledge” can reach this superior level of knowledge and wisdom (Asante & Mazama ed., 2005, p. 43). This is significant because it creates a level of humility in which the seeker of knowledge must foster in order to understand something as vast and powerful as knowledge and wisdom. Furthermore, with oral histories and tradition the elder who passes down this knowledge and wisdom must believe and gauge whether that person is worth of such power, responsibility and ultimately their epistemological essence. Within an African context knowledge must be used to maintain and sustain ma’at.

One way African peoples have maintained their oral histories are through folktales and songs. The socialization and educational journey of the child would be considered incomplete if the child did not learn or hear of a folktale or folklore from an elder, read about one in a book at school or watched a folktale story unfold through digital animations on their favorite cartoon series. Folktales or folklore are commonly known as stories or fables, which accentuate the experience of the protagonist, whom is usually an animal that has human attributes such as talking, singing, walking up right, etc. These folktales are in fact oral and mental reservoirs of knowledge that incorporate important life lessons instilling worthy moral values that are a significant factor of African oral tradition and history. African animal folklore is significant because it is a method in which African traditions are maintained and acknowledge the balance and respect between animals, Mother Nature and human beings in totality. This form of “edutainment” helped to maintain a particular level of respect, knowledge and appreciation of nature rather than disconnected western ideals of separation between the nature, spirituality and human beings (Nehusi, 2009, p. 2; Ani: 1994, p. 83). In this African tradition “epistemology (Bwino) and ontology (Bumuntu) are inseparable”, knowledge and wisdom are gained from an interdependent relationship between humans and their natural environment ((Asante & Mazama ed., 2005, p. 44).

Until the story of the hunt is told by the lion, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter. – African Proverb

“L’émotion est nègre comme la rasion hellène” – Leopold Senghor

Oral History: Folktales

African animal folklore gave human like characteristics such as emotions or speech to animals in attempts to explain simultaneous natural and social phenomena. Attributing human characteristics to animals emphasized the natural order of interdependency, which formed a constituting unit, allowing human beings to understand their positionality and relationship within the physical realm of life on earth (Vernus: 2012). Traditional African culture and oral tradition is extensively intertwined and connected to advanced notions African cosmology, which connects a spiritual knowing with the nuances of physical life.

African cosmology is a spiritual view and epistemology which acknowledges the intricate relationship between a supreme being, various deities, divinities, spiritual powers, human beings and nature (Peek & Yankah (ed.): 2004, p. 12). Similar to ancient Kemetic practices, sacred totems were honored and recorded in ancient Kemet as inherent spirits which were deified and each appointed or selected totem was sacred meaning that that particular animal could not be killed or harmed because of its spiritual significance (Asante: 2007, p. 64-66; Diop: 1974). The significance and origins of totems and their connection to folktale animal characters’ correlates with the idea of animism, which incorporates the “belief in dwelling spirits inherent in people, animals, plants (...) often personalized or anthropomorphized” (Green (ed.): 1997, p.19). Furthermore, the existence of African animal folktales and documentation of anthropomorphized characters found in ancient Kemet locate the origins of this valuable knowledge base which was established by African “accumulated knowledge” of animal characteristics (Nehusi: 2009, p. 2).

African animal folklore is an advanced form of “artistic communication”, knowledge and wisdom (Green (ed.): 1997, p. 15), which has survived European acculturation and violent demolition of its African origins. There are numerous aspects of African culture that have been stolen, altered and destroyed by insatiable Europeans who have continuously abused the wealth and abundance of knowledge, natural resources, land, and epistemologies, not to mention human beings.

The following section will focus on the aspect of African animal folklore and further emphasize the intricate spiritual connection and understanding of African epistemology, cosmology and ontology,

which encompasses a close relationship between Africans themselves and their physical surroundings, which enable the existence of, thus said folktales.

The art of African animal folktales is an ancient and advanced form of communication, education and entertainment, which has been used for centuries to educate and entertain communities of people around the world. The origin of animal folktales has been argued to be a product of ancient Greece, however scholars have provided extensive and scientific research to prove its African origins (Nehusi: 2009; James: 2009; Scheub: 2005; Gates and McKay (ed.): 1996; Kusimba and Yurco: 1996; Diop: 1974; etc.). One may recall seeing a dancing owl or bear for example as a school mascot during sporting events, or during their travels have seen the elaborate costumes and floats symbolizing various animals during carnival celebrations or heard of animals being mummified in ancient Kemet and wondered why they would spend so much time and effort in acknowledging and honoring specific animals? (Smart and Nehusi (ed.): 2000). Similar, the existence of animals within common folktales or stories such as the infamous race between turtle and the hare; the friendship between the lion and the mouse or the advantageous endeavors of Anansi the spider, one may have wondered how an animal could be perceived as having human characteristics? Each of these folktales has very important messages about equality, respect, reciprocity, balance, humility and the power of knowledge which influence almost every aspect of life.

E. B Tylor, a European anthropologist in his 1871, *Primitive Culture: Researches into development of mythology, philosophy, religion, art and custom*, that the gradual development of the natural, social and spiritual worlds of “ancient savage philosophers” contributed toward complex and higher modes of existence and reality that Europeans could not fully comprehend or relate to (Tylor: 1871, p. 129). Tylor’s use of the terms “primitive” and “ancient savage philosophers” provides an example of his ignorance and racist ideals. Both Tylor and Eliade unknowingly were referring to an advanced form of African epistemology, which surpasses European singular and limited notions of the physical world and human existence by acknowledging and connecting spirituality to life experiences and interactions.

Eliade builds upon Tylor’s European religious belief systems, in the 1957, *The Sacred and The Profane* provides an analysis of the physical manifestations of the “sacred” in contrast to “mysterious acts” which are “a manifestation of something of a wholly different order, a reality that does not belong to our world” referred to as the “profane” (Eliade: 1957, p. 10-11). Eliade argues that the civilized or advanced

people of Europe could only understand the history of religion through these binary provisions and that the “religious man deeply desires to be, to participate in reality, to be saturated with power” (Eliade: 1957, p. 13). Not only are his claims self-indulging but also infer that in order to be “religious” one had to want or require a particular type of physical power. Eliade furthers his argument by defining the “sacred power” as a means of reality that is “saturated with being” and juxtaposed to the “profane” which he states “is often expressed as an opposition between real and unreal or pseudoreal” (Eliade: 1957, p. 12). This epistemology or form of engagement within the separated physical and non-physical realms of reality is very limiting and creates boundaries or “grey areas” that were unaddressed and unacknowledged within European society which must have left people within their society disoriented and living within a false sense of reality.

Furthermore, *Stolen Legacy* by George G. M. James, argues that the ancient Egyptians educated the Greeks “as a result of Persian invasion” in 525 B.C and that the constant warfare and volatile state of affairs in Europe at the time was not a suitable environment for the creation of philosophy (James: 2009, p. 15-16; Earle and Lowe: 2005). James states that not only did the ancient Greeks receive their education from ancient Kemet; they also stole and did not give credit to their African colleagues and teachers. These ancient African epistemologies, (way of thinking or forms of knowing) are still present in African culture despite European colonization and attempts to disengage and separate the mind from the holistic spirit and were also heavily present in ancient Kemet with the existence of sacred animal totems.

Diop uses scientific and archeological findings, which shed light on the existence and significance of totems in ancient Kemet (Diop: 1974, p. 227). In his text *The African Origin of Civilization*, Diop presents photographic documentation of the Sphinx monuments that are still present in Kemet. The people of ancient Kemet understood and acknowledged the significance of animal totems and spent a great deal of time and energy to honor their connection to the various animal totems by building great monuments of them. Not only did they build monuments of their totems they also would strategically build monuments of their spirit animals to guard their pyramids and tombs. Asante builds upon Diop’s work in his text *The History of Africa*, which elaborates and describes the various totems used and variations of Sphinx such as a lion with a human’s body or the falcon with the lions body each with their own significance and relation to a divine deity that would serve as a protector of the people who were connected to their own individual totems (Asante: 2007, p. 33).

Anthony Browder skillfully combines the literature of scholars such as William Leo Hansberry, Willis N. Huggins, Carter G. Woodson, J.A Rogers, W.E.B DuBois, John Henrik Clarke, Asa Hilliard, George G.M James, Cheik Anta Diop and many others regarding Ancient Kemet and the *Nile Valley Contributions to Civilization* (Browder: 1992). In his text Browder discusses the elaborate and significant contributions of knowledge, architecture, education, navigational systems, agriculture and many other areas of civilization (Browder: 1992). He points out some of the significant meanings of “symbols and symbolic thought” that was present in all “dimensions of life”, which played a key role in the development of these certain aspects of civilization and the ways in which ancient Africans maintained their society. Browder also points out the symbols and use of animal totems such as the Falcon God Horus, the protective Aker Lions and the Benu bird, which represents “regeneration of the soul”, each animal had their distinct and powerful meanings which will be further discussed later (Browder: 1992, p. 55 – 72).

The documentation and evidence of animal anthropomorphism has been found in ancient Egypt as mentioned above and seen on the Turin Erotic Papyrus from the Ramesses period currently stored in the Louvre Museum and can also be traced from oral literature of African civilizations of the Nile “beyond Kemet” (Richelieu: 2013; Nehusi: 2009, p. 3; Browder: 1992). The Papyrus documents and depicts animals such as an ostrich, monkey and fox standing upright carrying items over their shoulders and on top of their head, a lion and donkey playing musical instruments and various other animals performing human tasks (Turin Erotic Papyrus 55001). This is only one of many of the forms of documentation that can prove the existence of anthropomorphism in Kemet that have been found in various tombs, pyramids, papyri and ancient drawings with a vast amount of ancient documentation which as not yet been rediscovered or has been destroyed. This is significant to this research by relocating and providing context for African animal folktales to their origin in ancient Kemet and restoring the “fundamental truths” of Africa’s contribution to civilization (Karenga: 2004, p. 6).

Oral History and Animal Folktales

Oral tradition was a means in which history, traditions and culture was maintained and passed from older generations to the younger generations in order to ensure the survival of important aspects of history and culture. Not only were folktales for educational for the “common folk” or communal gatherings

they were also a form of entertainment (Nehusi: 2009, p. 1). Oral tradition in central Africa still maintains and utilizes aspects of animal anthropomorphism found in ancient Kemet and have been recognized as “several major categories of orally transmitted text recognized by the Nyanga. Nyanga is a community of Bantu people who vastly travelled and migrated within the Great Lake regions of Africa such as the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda (Peek and Yankah (ed.), 2004, p. 54). According to the Nyanga there are different genres of folktales such as karisi, uano, mushumo, inondo, mubikiro, ihamuriro and nyimbo.

The karisi includes “long, sung, and recited epic narratives”, that focus on the trials and tribulations of an anthropomorphic hero with the help of multiple characters such as Mwindoxi who was born as a full size young boy (Peek and Yankah (ed.), 2004, p.53). This form of folktale can also be considered an epic due to the large amount of characters involved in the story and the multiple layers of not only the facial expressions and tone of the storyteller but also the participation from the audience such as singing, dancing and clapping.

Uano is the type of folktales where the major characters are animals, anthropomorphized animals, and humans in diverse roles, which were fluid between one another (Peek and Yankah (ed.), 2004, p.53). An example of Uano, are the tales of Anansi the Spider. For example, Anansi was known as an intelligent trickster who used his cleverness to achieve great victories such as gaining the hand in marriage of the most sought after princess in Africa. After completing the almost impossible tasks that the King had commanded him to execute, Anansi earned his daughter’s hand in marriage (Pelton: 1989, p. 87). Another popular tale about Anansi he is portrayed as a man. During this tale, Anansi takes his friend whom is also a King to find a suitable wife who will truly love him. Anansi suggests that he and his friend exchange garments so that the women would not know that he was a king (Pelton: 1989, p. 89). The intersectionality between the human and animal physique within the Anasi character correlates to the anthropomorphized beings found in ancient Kemet.



Figure 1: Anansi the Spider

Another aspect of African animal folktale is Mushumo or African proverbs, which covers a large range of succinct principles and truths regarding everyday life, i.e.: Knowledge is like a garden: if it is not cultivated, it cannot be harvested (Peek and Yankah (ed.), 2004, p.54). Connecting knowledge to a garden emphasizes the idea that knowledge is like nature and must be nurtured, watered, tended to with care in order to reap results or fruits and vegetables. Similar to a garden to acquire knowledge requires practice and discipline such as reading, writing and critical thinking. This genre is sometimes the most difficult to interpret or understand at first because it may be told in a form of a riddle or ways in which requires conscious and analytical thinking. Mushumo may not often include anthropomorphized animals but do often include the use or actions of animals to describe human like situations and are often said at the end of the animal folktale to emphasize the moral of the story or give the audience words of wisdom. This form of oral history required deep reflection and acute observations of society which African people were able to view their interactions, morals and ethics from a holistic standpoint.

Similar to mushumo, inondo consists of riddles. A riddle could consist of African proverbs and/or a series of mysterious questions or statements or poem that requires the audience to ponder the meaning, definition or significance. Inondo stories usually took place at social gatherings, dances and communal interactions for entertainment (Peek and Yankah (ed.), 2004, p.54). Although some animal folktales do have songs present the forms mubikiriro, ihamuriro and nyimbo are specially tailored spiritual songs which include dancing, singing, clapping and occasional use of instruments such as the drums if they are available (Peek and Yankah (ed.), 2004, p.55). Mubikiriro specifically consists of praise, prose and poetry which include standardized text, sung and/or recited invocations and prayers regarding divination, oath taking and

healing (Peek and Yankah (ed.), 2004, p. 55). Animals Gods and deities are usually present and honored through acknowledgment of the earth such as; water, fire and land, the sun and the moon, the ocean and the land, etc. (Peek and Yankah (ed.), 2004, p.55). Mubikiro, Ihamuro and Nyimbo all usually takes place during traditional rituals or ceremonies such as rites of passage or the birth of a baby where the Gods, deities and ancestors are summoned to join and bless the community with their presence. Similar to ceremonies in ancient Kemet animal totems were used to honor the Gods and bless the ceremony (Peek and Yankah (ed.), 2004, p.55).

Each of these aspects or variations of African oral history incorporate and use aspects of a spiritualized universe which acknowledge and honored the significance of animals and their connections to the spirits and ancestors and their essential role within African society past, present and future.

These examples are only a few of the many Gods and divinities that were portrayed as having animal parts of the body or correlated their existence with that of their spirit or totem animal. The existence and divine connection between the Gods, humans and animals in ancient Egypt disbursed throughout Africa through oral histories and cultural spiritual connections to the sacred animal totems and divinities as African people migrated across the continent. African culture and cosmology encompasses all notions of reality holistically and that the divine existed in everything. This advanced African knowledge and epistemology never separated the physical notions of materialistic beings and spiritual intangibles, which created a deep appreciation and understanding of life and the connection to their environment. African peoples understood that everything in the material world was a creation from the spiritual and therefore in order to maintain the physical world they must also maintain the spiritual.



Figure 2: The Turin Erotic Papyrus

After I understood the definitions and identified some foundational components of African epistemology and oral history, I could connect elements of Fa'aSamoa to the Bantu *Bwino*; such as the importance of respect for elders and the universe, the use of anthromorphism to illustrate the interdependency between the physical and metaphysical environment, a deep appreciation for the connection between the physical and spiritual realm as well as the importance of maintaining good relations with fellow human beings to sustain their lives and healthy communities. The *Bwino/Bantu* is only one example of African epistemologies that I chose to highlight. The abundance and almost identical set of principles which these alternative modes of analysis and consciousness are founded upon only help to solidify the relationship or as Robbie Shilliam would describe as the *deep relation* between Africa and Oceania; Samoa specifically.

Understanding the history of Oceania is important in understanding the destruction of strong Pasifika ties among the South Pacific island nations and the vilification of their African heritage, physical features, and spiritual beliefs. This short chapter will realign the location of Oceania and give a brief

synopsis of the European attempts to “divide and conquer” Tagata Pasifika (Shilliam, 2017). Relocating and exploring the history of Oceania is pertinent in ensuring the appropriate execution of coordination and organization that Afro-Oceanic people had in place centuries before European contact, demise and decline. The enforced infiltration of European epistemologies and frameworks attempted to devour and spoil the sophisticated algorithm of Fa’aSamoa however, the resiliency and spiritual strength of Samoan people and their Afro-Oceanic ancestors was victorious.

CHAPTER THREE

African Origins and Relocation

Have you ever seen a coconut floating in the ocean? Coconuts are truly amazing, per National Geographic coconuts are found in over 90% of the countries across the world and they can survive up to 110 days or about 3000 miles and still can germinate once it finds soil^{ix}. This is significant because its roots are self-sustaining and can endure vast travel across the ocean. Early Afro-Oceanic people made sure to include with them the domesticated plants and animals, ensuring their survival during their long voyages across the Pacific Ocean and on shore (Howe, 2007, p. 35). The versatility and ways in which societies use coconuts is also significant. Every aspect of the coconut and the coconut tree are used in various aspects of life such as nourishment, physical building, fuel, household tools such as brooms and woven coconut palm window shades.

Like the versatility and endurance of a coconut, African spirituality, epistemology and cosmology have also travelled and influenced societies around the world. People throughout the African diaspora must embrace and honor our African heritage rather than try to dispel its existence. Our African ancestors inspired movement, culture everything that relates to our current way of life.

This chapter will provide a brief literature review of the African origins of Afro-Oceanic peoples and the ways in which they have maintained their African epistemologies. Understanding the Pacific nations and their connection to Africa is important in strengthening the bonds within the African diaspora. This research will not attempt to scientifically map out the migration patterns of Afro-Oceanic peoples but rather analyze the established literature and data to connect the truth about Afro-Oceanic people, their history and their origins.

After exploring the Bwino epistemology of the Bantu people, I would like to briefly provide some context of African migration within and out of Africa. This brief section will shed light on the reason for migration and the ways in which African people travelled. I will begin with the archive of some of the first written documentation of phenomena in ancient Egypt.

In “Black Folk Here and There”, St. Clair Drake lays out the “Black experience” beginning with Ancient Egypt and maps out the interactions, involvements and exchanges that African people contributed to the world (Drake, 1987, p. xi). Constant travel and movement of African people swiftly navigated the

globe for commerce, trade, political agendas and expansion of their communities/ empires. African people carried with them their language, culture and traditions often mixing and interbreeding with those that they met along the way (Drake, 1987). African people were present and living throughout Africa, the Middle East, Asia, North and South America. Drake stated; “The complexities of the African Diaspora into the Western Hemisphere that began during the 16th century can only be understood if placed in context of vast movements of people (...) journeying to the Americas as indentured servants or adventurous free men and women seeking expanded political and economic opportunity” (Drake, 1987, p. 303). With constant travel and forced displacement of African people across the globe, the cultural aspects of these various societies were also transformed through “merchants, soldiers, missionaries, seamen and 5 other culture bearers” (Drake, 1987, p. 290).

It is therefore not far-fetched to imagine that African people who travelled East across the Pacific Ocean brought with them African retentions. In the same imagination, it could also be possible that the ancient Samoan people were an African ethnic group who migrated and interbred along their travels creating the Samoan people that we know today.

Africans in Asia:

In *African Presence in Early Asia*, edited by Runoko Rashid and Ivan Van Sertima, the text elaborates and presents the presence and livelihood of Africans in Southwest Asia, India and East Asia (Rashidi and Sertima (ed.): 1985). This included enslaved Africans, migrants from the Nile Valley, black dignitaries and navigators (Rashidi and Sertima (ed.): 1985). This information presented has allowed this research to trace the migration patterns and creation of indigenous Melanesian populations that Diop argues was created from the mixture of blacks and white which created the “yellow race” (Rashidi and Sertima (ed.): 1985, p. 121). In the text James Brunson’s chapter specifically focuses on the African presence in East Asia specifically and builds upon Diop’s work regarding the creation of the “yellow race” known as the Mongolian population (Rashidi and Sertima (ed.): 1985, p. 122). Brunson describes a “hairy race of people” called the Ainu, some of which remain and live in the mountains of China (Rashidi and Sertima (ed.): 1985, p. 122). Brunson argues that the Ainu people were a mix of “Negroid and Mongolian admixture”, who were the ancestors of the Australian aborigine and Papuan people of Melanesia also known as Austroasiatic or Black Pottery people (Rashidi and Sertima (ed.): 1985, p. 122). This is extremely

significant point, because it emphasizes and presents the African presence and interbreeding which created the Austroasiatic peoples and language. The Africans who bred and mix with the “yellow race” brought with them their culture and traditions such as the “black pottery” and infused them with the various communities they encountered. Although Brunson used derogatory term “Melanesian”, I will use his word choice to further support my claim. This creation of the Austroasiatic peoples could be considered the birth of Afro-Oceanic ancestors whom migrated out of Southeast Asia and began their voyage via canoes and boats across the Pacific Ocean.

Howe provides a detailed map of the migration patterns out of Africa, through Asia and into Sahul (Howe, 2007, p. 17). Howe explains that about 60,000 years ago Sahul was the land that comprises the current Australia, Tasmania and New Guinea (Howe, 2007, p.17). Due to the ice age, sea levels were much lower and humans could walk to many of their destinations but Howe argues that humans could not completely walk to Sahul from Southeast Asia. Between the coast of early Southeast Asia and Sahul there was a 90km water crossing that existed and had to be crossed using some type of vessel that could endure the voyage (Howe, 2007, p. 17). That vessel was a canoe.

The canoe is a very important and significant tool in the South Pacific. It is one of the only ways that Afro-Oceanic people have travelled and migrated across the biggest ocean in the world. Howe describes and provides detail of the outrigger canoes that were created and used by Tagata Pasifika. I would like to highlight one of the great canoes that was used to travel between Tonga and Samoa. The *Tongiaki* was a Tongan canoe that was intercepted and attacked by Dutch sailors in 1616.

Voyage Across the Pacific Ocean:

We Are the Ocean, by Epli Hau’ofa, explains the division and dispersal of Austroasiatic peoples across and into the Pacific Islands (Hau’ofa: 2008). Hau’ofa states that it is human nature “demands space for free movement”, which is fostered and motivated by the spirit and innate human nature of imagination and courage (Hau’ofa: 2008, p. 35). Hau’ofa explains how the “Ocean peoples” what Brunson termed “indigenous Melanesians” disbursed amongst the South Pacific islands. Hau’ofa explains that before colonization the ocean people were avid sea fearers and constantly traveled back and forth between the islands trading goods and food resources between islands (Hau’ofa: 2008, p. 32). Moreover, before colonization there were no limitations or restrictions on inter-island travel and exchange, which created a

welcoming and interdependent relationship between the islands. Hau'ofa argues that colonization and Christian religion disrupted and disconnected the relationship between the ocean people by categorizing the physical attributes of the people and island formations we now know as Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia (Hau'ofa: 2008, p. 28). This enforced and imposed Eurocentric division and separation of people “romanticized Polynesians” and vilified Melanesians as “savage and barbaric” because of the darker color of their skin and the prominence of their African physical features (Hau'ofa: 2008, p. 28). Hau'ofa's work builds upon the work of Rashidi and Van Sertima, which provides evidence of African people interbreeding, mixing and travelling across the South Pacific only still to encounter prejudice and European colonization.

Despite European attempts to divide and conquer the Pacific island nations, Oceanic peoples maintained a strong understanding of how they dispersed among the islands, their ancestor's history and the role each individual is responsible for in maintaining this way of life. The advanced and sophisticated ways in which Tagata Pasifika collaborated and coordinated business between each nation created a strong, interdependent and infrangible Pasifika.

In *Te Vaka Moana: Voyages of the Ancestors* edited by K. R. Howe (2007), provides an extensive amount of information regarding the migration of Oceanic peoples, the Gods and spiritual practices within Oceania as well as in-depth illustrations and details of the outrigger canoes that were used to travel across the Pacific Ocean (Howe, 2007). Building off Rashidi and Van Sertima's findings, *Te Vaka Moana* provides a crucial information regarding how Afro-Oceanic people travelled and settled among the islands and created powerful nations. Although Howe does a wonderful job at culminating and displaying these findings, there were a few phrases that I did not agree with. In the foreword by T. L Rodney Wilson, the director of the Auckland War Memorial Museum at the time, wrote: “Vaka Moana: voyages of the ancestors, is the epic story of the last original human migration, and simultaneously, the first for which technology was required to be achieved. It is the story of how people of Asian origin migrated across the Pacific, settling its furthest reaches” (Howe, 2007, p. 9). It is very confusing because on page seventeen of the first chapter by K.R Howe, a he begins with Africa and the migration of African peoples out of South Africa to Sahul, “the continent that comprised of the modern landmasses of Australia, Tasmania and New Guinea” (Howe, 2007, p. 17). This in cohesion within the text is only one example of the disconnect

between African understandings of reality and European fiction. Howe clearly explains his findings of the African origins of Afro-Oceanic peoples who later migrated through Africa and out of Asia building upon Rashidi and Van Sertima's work in 1985. The danger of not addressing this issue is that this one phrase could alter the entire location and framework of academic research. Wilson's careless mistake and false understandings of the origins of Oceanic people is a product of binary European consciousness and inability to grasp the natural, supernatural and paranormal truth of the universe and phenomena that occurs.

Despite the dislocation in the introduction, *Te Vaka Moana* provides very important details for this research by examining the ways in which Afro-Oceanic people travelled throughout the Pacific Ocean using highly established epistemologies, skills, and tools that they used to maintain their livelihood throughout the voyage. Howe argues that the "last and greatest human terrestrial migration" was along the islands in the vast Pacific Ocean (Howe, 2007, p. 21).

Howe examines the various Oceanic "migratory traditions" that are a product of the historical trials and tribulations of their ancestors (Howe, 2007, p. 35). Howe argues that Oceanic peoples "migratory or canoe traditions tell of the departure from the islands of origin and arrival, exploration and settlement in new locales." (Howe, 2007, p. 35) Using the oral traditions and histories of Pacific island peoples, Howe provides maps and illustrations of the sophisticated and advanced canoes, navigational methods and evidence of deliberate, well organized migrations in large numbers. The use of outrigger canoes, accumulated tools, domesticated plants and animals explains how the Afro-Oceanic people carried their knowledge and traditions with them wherever they went. Ancient Samoans lived in a very sophisticated and holistic understanding of reality and the universe, which they were apart of and functioned within. The core aspect of Fa'aSamoa; spirituality, has survived the brutal and savage acts of Europeans colonizers, enslavers and thieves because of the resiliency and enamored with faith. This acknowledgement towards a higher power and their ancestors is classified within the supernatural category of an African epistemology.

Lea Kauvaka's article on *Berths and Anchorages: Pacific Cultural Studies from Oceania*, makes a significant argument regarding the methods of engagement and the ways in which scholars view the significance of the canoe when analyzing and creating certain metaphors for Tagata Pasifika (Kauvaka, 2016, p.133). Kauvaka makes a key point in acknowledging the dangers and limitations for analyzing the canoe/water and labor/land in isolation (Kauvaka, 2016). Kauvaka argues that "at times the canoe must

make landfall in order to transform the power structures of the institution,” although the ocean is a very important part of Fa’a Samoa the land must not be forgotten (Kauvaka, 2016, p. 134). Kauvaka clarifies that these particular type of berths “are in fact real spaces influences and constrained by geography, holding real memory of journeys, departures, homecomings and crossings. And they are most importantly spaces of reciprocal exchanges that signify, and maintain relationships over distance and across time” (Kauvaka, 2016, p. 134). This form of deep reflection and acute observations of Oceanic history is significant in understanding the complexity and richness of Afro-Oceanic people, their culture, languages and connection to the natural, supernatural and paranormal.

Oceania is a very diverse and complex region with water being the core element that connects the body of islands. According to Samoan legends, thousands of islands were birthed and fished out of the water by the demi God Maui (Howe, 2007, p. 30). In the Pacific Ocean, the islands range from the great continent of Australia to the small island of Tokelau that is not big enough for an airplane to land on. These islands are often viewed and studied through a Eurocentric lens, which isolated and separated them into three categories; Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia, which I refuse to use. The overall belittlement and disregard toward Oceania as a great water continent is worthy of chastise. My family refers to the Pacific as Pasifika; the traditional Samoan term for Pacific. I often use Pasifika and Oceania interchangeably. This is because both terms have a deep connection to the Pacific Ocean or *Moana*. I refuse to use these three derogatory terms because these words are full of hate, oppression, greed, control and evil. These terms were created to divide the great island nations and turn these great interdependent nations into enemies competing for resources that were once bountiful until European contact.

The University of the South Pacific; Institute of Pacific Studies emphasizes that “the emerging cultural studies in Oceania should commit itself to constructing products that look different from those created by the disciplines that have traditionally investigated Oceania. If not, cultural studies will probably resemble most other Euro-American disciplines, working in Oceania but not being of or for it” (Wood, 2003, p. 358). Oceanic studies are an essential area of academia that must collaborate with Afrocentricity and use the Afrocentric paradigm as a foundation for their academic endeavors. Afrocentricity creates a stable location and cannon of literature that will help restore Oceania to its majestic and powerful empire it once was. The oral histories and tales of Oceania from a *Fa’a Samoa* perspective emphasize this once

powerful and interdependent island empire. The following section will discuss and explore the oral history and folktales of Samoan people. Folklore and oral history in Samoa was one of the only ways history and information was passed down because Samoan elders had the power (knowledge and wisdom) that could only be passed down if the young person was worthy of their time and ready for the responsibility of maintaining the oral history which could affect the entire family, village and greater Oceanic domain. This importance and high level of discipline, memorization and repetition could only be cultivated and fostered within an African context such as the Bantu epistemologies discussed in earlier chapters. This major similarity between Samoan elders and African elders emphasizes the level of humility and good heartedness that one must attain before they bestow them with such power such as knowledge and wisdom.

CHAPTER FOUR

Karisi and Uano in Samoan Folklore

“O le ala o le pule o le tautua” (“The path to righteousness and leadership is through true dedication”) - Samoan Proverb

Trying to articulate a complete definition of Fa’aSamoa is a very difficult task. It is difficult because each Samoan has their own definition and understanding of Fa’aSamoa based on their geographical location within the sixteen (16) Samoan islands, their familial ties/history, the oral accounts passed down from generation to generation as well as their individual religious and spiritual practices. This research is a humble attempt to explore the various understandings of Fa’aSamoa using an Afro-Oceanic perspective within the oral histories and folktales of Samoan people. It is very important that I use an Afro-Oceanic framework as a grounding location and level of consciousness that will allow me to clearly identify and comprehend this physical and metaphysical Afro-Oceanic epistemology, cosmology and ontology.

I will begin my analysis with the creation stories and oral histories of Oceania emphasizing Samoa and its creator Tagaloa. Tagaloa is the God of Gods throughout the Pacific and is commander of the nine levels of heaven that lay above the South Pacific (Meleisea, 1987, p. 19). Samoans have a very distinct origin story within their folklore, songs and oral histories. These examples of Samoan folklore fall under the same forms of Bantu folklore. The Karisi and Uano forms of folklore then act as a supporting framework and model for Afro-Oceanic understanding of the world around them.

Samoans believe that they have a direct connection and are descendants from the children of Tagaloa himself (Fido 1995, p. 11; Henry, 1992, p. 30; Meleisea, 1987, p. 19). Meleisea was one of the first Samoan scholars in Samoa who published a book titled *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa* in 1987 in which he successfully dispelled many of the false Eurocentric understandings of Samoan history. He points out that even a French philosopher in 1616; Jean Jacques Rousseau argued that many of the Pacific islands “were described as an ideal society where everyone lived in beautiful surroundings with good health and abundant food without any of the political institutions which Europeans considered necessary to maintain order” (Meleisea, 1987, p. 46). Samoans specifically had a “unified language, the same social, economic and political structure” as well as the method of maintaining oral history for centuries prior to

European contact. Each village maintain autocratic authority through the institution and organization of matai under the four Godly names that were from Tagaloa (Siauane, 2004, p. 31).

This chapter will explore the oral histories and folklore that describes and articulates the history of Samoa from a Samoan perspective. Using the African categories of folklore, this chapter will make connections between the similarities of Samoan folklore and African folklore as a basis for this spiritual knowledge and indigenous epistemology in understanding how Samoan society was created, sustained and maintained.

The Origin of Earth and People

Tala o le Vavau is an anthology of Samoan history by Samoan scholars written in the Samoan language (Steubel et. al. ed., 2010). *Tala o le Vavau* translated into English means: “talk of the spiritual realm”. The title of the anthology itself is very significant in acknowledging the spiritual realm from the beginning. The book opens with the creator, Tagaloalagi who is one of many Gods however he never leaves the heavens. According to Samoan oral history there are 9 levels of heaven that the Gods reside in (Steubel et. al. ed., 2010, p. 98). Within these nine levels of heaven each God is in charge of various aspects of the world. Tagaloalagi was the oldest and supreme God because all the other Gods would seek and rely on his knowledge and spiritual powers. Tagaloalagi existed before time was created and before Samoa was created. According to *Tala o le Vavau*, Tagaloalagi left his stool in the 9th level of heaven and went down to earth to search for a place to create a place that he could visit and make his second home whenever he pleased (Steubel et. al. ed., 2010, p. 99). Tagaloalagi along with his wife Sinaalagilagi had one child; Puleiluga^x (sky) who married the God Puleilalonei^{xi} who created earth (Steubel et. al. ed., 2010, p. 4). Puleiluga and Puleilalonei then had a child Puleileele^{xii} who married Faagae^{xiii} Puleileele and Faagae then had a child named *Papaelele* who was made out of rock. Tagaloalagi then took *Papaelele* and taught him how to make more rocks. As *papaelele* made these huge rocks they fell in the ocean and created land mass across the South Pacific Ocean. Tagaloalagi then designated a piece of land to each of his descendants where they created villages under the names of each God or *Alii* they descended from creating the villages of “Safotulafai, Saleaula, Safotu, Satupaitea, Palauli, Matautu, Sataua, Salega and Safune” (Steubel et. al. ed., 2010, p. 98). Each of these villages still exist today and are considered to hold the *Ali’I Pule* or *Suafa Paia* titles which mean that the high chief titles in this village are *Sa* (sacred).

Within these village names most begin with *Sa* which emphasizes their sacredness and direct lineage of the Old Samoan Gods. Each village name has an origin story and can be linked to various high chief names and is the way Samoan genealogy and family histories are maintained within the village.

Maui the Demi-God

One of the most popular demi-Gods throughout the South Pacific is Maui. Maui is known for being able to change into different animals. His ability to engage with anthropomorphism allowed him to accommodate his physical body to adapt to any environment he encountered. Maui is known to people across Oceania as a hero and trickster similar to Anansi with his cunning wit and intelligence (Howe, 2007, p. 20; Peek and Yankah (ed.), 2004, p. 55). Maui was able to defeat and outsmart any opponent that stood between him and whatever he wanted. One day as Tagaloalagi was looking down at the islands he had created he realized that he needed stepping stones to get to the islands we know as Tahiti and Rarotonga (Howe, 2007, p. 20). Tagaloalagi then summoned Maui and asked him to pull up the islands that had been created beneath the ocean so that he could use them as stepping stones from Tonga and Samoa. The stepping stones would make Tagaloalagi's journey between islands much more convenient. Maui turned himself into a fish to find the islands deep in the ocean and once he found them he turned back into a man and used his hook to fish up the Cook Islands and Niue (Howe, 2007, p. 20).



Figure 3: Maui Pulling up Islands

Sina and the Eel

Sina and the eel is a legend that is very popular on the island and is even taught in schools across Samoa. Sina was the daughter of a high chief who lived on the island of Savai'i. The word had spread of how beautiful she was and once the king of Fiji heard of her beauty he knew he had to travel back to Samoa to see her in person and make her his wife (Steubel et. al. ed., 2010, p. 105). The king turned himself into an eel and began his journey to find Sina in Samoa. Sina had to fetch water for her family every day and one day she noticed the eel. The king had found her and as soon as he saw her beauty for himself he fell in love and would not leave her side. Sina saw the young eel and took him home as a pet. She kept him in a bowl until he outgrew the container. Sina then took him to the spring where he grew even bigger and eventually outgrew the Spring. Sina's eel had grown so big she looked at him one day and got frightened. She ran to her father and asked if she could go to the island of Upolu to visit their family there with hopes that they eel would return to where ever he came from. Every village Sina had gone to in Savai'i the eel would follow her. Sina knew the only way she could escape was to go to Upolu.

A few weeks had gone by and Sina had not seen the eel. She rejoiced as she thought that the eel was no longer following her around. She went to the local bathing pool and just as she put her feet in to swim the giant eel swam right up to her. Sina screamed out of fear and ran straight to the *fono* house where all the high chiefs were gathered to ask them for help and protection. The eel had followed her all the way to the *fono* house and pleaded with her. He said,

“O beautiful Sina, listen to my words and in pity, fulfil my last wish. I have lost the art of magic-making, and I am therefore unable to change myself back into a man. I turned myself into an eel and an eel I shall remain until the end. My journey has been long and hard. I am tired and will die, but before I do I have one wish to beg of you. Sina, when I die, cut off my head and bury it in front of your *fale*. A tree will grow out of it- a tree which will be useful to you. Sina, take its leaves and weave fans for yourself. When it bears fruit, they will appear in bunches of threes and fours. Drink from these fruits, beautiful Sina, when you are thirsty. Fulfill this last wish of mine and drink from the fruit of this tree because every time you do this, you will be kissing me” (Steubel et. al. ed., 2010, p. 107).

This folktale of Sina and the eel is common knowledge in Samoa and is the only explanation for why coconuts have three holes which make up the face of the Fijian King. Afro-Oceanic people understand the sacredness of the coconut and appreciate the entire tree as each aspect of the tree is used in maintaining life of the island. Understanding Afro-Oceanic indigenous knowledge ensures that Afro-Oceanic people understand the origins and creation stories of trees such as the coconut, noni trees, cocoa trees, mountains, lakes, and even the names of villages that are directly linked to Tagaloa and his offspring.

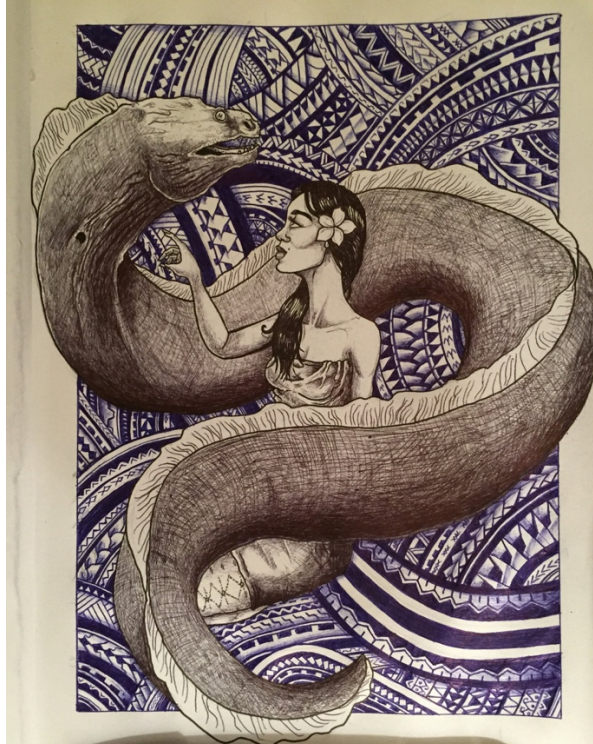


Figure 4: Sina and the Eel

Understanding Fa'aSamoa as an epistemology and a framework in which definitions and explanations are cultivated helps create an epistemology that is linked to cosmology and ontology. By understanding how nature and human life are connected and interdependent ensures a mindset that values and protects these natural resources that enable and sustain our very lives. This is the power of indigenous epistemology. By understanding and believing our folktales and oral history as fact, spiritual and experiential knowledge our “mainstream” knowledge becomes complete, holistic and founded within generations of acute physical and metaphysical observation and analysis.

How Truth is Revealed

In ancient Samoa the ways in which the truth was brought to light in any altercation or situation was by a set of practices and rituals that would summon the spiritual realm for assistance in the physical realm on earth. If an argument arose between people they would get a coconut and place it with the eyes facing up toward the sky (Steubel et. al. ed., 2010, p. 188). The coconut would be spun and they would chant the following saying, “We are going to spin this nut. If the eye turn towards you, you will protest in vain. You are convicted of falsehood and are the culprit. If the eye turns towards me, recriminations are useless; I am the liar” (Steubel et. al. ed., 2010, p. 188).

Another method of solving conflict or theft specifically, was by the high chiefs of each family within the village would gather in *fale sa* or the sacred house and take an oath using *kava* libations to the Old Gods of Samoa. Before drinking the *kava* a small offering is poured out of the cup and the following phrase is said, “May the thief be discovered by the power of this *kava*” (Steubel et. al. ed., 2010, p. 190). After this ceremony was complete the village would be on high alert to see which God would come down to punish the thief. If someone in the village was eaten by fish or perished in the sea, the power of the Ocean Gods was established (Steubel et. al. ed., 2010, p. 190). If someone was bitten by an animal, fell or was wounded by a tree or some natural element found on land the family God had avenged his transgression (Steubel et. al. ed., 2010, p. 190).

CHAPTER FIVE

What's Next for Fa'aSamoa?

Tui Atua Tamasese Ta'isi the late Head of State of Samoa wrote in his memoir; *'Fa'asamoa speaks to my heart and soul'*, "Faasamoa is more than just a culture. Samoan culture is beautiful and diverse. We have a rich and rambunctious cultural dances, food, clothing, ceremonies and celebrations. Fa'aSamoa then, is much deeper than culture, FaaSamoa is knowing when and how to speak on behalf of your family, it is knowing why Samoans believe in God, how the Samoan islands came into existence (...) it is ultimately knowing how to be a Samoan" (2009, pp. 52-53). In order to examine and dissect the understandings of Fa'aSamoa in an academic context, I will use a content analysis approach to cultivate and overturn the academic archive regarding Oceania and Fa'aSamoa. Using an Afrocentric framework to analyze Afro-Oceanic phenomena will allow me to infuse my own lived experiences and become in-sync with the components of my research. Understanding the natural, supernatural and paranormal components of African epistemology, it is very important that I, as an indigenous activist scholar be very careful in interpreting the information that has been established and published within various academic platforms. The purpose of this research is to dispel the false narratives created from a Eurocentric standpoint that cannot appropriately analyze any form or variation of Africa and its contributions to society. Furthermore, this research is important in maintaining the bridge between Afro-Oceania and Africa.

Scholars in Africology, Pacific Studies, Ethnic Studies and other disciplines who are studying African peoples of the African diaspora, need to break away from any epistemological framework that is not African. For example, if a scholar wanted to study dolphins they would not use the same methods used to study birds. The scholar would use the data and established frameworks for studying dolphins rather than forcing the frameworks for the study of birds onto research regarding dolphins. Both animals live in different habitats, have a different history and perception of the world based on their geographical location, natural/supernatural connection to that location and themselves. If you read this example and think that animals do not have a supernatural connection that is an example of dislocated consciousness. The ability to activate and engage with African epistemologies is a skillset that extends and pushes the boundaries of the material world.

Samoan scholar Karlo Mila Schaaf, writes about “polycultural capital, the Pasifika second generation” and how they negotiate their identity capital as Tagata Pasifika outside of their home countries (Mila-Schaaf, 2011, p. v). Schaaf argues that “polycultural capital is associated with an ability to make contextually responsive strategic cultural choices and identification. The wider the variety of resources and knowledge (...) the more fluid” these second generation pasifika children are. Schaaf explains that his fluidity and understanding of multiple cultures and Fa’aSamoa specifically allow these youths to have the more opportunities become available to them because of their ability to grasp a variety of concepts of a global scale (Mila-Schaaf, 2011, p. v). Schaaf’s main argument is that “one of the fundamental elements of Fa’aSamoa is its fluidity. This fluidity enables Fa’aSamoa to shift meaning in different contexts. Fa’aSamoa is a concept that is deeply entrenched in the language” which acts as the vehicle in which Fa’aSamoa is transferred from generation to generation (Mila-Schaaf, 2011, p. 2). Schaaf points out that both “internal and external power struggles have shaped Fa’aSamoa” which has endured Christianity, colonial regimes of Tonga, Germany and New Zealand and amidst all this Samoans have maintained variant models of Fa’aSamoa across the Samoan diaspora^{xiv} (Mila-Schaaf, 2011, p. 2).

This section will examine the ways in which Fa’aSamoa is understood and articulated within academic institutions and provide two examples of Fa’aSamoa research methodologies. These Fa’aSamoa methodologies are the *Talanoa Method* and the *Ula Method*. Fa’aSamoa surpasses and encompasses everything, this can be seen with the importance of the chiefly title over the Dr. title given to someone who has successfully attained a doctoral degree. Aiono Tuiatua Dr. Tupuola states that research that is “culturally sensitive to Fa’aSamoa protocol and etiquette of fa’aaloalo (respect) and consensus, (...) understood how imperative it was for the researcher to consult all participants” (Tupuola, 1994, p. 182). Fa’aSamoa protocol demands that both parties are reciprocating respect, acknowledgement of metaphysical powers, spirituality, honoring Tagaloa and all his creations as well as maintaining a proper *Va Fealoa’i* or physical space between one another.

Talanoa Method by Timote M. Vaioleti:

Timote Vaioleti created the *Talanoa Method* with hopes that Tagata Pasifika would use his methodology in order to reclaim and rewrite our own history, philosophy and overall Tagata Pasifika knowledge and wisdom (Vaioleti, 2006). Vaioleti explains that:

“Talanoa, a personal encounter where people story their issues, their realities and aspirations, allows more *mo’oni* (pure, real, authentic) information to be available for Pacific research than data derived from other research methods (...) a cultural synthesis of information, stories, emotions and theorizing made available by Talanoa will produce relevant knowledge and possibilities for addressing Pacific issues” (Vaioleti, 2006; 21).

Vaioleti’s Talanoa method is powerful because it uses a Samoan perspective and understanding of Fa’aSamoa to conduct research and collect any type of data using Fa’aSamoa as a theoretical framework. According to Vaioleti, the word talanoa translated into English is; to speak casually between one another in a reciprocal knowledge exchange. The Talanoa method can be very powerful in rewriting history and fighting against epistemological violence. Vaioleti argues that the Talanoa method “removes the distance between the researcher and participant,” furthermore, this flexibility allows for and creates space for talanoa opportunity which could be just a safe space to talk (Vaioleti, 2006, 25).

One of the key components of the Talanoa method is that the research is discussion based and the researcher should be culturally competent and use Fa’aSamoa as a guiding factor when conducting any form of research. Vaioleti is very intentional in understanding that “because Talanoa is flexible, it provides opportunities to probe, challenge, clarify and re-align” (Vaioleti, 2006, 26). Therefore, by using this method scholars are able to create contextual subjective research that does not have to undergo “academic sanitization” and produce a primary level resource and authentic spiritual or experiential knowledge that cannot be tarnished by Eurocentric notions of “modern knowledge” (Vaioleti, 2006, 26). Vaioleti emphasizes that the “reciprocity embedded in Talanoa will raise expectations that researchers and participants have of each other, promoting mutual accountability, which adds to the trustworthiness and quality of the research” which is also inherently African (Vaioleti, 2006, 26).

This Afro-Oceanic tradition of reciprocity and respect for spiritual knowledge is very similar and can be linked back to *maat*. Vaioleti states that the Talanoa method “firmly places the power to define what the Pacific issues are within the encounter between the researcher and the participant. Participants will disclose information only when they feel the time is right and the context is appropriate. If protocols are

ignored, the participants may end the talanoa” (Vaioloti, 2006, 26). The interdependency and proximity between the researcher and their research has deep relation between both parties. Using Fa’aSamoa as a theoretical framework within the Talanoa method, aspects such as respect, humility and reciprocity will always be present during research data collections such as interviews and case study.

The Ula Model By: Seiuli Luama Sauni

The Ula Model is another research method that uses Fa’aSamoa as a theoretical framework that understands the centrality of the family, their collective and individual responsibilities and most importantly “pacific values, pacific notions of time, pacific understandings of knowledge and its value, ownership for things tangible and intangible” (Sauni, 2011, p. 53). Scholars who use these Fa’aSamoa research methods within an academic context are introducing new knowledge and are acknowledging Afro-Oceanic epistemology and cosmology. Fa’aSamoa is founded upon three aspects of life; God, family and social responsibility which centers many of the same characteristics of Maat and African epistemology such as “holistic perspective focused on the interconnectedness and balance of reality” (Sauni, 2011, p. 53; Chukwudi, 1998, pg 42).

The Ula model is based on the Samoan flower necklace that we call a ‘*ula*’. The ula is made with thread and flowers strung together that represents a sign of love and is bestowed upon a person, place or object as a notion of welcoming and acknowledgement. Sauni uses the ula as a basis for the Ula Model which incorporates eight characteristics of Fa’aSamoa: love, respect, spirituality, service, Samoan language, relationships and trust (Sauni, 2011, p. 53). The Ula model uses Fa’aSamoa principles and values to conduct interviews and research with real people. Sauni explains the importance of using Fa’aSamoa as a theoretical framework because in doing so “knowing one’s self and his/her surroundings and environment exemplifies the importance of having this knowledge for attaining wisdom and success (Sauni, 2011, p. 44).

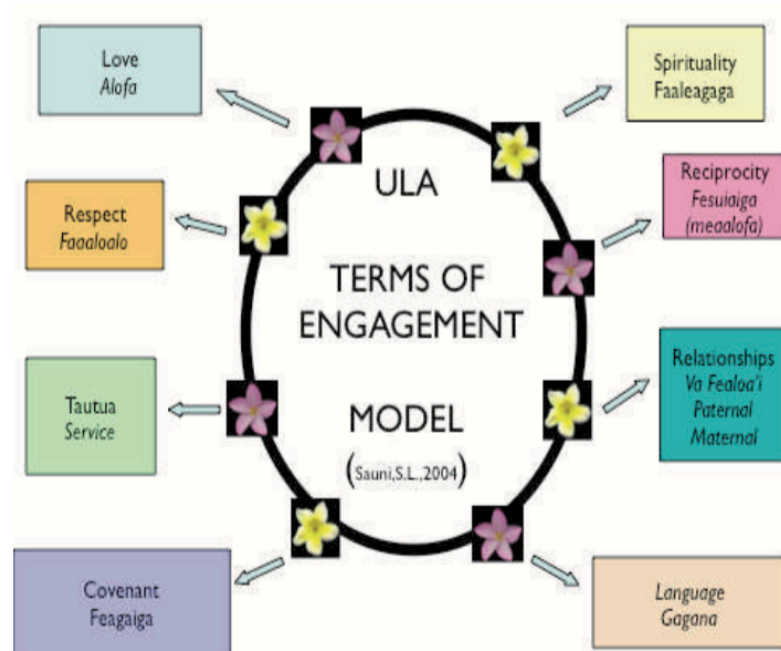


Figure 5: Ula Model

Sauni's *Ula Model* seeks to "raise research consciousness" using Afro-Oceanic methodological frameworks that are founded in indigenous Afro-Oceanic epistemologies such as Fa'aSamoa (Sauni, 2011, p. 44). Sauni argues that by using the *Ula Model* during her research endeavors "the relationships, interactions, communications and engagement between the Pasifika researcher and participants was an empowering and enriching experience" due to the fact that Fa'aSamoa protocols were in place and being followed (Sauni, 2011, p. 44). Furthermore, Sauni emphasizes that "the Ula model promoted Samoan values and principles within the protocols and practice of respect, love and service which are inseparable", solidifying an established theoretical framework based off indigenous Afro-Oceanic epistemology and understanding of how and why things are (Sauni, 2011, p. 45).

A connected and Collected Afro-Oceania *Pieces of an Afro-Oceanic Paradigm*

Fa'aSamoa is a deep and complex paradigm that can be dissected and analyzed in many different shapes and forms. Indigenous Afro-Oceanic epistemology needs to be brought back to the forefront of education to restore the value that has been lost by denouncing old Samoan Gods, believing Eurocentric understandings of the ways of the world and losing connection between spiritual knowledge and indigenous epistemologies. Ancient peoples across the globe have created and cultivated a rich knowledge and wisdom base that has been maintained through oral tradition, deep thought/recollection and a particular level of synchrony between the physical and metaphysical. Kauvaka argues that oral histories are “in fact real spaces influenced and constrained by geography, holding real memory of journeys, departures, homecomings, and crossings. And they are most importantly spaces of reciprocal exchanges that signify, create, and maintain relationships over distance and across time” (Kauvaka, 2017, p. 135). Oceanic people are strong, spiritual individuals who travel and maintain connections across Oceania. Kauvaka explores the voyages and anchorages that took place across the Pacific Ocean and articulated the significance of these moments where Afro-Oceanic peoples stopped to build relationships with their neighboring island communities which were “in constant formation” (Kauvaka, 2017, p. 135). Kauvaka states that “the entire world and everything in it is moving and fluid, and this dialogue sense is especially amplified by oceanic space. Oceanic berths, like oceanic lines in oceanic space, bend, particularly at sea, where mutable signs are abundant and constantly in flux” (Kauvaka, 2017, p. 135).

This fluid way of knowing and understanding allows for time and humility to acknowledge the unknown and accept the spiritual Afro-Oceanic knowledge that is cultivated when activating a victorious consciousness, understanding the Afrocentric paradigm and using Fa'aSamoa research methods to fight this war against epistemological violence. By reclaiming our Afro-Oceanic knowledge and revitalizing our African retentions opens opportunity for unity of a powerful spiritual people that can be undefeated because these individuals would understand the importance of acknowledge and understanding our connections rather than the demise of humanity based on the hatred and fear of our differences.

My research works to shed light on the voices of forgotten Oceanic scholars who are fully capable of articulating their own narratives based on their traditional foundational knowledge that may not align

with standard western notions of knowledge but in fact honor its African epistemological and cosmological retentions, creating a system or methods of knowledge unique to the Afro-Oceanic community and traditions. The Afro-Oceanic agenda of self-determination, indigenous rights and sovereignty, spiritual healing, reconciliation and development, builds capacity towards a systematic change and acknowledgement and engagement of Fa'aSamoa.

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ENDNOTES

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- ⁱ The Oceanic islands and its people
ⁱⁱ Pacific Ocean
ⁱⁱⁱ Fa'a Samoa is the Samoan way of life
^{iv} Define modern
- ^{vi} Maat- See Maulana Karenga
^{vii} Almighty Creator in ancient Kemet
^{viii} *logic* See Sosa, E., Epistemology 2017.
^{ix} See Article: National Geographic, *Tree of Life: Coconuts*, 1941, p. 56.
^x Puleiluga: Translation- In charge of above
^{xi} Puleilalonei: Translation- In charge of below
^{xii} Puleileele: Translation- In charge of physical realm
^{xiii} Faagaae: A Samoan goddess who birthed a son who was made out of rocks.
^{xiv} Samoan Diaspora: Includes all the islands of Samoa that have been separated due to colonization. Island nations now known separately as Samoa and American Samoa

FIGURES

- Figure 1: Parsons, Brandon. (2016) Anansi the Spider. Mythopeida, NY.
Figure 2: Turin Erotic Papyrus 55001. Museo Egizio. Turin, Italy
Figure 3: Howe, K. (2007). *Vaka Moana : Voyages of the ancestors : The discovery and settlement of the Pacific*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
Figure 4: D. Wulf. *Sina and the Eel*. <http://mrdwulf.deviantart.com/>. Accessed May 2016
Figure 5: Ula Model. Sauni, L. Seuili. (2011). "*Samoan Research Methodology: The Ula; A new Paradigm*". Pacific-Asian Education. (n.d.) (53-64).