USE OF THESES

This copy is supplied for purposes of private study and research only. Passages from the thesis may not be copied or closely paraphrased without the written consent of the author.
DAUGHTERS OF SINA

A study of Gender, Status and Power

in Western Samoa

Penelope Schoeffel

ABSTRACT

The dyadic structure of Samoan society is based upon a concept of power comprising two complementary aspects; sacred and secular. These divisions operate as fundamental ordering principles in society. Power, in the sense of the ability to exert moral suasion and authority, is perceived as the combination of secular action and sacred legitimation. This duality derives from beliefs about the origin of society; that sacred power originated through matrilineal descent lines from the creator deity to dignify secular power, and is maintained through a predominantly patrilineal mode of inheritance. Thus the focal dyad is the kinship of a sister and brother, and a number of other important dyadic relationships are metaphorically derived from it. The division of power into two aspects does not focus, symbolically or otherwise, upon male and female, but upon an opposition of qualities ascribed to particular statuses. Samoan females have two distinct statuses which are usually held simultaneously but exercised in different contexts. As sisters this status is sacred relative to the secular status of their brothers. As wives their status is secular relative to the sacred status of their husband's descent group and is also derived from the status of their husband in that descent group. Similarly the designation of male statuses as sacred or secular is contextually defined, according to the rank and status of a title or descent group, and by categories of kinship with respect to a descent group on the basis of ancestral cross-sex siblingship. Since 1830, Christianity has eroded aspects of Samoan social structure and, together with the new avenues for acquiring wealth and prestige, has blurred many of the fundamental
distinctions on which the complementarity of secular and secular power rest. Despite change and modification, the traditional concept of power is still reflected in kinship and village institutions. One of the most interesting manifestations of change and continuity is the introduction of village womens committees since the 1920s. These have adopted a tripartite structure which maintains distinctions between the wives of titled and untitled men, but more importantly, maintains the distinction between sisters and wives in the context of the local community. This distinction supports a complementarity between sacred and secular aspects of power, as exercised collectively by the two female status groups within a institutional framework. The persistence of patterns of belief, action and social institutions, even after the ancient religious ideology which justified them has been formally abandoned, is illustrated by the way in which an innovation such as the Western Samoan village womens committee has developed. This evidence has particular significant implication for planned change and economic development in small-scale societies.
DAUGHTERS OF SINA

A Study of Gender, Status and Power in Western Samoa

Penelope Schoeffel

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Australian National University

December 1979
Except where otherwise acknowledged in the text, this Thesis represents my original research.

Penelope Schoeffel
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Introduction

**Preface:**  "The Story of Sina"  p. 22

**Chapter 1:**  Village and Society  p. 28

**Chapter 2:**  Tradition and Change  p. 57

**Chapter 3:**  Girls and Boys  p. 99

**Chapter 4:**  Male and Female  p.165

**Chapter 5:**  Husbands and Wives  p.222

**Chapter 6:**  Sister and Brother  p.275

**Chapter 7:**  Wife Givers and Wife Takers  p.327

**Chapter 8:**  Healers and Ghosts  p.373

**Chapter 9:**  Ladies and Women  p.423

**Chapter 10:**  The House at the Front and The House at the Back  p.460

**Chapter 11:**  Sisters and Wives  p.526

* * * * *

**Bibliography**

**Glossary of Samoan Terms**

Appendix A  Interview Schedule

Appendix B  Households of Poutasi Village

Appendix C  Constitution of the National Council of Women

Appendix D  Medicinal plants, diagnoses and symptoms of illness and remedies commonly known to Poutasi women.
Case Studies

1. Inheritance Rights of a Son from a Second Marriage
2. The Poutasi Banana Scheme
3. Adolescent Female Rivalry
4. Adopting a Family
5. Adolescent Suicide
6. Illegitimate Pregnancy
7. Abortive Elopement
8. Weddings and Status Rivalry
9. Widowhood and Loss of Status
10. Loss of Control as a Political Tactic
11. The Power of Sisters in 'āiga Affairs
12. Samoan Ghost Stories
13. Committee Autonomy in Village Affairs

Maps

1. Map of The Western Pacific: Samoa, Fiji and Tonga
2. Map of Western Samoa
3. Map of Poutasi Village

Diagrams

Fig. 1 The Fono of Poutasi
Fig. 2 The Children of Enefa
Fig. 3 Claims to the Chiefly Titles Meleisea and Tuatagaloa
Fig. 4 The Genealogy of Salamasina
Fig. 5 Schematic Representation of a Samoan Gafa
Tables
1. Household Composition in Poutasi
2. Formal and Informal Marriages in Poutasi
3. Falefìtu Villages: Endogamy and Exogamy with the Village
4. Comparative Sample of Exogamy and Endogamy from 12 Villages.
5. Post-Marital Residence Choices of 434 Women in 17 Villages.
6. Sample of Live births correlated to Mothers Age.
7. Acceptance of Family Planning.
8. Patients and Healers.

Plates
1. Taupou in 1860's.
2. Samoan Household.
3. A Small Dwelling House.
4. Children Care for Children.
5. Weaning Problems.
6. Collecting Sea Food.
7. Samoan Cricket.
8a. Comical Dancing.
8b. A Young Woman Dances.
10. Women Serve Food.
11. The Ladies of Poutasi.
14. A Presentation of Sleeping Mats.
15. Preparing Pandanus for Weaving.
17. Samoan Ladies of the 1860's.
19. Leaders Sitting in Front of the Womens Committee House.
20. Young Women Eat at the Back of the House.
22. A Pile of Newly Made Thatch Pieces.
23. Womens Committee Meeting House.
24. Womens Committee Meeting House.
25. A Womens Committee Guard House.
26. A Womens Committee Guard House.
27. The Monthly Committee Maternal and Infant and Welfare Clinic.
28. The District Nurse Checks Primary School Children.
29. Inspecting Household Linen.
30. Sanitation Inspection.
31. Inspection of Vegetable Gardens.
32. Classes in Nutrition.
33. A Prize Winning Dairy Heifer at the Annual Show.
34. Prize Cabbages for the Show.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Acknowledgements

To begin at the beginning, I thank my mother and father Jean and Kenton Schoeffel who gave me the encouragement and financial support to study for my undergraduate degree at an age when one does not normally expect such assistance. For this "second chance" I am profoundly grateful, and I dedicate this thesis to them with love.

I thank my supervisor, Anthony Forge for his insights, critical comments and encouragement, also Caroline Ifeka, Graham Harrison, Alfred Gell, Diane Bell, Dick Davis, Inge Reibe, Michael Young, Don Gardener, Shirley Campbell, Trish Reid, Neil Gunson, Mike Davis, Vijay Naidu, Brian Ponter, Chris Griffin, Kilefoti Eteuati, Lyn-Marie Eteuati, Ann Chowning and George Milner, who read or listened to various parts of this thesis in draft form and offered many helpful comments. I offer special thanks to David Routledge who read the final draft and who managed not to despair at my many "linguistic infelicities" while giving me the encouragement to get it finished.

Sharon and Walter Tiffany have my gratitude for allowing me to read several pre-publication drafts of their articles on Samoa, as does Bradd Shore who allowed me to read his Ph.D dissertation on Social Control in Samoa, and who read and commented upon several of my earlier research papers on Samoa.
I am indebted to Professor Derek Freedman for encouraging me to pursue this topic of research and for his comments on early draft sections of this thesis. Besides offering criticism of my work, he also allowed me access to his extensive library on Samoa.

I would also thank Doug Jervis, for developing and printing the photographs, Joan Goodrum and Ramesh Singh for the maps and diagrams, and Graziella Wurmli for helping me get organised, and for translating some German sources for me.

While conducting field research in Western Samoa I was assisted by the Ali'i and Faipule of Poutasi, the women's Komiti of Poutasi, the 'āiga Sā Meleiseā, and the Public Health Nursing Section of the Health Department of Western Samoa. While it would be impossible for me to list here all the people who helped me with my research, I would like particularly to thank Poutasi Solomon, Soloia Meleiseā, Sa Pene, Fa'alavelavelave Masinalupe, Va'asa Suniula, Puapuaga Tamaseu, Luisa Sofara, Fiapaipai Leataua, Moli Seuli, Aleipata Brown, Luisa Tanuvasa, Leonesā Sala, Avei Va'a, Rev. and Mrs. Senara Tofaeno, Rev. and Mrs. Soti Enari, Momoi Kuresa, Iiga Suafole, Dr. Viopapa Annandale, and Jenny and Albert Wendt. I cannot thank Meleiseā Folitau, nor those two wise men Nofoagatotoa Uasu and Masinalupe Venu, for they died in 1978. Instead I thank their families for all the help that they gave me. I will remember them with love and gratitude.
Finally I thank Malama Meleisea for allowing me to read or listen to and to cite his large collection of Samoan oral traditions which he collected between 1976-1979 in the course of his own post-graduate research. Without his support, encouragement, help, criticism and advice this thesis would never have been possible.
INTRODUCTION
Introduction

"We cannot begin to understand either in evolutionary terms or in current and historical situations why and how women in so many cases have been relegated to secondary status until we first reckon with the power women do have, even if this power appears limited and seems outside the political field".

Annette B. Weiner (1977:227)

In 1973 I visited Western Samoa and was immediately fascinated by the proud, almost self-important, manner and bearing of mature Samoan women, their komiti meeting houses in every village, the respect and autonomy they seemed to have. Like most people, I had read Margaret Mead's famous study of Samoan adolescent girls, Coming of Age in Samoa based on field work in the Manu'a group of Eastern Samoa sixty-nine years ago. The evidence from this study is still cited today:

"Samoan girls are indulgently permitted to spend much of their time dancing, primping, and having a succession of carefree love affairs. For them it is a gloriously free and exciting period and one which they are often loath to leave".

(Hammond and Jablow, 1975:20-21)

I was only two months in Samoa during that first visit but I left feeling that there was need for a re-study of Samoan women. Whatever the reason, my observations, even in that short period, were at a variance with those of Mead. In essence Mead considered that while Samoan girls enjoyed an idyllic interlude between puberty and marriage, their status was one of inferiority.
"To be young or a woman in Samoa is a sort of guilt in itself, a state of affairs for which perpetual tacit apologies must be made". (Mead, 1971:169) "... the community makes no distinction between unmarried girls and the wives of untitled men in the demands which it makes upon them..." (Mead 1963:151) "The hardest work of the village is done by women between forty-five and fifty-five". (Mead, 1963:156).

According to Keesing (1935) any difference between Mead's observations and his own was due to the influence of New Zealand administration which had, among other things, introduced village womens committees. One of the first Europeans to write about Samoa, the London Missionary Society pioneer, John Williams referred to the position of Samoan women as one of "terrible degradation" (Williams, 1837:351-52). There is a vast literature on Samoa and the Samoans, but few writers offer the same evaluation of womens status - if indeed women are mentioned at all.

My first attempt to analyse the status of Samoan women was a research paper based on ethnographic and ethnohistorical sources which I entitled Sisters and Wives: The Dual Status of Women in Samoan Society. I argued that Samoan women had two distinct statuses, one respected and valued, as co-descendants of men and the other subordinate and derived, as the wives of men. Since I had little idea as to why this should be so, I pinned this fact to a structuralist-functionalist argument (e.g: Radcliffe-Brown, 1952) that the special rights of sisters and
their children were a compensatory mechanism. Since women marry out they lose their rights in land and other permanent assets of their descent group but to avoid offence to their ancestral gods they and their children are compensated with special respect and affection and special rights to portable property such as ceremonial valuables. I had an uneasy feeling that this analysis was too superficial and this feeling was confirmed when I read Leach's brilliant structural analysis of some Tongan myths about the origins of kava and the kava ritual (Leach, 1972). Leach pointed out the themes of the myths were concerned with transmission of matrilineally inherited rank, a point which had previously escaped me when I had examined Samoan origin myths which had great similarity to those of Tonga.

The central concern of this thesis is to explore the asymmetrical relationships between male and female statuses in terms of the logic of Samoan culture. I have sought to do this by ethnographic description, through reference to ethnohistorical sources and by considering the changes that have occurred in Samoan beliefs and social institutions since Christianity was introduced in 1830.

II

When I commenced the research on which this thesis is based I was concerned with a number of questions about the overall orientation of women's studies and the social anthropology of women. In particular I was uncertain as to what is meant by a feminist
theoretical perspective. If a feminist is one who is critical of the sex-role structure of his or her own culture and society because it oppresses women, should a feminist anthropologist incorporate the same critical evaluations into analyses of the roles of men and women in other societies and cultures? Is the theoretical orientation of feminist anthropology that which exposes the universal devaluation of women in terms of the roles and statuses they occupy relative to those occupied by men? Or, on the contrary, is it an orientation which unmasks the androcentric biases of our discipline by producing evidence that women are more valued, powerful and interesting cross-culturally than they have been portrayed in the past?

The field of women's studies has grown considerably in recent years and at least part of its impetus has been the feminist movement in the Western world. This movement, while agreed upon the need for women's liberation, is divided upon both the causes of women's oppression and upon the strategies by which the liberation of women will be effected. Feminism has no core of theory, as does Marxism, for example. A significant number of studies of women in particular societies and cultures, which have been made in the last two decades, have certainly shown that women are more valued, powerful and interesting than they had generally been portrayed in the past.
One of the main problems of evaluating the status of women relative to that of men, as Tiffany (1978) has observed, is the model on which the evaluation is founded. Traditionally social anthropologists have measured the relative status of men and women in terms of the way in which their respective economic and political roles are ordered by principles of descent, residence, inheritance and jural status. The problem with this model is that it tends to over-emphasise the secondary status of women in small scale and peasant societies because of its emphasis on the formal principles of social structure. In most societies women marry "out" and men control formal political institutions, thus when applied cross-culturally the numerous spheres in which women do have power tend to be ignored. This model has been refined upon over the past decade to show the cross-cultural tendency by which formalised and non-formalised roles of men and women are linked to an opposition between public and domestic spheres of action. Studies of women along these lines (eg: Chinas 1973; Lamphere 1974) have shown that despite the existence of ideologies that designate the "private, domestic" sphere as of peripheral importance, women succeed in influencing the "public, political" sphere to a greater extent than had previously been recognised by anthropologists.

Another approach focuses upon women's economic roles, their participation in economic institutions and relationships between control of resources, political power and social status. Tiffany distinguishes three orientations in the economic approach:
"(a) the use of synchronic, structural-functional models concerned with the relationship between modes of subsistence and production and sex-role variability (eg: Friedl 1975);

(b) the use of historical-dialectical models concerned with changes in women's political and economic statuses as modes of production have changed through time (eg: Leacock 1972; 1975; Sacks 1974); and

(c) an ecological orientation, which considers the adaptive advantages of economic roles (eg: Martin and Voorhies 1975)".

(Tiffany, 1978:36)^1

Since all these orientations share the assumption that access to and control of strategic resources are related to the distribution of power and authority (as Tiffany also notes) they seem to me to share the same fundamental weakness. My reading and my own experiences working in various parts of Papua New Guinea with village people of several cultures, in addition to my research in Western Samoa, has led me to the conclusion that different economic systems in small scale societies cause the political relations between males to be ordered and ranked in various ways, but such differences do not consistently determine the degree of asymmetry in the cultural evaluations of male and female.

Another approach is that which, rather than looking at the political and economic aspects of sex-roles as such, focuses instead upon the interpretation of ideologies which validate and perpetuate differential sex roles. There are two strands to this approach, the psychological and the symbolic.

^1. The sources of Tiffany's references quoted here are included in my Bibliography.
Psychological approaches vary from the experimental research into measurable sex-based differences in behaviour and skills to theoretical postulates that derive from Freud, even where these criticise or reject his theories about masculine and feminine personalities as describing effects rather than causes. Studies of socialisation and the development of gender identity are yielding convincing explanations (eg: Chodorow 1974) which avoid some of the less testable and questionable assertions of biological determinists. (Eg: Tiger and Fox, 1971).

The study of symbolic systems of modes of classification complement the psychological approach in understanding the relative value accorded to male and female statuses cross-culturally by exploring the logic upon which such judgements are based; how different cultures differentiate between and evaluate masculine and feminine categories of their universe. This approach is particularly helpful in interpreting ideological systems by which males appropriate "feminine" qualities to a male sphere of action - the "envious male" phenomenon which so often seems to dominate male rituals. This mode of analysis frequently reveals that while females may be considered inferior to males, the "feminine" is by no means always devalued in relation to the "masculine", but rather the two are often seen as being the two important ordering principles in the universe. However dual symbolic systems are not necessarily founded upon masculine - feminine oppositions but may instead incorporate and oppose qualities which are ascribed to males and females of particular social statuses. This thesis argues that such is the case in Samoan dual symbolism.
Controversy concerning "emic" and "etic" modes of analysis is generated by the question of theoretical priorities; are the psychological and symbolic foundations of sexual inequality cultural mystifications or rationalisations of biological, economic, political and evolutionary facts? Or are these "facts" themselves conditioned by universal projections of the human mind, arising out of mutual experiences which are not infinitely diversified but variations on a theme of environmental and biological constraints? I regard this question as unanswerable and therefore distinctions between emic and etic perspectives as being invalid. To analyse any society or culture without reference to its own internal premises is as one dimensional as it is to analyse it solely in terms of broadly based sociological and economic theory or of comparative models.

I have said that the main concern of this thesis is to explore the asymmetrical relationships between sets of male and female statuses; sister-brother, husband-wife, in terms of Samoan culture, but this does not mean that I propose to ignore any of the theoretical perspectives briefly reviewed here. By endeavouring to interpret the cultural logic by which these statuses are opposed, I am attempting to identify the way in which Samoans perceive female and male domains of power. When I have done this, I then consider the implications of my evidence and analysis for existing bodies of theory.
The field work for this thesis was carried out between May 1976 and December 1977, with an additional short visit to Western Samoa in November 1978. My position as participant observer was both facilitated and circumscribed by my status, which was that of the wife of an untitled Samoan man. My husband, to whom I had been married for three years before we went to Western Samoa, is the fourth child and third son of a chief who held, jointly with another chief, paramount rank among the twenty-four *matai* of his village, his title is also among the four paramount titles in the political district of which his village is a part.

Thus, in the village, and surrounding district the family into which I had married was well known and respected. I found that even when carrying out research in villages and districts outside the sphere of influence of my husband's family, I was immediately identified and treated as an affine of my husband's family - which like most Samoan families, had many connections in villages throughout Samoa. Most visiting scholars who visit Samoa for research become the guests of Samoan families in order to work in rural villages and as their guests, are to some extent identified with their hosts by other Samoans. However there is a considerable difference between being the guest of a family, even if one is addressed by other Samoans as a "son" or "daughter" of that family as a politeness, and being the real wife of a member of a Samoan family.
As a wife my research was facilitated by the opportunity to observe behaviour and receive information that would not be available to a family guest. On the other hand my position was circumscribed by the greater degree of incorporation into my husband's family and village.

My residence in my husband's household and village, created some initial problems in how to behave towards me. On one hand I was a *palagi* (European), and as such of fairly high social status, since Samoans, at least formally, have for over a century treated European guests with generosity and deference. On the other hand I was the wife of an untitled man which placed me in the lowest social category in the family and community just above that of children.

It was politely left to me to choose whether I would claim the status of a foreign guest or that of an inmarrying wife of an untitled man in my husband's family and in his village. For example, would I accept my food and eat with the head of the family and his wife, or would I eat last, together with my husband? Would I sleep on a bed in the main house of my husband's father's household, or would I sleep on a mat in that house, or in one of the small houses at the back? Would I sit about doing nothing and being waited upon by my husband's sisters and brothers, or would I perform the kinds of services normally expected of an inmarrying woman? These and many other questions concerning my status caused problems for my in-laws as much as they did for me. From their point of view, they wanted to look
after me and ensure my comfort and well being. They wished to avoid criticisms from other people that they were neglecting or ill-treating me by expecting me to behave as a Samoan daughter-in-law. From my point of view, I wished to cause the least possible inconveniences to my husband's family, to take my place in their household as the wife of my husband and to give them the respect and service that they had every right to expect from me. My effort to play this role was hindered by my ineptitude and total ignorance of most of the basic skills of a Samoan woman of my age. The compromise that we eventually reached was that I would assume the formal status of an in-marrying wife while being excused from a great many of the normal duties. Most attempts that I made to perform simple duties or to learn basic skills were fairly firmly resisted in private household life, however on public occasions when we entertained guests I was allowed to assist in serving food and other simple tasks in order that others might recognise that I had opted for the status of wife, rather than guest.

The first time I attended a meeting of the women's committee in my husband's village, I sat outside the house at the back, on the stone platform with the other younger in-marrying women of the village. I was invited to sit in the front of the house with the wives and sisters of the chiefs and orators of the villages but I declined. After a time, I was invited again, and since a fuss was being made about my sitting in the sun, I moved to
sit just inside the back of the house with the older wives of untitled men. When the business of the day was completed, the wives of the untitled men went off to prepare lunch for the senior ranking women, and they resisted my attempts to accompany them. Since my command of Samoan was poor and I could find nothing useful to do to help them, I wandered about while they cooked and followed them back to the house when they served the food they had cooked. I was offered a plate of food along with the leaders of the committee and again, I declined. I was then asked why I would not eat with them and, foolishly, blurted out "tumaga mulimuli o a'ū" "I am a lowest tumaga (untitled person)". This was received with hilarity both because it was idiomatically incorrect and because it sounded so funny coming from a palagi. For the next two years I was greeted by most of the women in the community as "tumaga mulimuli" with many chuckles. But the point was taken, my mother-in-law, president of the committee, was relieved and everyone accepted and welcomed the fact that I had made the most appropriate and respectful choice of status in the community.

Nevertheless, I was accorded many privileges. Most people responded patiently to questions which a Samoan wife would never have dreamed of asking in her husband's village - or of asking at all. My closest friend, informant and companion was one of my husband's sisters, normally a relationship which Samoan etiquette would forbid because of our opposed statuses. It was
up to me to avoid abusing these privileges, to maintain the
dignity of my husband's family in the way I dressed, behaved
and interacted with members of his family and community. Certain
questions could therefore not be asked, and certain people could
not be approached on certain matters. Many occasions demanded
that I absent myself, whereas had I been a guest of the family
I would have been invited to be present or at least my presence
would have been politely tolerated. Therefore, it became
necessary for me to develop relationships with Samoans outside
my husband's village in order to obtain information on sensitive
political or sexual topics, and to gather comparative material.

As an affine of my husband's family, if I went to another village,
it would be expected that I stay with relatives of the family
and I would be faced in most respects with the same constraints.
Therefore although I lived most of the time with members of my
husband's family in his village, other villages and in Apia, I
obtained permission from the Prime Minister's Department and
the Department of Health to visit villages in various parts of
Western Samoa with the public health or district nurses when
they held their monthly clinics in each village. At each village
women's committee that I visited, I administered a short
questionnaire to each woman attending the clinic\(^2\). This
information gathering process was largely a ruse which would
enable me to visit villages in the capacity of a foreign
research worker rather than as an appendage of my husband's
family. It enabled me to examine the composition, activities

\(^2\) See Appendix A.
and structure of a variety of village women's committees and the social setting in which they existed, and to meet and talk with rural public health nurses, many of whom proved to be most valuable informants. The information gathered from the questionnaires was useful in providing a wide spread of data about post marital residence patterns, family size and the acceptance of recently introduced contraceptive devices and techniques. It was not, however, a sufficiently large or representative sample on which to base any firm statistical conclusions.

In the first two chapters I describe the basic institutions and social organisation of Samoan villages today, the second chapter being an extended case study of Poutasi village where I conducted part of my field research. In Chapter three I discuss the socialisation of Samoan children and adolescents, emphasising the factors which influence the formation of gender identities and sex-roles. This leads into a discussion and analysis in Chapter four of male - female relationships, attitudes to sexuality and sexual mores. This chapter is particularly concerned with the process of courtship and provides a background for Chapter five which examines contemporary marriage in terms of formal and informal unions, post-marital residence, the relations between husbands and wives and their respective affines and those aspects of social and economic change which affect marriage patterns. In Chapter six I discuss the manner in which the contrasting status and rank of sister and brother is metaphorically extended
to other important dyadic relationships, how the opposed qualities which cross-sibling pairs represent express the social contract upon which order is perceived to be based. I go on to examine the ideological basis upon which the status of sisters and the matrilineal inheritance of rank is founded, using examples from Samoan genealogical traditions. Chapter seven reviews traditional (or pre-Christian) systems of marriage, exchange and alliance in Samoa in order to demonstrate the social expression of the ideological system discussed in the previous chapter, in the past.

Chapter eight begins a consideration of major institutional changes since the introduction of Christianity, and the effects these changes have had upon the statuses of Samoan women. This chapter looks at the part which women play in maintaining, mediating and interpreting those aspects of traditional religious belief and practice which have not become integrated with Christian practices and beliefs. I argue that while women have been formally excluded from important ritual offices in the Christian churches, they have assumed a dominant role as traditional healers and spirit mediums, roles which in the past were shared to a greater extent with men. In Chapter nine I examine that process of change which weakened the traditional aualuma society, which restricts membership to women in the category of "sister", and trace the origins of the contemporary women's associations to "wives" groups, who performed auxiliary work for the Churches, and during the period of the New Zealand administration, carried out public health extension programmes in Samoan
villages. The following chapter discusses the organisational structure and the functions of contemporary women's associations in Western Samoa. The concluding chapter is an evaluation of female and male domains of power with reference to a number of theoretical approaches to the cross-cultural study of female roles and status.
PLATE 1.

A taupou of Apia, 1860's.

(George Brown Collection, Courtesy of the Mitchell Library of New South Wales).
PREFACE

THE STORY OF SINA
The Story of Sina

Tafitofau and Ogafau had two sons, Tulifau'ave and Tulau'ena. The boys grew up to become handsome youths indeed. In those days there was a beautiful aristocratic virgin named Sina, stories of her beauty were told everywhere in Samoa. The two boys decided to go to court Sina, and to try to win her as a bride for one of them. They baked a whole pig and when it was cooked they cut it up in the usual way but instead of taking the important part of the pig, as was indeed the custom in situations like this, the boys picked only the foot from one of the legs, then set off to visit Sina.

On arrival they found Sina's house full of suitors from all over the country. Each displayed the food and gifts they had brought for the girl; there were chickens and whole pigs. But when it came to Tulifau'ave and Talau'ena's turn, the latter told Sina that his gift for her was not a whole pig, but a pig's foot. Sina immediately asked Tulau'ena to sit with her in the front of the house and share his present with her. This angered the other suitors who had brought better presents.

When it was night time, the suitors who were still there were given mats to sleep on. Sina and Tulau'ena shared the same sleeping mat. When everyone was asleep, Sina and Talau'ena ran off into the night to Tulau'ena's family. Tulifau'ave returned
and they all lived together. But Tulifau'ave was jealous of his brother because he wanted Sina himself.

Tulifau'ave planned to get rid of his brother. He asked him to go fishing for bonito with him. Tulau'ena accepted, but suspecting his brother's intention he spoke to his wife before they left.

"Sina, I know that I am going to die. Keep looking at the waves on the reef. If you see a bloody wave break upon the reef, then I am dead. Should this be the case, you should come in search of me. If the wave breaks white upon the reef, then you will know that everything is alright".

The boys left, and Sina sat upon the beach watching the waves breaking upon the reef. When the canoe was well out to sea, Tulifau'ave told Tulau'ena to keep on paddling until they come to the place where the one-eyed bonito are found. When they got there, the boys started fishing, hauling in lots of fish until their canoe was almost full. Then they headed back to shore. When they were close to the reef, Tulifau'ave cut up a bonito for them to eat. He threw a piece to Tulau'ena, who caught the piece and ate it, but when Tulifau'ave threw the second piece, he missed it and it fell into the sea. Tulifau'ave demanded that Tulau'ena jump into the sea to get the piece of fish, in spite of Tulau'ena's plea that he cut up another bonito, seeing they had so many. While Tulau'ena was in the sea,
Tulifau'ave speared him to death.

Sina saw that the waves breaking upon the reefs were bloody and remembered her husband's words. She got up and began her search for her husband. On her journey, she came upon a pigeon first. She asked the pigeon:

"Pigeon; the bird of chiefs, Please may I ask if my enemy has passed by?"

The pigeon answered rudely, saying that pigs like her should dare not speak to a pigeon. Sina retaliated by telling the pigeon that his reply had earned him a small stone to put on its beak. Since that day pigeons have had lumps on their beaks.

Sina next met a Manuali'i bird. She asked the same question and the bird replied that her enemy had just passed by. Sina rewarded the Manuali'i by giving it some feathers from her mat to put above its beak.

Sina continued on her way and came upon a Manumā bird, and again asked the same question. The Manumā replied that her enemy had just passed by, and Sina rewarded it by giving it her shaggy white waist garment to put on its chest.

Next Sina met a Manutagi bird, asked her question, and the bird replied that her enemy had just passed by. Sina rewarded him with her red shaggy waist garment to put on its beak and chest.
Sina continued on her search and she met a Sega bird. She asked the same question, to which the Sega bird replied:

"Keep on walking until you come upon a lady. Matamolali is her name. Take the end of a coconut leaf and beat her with it".

Sina rewarded the Sega with her red garment for it's chest, and a garland for it's beak and tail. Sina told the Sega that it will feed upon sweet nectar in the bush.

Sina continued until she came upon Matamolali and she did as the Sega bird had bidden her. Matamolali screamed and asked who was hitting her. Sina answered telling Matamolali her name and asking if she had seen her enemy. This enemy was her dead husband. Matamolali then told Sina to remain in the house while she, Matamolali, went to look for him.

Matamolali went and opened up the living waters and closed off the dead waters. From the living waters were released all the aristocratic young men and girls. Among them was Sina's man. Matamolali asked him to give her his garland but when he came close, she seized him and beat him and tried to drown him in the waters. The man cried out for mercy. Then Matamolali pointed to the east, to the south, to the north and to the west, and she asked the man to name the directions in which she pointed. The man gave her the correct answers, and then Matamolali took him to her house.
Sina was hiding there. Matamolali called out for a cloth for the man to wear, and Sina threw out a piece of cloth that she and her husband had shared. Taking it, the man told Matamolali that it was like the cloth that he and Sina had used, but Matamolali replied that it was her own cloth. Then Matamolali called out for a comb, and Sina threw her comb, which the man immediately recognised as the one which he had shared with Sina. Matamolali again told the man that it was her own comb.

The man sat sadly in the house, gazing at the cloth and the comb.

Then Matamolali called out to Sina to come forth. Tulau'ena saw that it was his wife and the two embraced. They established their family there with the old lady Matamolali, who acted as a mother to the children of Sina and Tulau'ena.

(From a Samoan text recorded during the 1890's by Augustin Kramer (1903; Vol 1, 125-127) and translated into English by Malama Meleisea).
CHAPTER ONE

VILLAGE AND SOCIETY
MAP ONE: THE WESTERN PACIFIC: WESTERN SAMOA IN RELATION TO AMERICAN SAMOA, TONGA, FIJI
CHAPTER ONE

Village and Society

This chapter will offer a brief sketch of Samoan Social organisation which is included to provide a background and frame of reference for the major theme of this thesis.

The village or nu'u is the basic and the enduring political unit of the Samoans. In the 1830's, when the first missionaries commenced their work among the Samoans, villages were described as comprising from two to five hundred people (Turner, 1861:287). Each village is made up of a number of local 'aiga whose matai govern the village through a fono or council of chiefs. Each village has a fa'alupega or set of ceremonial greetings which act as a constitution in the sense that it expresses the rank order and political hierarchy of matai titles with allusions to the history and traditions of the village.

Villages were traditionally grouped into districts and sub-districts, which acknowledged particular paramount chiefs and a territorial hierarchy of ceremonial rank. However, these wider political units were fairly fragile in terms of enduring cohesion and authority and existed on a basis of concensus among the senior ranking matai of each component village.
District *fono* or chiefly councils convene occasionally for matters of mutual concern, in the past most frequently those connected with warfare, and for ritual and ceremonial occasions, and in modern times for electoral and administrative matters.

Kinship links cross-cut political boundaries but although kinship and marriage were the principal means of creating alliances between descent groups, villages and districts; primary political loyalties were centred upon the village. No two Samoan villages were exactly alike in terms of size, political importance, social and political organisation, laws, and traditions.

The population of Western Samoa is currently something in the order of 160,000 people. The census of 1971 recorded a population of 146,627, of whom 75,950 were male and 70,677 were female. The nation is divided into electoral districts which tend to follow traditional district boundaries, which are subdivided for administrative convenience. (See fig.1).

Villages outside the peri-urban area of Apia characteristically encompass something between 200-500 people and when they become larger than this, there seems to be a tendency for "splitting" to begin. Splitting usually follows the established subdivisions of the villages, the *pitonu'u*, which are named localities which emerge over time. "New" villages, that is to say new political units, usually take the name of the *pitonu'u*. 
WESTERN SAMOA
The basic unit of the social structure is the local kin group or 'āiga. This consists of a group of people related by ties of blood, marriage or adoption who render service to and are represented by a matai. The term matai refers to a titled office which is the property of the 'āiga and is the custodian of the estate or various portions of land owned communally by the 'āiga. Matai titles are of two orders, the ali'i or "chief" and the tulafale or "orator".

Theoretically at least, ali'i titles are of higher rank than tulafale titles, in the sense that the paramount titles of most villages and of Samoa as a whole are ali'i titles, and also in the sense that the attributes of the ali'i are "sacred" in contrast to the secular or "profane" attributes of the tulafale. However, in the rank hierarchy of most villages there are tulafale whose titles are of higher rank than those of many of the lesser ranking ali'i because of their history or their complementary relationship to the paramount ali'i titles of the village.1

1. Because ali'i essentially belong to the more venerated social category (See Chapter 5) and high ranking ali'i can elevate the rank of a related tulafale above an ali'i of lower rank than himself.
A village controls and has collective rights over a defined territory, which typically extends from the reef of the beach inland to the ridgetops of the central mountain range. Samoa is thus territorially divided in the typical high-island Polynesian "pie-slice" manner which gives every settlement access to the full range of ecological zones.

There are four basic categories of land in a village territory:

a. House lots or *tūlaga maota* on which the guest house of the matai is located and often the other dwellings of his household as well. These are usually located in a nucleated settlement by the sea.

b. Plantation lots where food and cash crops are cultivated.

c. Owned reserves of fallow land or forest which are not under cultivation.

d. Village lands, which include the mountain slopes of uncultivated forest, the reef and sea frontage and the *malae*. The *malae* is the central place of the village, and open area of sand or lawns where the village cricket pitch is often situated and around which are located the *maota* of the highest ranking titles of the village, and often the village church or churches.

Every village is made up of constituent *'āiga*. The term *'āiga* is used to refer to kinship of all kinds, the nuclear family, the sub-lineage, the maximal descent group, consanguineal, affinal and adoptive kin. In the context of the village it refers to a group of consanguineal or adoptive kin who are represented by a matai in the village *fono*, these kin groups may or may not form related clusters, and each is ranked hierarchically according to the rank of the title by
which the group is represented in the village fono. Each matai, irrespective of his rank, is monotaga to his village; this means that he is expected to contribute to a wide range of extra-household village activities which range from ceremonial to functional economical projects which concern the whole settlement. His "contribution" is in fact mainly the collectively pooled resources of labour, goods and cash of the 'āiga he represents.

Each 'āiga has an estate of which the matai is the custodian. This estate includes maota or house sites, plantation lots and reserves of land either fallow or uncultivated. The estate of an 'āiga may be increased by assuming portions of the uncultivated forest lands by clearing them for cultivation, this requires the approval of the village fono. Portions of an estate may be transferred to other 'āiga or subdivided when an 'āiga splits with the approval of all its adult members.

III

Samoan villages have a further means of internal sub-division which is not measured in territorial or spatial dimensions but in the division of labour and spheres of influence between males and females. This division is referred to as:
"O le nu'u o tama'ita'i ma le nu'u o ali'i." - "the village of ladies and the village of gentlemen."
This division reflects not the division of husband and wife but the division of brother and sister. The term "village of the ladies" refers to the society of unmarried, separated or widowed girls and women who were members, by right of descent or adoption, of village 'āiga. This society of ladies is referred to in Samoan as tama'ita'i or aualuma. I use the term ladies here as there is an important social distinction in the Samoan language in the use of the term "lady" (tama'ita'i) or "girl" (teine), and "woman" (fafine) when applied to a female. The latter term may only be used acceptably to refer to a married woman who is cohabiting with her husband. To refer to a spinster, divorcee or widow as a "woman" implies that she is engaged in illicit sexual activities. This distinction in terminology emphasizes the dual status of most adult Samoan women as "sisters" and "wives".

The term "village of the gentlemen" refers to two male groups, the fono or council of matai and the society of untitled men, called the 'āumaga. The fono is the executive and judicial authority of the village and the 'āumaga carries out the will of the fono. This latter group, referred to by Samoans as the "strength of the village", were the army, the constabulary and the main work force of the village.

2. Males are referred to as tama (boy) when unmarried, regardless of age, and tamāloa (man) when married.
Village groups may be summarised in the following manner:

**VILLAGE OF LADIES**
**(nu'u o tama'ita'i)**

*Aualuma:*
Society of female members of village 'āiga.

The sisters and daughters of the members of the *fono* and the *aumaga*.

Function: largely ceremonial.

**VILLAGE OF GENTLEMEN**
**(nu'u o ali'i)**

*Fono:*
Council of matai (*ali'i* and *tulafale*) of village 'āiga.

The brothers and fathers of the members of the *aualuma*.

Function: largely political and administrative.

*aumaga:*
Society of untitled men.

Function: provision of labour and defense.

In-marrying women are not counted as being of the "village of ladies" and are subordinate in rank and social status to the members of the *aualuma*. In modern times in-marrying women form a separate institution in the village known as the *komiti*.

In most Samoan villages members of the *aualuma* take part in the *komiti* but as a distinct and higher ranking group. In-marrying women belong to two status categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wives</th>
<th>Husbands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Matai</em></td>
<td><em>ali'i</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paletua</td>
<td>tulafale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tausi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Matai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>āvā taulele'a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. See Chapter 8 for a discussion of the origins and development of this institution.
## THE CONTEMPORARY DIVISION OF LABOUR IN SAMOAN SOCIETY

### BY SEX, AGE AND STATUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children under ten</strong></td>
<td>Caring for younger siblings. Fetching, carrying for adults. Household weeding. Collecting rubbish, dry coconuts, firewood.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Age</td>
<td>Weaving <em>'ie toga'</em> and other pandanus handicrafts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The village groups do major tasks for the community. A group of members of the ūumaga will successively clear bush or weed the taro gardens for every 'āiga of the village, the tama'ita'i and komiti will prepare thatch to renew the roof of every house of the village in turn, and so on. Male and female working groups also prepare food and provide hospitality for visiting parties, weddings, funerals and other ceremonial occasions and will undertake projects for the village as a whole, such as maintaining the bathing pool and other community amenities.

Since the 1930's, the "nu'u o tama'ita'i" has been represented by the komiti or women's committee, which usually includes the 3 female status groups of the village, the aualuma, the faletua and tausi, and the āvā taulele'a. The komiti is responsible for village sanitation, water supplies, infant and maternal health care, domestic standards (supplies of basic household equipment such as linen, cutlery, kitchen-ware, etc.) and for providing hospitality to guests of the village on ceremonial occasions.

IV

Samoans are universally Christians and every village has its own church or churches if several different denominations are represented. About half the population of Samoa belongs to the Congregational Christian Church in Western Samoa, formerly the London Missionary Society, the next largest is the Roman Catholic Church, followed by the Methodist
Church. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon), the Seventh Day Adventist Church and a variety of smaller evangelical sects, are also represented in Samoa, in that order of influence.

Each village has a resident pastor for each church (in the case of the Roman Catholic Church, a married catechist). There is great competition between and within villages regarding the size and ostentation of their churches and the houses of their clergy. A village with a congregation of less than a hundred adult members will still typically have a large church with the capacity to seat as many as a thousand people. Village clergymen and their families receive a portion of land for subsistence and cash cropping, labour assistance from the 'aumaga, a cash income, the use of a house and all household necessities which are annually replenished, from the 'aiga of the congregation.

Villages in which there are several different Christian sects will characteristically have sectarian interests as an added source of political factionalism in the community. However, sectarian differences are rarely so great that they split traditional boundaries of village and 'aiga.

Households vary considerably in size and composition. Some 'aiga live in separate small households based on nuclear family groups located on different sections of the 'aiga
PLATE 2. - A typical Samoan household comprising three main buildings: a *fale tele* (right), a *fale o'o* (centre) and *fale pālagi* (left).

A small dwelling house or *fale o'o*.

PLATE 3.
They do not co-operate at the domestic level, but co-operate in subsistence production and cash cropping and pool resources for village church and family ceremonial contributions. Other 'āiga follow the more traditional practice of maintaining a large communal household in which each nuclear family has its own dwelling house (fale o'o or fale 'umi) clustered around the fale tele; the big guest house of the 'āiga, which is usually unoccupied for purposes of dwelling but is used for the reception and housing of guests, family meeting, prayers, formal meals, and in the case of senior ranking ali'i, for village fono. Besides the dwelling house, a household will have several smaller shelters, (fale o'o) for the 'umu (earth oven), for the preparation of food and other sedentary tasks, such as preparing pandanus leaves for weaving, for storage of tools, unprocessed coconuts, firewood and so on.

The basic unit of production is the household. At the domestic level, the household area is maintained and cleaned, food is processed, cooked and eaten through the co-operative labour of the members of the household based on divisions of age and sex. The cultivation of subsistance and cash crops and care of livestock, the production of manufactured items for household use or ceremonial exchange or sale, the gathering of wild forest products and seafoods, fishing and occasional hunting of wild pigs, pigeon and fruit bats follow the same co-operative pattern.
Each household comprises four basic status groups which are divided horizontally by sex and vertically by age, in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Matai</td>
<td>Consanguineal kinswomen of the same or senior generation of the matai. Also adult daughters of the matai and his consanguineal kinsmen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Untitled consanguineal kinsmen of the same or senior generation as the matai.</td>
<td>Wife of the matai and adolescent consanguineal kinswomen of the matai and his consanguineal kinsmen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thus hierarchical structure of the household is fairly complex; generation, sex, age and distinctions between affines and consanguinal members of the household are all factors which dictate role, status, rank and their attendant rights and duties. In practice, seniority in age is probably the most important principle in determining who has authority over whom in a household.

VI

A brief account of the Samoan kinship system will be given here with the intention of clarifying the principles upon which kinship group formation is based and by which descent and inheritance are ordered. I am referring specifically to the situation in contemporary Western Samoa as I observed it during my period of fieldwork. Aspects of social change and a more detailed consideration of structural principles will appear in later chapters.

The term 'āiga is used of kinship in all its dimensions. In this section I will use the term 'āiga to refer to the local "core" of a descent group which resides on the estate and under the jurisdiction of the matai with which it is associated.

4. Detailed discussions of Samoan Kinship may be found in Gilson 1971 Tiffany 1975, Schultz 1912, Kramer 1902.
Affiliation to an 'āiga is based on cognatic descent or adoption and accordingly, individuals have rights in as many 'āiga groups as they can trace descent from, if they have validated those rights by giving service to their respective matai. It is the requirement of service that limits the number of 'āiga to whom the individual actually considers himself affiliated and in practice most individuals have a primary interest in either the 'āiga of their mother or of their father which is determined by residence.

'Āiga are exogamous and marriage between persons related in the three or four ascendent generations is strongly disapproved of. Marriage within the village between unrelated persons is permitted but for a variety of economic and political considerations, Samoans consider inter-village marriage more desirable. The choice of post-marital residence venue is influenced by the interest males have in acquiring a matai title in their mature years.

Matai titles are the property of the 'āiga with which they are associated, that is, all the adult members of an 'āiga who have validated their membership through service to it, have a right to take part in the decision-making process by which matai titles are allocated. Accordingly, a male who wishes to be considered for the incumbency of a vacant matai title must earn the approval of the 'āiga who controls it.
Minor titles are sometimes conferred on persons who are not blood members of the 'āiga if there is no suitable direct consanguinal heir, thus some men may be able to obtain a matai title from the 'āiga of their wife if they have resided uxorilocally for a long period and given good service to the group. However, a man is most likely to acquire a matai title from an 'āiga to which he is related by blood and so he is likely to reside with the 'āiga which offers him the best prospects of inheritance in order to render service which would qualify him.

Women may hold matai titles but few do, most female matai are elite urban dwelling women with professional qualifications⁵. The preference for virilocal post-marital residence by males is a result of the interests males have in residing with an 'āiga in which they have full rights of membership and the best chances of inheritance. This means that in practice there is a distinction between principles of descent, which are cognatic and involve many options; and principles of inheritance, which, because of the way in which most Samoans exercise these options, tends to favour agnates.

---

5. See Chapter 10.
For example the following relationships exist between the present incumbents of nineteen matai titles in a particular Samoan village and the former holder of the same title:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Former incumbent of matai title</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Father's Brother</th>
<th>Father's Mother's Brother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's Father</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother's Brother</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This shows that out of nineteen titles, father to son succession is the dominant mode and an additional five titles were transmitted in the male line. Five titles were passed down through female links while one title was succeeded to by an adopted son.

Primary 'aiga affiliation derives from factors such as place of birth, place of childhood residence and inheritance prospects. After early childhood, most Samoans have a number of
options as to their ultimate primary 'āiga affiliation and
this choice will influence the choice of secondary 'āiga
affiliations. These will almost invariably include the
'āiga of the present parent with whom the individual has
not chosen to reside with in adult life.

The following case study illustrates a common situation
which modifies the perception of a Samoan Kinship as one
predominently ordered in a patrilineal mode; being that
of a son of his father's second marriage.
Case Study No. 1

Inheritance rights of a Son from a Second Marriage

Sefo was born in and resided with his father's 'āiga until he was ten years old. When he reached that age his father died. His father was Saosala, the matai of the 'āiga and Sefo's mother was his father's second wife. The Saosala title was awarded to the second oldest son of Saosala's first wife. Sefo's mother was returned to her father's 'āiga by her deceased husband's 'āiga accompanied by Sefo and his five younger siblings. The matai of Sefo's mother's 'āiga is Tautala, his mother's father. He died when Sefo was eighteen and was succeeded by Sefo's mother's brother, a man of about forty.

Sefo could have returned to live with his father's 'āiga and rendered service to his half brother Saosala, or he could have remained with his mother's 'āiga and rendered service to his maternal uncle Tautala.

In the 'āiga of Saosala he is tamatane; a member of the male line. He is the next eldest surviving son of his father; he is twenty years younger than Saosala, but he is older than any of Saosala's sons. If he wished to establish himself in the village of Saosala his chances of eventually succeeding to the title would be good. However, his relationship with his elder half brother is not close and he dislikes Saosala's wife, who would not welcome Sefo's return to the 'āiga of Saosala as he is a competitor to her sons.

6. The names and titles used in this case study are fictitious.
Sefo opted to stay with the 'āiga Tautala where his relationships to his mother, mother's brother, cousins and siblings are close and affectionate. His mother's brother's son Pito is a year older than he is and when Tautala dies the 'āigapotopoto (meeting of the adult members of the 'āiga) will probably choose either Pito or Sefo to succeed to the title. While Sefo's position as tamafafine (female descent line) gives him the weaker claim, long residence and service to the 'āiga would validate his claim to be considered for the title on equal grounds with Pito.

Sefo maintains his tie with his father's 'āiga as a secondary affiliation. Although his chances of inheritance there are diminished, he maintains links with his paternal 'āiga for a number of reasons. Firstly, if his half-brother dies prematurely, being older than his half-brother's sons, he could be considered as a successor to the title. Secondly, his personal status in his mother's 'āiga is enhanced by the high rank of his paternal 'āiga which gives him a slight edge on his mother's brother's sons, who do not have such high ranking connections on their mother's side. Thirdly, he wishes to maintain the links with his paternal 'āiga on behalf of his own young sons and daughters as the link may be of some advantage to them when they grow up, if they wish to maintain the links themselves.

The method by which Sefo maintains his secondary affiliation with his paternal 'āiga is by making periodic visits to them,
taking a gift of food or money to Saosala, by taking an interest in the affairs of the 'āiga of Saosala, by participating in family meetings ('āigapotopoto) when they occur and by keeping Tautala, the matai of his own primary 'āiga informed about the rites de passage in his secondary 'āiga, so that this matai will attend and contribute to the ceremonial distribution of goods and money which accompany these occasions.

VII

The constant demands of fa'ālavelave (troubles) which is the term Samoans give to ceremonial redistributions, may be looked upon as a constant drain on the resources of an 'āiga and indeed, Samoans often complain about them. It is more prestigious to give than receive, and although contributions to fa'ālavelave are always reciprocal in the sense that the goods and cash are pooled and redistributed, the feasting which accompanies these occasions means that the host 'āiga whose fa'ālavelave it is, receives less than they give away. But despite complaints, Samoans have a strong interest in the maintenance of the custom, since it is the principal mechanism by which secondary 'āiga affiliations are maintained over time, by kinship identification and consolidation.

The greater ceremonial obligations of the holders of high ranking titles derive from the senior position of such titles in a maximal descent structure which transcends the
village polity, and the obligation that the incumbents of such titles and their immediate 'āiga to maintain the dignity and reputation associated with high rank, by contributing generously to the many rites de passage of the large kinship network.

The constituent 'āiga of any Samoan village will, in varying degrees, all have kinship networks beyond the village, and this accounts for the high degree of mobility of Samoans and constant fluctuations in village populations as individuals move to and fro within their kinship networks. The potentiality for mobility and the range of residential options which each individual has are valued by Samoans.

In a nation where the G.N.P. is among the world's lowest, where cash is scarce and the economy is heavily reliant on subsistence, the solid village base, the large co-operative household, and the extra-village kinship network are vital to social and economic security and contributes to the overall re-distribution of wealth and lack of significant economic inequality.

Usually, the higher the rank of the 'āiga the greater the frequency of their ceremonial obligations. Fig. 2 is expressed as selective genealogies and indicates the links through which the 'āiga Sā Tasi traces its kinship to other named 'āiga. This diagram shows the actual secondary 'āiga affiliations which were acknowledged by the matai Tasi.

7. The names on the diagram are fictional. The prefix Sā is used to refer to the maximal span of the 'āiga associated with the matai title Tasi.
through contributions of ‘ie toga (fine mats), money and goods such as kegs of salt beef, cartons of tinned fish and meat, large boxes of hard-tack biscuits and loaves of bread, in the period May 1976 to December 1977.

The occasions which require these contributions are listed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fa'alavelave</th>
<th>Occasion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fa'afailelega tama</td>
<td>Birth of a child (first born)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fa'aiipoipoga</td>
<td>Weddings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagi</td>
<td>Funerals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saofa'i</td>
<td>Title-conferring ceremonies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umusaga</td>
<td>Opening of a new house, or public building such as a school, hospital, committee house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fa'aulufalega</td>
<td>New church opening.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the diagram it will be seen that a significant proportion of the links to secondary 'āiga affiliations are traced through women. Tasi recognises these links for the following reasons:

a. They provide him with reciprocal support for the fa'alavelave of the Sā Tasi.

b. They offer at least some prospects for title succession for the untitled men of the Sā Tasi and contributions to fa'alavelave is regarded as a form of service to a title, both to the donor matai and the recipient matai.
Alo o Eneta Children of Eneta
c. Certain of these links are to titles which exceed that of Tasi in rank and national prestige. The maintenance of links to such titles is a means of adding to the dignity and importance of the Tasi title.

d. One link is of special importance. It is a relationship termed feagaiga. Such a relationship exists between Tasi and his sisters and sister's children and attributes a special responsibility to him to contribute to their fa'alavelave and those of their affines. It also exists between the descendants of the original Tasi and the descendants of the sister of the original Tasi. This aiga is Sā Lua in Fig.2 and Sā Tasi would be expected to give generously to all their fa'alavelave (except a fa'afaitailelega tama which usually involves only the respective aiga of the parents of the newborn infant.)

e. Certain links are maintained for reasons of special interests. For example, one line (Tasi's fathers' father's brother's aiga) is in American Samoa. This relationship is of great value to members of the two aiga in moving between the two territories. Another, that of Tasi's father's second wife's aiga is well established in New Zealand and offers an important opportunity for getting members of the Sā Tasi entry to New Zealand.

8. See Chapter 5.
The classification of Samoan social structure and organisation in terms of its descent system has raised problems for ethnographers. Freeman (1971:93), referring to Sahlins' description of the Samoan descent system as "patrilineal" (Sahlins, 1958:181) and Ember's description of it as a 'bilateral society' in which all the descent groups are 'nonunilinear' (Ember, 1958:61), remarks:

"It is salutary to reflect that these logically irreconcilable definitions refer to the same reality, for, as this suggests, it is no simple reality to be subsumed under a single logical principle, but a rather complex reality calling for somewhat more subtle understanding".

Freeman's objection to the term "bilateral" for the classification of Samoan descent is understandable in view of his study of the Iban (1970) whose mode of kinship reckoning he terms "bilateral", and which has very little in common with that of the Samoans.

The whole notion of "lineality" seems to me to be inadequate to describe or to understand the principles of Samoan social structure. A study by Tiffany (1972, 1975) seeks to avoid the pitfalls imposed by this concept by applying and developing M.G. Smith's (1974) theory of corporation as a means of analysing the Samoan 'āiga.
Tiffany uses the term "cognatic" to describe Samoan descent groups. The problem, for me anyway, with her analysis is that while it does explain quite a lot about the principles of organisation of 'āiga in contemporary Samoa, it does so at the expense of the consideration of the underlying structures and subtle symbolic oppositions which are the very roots of Samoan social structure.

And as Freeman observes, these structures

"...have been modified by the vicissitudes of history to produce a complex living society in which Samoan orators find unending diversion, and for the reason that even the most erudite of them is unable to master all of its intricacies and subtleties". (Freeman, 1971, 93)

Duality - the opposition, reciprocity and contractual relations between dyads - forms the structure of all Samoan social and political relations at the level at which cultural order is imposed upon that of nature. The principal symbolic model for this duality is that of the ideal relation between brother and sister. This thesis will attempt to explore this relationship and will advance two propositions. The first is that secular authority or pule is the prerogative of brothers in a descent group, and by extension of all men, while moral authority and mystical power (mana) is associated with sisters vis a vis their brothers, and to a lesser extent with the descendants
of sisters, *tamafafine* - the uterine line of a descent group *vis a vis* the descendants of brothers, *tamatane* - the agnatic line of a descent group. My second proposition follows from the first and is that an opposition between the moral and secular aspects of power rather than an opposition of "masculine - feminine" that lies at the heart of Samoan symbolic logic and which is expressed, among many structures, in the descent system, the most powerful evidence for my case is the separation of females in both Samoan 'āiga and villages, into two distinct status categories, that of sisters and that of wives. The former being predominantly ceremonial and the latter predominantly domestic. The maintenance of this division of female status depends on exogamous marriage and a predominant mode of virilocal post marital residence.

If Samoan descent must be classified, then I conclude that the term cognatic is the most appropriate description, in terms of realities of contemporary society at least. Samoan descent groups are ancestor-focused and Samoans invoke their descent from particular ancestors for a number of reasons: as evidence of their personal rank; to acquire rights of residence and land use; to claim kinship to persons or groups of importance and to demonstrate rights of inheritance or rights of disposition to particular *matai* titles.
Gilson (1970: 37-38) considers claims of the *tamafafine* to important titles during the nineteenth century to have been "pretensions", however in the opinion of the senior Judge of the Samoan Lands and Titles Court, Afioga Meleisea Politauf, both *tamatane* and *tamafafine* have rights of inheritance to a title, if they have the prerequisites of having rendered service to that title, unless there is a formal convenant (*feagaiga*) between them. Such *feagaiga*, he said, originate from a brother and sister pair, each of whom have founded a lineage and whose names are given as the titles of those lineages. A *feagaiga* of this kind enjoins upon the descendants of the sister and brother the obligation to treat one another as though they were brother and sister, with mutual respect and support. In such *feagaiga* the matai of the *tamafafine* has the right to participate in the *'āiga potopoto* of the *tamatane* but neither side may claim the title of the other.

According to the strictest interpretation of the proper relationship between a sister and brother, also described as *feagaiga*, a sister marries "out" of her own *'āiga* and creates, through her marriage, a useful alliance for her father or brother. She is considered to be providing heirs primarily for another *'āiga* rather than for her own, her children will grow up among their father's
'āiga in which they will have primary rights and duties by virtue of residence. But the reciprocal duty of a brother is to provide for his sister both by contributing generously to the rites de passage of her affinal 'āiga and by honouring her rights in the natal 'āiga, so that she may return there and find shelter, land rights and a position of respect, if her marriage comes to an end through either separation or widowhood. Now as I have shown in Case Study No.2, the enduring rights of a sister in her own descent group mean that children are frequently raised matrilocally and so, acquire equal rights with the children of their mother's brother in their maternal 'āiga.

The Samoans have an ideology which emphasises agnatic inheritance of matai titles which is maintained by an ideal pattern of virilocal post marital residence through which the children of sisters form their primary affiliation to their patrikin. As I will show in Chapter Four below, this is in fact the dominant mode of behaviour in contemporary Samoa. The ideology concerning inheritance is not extended to descent, however, which is traced multilaterally, or cognatically, for a variety of contextually defined purposes.
CHAPTER TWO

TRADITION AND CHANGE
CHAPTER TWO

Tradition and Change

This chapter is intended to serve as an extended case study which will both supplement the preceding chapter and describe the contemporary economic and political circumstances of a Samoan village.

In the early 19th Century, when Europeans first began to record place names there was a large village on the border of the districts of Tuamasaga and Atua. The village comprised seven pitonu'u, which were known collectively as Saga.

By the late 19th Century the settlement had divided into four separate villages, Pou tasi, Saleilua, Matautu and Vaovai. The name Saga has been dropped except in ceremonial usage and oratory but the four villages are still referred to as Falefitu - "house of seven". This term originally described two groups of tulafale (orator chiefs) called the Lufilufi and the Taulauaniu. Each of the groups had members in each of the seven pitonu'u of Saga.¹

¹. This village history is summarised from an account provided by Nofoagatotoa Uasu and translated from Samoan by Malama Meleisea.
The Lufilufi were the attendants of Tuisamo, the chief who founded Saga. Tuisamo, according to tradition, originally came from Fiji and was given his title and his land where he founded Saga by Malietoa, the paramount chief of Tuamasaga district, in return for services rendered. The village was at that time part of Tuamasaga district. Tuisamo built a house with only one main post in what tradition describes as "the Fijian style". The name of the house site (maota) of Tuisamo was (and is) Poutasi, the name given to senior ranking of the four modern villages that were once known collectively as Saga.

The Taulaumi were a group of orators who settled in Saga from Safata. Their traditional function is no longer well remembered but it seems probable that they served the war god of the village.

About twelve generations ago, two descendants of the original Tuisamo, who also traced their ancestry from Tuimanua and Tuitoga, replaced Tuisamo as the paramount chiefs of the village. Tradition says that a war was fought between Tuamasaga and Atua and the village became part of Atua. The Tuisamo title became the property of the Lufilufi who could bestow it upon the candidate of their choice.
The new paramount chiefs of Saga were Meleisea and Tuataagaloa. Meleisea resided at Poutasi. He had come there from Satalo. The Lufilufi conferred the title of Tuisamo on his father, Fanene, who was a descendent of the first Tuisamo.

The sister of Meleisea and Tuataagaloa was Leilua. The village of Saleilua is named for her - "Sa Leilua" - the family of Leilua.

The title Leilua is the highest ranking in Saleilua.

The history of Saga is alluded to in the fa'alupega of Falefitu which is recited when the matai of the four villages of Poutasi, Saleilua, Vaovai and Matautu meet. A fa'alupega is a set of ceremonial greetings which sets out rank precedence. The Book of Fa'alupega (Malua 1975) gives the following version of the fa'alupega of Saga.
Talouna lau Susuga a Tuātagoloa o le sa'o fetalai, o le to'osavili, o le ki o le Malo

Recognition to your excellency Tuatagoloa the leading speaker, Peacemaker and key to the government. (2)

Tulouna lau Afioga Meleisea o le sa'o aualuma

Recognition to your highness Meleisea the leader of the aualuma. (3)

Afio mai Leilua ma au Tamatane, Touli, Asuao, Tapu, Leali'ie'e.

Respectful greetings to Leilua and the sons, Touli Asuao, Tapu and Leali'ie'e.

Afio mai le Matua o Fanene

Respectful greetings to the parent, Fanene. (4)

Tulouna oe Lufilufi ma lou Tapa'au o le Tuisamoa

Recognition to you, Lufilufi and your high chief Tuisamoa.

Afio mai Sālevalasi, o lau Afioga a Mata'utia ma Tupuola ma le galu taulele'a.

Respectful greetings to the representatives here of the Salevalasi, your highness Mata'utia and Tupuola and his serving men. (5)

2. This fa'alupega, according to some oral sources was revised in the early 1900's when the Tuātagoloa of that time became an official in the German administration. The word "ki" is borrowed from English.

3. See part 2, chapter 1 for a discussion of the use of the term aualuma to describe a male group. The reference is to the original Meleisea who was a manaita and the sao aumaga of Satalo from whence he came.

4. Fanene was the father of Meleisea and Tuatagaloa who, together with Leilua, are referred to a "O alo o Fānene" - The children of Fanene. In this sense the term matua, lit. "parent", means councillor.

5. The founders of Mata'utu village who were allowed to settle in Saga by Tuisamoa.
Tuatagaloa and Meleisea
Leilua also, and the Four
The Supporters, Lufilufi
And Tuisamoa

Traditional Chant (Solo) of Poutasi

Auē, Poutasi - the best, the finest
With your atoll, Nu'usafe'e standing in the sea
Come - seeing is believing,
For my village is one where things are accomplished.

Praise Song (vi'i) of Poutasi by
Naila Ta'ale

Oh my pigeon, my pigeon has been
released among the dwellings of Fānene's children,
Our Ruler has ended that which was the best
of relationships,
Your gentleness will be remembered until death.

Lament for Meleisea Filisouaiga
by his wife Fuluiole
A - NELSONS STORE (AIGA & ALOFA)
B - FALEALILI DISTRICT HOSPITAL
C - PRIMARY SCHOOL
D - FALEALILI JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
E - AGRICULTURAL STATION
F - TEACHERS HOUSES

PERMANENT MATERIAL HOUSES (FALE PĀLAGI)
△ FALETELE
△ AFOLAU (INCLUDES SOME PERMANENT MATERIALS; i.e. IRON ROOF)
○ FALEČO
▼ COPRA DRYERS
❖ CHURCHES

NUMBERS INDICATE HOUSEHOLDS ACCORDING TO APPENDIX B.
These verses are English translations of the refrains from three well-known songs of Poutasi Village. The first is ancient and derives from the *fa'alupega* of Saga. It reflects the pride that Poutasi people have in their high chiefs Meleisea and Tuatalagaloa, who are among the four highest ranking *ali'i* in Falealili district.

The second echoes the pride of Poutasi people in the beauty of their village - Nu'usafe'e is Western Samoa's only atoll, a tiny island on the reef about a mile off shore from the village. Poutasi is on the edge of the large Falealili lagoon and the main village settlement around the *Malae* is bounded by two small rivers, one a tidal mixture of spring water and salt, and the other flowing down from the foothills of the mountain ranges behind the village. The song also reflects popular pride in Poutasi's reputation for "accomplishment" - their high chiefs, a senior Judge and a Member of Parliament respectively, and the many utilities and strong men's and women's groups of the village. Poutasi has within its boundaries, the hospital, junior high school, police station and agriculture station that serve the surrounding district. It has a piped water supply, two general stores, a Catholic and a Congregational church, a primary school, post office and bank agency, copra driers for each household and until 1973, a bus service owned by a village *matai*. One store is owned by a Poutasi 'āiga, and the other is a branch of an Āpia merchant firm. (See Fig. 3).
The third refrain is in memory of Meleisea Filisou'aiga. well remembered over thirty years after his death as a man with the traditional virtues of a high chief. He had fifteen children by his first and second wives, and possessed great knowledge of Samoan history and genealogy. His generosity is still spoken of. On his deathbed he asked that his title go to his most educated son, for he felt that the traditional virtues and traditional knowledge were no longer sufficient for Samoan chiefs in the mid 20th century.

Poutasi is typical of many Samoan villages in the problems it faces. These reflect the strains of adaptation to new circumstances, for although Samoan culture has gone through several periods of adaptation and change in the past two centuries, a new period of change has resulted from a rapid increase in secondary education and overseas emigration since 1950, producing conflicting expectations. These are that a "higher" standard of living in terms of access to and capacity to acquire imported consumer goods ranging from pick-up trucks to tinned beef will eventuate without significantly altering the basic institutions of Samoan society. Of the twenty-one 'āiga in Poutasi Village, all but one have members residing in American Samoa, New Zealand or the U.S.A. and all receive regular gifts of goods and money from their emigrant kin. Every family sends their children to primary school and all had children who were either in senior forms in secondary schools or who had gone as far as Form Five
Six 'āiga had children who had succeeded in obtaining tertiary qualifications but only the four adult residents of/village had themselves had tertiary training, three as primary school teachers and one as a nurse. These are all women, three of whom are married to village farmers.

A rather retrograde ideology affects most rural communities in Samoa, with the exception of those bordering the Apia town area. This states that clever, successful people live in Apia, Pago Pago in American Samoa, New Zealand or the U.S.A. but not in Samoan villages. Despite the frequent strong and determined assertions by villagers of the value of fa'a Samoa (the Samoan way) for the happiness of the Samoan people, there is nevertheless considerable unhappiness, doubt and confusion in Samoan villages as people wrestle with contradictory values. For example, one value asserts that a house of permanent materials, a car, a cash income and an individualistic lifestyle is the key to happiness. The other that the largely subsistence-based, authoritarian and hierarchical, communal lifestyle characteristic of rural villages for centuries is inseparable from Samoan culture, and self image in terms of human dignity and worth, and consequently from happiness.

Lockwood's study of Poutasi (1969, based on field research in 1965) described the village as economically progressive, well governed and prosperous without any significant cost to
traditional institutions and values. During my eighteen months field work in Poutasi many people referred to that period as having been much as Lockwood described it, in contrast to the faction-ridden economically stagnant community which I observed. The difference between my data and that of Lockwood does not arise from a significant difference of perception, or of our different research methods and theoretical orientation, although it may point to some weaknesses in the predictive value of economic theory (eg: Rostow, 1956) with regard to small scale societies. The fact is that Poutasi has suffered a decline in terms of productivity, prosperity, community co-operation, political cohesion and effective leadership since 1969. The causes of this decline can be attributed to the aging of many of the village's most senior matai and the beginnings of a struggle for succession to those titles. This struggle was exacerbated by the fact that of the younger generation of men, (those of their thirties and forties), the more talented, qualified and industrious Poutasi men were living away from the village, in Apia or overseas. With perhaps one exception, the leading figures in the political feuding which has wrecked Poutasi since 1970 to the present (December 1978) have been men of modest ability and few accomplishments, either in terms of traditional or modern skills.
There are sixteen "foundation" titles in Poutasi. "Foundation titles" is the term used by Meleisea Folitau to describe titles which have a long history in Poutasi or Saga, that is, titles created or brought in from outside by Tuisamoa, or the Alo o Fānene in previous centuries. Of these titles, one has two branches each with a right to confer the title simultaneously (recognised by Lands and Titles court decisions in 1971 and 1978). This title has two holders in one branch and one holder in another, a total of three, of whom one representative of each branch is residing in the village. Another title is held jointly by two members of the same 'āiga. Three titles have recently been created or perhaps revived. It is not clear how these titles originated, but all three have been conferred in recent years. There are in addition, two titles from outside the village. One is held by a Poutasi man who received it from his 'āiga in another village. Another is held by the uxorilocally resident husband of a Poutasi woman. Both matai cultivate land and render service to Poutasi matai (the father of one and the father-in-law of the other) but their titles are recognized as having monotaga rights and duties in the village and each is the head of his own household. Like the holders of the three newly created titles, these holders of outside titles do not have their own posts to sit at in a meeting of the fono or village council of matai. (See Fig. 4).
The twenty-one titles of Poutasi may be grouped in three ways:

a. **By Rank and Status:**

   **Ali'i**
   1) Meleisea, Tuatagaloa (Luafutu line)
      Tuatagaloa Simaile - (Tuitapā line)
   2) Pāuga, Ai'i, Luafutu, Tuitapā
   3) (outside title) Te'o

   **Tulafale**
   1) 'Auseuga, Lupeomanū, Toelupe, Nofoagatotōa
   2) Si'a, Seuseu, Suavai, Tamamasui, Tūmanuvao, Fa'alētonu
   3) (new titles) Asaasā, Tuālagi, Seumaali'i
   4) (outside titles) Tupaola

b. By kinship; there are three groups of titles which are related genealogically and which may not be bestowed without the consent of the head of each maximal 'āiga.

   **Sā Meleisea**
   Meleisea
   Toelupe
   Lupeomanū
   Ai'i

   **Sā Tuatagaloa** (Simaile-Tuitapā line)
   Tuatagaloa
   Tuitapā
   Asaasa
   Fa'alētonu
   Si'a

---

6: These are not necessarily listed in order of rank.
Sa Tuatagaloa (Luafutu line)
Tuatagaloa (fa'amoana)
Tuatagaloa (Siaosi)
Luafutu
Suavai (Saimoa)
Suavai (Otto)

c. By Orator Groups

Lufilufi
Nofoagatotoa
'Auseuga
Toelupe
Seuseu
Suavai
Fa'alētonu

6b. The titles Tuālagi and Seuma'āli'i were conferred (in 1978) by 'Auseuga upon his two elder sons. I was unable to discover the origins of these two titles or whether they were junior titles of the Sā'Auseuga. The third new tulafale title Asaasa is also said to be of recent origin and was conferred by Tuitapa upon his brother about ten years ago.
IV

Demography of Poutasi

Population breakdown according to age and sex

Female population: 208
Male population: 200
Population aged 20 and under: 267
Population aged 21 and over: 141
Total Poutasi population: 408

The final total population excludes employees of government agencies and Nelson's store, also the Roman Catholic Catechist, the Congregational Church Pastor and their families. The 1971 government census recorded a population of four hundred and twenty-four persons living in Poutasi, but this included the residents of the villages who were not members of village 'āiga.

A village census of members of Poutasi 'āiga taken by Lockwood in November 1965 (Lockwood: 1970:5) indicated that only sixteen 'āiga were counted in Poutasi, while a benchmark survey conducted by the Department of Agriculture of Western Samoa (March 1977) refers to twenty 'āiga. I have referred to eighteen 'āiga. This discrepancy is because since Lockwood's study two Poutasi titles have been split, and there is an additional 'āiga Tuātāgaloa and 'āiga Suavai. In the case of the benchmark survey, the two matai, Tupuola and Te'o, were counted as Poutasi 'āiga, whereas I
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE: 1</th>
<th>Census Poutasi Village 1977 *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td>1-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'AIGA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meleisea</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuatagaloa(T)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuatagaloa(L)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ai'i</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luafutu</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauga</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuitapa</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lupeomanu</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Auseuga</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nofoagatotoa</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toelupe</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faaletonu</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suavai</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Si'a</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asasa</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamamasui</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumanuvao</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seusueu</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

71 70 56 70 25 15 16 16 17 16 6 8 4 8 5 5 408

* See Appendix B for details of the composition of Poutasi households.
have counted them as being attached to Poutasi 'āiga, according to the estate of the matai on which they were residing and cultivating crops. Lockwood's population figures for November 1965 were:

- Female population: 183
- Male population: 199
- Population under 15: 201
- Population over 15: 181
- Total: 382

There has been very little significant variation in population. After a twelve year interval, although the total population of Samoa is increasing at the rate of approximately 3% per annum, I counted only 26 more people resident in Poutasi, than did Lockwood.

According to an Agriculture department sponsored survey, Poutasi 'āiga had 16 persons in New Zealand, 7 in American Samoa, 17 in Apia, and seventeen in other Samoan villages, at the time of the survey in June 1976. I have no actual count of Poutasi people living elsewhere, but hundreds of people either born in Poutasi or at some time resident 'āiga in Poutasi, are living in other villages, Apia or overseas. There is only one 'āiga in Poutasi without relatives living abroad, and every individual member of each Poutasi 'āiga has a network of kin in other villages or Apia with whom they might go to visit or to live with. Samoans are a highly mobile people, tending
to settle down permanently when they (or their husbands) receive *matai* titles and have responsibilities which bind them to a particular village.

Poutasi village, like most Samoan villages, has a number of by-laws which are enforced within the village by the *matai*. Some are common to most Samoan villages; a conch shell blast calls people to family prayer at dusk, calls children to their houses at about 8.00 and announces a curfew at about 11.00, after which nobody is permitted to roam about the village. Other common village by-laws enforced in Poutasi forbid long hair to young men, western dress such as slacks, shorts or mini-skirts to women and girls, and prohibits the consumption of alcohol in the village. It must be stressed that such legislation is not inspired by "missionaries". The dominant Christian sects of Western Samoa have had an indigenous clergy for at least the last half century, and furthermore, village clergymen do not have legislative powers, although they may make recommendations to the *matai* on church matters.

Some villages have particularly elaborate sets of prohibitions, for example, in the village of Leulumoega, untitled men and their wives are not permitted to carry an umbrella in public or to use a fan in church; these privileges being reserved for *matai* and the *tei* - the name given to the *auluma* of that village.
Poutasi has two relatively uncommon regulations. One states that horses may not be owned or grazed within the village boundaries. This was enacted about twenty years ago by the *matai* because of the continual damage to breadfruit trees and other crops by untethered horses. In many Samoan villages each household owns one or two horses, which are used to transport coconuts and other crops from inland plantations to the village. Other villages seem to control horse damage by insisting the animals are tethered, however, in Poutasi there are no grassy areas in front of most of the households where horses can be tethered and kept under surveillance. Another law prohibits free roaming pigs. All pigs owned by village 'āiga must be kept either in a pen or in the village pigsty, a large stonewalled field behind the village.

Still another village law forbids the sale of unprocessed coconuts to village traders. At the time of Lockwood's study, every 'āiga had a copra drier and only fire-dried copra was sold. The council of *matai* enforce village laws with fines of varying severity. The fines are never levied on individuals but on the *matai* of the 'āiga to which an offender belongs. Since 1969 the coconut law has been fairly generally ignored by most 'āiga without action from the *fono*. 
Beside enforcing the village laws the matai adjudicate disputes and punish breaches of customary law (many of which coincide with the legislation of the State of Western Samoa). Officially, offences against the formal laws of the land are supposed to be reported to the police and brought before the magistrates court or the Supreme Court. However, a significant proportion of such offences are punished by the village council. During my eighteen months residence in Poutasi, several "criminal" offences - assault, rape, incest and theft - were dealt with by the council of matai and were not reported to the police. There are also large numbers of customary laws that are enforced by the matai. Breaches of these include disrespect to a matai by an untitled man, uttering an ususū or warcry (which is interpreted as a threat of violence), adultery, illegitimate pregnancy, boundary disputes and breaches of courtesy or etiquette.

Although vis-a-vis the outside world, the village is a tightly knit unit with a strong sense of its own unique identity, customs and traditions, relations within the village are subject to competition, jealousy, feud and other forms of animosity between 'āiga. Each 'āiga is regarded as a distinct entity by other 'āiga, thus the stratification of titles, and the grouping of certain 'āiga into maximal lineages is expressed in ceremonial and political contexts, but not in terms of everyday behaviour.
In practice, harmonious relations within the village rely on every individual respecting the boundaries, property, persons and dignity of other 'āiga, for a dispute between two persons of different 'āiga will rapidly become a dispute or even a feud between two 'āiga groups. In terms of functional inter-group relations, Poutasi is a community of equals, and high ranking 'āiga are bound with the same obligations as low ranking 'āiga concerning mutual respect.

The basic crops\(^7\) of Poutasi are coconuts and taro. The village has approximately five hundred acres of coconut palms in the hinterland between the coastal settlement and the foothills of the mountainous interior. Nuts are gathered for human consumption, (coconut cream is an ingredient in most Samoan dishes and green nuts are used for drinking), for pig and poultry feed and for copra. In 1976, Poutasi sold one hundred and twenty one tons of copra. The spaces between the trees in the coconut plantings of most Poutasi 'āiga are infested with heavy growth of weeds and shrubs, so many nuts are lost.

Taro is grown by every Poutasi 'āiga in the land beyond the coconut plantings. The forest line is being slowly pushed back as land is cleared for taro plantings. Ta'amū, a giant taro speci\(Alocasia macrorrhiza\) is also grown in areas that are not as favourable for taro. Taro is the most valued staple item

\(^7\) The economy of Poutasi has been well studied and documented elsewhere, (Lockwood, 1971, Department of Agriculture, 1977, University of the South Pacific, 1977).
of the diet of Poutasi people. Ta'amū, banana and breadfruit are the other staples, but are not as highly valued. Taro is also the only other major cash crop of Poutasi. The village has approximately eighty acres of taro plantings which has been estimated to yield about five hundred and ninety one metric tons (Agriculture Department, 1977).

Only eight Poutasi 'āiga grow the export variety of bananas and no 'āiga exported any bananas in 1976-77. The Poutasi people have had a number of unfortunate experiences with the commercial production of bananas - the failure of a communal project due to village politics in 1976, the fluctuation of export prices, the cost of fertilizer and insecticides, difficulty in obtaining packing materials were some of these. Bananas are grown mainly as a subsistence crop by most Poutasi farmers (Samoa are fond of boiled or roasted green bananas) and also as a good seasonal commodity for sale at the Apia market. Cocoa is also grown by most Poutasi 'āiga, but it has proved a disappointing investment as a cash crop, as the soils and environment of Poutasi produced poor yields and disease. However, cocoa is an important subsistence item. Samoans harvest and ferment small quantities of beans and crush them in a wooden mortar using an oval stone pestle, which yields a thick blackish-brown paste. Steeped in boiling water with sugar it makes a very popular local drink, koko Samoa.
Most households grow a variety of other trees and plants around their households which are useful for food, manufactured items, medicine or cosmetics.

1) **Food:** Breadfruit, *Vi* (*Spondias dulcis*), Sugar Cane, Pineapple, Oranges, Limes, Pawpaw, Avocado, Mango.

2) **Manufacture:** Coconut Palms, Sugar Cane, Pandanus, Tapioca.

3) **Medical/Cosmetic:** Lau ti (*Cordyline terminalis*), Guava, Lama (*Aleurites moluccana*), Coconut, Ginger, Moli (*Citrus hystix*), Frangipani.

In addition, many fruits, flowers, nuts, leaves, woods, vines and other wild products are gathered from the bush and used for a variety of everyday purposes.

Fishing is an important activity in Poutasi. Most 'āiga have small canoes and four have motor boats. Most fish is caught for subsistence, however, fish is marketed in Poutasi and in neighbouring villages in two ways. In the first, motor boats with good catches of Bonito cruise the shore of the village at dusk and families who want to buy a fish will hail the boat from the shore. The second way is for a family with a good catch of reef fish to send a child with a basket of fish to walk around the back of village households. People who see a child with a basket of fish

---

8. A fruit which is similar in taste and texture to an unripe green pear.
will call to it if they wish to buy some. Women, children and youths collect marine products from the reef and the floor of the lagoon at low tide. Several species of shellfish, sea cucumber, sea urchins, jelly fish, octopus, crabs, clams and seaweed are commonly collected.

Every 'āiga in Poutasi has some pigs and poultry, though some 'āiga have only a few while others have many. In June 1976 there were two hundred and seventy-one pigs in the village. These are kept for ceremonial occasions and gifts. Poultry are also kept for ceremonial occasions and for feeding guests, and eggs are rarely consumed, but left to hatch. One untitled man from the 'āiga Tuātagaloa Fa'amoana has a flock of hens from which he sells the eggs at the Apia market. Excluding his poultry, there were a total of two hundred and two hens in Poutasi in June 1976. In that same month one hundred and fourteen head of cattle were counted in Poutasi. These are mainly grazed under coconut palms. Only one 'āiga, that of Luāfutu, was producing milk in 1976. This was mainly for his own 'āiga consumption, but he sold some milk within the village. Poutasi people treat the cattle rather like pigs. They are slaughtered on ceremonial occasions, and used as gifts or as fines levied by the village council for offences committed by members of an 'āiga. Only Tuātagaloa Te'o Fetū and an untitled man from the 'āiga Tuātagaloa Fa'amoana raise cattle as a commercial venture, practice pasture improvement and care for the quality of their animals.
Because Poutasi has been the subject of several economic surveys, at the time I left the village in December 1977, there were several government sponsored projects either underway or being anticipated, all of which were pioneer or trial projects in rural development. One was a model piggery, the others were connected with the raising of cattle, taro and bananas.

Past experience in Poutasi seems to indicate that communal ventures aimed at a target sum to be spent on a village utility or church are successful. Such communal target production schemes have been successful in raising funds to build churches, the pastor's and catechist's houses, to install a piped water supply and water-seal latrines for each household ("peace-corps" toilets as they are locally known), and to build a maternity ward at a district hospital. However, co-operative schemes which involve a pooling of community labour and resources where an eventual sharing of profits among village matai, or 'aiga is anticipated have a history of failure. Recriminations usually begin once the target sum which motivates village co-operation on a project has been raised, or a loan to finance a project has been repaid. When profits are redistributed to participating 'aiga the basis for deciding who receives how much and on what basis becomes a source of dissenesion. Long standing rivalries below the surface of village politics suddenly emerge as focal points for faction fights between 'aiga which eventually cause the abandonment or failure of the project. The last such project carried out in Poutasi, in 1966, is still a source of many political tensions in the community.
PAGES 81 - 96 HAVE BEEN REMOVED

BY REQUEST OF THE AUTHOR
CHAPTER THREE

GIRLS AND BOYS
"Children are a gift from God" Samoans say and they assume all adults desire to have children. People without children are pitied, but it is assumed that they will adopt children from their relatives just as it is assumed that a child could not be unwanted, even if a mother finds a child an embarrassment or a burden, there are always others who will want it. Children are valued because they increase the numerical strength of the descent group and the potential work force of the household, and ensure adults' support and care in their old age.

I began field work in 1976 accompanied by my four daughters. One was aged only six weeks old and provided me with an excellent opportunity to learn about Samoan attitudes to infant care. I was laden with advice by both women of my own age and by older women: I must not sleep with my husband, it would make my breast milk sour, I must not take the baby outdoors after dark or carry her facing backwards over my shoulder, or sleep with a lamp burning at night, lest ghosts attack her. I was warned to watch my husband's activities, for if he were unfaithful to me, the child would surely become ill. I was advised about her diet and given lists of food that she should not be allowed to eat as they would give her either diarrhoea or constipation. I was scolded if I took her in the sun, failed to cover her
with a net while she slept during the day or washed her with cold water. If she cried and I did not immediately pick her up, someone else did. Samoan women were appalled when I told them that some Australian women "trained" their babies to sleep according to schedules by allowing them to cry and that in Australia babies often slept alone in cots in separate rooms from their mothers. A child, I was instructed, needs to sleep with its mother, and to be cuddled, comforted and carefully protected from numerous physical and supernatural dangers.

Babies are regarded as such vulnerable creatures that people of all ages and status categories have endless patience with them and seemingly unlimited interest in the most minute details of their health and physical development. It is rare to hear a baby crying in a Samoan village and when one is heard crying at night, great concern is expressed for this is always assumed to be a sign that the child is ill. One night, when my infant daughter cried almost all night due to pain from an ear infection, three women came to the house I was occupying to offer help in caring for her.

Infants are exclusively cared for by their mothers only for the first few months of their lives. Once they can hold their heads up and have gained in weight and strength, younger members of the household begin to share the caring for them with the mothers, and in several large households I noticed that mothers only held their babies when they
needed to be breast fed, and when sleeping with them at night. The rest of the time the babies were either passed from hand to hand among the children and adolescents of the households, or allowed to play on mats on the floors of the houses. In many households, this requires constant supervision, as the floors of traditional Samoan *fale* are covered with pebbles and babies over about six months constantly endeavour to dig stones from under the mats and put them in their mouths. This supervision is provided by any members of the households who have not got other pressing matters to attend to; whoever is sitting in the same house where a small baby is playing on the floor watches it, but usually small children are ordered, by adults present, to retrieve stones from the baby's mouth, or to put the baby back on the mat if it rolls or crawls off. Small children often spend many hours each day carrying babies around in order to amuse them or keep them out of harm's way.

Although the division of labour gives adolescent and adult males less responsibility for the care of small children, there is no feeling that it is unmanly to show interest in them. Males of all ages can be seen playing with babies, carrying them about and even feeding them solid food. Fathers generally show as much interest in their infants as mothers and are as likely, in the case of older infants, to try to comfort them when they cry, passing the children to their wives to be fed only if they are unable to stop the children from crying.
Although gender distinctions are made in referring to babies from earliest infancy, names do not follow strict divisions of gender unless they are of Biblical derivation or the name of a distinguished ancestor or ancestress. In the first year of life babies are usually referred to as "the girl" (o le teine) or "the boy" (o le tama) rather than by their given name. The term "pepe" - baby, is not often used to refer to infants and the term itself may be a contemporary or at least a post-European contact usage. If somebody calls "the boy is crying", or "the girl is hungry" it is quite clear to everyone that it is a small baby that is being referred to.

Apart from Biblical, European or Ancestral names, infants are named for relatives and friends, for particular events, qualities, objects, numbers (often referring to birth order in the family), sentiments or places. Such names might be gender linked only if a child is being named for a friend or relative of the same sex. Nor is it uncommon for this convention to be disregarded, so that a boy might be named for his father's sister or a girl for her father's mother's father, provided their names were not specifically gender linked.

Some Samoans derived amusement from my joking with them by addressing them with English glosses of their Samoan names

Fa'apusa - "boxed" or "oven".
Ua'lesi - "telegram"
Fa'alavelave - "troubles"
Fiamaile - "dog-like"
Sefulu - "Ten"
Lupe - "pigeon"
Malama - "enlightenment"
Pula - "ripe"
Fili - "enemy"
Manu - "bird"
Vao - "bush"

Only one or two syllables of given names are usually used to address people. Thus Senetenari (Centenary) is known as "Sene". Lupeaʻonu'u (pigeon honouring the village) is known as Lupe or Sauseaso (come the day) is known as "Sau". Long composite names are quite common and are most frequently given to a child to commemorate some special event in the family, community or nation.

Sometimes children are given names which sound degrading or ridiculous. This is rarely intended as a punishment or insult to the child but is usually an expression of anger towards other adults, particularly relatives.
Case Study No.4

In 1955 a woman, Alia, named her infant son "Saivaega" after the child's father's father's father who had held the title of the 'āiga. But a few weeks later her husband's father's brother's daughter also bore a son and named him Saivaega. Since Alia's husband held the title that the original Saivaega had held, and since her son was the elder of the two infants she was greatly angered. But her husband's cousin, the mother of the second Saivaega was married to a clergyman who was serving in the village. Their respective positions, the wife of a high chief and the wife of a clergyman forbade them arguing as to whose son had the greater right to the name. So Alia renamed her child 'Faainaelo' which might be glossed as "smelly" or "stinky". Faainaelo or Saivaega is now an adult and a school teacher. He is known professionally and to his friends as Saivaega, a more dignified name, but to his 'āiga and fellow villagers he is addressed by the former name.
Small children have a collective status until they are about ten. Domestic chores are allocated to them according to their size and capacity, not their sex. The work expected of children includes weeding and collecting rubbish from around the house, collecting fallen coconuts from the plantation and light firewood from the bush, fetching and carrying for adults and caring for younger siblings and other smaller children residing in the same household.

Children are ordered into small caretaking hierarchies by the older members of the household; the eldest child being expected to look after the next eldest and so on, down to the baby. Babies are handed over to the care of children when they are about two but even before they reach that age, children spend a considerable amount of time lugging babies about to pacify or amuse them. There is no expectation that female children should look after their youngers rather than male children, it is simply a matter of age and not sex. However, after children pass the age of about ten boys and girls begin to assume distinct sex-roles which confine girls largely to the household area while boys move further afield - to the bush, the plantations, fishing or just roaming about the village. Thus each "hierarchy" of smaller children ranked by age rather than sex will have at it's head one or more adolescent girls.
A small boy watches his baby brother while his mother works in a nearby house.

A child cries to be breastfed as his mother feeds her new infant.
These older girls are not obliged to look after the smallest children but rather to make sure that the older children are doing so. The dramatic increase in primary schools in Samoa since the 1950's has placed a previously unknown burden on adolescent girls in recent years, since all the children over five troop off happily to school from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. leaving adolescent girls and younger married women all the chores, including babyminding, formerly done by young children. There is no feeling that it is inappropriate for bigger boys to mind children, it is just that they are permitted greater freedom of movement and are less likely to be around for this purpose. If a busy woman can grab hold of her adolescent son or brother, he will find himself minding a small child until he can palm it off on a younger child.

III

Outside school hours, it is often quite difficult to tell the sex of young village children, dressed alike in waist cloths, their hair cut short to reduce the infestation of lice, they roam about in groups playing the same games and doing the same chores. It takes careful observation to tell the boys from the girls. Most Samoan households have some western-style children's garments which are stored in a box and distributed according to need. If the garment worn does not match the sex of the wearer, nobody
minds. But school children are dressed to emphasise gender distinctions. Bright red pinafores with pleated skirts worn over white blouses for girls, and grey shirts and blue lavalava or shorts for boys.

My house in the village was beside a stream and I noticed that little girls are more concerned about bodily modesty, on the whole, than little boys. Boys under ten usually swam naked but many little girls swam in their clothes. Adults do not seem to be very concerned about modesty in children at this age but small girls are often issued with underpants to wear. Naked children are sometimes teased by older children or adults, who joke about their genitals "I can see your teapot" or "I can see your joy". These euphemistic terms" tipoti (teapot - the shape is said to resemble male genitals) the coarser diminuative of tipoti; poki and the English work "joy" (pronounced by Samoans as Sioi) are the prevailing usages. Older Samoan terms are considered so obscene that they are not used and thus most of the younger generation of Samoans, at least, are unaware of them. Teasing children about their nakedness appears to have the aim of teaching them to take responsibility for finding something to wear and to learn not to wander about naked. The shamed child usually goes off to search washing lines and clothing chests for something to put on.
The feeling that gender distinctions are unimportant with regard to children under ten insofar as their clothing or roles are concerned is evidenced by the fact that some families will dress children in the clothing of the opposite sex for special occasions.

A W.H.O. Leprosy Consultant told me with some perplexity that he had been invited to attend the annual White Sunday service at Magiagi village and noticed that several children whom he had examined physically a few days previously were attired in the clothing of the opposite sex.

White Sunday, or Children's Sunday, was originated by the London Missionary Society (now the Christian Congregational Church of Samoa) but is now observed by most Christian denominations. As Protestant Samoan children are baptised on this day, it is a sort of annual children's birthday celebration. Children are coached for weeks before by the village pastor and his wife and perform Biblical playlets in age sets during the morning and afternoon services. They are feasted with cake and ice cream at Sunday lunch and receive new clothing for the occasion.

A family with an unequal number of small boys and girls may decide to rectify the matter for the occasion by clothing boys as girls. (Significantly, it is far rarer for a girl to be dressed as a boy. This will be discussed in later Chapters). Another reason for this occasional practice was suggested by a Samoan informant. Families with relatives
overseas often receive parcels of new children's clothing for White Sunday and a family in possession of surplus and expensive girls dresses may put them on a small boy to publicly demonstrate their affluence. There is a high incidence of male transexuality in Samoa. I was first informed, after meeting one, that they were uncommon, but discovered that by "uncommon" it was meant that there were usually only one or two such persons in each village.

It is possible that the origins of transexual behaviour originates in the pre-ten stage of childhood when gender identity is not stressed. Some mothers may tacitly or passively encourage transexual tendencies in their sons by simply not discouraging their wearing girls clothing, permitting them to participate in the tasks of older girls and women and eventually coming to value their helpfulness to the extent that they accept the development of a transexual role.

Fathers are much less likely to accept such an identity in their sons, but it is possible that they do not perceive the development until the boy reaches adolescence and fails to assume a clearly male role. By this time it is often too late and the anger, aggression and contempt of a father and the teasing of the boy's peers may only cause him to cling more determinedly to a feminine identity. This was the situation in the case of one transexual youth, the only one about whom I have detailed information.
Chodorow (1974:43-66) has suggested that a crucial differentiating experience in male and female development arises out of the fact that women, universally, are responsible for early child care and later female socialisation. She argues that there are crucial effects on the conscious and unconscious development of the ego resulting from early involvement with a female for children of both sexes. She proposes specifically that in any given society, feminine personality comes to define itself in relation and connection to other people more than masculine personality does.

"For boys and men, both individuation and dependency issues become tied up with a sense of masculinity, or masculine identity. For girls and women, by contrast, issues of femininity or feminine identity are not problematic in the same way. The structural situation of child rearing, reinforced by female and male role training, produces these differences, which are replicated and reproduced in the sexual sociology of adult life".

(Chodorow 1974:44)

Chodorow's theoretical insights have a particular explanatory value for both the development of gender identity among Samoans and for the noteworthy incidence of male transexuality in Samoa.

The phenomenon has been widely documented in Polynesia and Levy, writing of Tahitians (Levy, 1975) considers the role of Mahu (male transexual) to be an institutionalised one in Tahitian communities. The Mahu, he considers, serves as a living object lesson to young Tahitian males of what they should not become since gender distinctions
are not strongly emphasised in the socialisation of Tahitian children.

Levy is less specific as to how the incumbents of the institutionalised role of *Mahu* are produced but suggests (1975:111) that some mothers more or less consciously choose to elicit a transexual identity in a particular male child.

The opposite qualities of gender are a major theme in Samoan culture and consciousness and focus on the opposition of qualities symbolised in the structural relationship between brother and sister. This will be considered in a separate chapter but must be referred to briefly in this section with regard to the formation of gender identity in Samoan children.

Samoan children are predominantly socialised in an active sense by other, older children whose major preoccupation is to make them behave and to perform minor but arduous household tasks which the elder children might otherwise have to do themselves. Older children and mothers too, are more interested in ensuring that small children perform these tasks than worrying about whether the tasks are appropriate to the sex of the children performing them.
Although adults are not very concerned with the sex-roles or gender identity of children under ten, most children begin to demonstrate their perception of appropriate sex roles and display a sense of gender identity at about the age of four or five. This is accelerated if they are sent to school where distinctive dressing, differential treatment of boys and girls with regard to extra-curricular work around the school and separation of children into male and female play groups (which is facilitated by the school setting and numbers of children). In the Samoan home, however, the division of age, rather than sex, is more important to children under ten years of age.

At the household level, small boys begin to show an interest in the work of men and youths when they are about five. They are not allowed to accompany older males to the plantation or on fishing trips, but it is a common sight to see small boys squatting around the *umu* (earth or ground oven), watching the older boys and men preparing food and trying to help. The work of smoothing out pandanus leaves to be rolled into coils for mat weaving is learned by children of both sexes as are the elementary skills of weaving food baskets and house-blinds from coconut fronds. The more technical aspects of women's manufacturing skills are not taught to girls under ten.
Small age sets develop in households where the complement of children is large, children between eight and ten attempt to get away from the younger children leaving them in charge of the demanding and fretful toddlers and very small children. Divisions based on sex are most likely to develop in the oldest age groups when they can get away from the household area to play with the children of other households.

As children approach the age of ten, the way ahead is clear to small girls - in terms of the roles they will assume in future years; while to the small boys, the world of youths and men is still full of mysteries, because so much male activity takes place outside the household and village arena.

A boy's masculine gender identification is not necessarily based on identification with his father, especially if his father is an older man (or particularly if he is a matai, for this is far too remote and august a role for a boy to identify himself with). It will most likely be an adolescent male, someone from the "next stage" in the male role sequence that the boy will identify himself with. But for the boy under ten, even a fifteen year old youth is a remote figure, in contrast to a girl of this age who is constantly in the proximity of older girls and adult women.
Chodorow comments that the remoteness of the figures with whom boys take their masculine identity means that "a boy's male gender identification often becomes a "positional" identification, with aspects of the (male model's) clearly or not-so-clearly defined male role, rather than a more generalised "personal" identification - a diffuse identification with his (male model's) personality, values and behavioural traits - that could grow out of a real relationship to his (male model)." (Chodorow 1974:45).

The traditional Samoan *rite-de-passage* that marks the transformation of boy (*tama*) into youth (*taule'ale'a*) is that of circumcision (formerly superincision of the penis) which is performed nowadays on boys at between the ages of five and twelve, by a doctor at the district hospital, with an absence of ceremony.

In earlier times this operation was performed by a specialist (*tufuga tafaga*). Boys of the appropriate age organised themselves into a group and sought the operation for themselves, or else when the son of a high chief was of an age, a group of his lesser ranking peers were rounded up to join his suffering, and a ceremonial presentation was made to the expert on their behalf by the *matai* of the village.

---

1. I have substituted the term "male model" as being more appropriate in this context to Chodorow's usage of the term "father".
In contemporary Samoa there is no particular emphasis on how arrangements for circumcision of boys should be conducted. In Poutasi village, it was customary in recent times for the wife of Tuātagaloa or Meleiseā to decide and to arrange with the hospital for circumcision of a son and for other women of the village to send their sons along to be done in company with them. The only rule of circumcision that is acknowledged by all Samoans is that the operation must be performed. Foreskins are considered disgusting, dirty, ridiculous and animal-like. It is said that no Samoan female would consent to sexual intercourse with an uncircumcised male.

The custom of performing circumcision on boys between the ages of five and twelve clearly still has significance to people, as the operation could just as easily be performed on early infants as it is with Jewish infants, or as it is in most western countries where circumcision is still considered to be "hygienic". However, the fact that so many small boys are circumcised at an age when they are ready for school rather than when they are ready to take the first steps to an adult male role, indicates that it's significance is not so much that of a rite de passage as a means of emphasising masculine gender identity in young males.
Boys regard circumcision with fear and apprehension, and some boys run away or hide if they manage to find out the day on which it is to be performed, whereupon they are relentlessly sought out and dragged, protesting, to the hospital. However, once the operation has been performed, the group of boys, wearing nothing but a bandage on their penises, wait proudly for their wound to heal, and finally stand for an hour or so in the sea together to soak off the bandages. This is a spectacle which Samoans like to joke about, referring to the small fishes which swim around to nibble at the boys' bandages.

The greater difficulty of defining and confidently acquiring a male gender identity in childhood explains the noteworthy incidence of both male transexuality and the prevalence of expressive "feminine" gestures and behaviour in a high proportion of Samoan youths, who are still at the stage of a more generalised "personal" and diffused identification with people, and who have not yet fully arrived at a clearly defined "positional" identification with masculinity. This involves a process of negative self-definition, which will be discussed below in conjunction with adolescence in Samoa.

Samoans do not emphasise a need for rapid development of desired personality and behavioural characteristics. Thus there is considerable disparity between one boy and another of the same age in terms of levels of maturity in accordance with cultural expectations. This is considered to be quite
normal by Samoans, as human beings are seen to be in a constant state of development and personal growth and not to be passing through prescribed and expected stages at particular ages. Even elderly people are said to be still learning "how to behave", and Samoans do not seem to accept the idea that a person necessarily becomes fixed in a particular personality type or set of behavioural characteristics. This has been commented upon by Mead, (1928, 481-495). However, I strongly disagree with her assertion that this is linked to a lack of recognition of individuality which produces an overall national blandness of personality.

IV

The limited range of Samoan Kinship terminology, which is used for the purposes of description or identification, rather than as a form of address, is learned by Samoan children in early childhood. It's most striking characteristic is that it emphasises a distinction between cross-sex siblings and a distinction between male and female with respect to their offspring. The learning of kinship terminology is thus an important foundation stone in the Samoan child's formation of gender identity, which, as discussed above, is a passively rather than an actively encouraged learning process in younger children.
### Basic Samoan Kin Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female speaking</th>
<th>Male speaking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>uso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>tuagane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/elder</td>
<td>matua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>tīnā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>tamā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>tama tama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>tama teine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child, male</td>
<td>tama tama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child, female</td>
<td>tama teine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offspring</td>
<td>fānau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>tane/to'alua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood relatives</td>
<td>gafa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affines</td>
<td>paolo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descendants of</td>
<td>tamatane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a male</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descendants of</td>
<td>tamafafine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The term *suga* may be used of any female child or adolescent girl and *sole* of any male child or youth. (These terms are used playfully between adults also). Children address others including their parents and adult relatives by their given names or in the case of titled persons, by their *matai* names.
Samoan children are usually ignorant of all but the most fundamental kinship relations which exist between the members of their household; that is, that they know their parents, siblings and grandparents, but beyond that, other persons in the household are known to be "āiga" (relatives) but the precise nature of the kinship link is usually not known.

Lest this seems an excessive generalisation, I should add that knowledge of precise kinship relations is an area of esoteric information which is not a subject for general conversation, and is only acquired gradually by Samoans as they grow up. It took me two years to make a genealogy of the extended family with whom I was co-resident. I began by charting the relationship of the members of the household, two members of which it took me over a year of persistent questioning to identify precisely in this manner, and gradually fitting in other members of the descent group as I came across them. When it was completed, shortly before my departure, I gave it to the head of the household for him to check that it was correct. The adolescent members of the family crowded around and spent half an hour studying it with fascinated attention. Half the people included in it were very well known to them, but they did not know the precise kinship relations between themselves and those people.
The relationships which are important to children and young people are defined by status which is based on sex, age and rank as I have shown in Chapter one, rather than kinship as such. Children in Samoa become self-reliant at a very early age in terms of bathing, feeding, dressing and looking after themselves. The main thrust of the socialisation process is aimed at teaching children the appropriate manner in which they may interact with others. They learn by observation of others and by coercion. They are expected to gradually acquire wisdom and judgement (māfaufau) which will enable them to perform domestic tasks which are an aspect of their role and status in the household.

Children are the lowest status group in the household and their labour contribution to the household is something they learn to perceive in terms of service to higher ranking status groups. The difference between parents and children is the same as that between junior or senior and the term matua has both meanings. This relationship between persons of different generations does not change, regardless of chronological age, the distinction in status is maintained between adults and their parents. The distinction between junior and senior concerns the acquisition of māfaufau, wisdom or judgement which Samoans consider to be a life long process between infancy and old age. The
low status of youth and the high status of old age is rationalised by this theory of human development. Mead's (1928:481-495) well known assertion that Samoans have "a feeling of rigid intolerance toward precocity, youthful innovators, or short cuts to prestige" must be qualified here, however. "Tautalalaititi", the offense of speaking above one's ascribed status is applied to both children and adults in specific contexts. The precedence of rank and age in the household and village is stressed particularly in formal matters and on ceremonial occasions.

Mead's assessment of the role of the individual in Samoan culture may very well have accurately portrayed the circumstances of the early 1920's; the period in which she conducted her field observations in the isolated Manu'a group of Eastern Samoa. This was a period in which many of the traditional avenues for individual expression and achievement had declined: warfare, traditional religion and ritual, inter-island voyaging and arts and crafts. At the same time the new avenues for acquisition of non-traditional forms of status were lacking: eg: formal education, wage employment, trading and commercial agriculture, overseas travel and emigration; all of which offer a variety of new challenges and opportunities to the individual.

In contemporary Samoa, people's behaviour seemed to me to be largely characterised by a more or less silent struggle for personal recognition. "Good deeds", innovations and precocious achievements are highly valued, but the pursuit
of public approval and recognition via personal achievement is also clouded by a widespread fear of failure and of public mockery.

The sin of self-advertisement, of tautalalaititi is not so much the attempt to capitalise upon individual achievements and abilities by attention-getting behaviour, but of failing to achieve enduring success and thus looking foolish as a result. Status born of achievement is so much more transient and fragile than that acquired by ascription and although one often leads to another, there is security in obscurity, and a patient wait for seniority.

Children learn the somewhat contradictory dictum that virtue is its own reward, the reward of inner self-satisfaction and silent community approval. Yet at the same time one's virtues must be noticed if one is to acquire a matai title, or any other form of prestige. Thus the achieving, aggressive, thick-skinned individual who learns the art of strategic and diplomatic self-advertisement is as much a product of Samoan values as the bland, malleable, under-achiever that Mead saw as the characteristic Samoan individual.

Status differentiation strongly conditions the relationship between children and parents; children are taught to hold their parents in special affection and respect, but to treat them, as all their seniors, as persons of a distinct and higher status group. Thus relations between parents
and children are not demonstrative, individualistic and personal, but formal and reserved. It is believed that children should learn by experience as members of a status group rather than by admonition and guidance as individuals.

Samoan children's learning experiences are as a result greatly influenced by their environment - by the type of people and range of behaviour that they have the opportunity to observe. The child of a village clergyman, a high chief or a government official will have a richer environment in terms of the variety of people to observe and behaviour to internalise. A child from so privileged an environment may be no better fed or clothed than the average child, and in the case of the children of a high chief, will have a great deal more expectations levied upon them for hard work and good behaviour. But children of large, high-status households where many guests are received will inevitably have a far greater range of perceptions to draw upon which will stimulate self-confidence in interacting with others as he or she grows up. This is clearly reflected by pass rates in senior secondary schools - a relatively new avenue for achievement - in which the children of families with high rank or high status through employment in the Church or public service are in a striking majority. This is popularly explained as a result of
nepotism, favouritism and influence-peddling. Although these are strong factors in getting on in modern Samoa, they cannot explain higher success rates in examinations. In contrast, children from smaller, lower status rural households, whose opportunity to observe at close quarters the behaviour of many adults of varying status is limited, seem more likely to accept the "rules" of self-effacement and the futility of attempts at individual achievement at face value.

V

The two main coercive elements of child socialisation are mockery and verbal and physical aggression, and the prerogative of exercising most forms of coercion belong to all members of the household who are senior to a child. The word *sasa* (smack or spank) is one of the first disciplinary words used to an infant. Although Samoans rarely hit children under two with the intention of hurting them, the mother of a fretful or obstructive infant will say to it "*sasa ... mmm ... mmm*" - the "*mmm ... mmm*" is accompanied with gentle taps of the hand on its body and the tone of voice is quite gentle.

The object is to condition the infant to the acceptance of discipline which will be administered more forcefully as it grows bigger and by other people in the household. When
small children howl because they have been smacked, they will often be smacked again. Samoans often joke about the irrationality of this very common event: "stop it ... smack! ... stop it ... smack!", while the child's screams become increasingly frantic. However this form of punishment works; eventually the howls diminish to stifled sobs and the child wanders off to seek sympathy from an older sibling or an elderly relative, or to sulk in solitude.

One of the most painful transitions for small children occurs when they are weaned. This usually takes place at about fourteen or fifteen months unless a new infant has been born when the child is younger. Samoan women often find it tiresome to breastfeed older infants since it requires them to spend more time around the house. Weaning takes place in a fairly patterned way, the child seeking the breast is pushed away gently and things are said to it like "no, this is the baby's breast milk (susu) now. Shame. Are you a baby still?" If the child persists, gentle mockery will be replaced by irritation and hostility, and the child will be forceably removed by older children or adolescents or even smacked.

Samoans interpret the first babbling sounds of a baby as "tae - tae - tae ", (tae is the Samoan word for excrement).
English speaking Samoan women joked with me when my baby was learning to talk. "Don't you know that the first word a baby says is a bad word?" they would ask me. "Does your baby say that bad Samoan word yet?" The sounds "tatatata" when made by a Samoan baby are reinforced by people laughing and repeating "taetaetae". Before long it will have learned to say "ai tae" (eat excrement) with great effect, and Samoan infants quickly register that this phrase is a common term of abuse, or an expression of anger. Toddlers use the term with great vehemence when throwing tantrums after being shamed or thwarted.

This early eliciting of an aggressive response in very young children is a circular phenomenon, for shame and mockery are used as instruments of discipline towards children from the second year of life; it is as though teaching infants a term of abuse as a first articulate sound is to arm the child against the shaming tactics which will be used to mould it's subsequent behaviour.

The term employed is 'ua mā.- "shame". All undesired behaviour, particularly attention-getting behaviour (which was termed "showing off" in my own childhood), such traits as possessiveness, greed, incontinence, immodesty and the presence of small children where they should not be - such as in formal gatherings of adults - are greeted with
laughter and cries of *ua mā* and, if appropriate, *tautala-laititi* (to act above one's age or status). Younger children respond by crying angrily, but as they grow older, they express their feelings of shame, rejection and anger by a sullen, withdrawn, sulking behaviour which is termed *musu* (unwillingness). Such behaviour becomes a characteristic response in later childhood, adolescence and adulthood to personal offence.

Only the most senior, high ranking or privileged persons are considered to have a legitimate right to express anger in the form of shouting abuse or commands or rebukes to others. For a person whose status does not legitimate such behaviour, an overt display of anger is the ultimate form of *tautala-laititi*.

Children are beaten for stealing food, for insolence or disobedience and for damaging or interfering with valued household effects. Smacks may be administered to a child by any older person but severe beatings using a broom or stick are usually done by the mother who will tend to regard such punishment as her prerogative. Bad feeling between adult women of the same household often arises from their beating each other's children. Fathers also
beat their children, but they are less often about the household area during the day, so they do so less frequently than mothers. The beating of children by school teachers is tolerated or approved of by most Samoan parents. The occasional beating is considered necessary to accelerate the acquisition of mafauau and self-discipline by children, however parents who are continually beating or audibly chastising their children will be criticised in village gossip. Samoans value dignity and self-restraint in adults, and parents who continually use violence against their children are criticised for not having trained their children to be less irritating in early childhood and for lack of self-control.

The term "shame" (ua mā), like the threat "smack" (sasa) is quickly acquired by small children themselves, and used to mock or threaten their peers or older siblings. This is received by the latter, if the child is very young, with great amusement.

Children and adolescents maintain control over their younger charges using a mixture of threats and cajolery. If they use too overt means of disciplining their youngers, and cause them to howl, they are likely to incur displeasure from their elders. However, generally quarrels between children and adolescents of the same status categories are ignored by adults.
Another term acquired by young children by the time they are about four or so is the term *ali'i* used as a preface to the name of another child or a senior. The term literally approximates in English the word "Lord" and is used of the order of *matai* who are chiefs rather than orators, of God (the Lord God) or in the sense of "Gentlemen" when politely speaking to a group of adult males. It is also used as a respectful preface to the name of any person of either sex, and it is in this context that children first acquire it to convey politeness or simply goodwill in addressing another.

By this age children have also learned basic Samoan etiquette and will stop and excuse themselves when it is necessary for them to walk in front of a seated person; to sit or kneel beside a person who calls them, before speaking, to refrain from eating or drinking while standing or walking, and a wide range of other polite behavioural expressions and avoidances.

Rank divisions in the household hierarchy are visually reinforced in a child's mind through the manner in which members of the household take their seated positions at evening prayers and at mealtimes. Samoan houses are divided into three invisibly partitioned sections which are associated with rank (see Fig. 1.). The highest ranking
part of the house is the "ends" or "sides". These spatial distinctions are maintained in round, square, oval or rectangular houses. The orientation points are:

- front - the direction of the sea or road;
- back - the direction of the inland or bush area.

The front of the house has the next highest rank value and the back of the house is the place of least or lowest rank.

The seating positions of the members of a household are contextually defined by the rank of the persons present. For example, if the head of the household, the *matai*, is the highest ranking person present, he may sit in either the front or one end of the house with his wife, and everyone else will sit at the back of the house, if there is room. (If it is family prayers, they may sit in two rows at the back). If a guest is present, he or she will sit in the front of the house and the *matai* and his wife will sit in either of the ends of the house. But if the guest is of higher rank than the *matai*, their positions are reversed.

If the household includes the elder sister of the *matai*, or one of his father's sisters, she will sit in either end of the house, and the *matai* may sit in the opposite end, facing her, or in the front of the house. If
neither the matai nor his wife are present, the senior male members of the household will sit in front, and their sisters, if they are present, will sit at the ends. The wives of the senior males will also sit in front. Junior members of the household will sit at the back.

During mealtimes, food is portioned out and served at the back of the house and is served first to the highest ranking persons present. The junior members of the household do not eat until their seniors have finished eating, and their food mats have been removed and they have been given bowls of water to wash their hands and towels to dry them. If the household is large, the junior members of the household may eat afterwards in a smaller house at the back where the food is prepared.

Children over about five years old assist in the serving of food by fetching and carrying small items and fanning flies away from the food mats of senior members of the household while they eat. Depending on the composition of the household, children eat last or in company with the adolescent youths of their family. This eating order means that children have least access to highly valued protein foods such as fish and sea-foods, meat and poultry. They often get only the scraps and left-overs of these items, although they usually have plenty of the staple dietary items such as taro, breadfruit or bananas.
There are exceptions to this general practice however; in households where the *matai* is grandfather to the children resident there, Radcliffe-Brown's principle of the equivalence of alternate generations may be observed in action. Such was the case in the household in which I resided much of the time in Poutasi. At each mealtime eight little girls and two small boys sat in the front of the house, their grandparents at one end. The children were served their food immediately after their grandparents. The choicest foods were served to the grandparents, (the *matai* and his wife), who showed particular interest in the quantity eaten by the children and passed them portions of the best food, encouraging them to eat.

The *matai* of our household was most concerned if he heard children cry, and one child, his special favourite, used to make sure she went and howled within earshot of her grandfather who would always call her to him, comfort and tease her and offer her food if there was any by him.

One young man in the household recalled the happiest part of his childhood was the years he spent as the foster child of his grandfather's sister until she died of old age. She used to feed him and his small brother the best food she had, gather ripe mangoes for them each morning and tell them stories every night until they fell asleep. Elderly women frequently foster the small children of relatives who perform services for them and provide them with company and affection.
Although children are at the bottom of the pecking order of access to food in most households, they are rarely underfed or malnourished. Outside the house, children are generally ignored by adults and unconstrained by the adult attitude that it is undignified always to be looking for something to eat, they tend to remedy any deficiency in the meals they are served within the household by collecting fruit, seeds and coconuts to eat between meals.

Small children of high ranking families often go around the village from household to household to see if other families have something nice to eat, and will usually be offered food. Children sometimes hunt flying foxes (by throwing stones at them). If they manage to bring one down, they will clean and gut it, put a hot stone or two in it, wrap it up with banana leaves and carry it around with them (to keep it from other children and dogs) until it is cooked.

If children join the women and adolescents of their household gathering sea foods from the reef and lagoon (sea slugs, sea anemonies, shell fish, sea urchins and seaweeds are the most commonly gathered items) they know that they are contributing to the household economy and will not eat the food they collect without permission.
Once children pass the age of about ten, they begin to occupy social roles as males and females. When they were younger they acquired their gender identities in a fairly passive manner, through linguistic usages, observation of their elders and in most cases, in contemporary society, through attending school. But the work they performed: fetching and carrying for their elders, weeding and picking up rubbish around the household compound, minding younger children and performing simple tasks to assist their elders, was undifferentiated in terms of gender connotations. After the age of ten or so, there is an increasing emphasis on gender and on appropriate sex roles.

Boys take up separate sleeping quarters from girls. While the girls continue to sleep in the same house as their parents or other adults, boys go to sleep with the older unmarried youths and men. They sometimes have a small shelter at the back of the main house, which is used for working during the day, and sometimes sleep in the kitchen area in the back of the main house. Where there is only one dwelling, male and female adolescents sleep at opposite ends of the house. Once separated in this manner, girls and boys of the same household learn that they must henceforth avoid each others company, engaging only in the most formal and necessary interaction. This convention is
based on the injunction of avoidance between sister and brother, but it is expected to exist between all male and female adolescents in the same household, whether they are brother and sister or not. Avoidance is only one aspect of the brother-sister relationship and it will be considered in detail in the next chapter.

Samoan parents desire to have an approximately equal ratio of sons and daughters and one of the reasons for this is that it is the adolescent members of a household, particularly the males, who perform most of the domestic and productive labour. If a couple has a majority of children between the ages of ten and twenty of the same sex, they will usually seek foster children from among the husband's, or the wife's kin, in order to correct the imbalance and to achieve a satisfactory division of labour. There is a clear division of status and roles between male and female adolescents in contrast to the collective status of younger children. However, the demand that adolescents work for their elders is stronger than the need to maintain an appropriate division of labour. Thus, when there is an imbalance in the household complement of sexes, boys will attend to such normally female occupations as washing, ironing, sweeping and even sewing; while girls might have to chop firewood, grate coconuts, feed livestock and make the umu (ground oven), normally the work of youths and men in the domestic arena.
The basic restriction on the extent to which adolescents can perform work which is normally considered to be inappropriate to their sex is that from adolescence onwards most work considered appropriate to single sex groups is determined by a perceived need to keep adolescents apart.

In one Poutasi household, that of Pene in the 'āiga of Ai'i, there were eleven adolescent girls and unmarried young women, and only one adolescent male. The boy worked mainly with his father and his father's brothers growing taro and bananas for subsistence consumption and for the market, and going fishing. The girls formed a collective labour unit and performed many of the tasks normally regarded as male work to meet the needs of the household. This included working regularly on the family taro plantation, planting and digging and weeding, collecting and making copra, and making the umu. This was considered regrettable by other people in the village, but not shameful, since the girls worked together there was no impropriety, such as there would be if they were working with youths in the same group. Overall, Pene's daughters were admired for their willingness to serve their parents by doing the work of young men.

Relations between male and female adolescents are not competitive, since they have separate attributes and tasks and different sets of social expectations. It is in a sense, productive of solidarity in that the two groups
belong to and represent different aspects of the same 'āiga. There is however, a certain amount of mutual suspicion; the girls fearing that the boys may be up to something which may bring shame to the 'āiga, and vice versa. Since very little communication takes place between them, and because neither enquires about the doings of the other, both have a tendency to assume the worst, and in fact, this mutual suspicion has a sanctioning effect on both. This relationship will be considered in greater detail when I discuss sexuality and courtship.

In groups of same-sex siblings there is considerable scope for rivalry as parents elicit service from adolescents by favouring a child most pleasing to them at the time, and because the clear-cut power relationships of young children (when seniority in age is backed up by superiority in size and ability), no longer exists among adolescents who have passed puberty.

To take girls first: individual achievement in terms of being industrious, obedient and helpful within the household does not contribute to their ultimate acquisition of matai status, as it does with boys. Nor does it have much, if anything, to do with their making a good marriage when they grow up. In families with a balanced ratio of the sexes in the adolescent age group, the tasks expected of girls are not as onerous as those of boys and in large households, girls often manage to push off most chores on to their younger siblings and male peers. Girls are
very restricted in terms of their freedom of movement and the range of permissable behavioural expression; the conceptual ideal of an adolescent girl is called *tausala*.

Although the term "*tausala*" is mostly used directly to refer to a girl of very high rank, in fact the term encapsulates a set of ideal behaviour, qualities and attributes to which most Samoan girls learn to aspire. It epitomises a girl who is dignified and intelligent, restrained and graceful in her movements and speech, physically attractive (well formed, of good proportions, light skinned and unblemished) and with a pleasant facial expression. Parents are more interested in the realisation of these qualities in their daughters than the more serviceable attributes, since daughters (or sisters) represent the moral and aesthetic aspect of the honour and dignity of the 'āiga.

The restriction of movement of young Samoan girls means that their main peer-group social interaction takes place within the household. They make friends with other girls at school and they may walk home with their friends, but they may not freely go visiting them or go roaming around the village together. If a girl leaves the household area, it is expected that unless she is going only a short distance away during the day, she will be accompanied by other girls of the household, or with one or more children from the household as escorts.
If a girl is sent on an errand to another household, she will linger to talk with the girls of the family, girls also meet at choir practice, church and other village gatherings, and spend time together. On those occasions when all the adults are busy, the girls form little extra-household groups and stroll through the village, but younger children will be watching them and will quickly repeat any indiscreet remark they overhear, or report any socialising with young men, to their parents later on. This represents one of the few opportunities smaller children have to exact revenge on the adolescents who dominate, tease and burden them in daily life. Peer groups of girls in a household, thrown together by kinship and their mutual restriction, may get along very well, but frequently do not. Fights blow up and girls sometimes actually attack each other in rage. Older people rarely attempt to mediate in these kinds of disputes and girls often go about in wounded silence for days after a row.
Case Study No.5  Adolescent Female Rivalry

A nineteen year old girl, Fua, came to stay in Nu'u with her mother, who was married to a matai of intermediate rank. Fua had grown up in another village and had trained as a school teacher. Her reason for coming to stay with her mother was that she had been posted to a school near the village as a probationary teacher. Fua was dark-skinned and not specially attractive by Samoan standards of beauty, but she was charming, graceful and well mannered.

A girl of the same maximal 'āiga (but of a different household) as Fua's mother's husband, was getting married and indicated that she would like Fua to be her bridesmaid. The bride-to-be was of a low ranking 'āiga and was entitled to have only one bridesmaid as a daughter of the ali'i Tasi, had married in Nu'u the previous year and had had two bridesmaids.

Another girl, whom I shall call Sala, who was a blood member of the bride-to-be's 'āiga, had hoped to be chosen and was very angry when she heard that Fua was chosen. She went around the village telling other women and girls that Fua "was black", she had "a fat bottom and skinny legs" and that Fua was "rough" and "talked too much". This of course, eventually got back to Fua and her mother who went straight to the leader of the village women's committee to complain about "gossip" (which the committee...
may punish with a stiff fine if a case can be proved). The leader of the committee felt it was a family matter rather than a village matter and referred the complaint to the wife of the senior matai of the 'āiga. After consideration, she decided that Sala should be the bridesmaid as was her right as the oldest unmarried female "gafa" (blood member) of the 'āiga. But she pointed out that Fua was also a daughter of the village, though through adoption, and should be given respect.

The tension between the two girls became a hot topic among the other girls of the village, with the respective behaviour and physical appearance of Sala and Fua being analysed in great detail. The consensus seemed to be that Fua, though not as attractive as Sala in physical appearance was the more "beautiful" of the two because of her manners and virtue (Sala had an illegitimate child) and charm.

This assessment is very typical of Samoan values regarding girls which places greater emphasis on ideal behaviour rather than ideal physical appearance. (Although the teasing and mockery of extremely ill-favoured Samoan children might be considered to exert a very negative effect on their development of social charm).
If girls learn that they will be valued primarily by their ideal "expressive" qualities, boys are taught that they will be valued by their "instrumental" qualities. Industry and service are for boys, the means of increasing their status position in the 'āiga and the village and eventually, for most boys, leading to a matai title once they reach their late thirties or forties. But before they reach those heights, a capable, industrious youth will be regarded with respect by his peers and by adults. The measure of his value being his labour and productivity, boys are not very constrained by expectations about their behaviour or by restriction of their freedom of movement. Adults are only interested in the whereabouts of a youth if he has left his daily tasks uncompleted. When these have been correctly performed, the boy may roam around the village with his friends. He can get away from his brothers and household peers with whom he is in lifelong competition for prestige, despite the Samoan ideal of brotherly love and solidarity.

Boys tend to form age sets around the age of nine or ten which includes boys of their own households as well as those of others. As the boys get older, the members of their age set will very likely exclude younger and older boys from their household, and include boys from neighbouring villages as well as their own.
In two Poutasi households a teenage boy had moved from his own household to live in that of a close friend to whom he was not related. The move was described by the parents of the boy who moved as "X going to help the family of Y who has not enough young men in his household", suggesting that they were making a gift of their son, but in fact the move was primarily motivated by the friendship of the boys, the choice of residence being determined by which family had the greatest labour shortage. Although a great deal has been written about adoption in Polynesia, one hitherto undocumented aspect of adoption is that initiated by the "adoptee"; cases in which a child or most commonly, an adolescent, adopts a family rather than the reverse.

Case Study No. 6
Adopting a Family

From the age of about thirteen Pita and Sefo had been close friends. Pita was the son of Tasi and Sefo the grandson of Ono. After leaving secondary school, they both attended the same technical training institute. During school holidays and weekends, Sefo spent most of his time working with the men and youths of the Tasi household and slept and ate there. Even after Pita went to study in New Zealand on a scholarship, Sefo maintained his links to the family and served Tasi as one of his sons.
On one occasion when Pita was home on holidays from New Zealand and Sefo on leave from his job in Apia, both young men had grown their hair to shoulder length, as a result Tasi was fined a large pig and a carton of biscuits by the village fono, for long hair on males is forbidden in Poutasi. Alia, Pita's mother, asked the young men to cut their hair immediately. Sefo obeyed and stayed and worked for the family over the Christmas and New Year period. Pita refused and went to stay in Apia.

The following year Sefo went to live in American Samoa with some connections of his mother's 'āiga and found work there. He regularly sent gifts of food and money to Tasi. When he returned to Western Samoa from time to time, he went home to the Tasi family rather than to other 'āiga.

In American Samoa he is known, registered and holds a passport in the surname of Tasi, Tasi having obtained a birth certificate for him in that name.

When Tasi died, Sefo heard the news and rushed to the airport with only the clothes he was wearing, boarded a plane and got to Nu'u in time for his adopted father's funeral. He spent a week cooking and serving the funeral guests. Before he returned to American Samoa, he gave $100.00 and some cases of canned food, as his contribution to the funeral -
an amount larger than any but four of Tasi's natural children.

His relationship with his own natural 'āiga is amicable, they accept that he belongs primarily to the 'āiga Tasi, with no apparent resentment or sense of rejection. His mother, father and siblings are all in Nu' u, but Sefo does not go out of his way to see them.

His motivation is not easy to explain for although he gains a little prestige from membership of a well known 'āiga, he is in line for no titles nor does he show any interest in establishing himself on the estate of the 'āiga. He works harder when staying with the Meleisea family than he would if he stayed with his own, for the 'āiga is large and its obligations and restrictions are greater than that of his own natural 'āiga.

Perhaps we must accept Sefo's non-functional and unstructured explanation of his reasons for choosing to adopt a new family. He said he loved them better than his own family.
Girls may also go to live in households with people to whom they are not related, but it is not likely to be a move which they themselves initiate in order to stay with a girl friend. It will more often be arranged between the families, the girl being requested as a companion for an older single woman, to help a young mother with her children when there are no big children to help her, or to place her in the protective environment of a higher ranking household.

Girls, and occasionally boys, often spend several years residing with the village Pastor and his wife, performing services for them such as they would do in their own household, and receiving in return instruction in religion, music and for girls, sewing, embroidery and other crafts of non-Samoan origin. Before government primary schooling became generally available the Pastor and his wife usually had many unmarried girls living with them for instruction and protection. The Pastor's house is considered still to be a very safe place for girls to stay in order for them to maintain their chastity or reputation for chastity.

Most older Samoans became literate and numerate through the educational services provided to the village by the Pastor and his wife. The greater availability of schooling has somewhat undercut this aspect of the Pastor's role, however village Pastors and Catechists are now becoming increasingly active in the formation of youth groups which cater to the needs of school leavers.
Most Samoan children, if they are sent to school at all, remain in school until form two, which in the Samoan educational system (based on that of New Zealand) is the upper limit of the primary school system. If they pass the examinations at this level, and if their parents are willing to allow them to continue attending school, they may gain a place in a Junior secondary school which will take them to form four or to lower fifth. The few who pass at these levels then compete for places in the urban high schools to study for the New Zealand School Certificate and University entrance examinations, or for admission to Teachers College, Technical College, Agricultural College, Nursing School, or for the very few and sought after junior clerical positions in the Public Service or private companies.

School hours are between eight o'clock in the morning and one o'clock in the afternoon, this allows most adolescents, unless their school is very distant from the village, plenty of time in the late afternoon to perform various household tasks. Older adolescents who show signs of likely success in the lower fifth examinations, will sometimes be absolved from many household tasks in order to allow them more rest and homework time.
When junior secondary education became generally available, parents were quite willing to send girls to school and did not particularly favour the education of sons rather than daughters. Even though the role models provided by educated Samoans in the colonial period were largely male, as before the 1950's, most secondary schooling was only available for boys. Adolescent female labour in most households is less productive and valuable than that of adolescent males, and although sending girls to school requires the expenditure of scarce cash resources in school fees, there is relatively less sacrifice to the labour resources of the household. It also ensured parents that their adolescent daughters were safely under the supervision of teachers and that their freedom of movement was suitably restricted. It had earlier been the custom to ensure the security and chastity of their daughters by sending them to live with the village Pastor and his family. Sending to school was seen as an extension of this custom.

The success in the early 1960's of a number of girls in passing matriculation examinations and in gaining scholarships to study abroad, quickly created role-models of female teachers, nurses and administrators which further encouraged Samoan parents to educate their daughters. This is not to say that there was not some prejudice in
the early 1960's against the tertiary education of females, but nowadays Samoans feel that educating their daughters as well as their sons increases their chances of obtaining the greatly coveted reward of having one or more of their offspring in wage employment.

Education in Western Samoa is neither free nor compulsory. Apart from school fees of $5.00 a term, uniforms and other expenses, village and district school committees raise money to build and maintain village primary schools and district junior high schools. Despite the cost of education and the number of children each couple has to educate, the majority of Samoan children are sent to school.

In Poutasi, with one exception, every family had children at school. The prevailing attitude in the village was that unless a child was in some way handicapped or unwilling to attend school, parents had a moral obligation to send their children to school. Those who did not enrol their children in school when they reached five years, were subjected to community pressure to do so.

The growth of formal education and the almost universal primary school attendance by Samoan children which has taken place since the late 1950's has considerable socio-

---

2. Sun (1973) reports the average number of living children born to Samoan women is 5.4.
logical significance. This centres on the fact that prior to 1950, children between the ages of five years and fifteen years of age were economically active members of their households and village, whereas now, a significant proportion of children in this age range are attending schools and as such are "consumers" rather than "producers". Approximately 30% of the total population is attending school.

This has had a fairly dramatic effect on the division of labour, particularly upon the roles of adolescents. I regard it as being, along with the boom in short term migration to New Zealand in the 1960's, one of the most significant forces for social change in Samoa in this century.

More than 50% of the population of Samoa is under the age of fifteen and this half of the population is growing up with a very different set of values and expectations than that of their parents. This results not so much from what they learn at school, but what they do not learn at home. The "apprenticeship" years of adolescence are now taken up, for a significant number of young Samoans, with attendance at school and few school leavers are willing to begin the slow process of learning traditional skills, arts and knowledge in late adolescence.
Adolescents traditionally acquired general skills as members of the 'aumaga or the aualuma. The 'aumaga learned the arts of warfare, fishing, hunting, horticulture and the intricacies of male ceremonial and political roles under the tutelage of the matai for whom they acted as a service and apprentice group. The young girls of the aualuma learned the arts of making *ie toga (fine mats) and other intricate female crafts (other than the manufacture of the more mundane household items) and performing arts and etiquette from the senior women of the group.

Special skills tended to be handed down within the 'āiga, boys learned skills such as housebuilding, fishhook manufacture, bonito fishing, woodcarving and tattooing as chosen apprentices to title male relatives. Girls also acquired special skills such as making dyes and medicine, healing and massage, midwifery, and magical or supernatural arts from such elderly women of their 'āiga as were experts in any of these areas.

In Poutasi, none of these skills were possessed by people under thirty years of age, and those with any expertise were all past middle age.

It might be argued that the fault lies with the education system, or with the older generation for failing to instruct the young in relevant skills. But specialist knowledge was acquired by the unskilled, patiently giving menial service to the skilled, and acquiring those skills for themselves after many years of trial and observation.
Girls collect seafoods at low tide.

An 'autalavou youth group plays Samoan Cricket.
Most young Samoans have the basic skills of subsistence. In Poutasi all the young men know how to grow taro and bananas. They know how to make copra, catch reef fish and cook staple and ceremonial foods in an umu or saka (boiling pot). Girls seemed to have relatively few productive skills in comparison to their mothers and brothers. Most can weave food mats and blinds and sew thatches. But very few know how to prepare pandanus for weaving, or how to weave sleeping mats or finer grades of mats. No Poutasi woman has made anie toga in the past ten years. Poutasi girls know how to cook in the European manner (indoors, using a stove and pots, or over an open fire). They are able to prepare several kinds of soups, sapasui and combinations of sliced meat and vegetables (popular dishes of Chinese inspiration). But this is usually the extent of their culinary repertoire. One or two girls know how to use a sewing machine.

IX

Traditionally, boys and girls who had passed puberty, joined either the 'aumaga - the society of untitled men, or the aualuma - the society of unmarried women (including widows and women who had left their husbands). These two groups took over from the household as the main socialising agency, girls and boys often lived in communal houses with their group which was hierarchically ordered
according to the rank of each 'āiga in the village, and each of the ranks were sub-ranked according to age and the degree of kinship to the matai of the 'āiga.

Cultural changes resulting from the acceptance of Christianity, the role of the Pastor and his wife, and the more recent availability of state education have combined to gradually weaken the strength of these two institutions in Samoan villages; although they still exist, they play a more ceremonial and less instrumental role in the lives of young Samoans. The 'autalavou, church-associated youth clubs tend to be the main extra-household focus for the collective activities of adolescent co-villagers today. 'Autalavou are not formally divided into male and female sections; the divisions and stratifications within them are similar to those which I have described with regard to the household in Chapter one; that of seniority and sex.

The divisions of sex based on both brother-sister and on husband-wife oppositions of role and status exist within these groups. Many 'autalavou follow the traditional model of the 'aumaga and aualuma whereby young men and women form collective working parties and go to work on the plantations of each 'āiga represented among them in turn, or according to need. The males clear and
plant, the females do the weeding, and an arduous chore is transformed into a happy social occasion. The 'autalavou also comprise the main corps of the church choir and spend considerable time learning and practicing the singing of hymns, which most enjoy considerably. 'Autalavou also held regular cricket matches with other groups. The nominal head of each 'autalavou is the Pastor of the church with which it is associated, but leaders are elected from among its ranks not without reference to age and family rank. The deacons or elders of each congregation, usually matai, also participate in 'autalavou activities as a sort of "upper house" and supervisory body.

'Autalavou are "youth" groups in name only, for in the Samoan view, all untitled men and their wives (who take their status from their husbands) are "youths" regardless of their chronological age. The point being, of course, that the mature untitled man is junior is status to that of a matai.

The 'autalavou have become the functional substitute for the aualuma and 'aumaga which mainly exist today as groups on formal, ceremonial occasions only. However 'autalavou in most Samoan villages have not assumed the educational role of the groups they have replaced, particularly now that the role of the village Pastor and Catechist in secular education has been taken over by village primary schools.
Mead's famous study *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) contains a central thesis that Samoan adolescents do not experience the "*sturm und drang*" or stresses and strains of adolescence experienced by their American counterparts, in the early 1920's. Much of the "role strain" experienced by American adolescents, Mead argued, resulted from hypocritical social attitudes of American society which frowned on any form of sexual expression in young people who were biologically ready for sex many years before they were socially permitted to marry. Young Americans were thus expected after marriage to be able to express their sexuality which society had enjoined them to repress which frequently produced sexually maladjusted marriages.

Samoan adolescents, Mead found, were not subject to such hypocritical social mores and were free to experiment sexually from early adolescence until they married. Samoan girls, after an oppressive childhood, enjoyed a prolonged adolescence in which their main concerns were their appearance and their many lovers. In this more natural and reasonable moral climate, adolescents were spared role strain and *sturm und drang*. 
Mead's theoretical orientation, methods of observation and the reliability of her data have been critically reviewed by Freeman (1978). I will add my voice to his with regard to her contention that Samoan adolescents do not experience role strain and will discuss in the next Chapter my own data on adolescent and premarital sexuality which is at considerable variance with that of Mead's.

The relationship between adolescents and adults within the household is more restricted and formal than that of small children, for it is assumed that by the age of puberty, young people will have acquired enough judgement to automatically observe the avoidance and restraint which characterises relations between people of unequal status.

The Poutasi household in which I resided comprised four adolescent girls, two adolescent boys and two young unmarried males. During my first few months there, I felt extremely uncomfortable with these young people; if I entered a house, they arose and left, if I spoke to them, they answered politely but did not pick up any conversational cues I dropped. If I joked with them informally, they laughed, but locked rather embarrassed and confused by my manner. As my understanding of social norms of interaction developed, I came to virtually ignore them, as did other people my age, which eventually enabled them to feel more comfortable about my presence in their midst.
The restricted communication between adolescents and adults denies young people the right to argue with their elders and can produce extreme tensions in adolescents when their desires are thwarted. During the eighteen months I resided in Samoa, there were two adolescent suicides, one in Poutasi and the other in a neighbouring village. Several other cases were reported in the local press during the same period, all involving adolescents. While some victims were girls, there was a large number of male victims. Each suicide was motivated by a seemingly trivial incident; in one case an eighteen year old girl who shot herself on the steps of the village church was said to have been angry with her parents because they had refused her school fees after she had gained a place in the upper fifth form of a secondary school. In another case, a sixteen year old boy hung himself after his mother refused him a gift to contribute to a school presentation to a Peace Corps teacher who was returning to the United States. The following case study may clarify the underlying tensions which lead to suicide for an apparently trivial motive.

3. The frequency of suicide was a sensitive issue in Western Samoa during the period of my field work. I was unable to obtain any official statistics or details on the incidence of suicide, however, in June, 1977 when the suicide detailed in Case Study No.7 occurred, I was informed by one doctor that nine cases of suicide or attempted suicide through ingestion of weed-killer had been admitted to the National hospital in Apia that month.
Case Study No.7  Adolescent Suicide

Eti, aged sixteen, was the son of an untitled man who resided uxorilocally in the village of Eti's mother. The 'āiga of Eti's mother had only one adult male member residing in the village. The matai and his wife and children resided in New Zealand. Eti's mother's mother, his mother's younger brother and his wife, and two of Eti's mother's sisters lived in the main household compound of the 'āiga. This comprised two comfortable houses, one of permanent materials, on the sea shore in the main settlement area of the village.

Eti lived with his mother (aged 37) and father (aged 47) in a small fale up on the main road on a piece of land which bordered the village school. The house was very crowded as Eti was the eldest of ten children. Below him in age were two sisters aged fifteen and fourteen, respectively. The eldest of his younger brothers was only twelve and the youngest child in the family was still a baby.

Eti's father was an unstable man who periodically got very drunk and beat Eti's mother and any of his children who tried to intervene. The man was conscious of his low status in the community as a fai āvā (a uxorilocally resident male) from outside the village and he did not get along with his wife's 'āiga, which is why they lived apart in less comfortable quarters. Eti's mother was a placid, patient, unassertive woman who was kept very busy with her youngest children as her elder daughters were all at school.
His greatest affection was for his grandmother who was a very strong, extroverted woman in her late fifties.

Eti's closest friends were from an 'āiga which belonged to the Catholic Church. Eti's 'āiga were Congregational. For almost a year Eti had been joining his friends at the meetings and village and sporting activities of the Catholic 'autalavou. This was disapproved of by his grandmother which created a rift between them.

In August 1976 the Catholic 'autalavou was preparing for a cricket match with the 'autalavou of another parish. At that time Eti's father was reproved by the village Congregational Church Pastor for his son's apparent defection to the Catholic Church, and for his own non-attendance at choir practice (which is compulsory for untitled members of the Congregation).

Eti's father went home in a rage, humiliated at having been reproved by the Pastor. When he saw Eti he ordered him to stop attending the Catholic group. The next evening Eti's father came home from a visit to Apia very drunk. When his wife objected to the money that had been spent on liquor, he beat her and when Eti attempted to stand between his parents, he was also beaten. His father swore at him and said that he had heard that Eti was planning to play in the cricket match with the Catholic team the next day, which he forbade. Eti left the
house and taking a container of weedkiller that his father used on his plantation, he went and sat in the dark grounds of the school near his house and drank the poison. A teacher returning to his house at the school found him lying there semi-conscious. The boy died in hospital some days later. At the time the boy was admitted to hospital, doctors reported that they were treating eight other cases of poisoning from self-administration of weedkiller.

Eti's emotional outburst of drinking poison might be at least partly explained by a number of factors; his poor relationship with his father and a lack of other male relatives with whom he could positively identify. His estrangement from his grandmother and his frustration at being ordered to break away from his friends and the church group which offered him companionship and a feeling of belonging.
The usual tactic of adolescents who feel that they have been ill used by their parents or other members of their household is for them to move to another household in which they have relatives or friends until either their own anger or that of their immediate family has cooled.

The right of a child to leave home if offended or if in danger of severe punishment from his or her family is almost always respected in Samoan villages and a child who seeks shelter in another household is rarely rejected or even questioned.

With this institutionalised safety valve it is difficult to satisfactorily explain what seems to be an increasing incidence of adolescent suicides (in the opinion of several Samoan doctors with whom I discussed the matter).

Two related factors may be involved. Firstly, the unrealistic goals and aspirations to which children in rural Pacific Island communities aspire through education, films, books and comics and a feeling of pessimistic alienation when they begin to realise the futility of such hopes, or to discover that the fantasy solutions to problems depicted in movies and fiction have no relevance to the reality of his or her own problems. Secondly, the rather confused and alienated child is treated with hostility or mockery by his or her family who are unable to understand the causes of what seems to be unreasonable or uncharacteristic behaviour.

4. Hazell (1977) has commented on the increase of apparently unmotivated adolescent suicides in Micronesia and offers a similar interpretation of this phenomena to my own.
To summarise: Samoan children spend their first ten years in a situation in which they learn appropriate sex-roles but are under no pressure of expectation to play these roles. Between the ages of ten and thirteen, children move into clearly defined and strongly contrasting male and female behavioural roles which should ideally be accompanied by a clear division of labour. That this is sometimes not practicable reflects the great importance of the labour of children and adolescents in the household economy, the burden falling more heavily on males than on females. The lighter work load of girls is accompanied by a strongly perceived need to restrict the movement of female adolescents and a desire for them to exhibit behaviour that is characterised by restraint, dignity and reserve to members of the opposite sex. The heavy chores of adolescent males is offset by lack of restriction on their movements and a great deal of allowance and tolerance regarding their behaviour, which permits sexual adventures, (which are denied to girls - posing something of a dilemma) freedom to develop social contacts beyond the village and greater opportunity for the development of strong personal friendships.

Traditional problems of adjusting to new and more exacting role expectations have become additionally complicated in recent decades by the boom in education. New values which are often incompatible with those of the senior members of
the 'āiga are developed by children and adolescents, and at the same time new avenues for the acquisition of high status become available through formal education.
CHAPTER FOUR

MALE AND FEMALE
MALE AND FEMALE

I

Samoans consider that the proper relationship between a brother and sister should be one based on mutual respect and that interaction between them should be restricted and formal. The structural significance and wider cultural implications of the relationship between brother and sister will be discussed in a separate chapter. In this chapter I will look at the ideal roles of sisters and brothers, and the way in which these roles relate to the Samoan conception of masculinity and femininity and also to sexuality.

'O le teine o le 'ivimata o lona tuagane', says a famous Samoan proverb: 'A girl is the inner corner of her brother's eye'.\(^1\) This saying expresses the way in which the sister-brother relationship is conceptualized. A sister represents her brother and is honoured by him because she represents his own honour as a member of their mutual descent group.

\(^1\) It has a similar meaning to the English saying "The apple of his eye".
Thus the relationship attributes to her a higher rank and she is given separate and more comfortable sleeping quarters and precedence in seating arrangements and in the serving and eating of food. The division of labour between male and female adolescents allocates light, clean work to girls and heavy, dirty work to boys. Sisters and brothers avoid any but the most necessary interaction, and while brothers may roam freely around the village and its environs, constrained only by the demands on their labour, sisters are subject to endless restrictions. They must learn to develop qualities of grace, dignity, reserve and control, the ideal expressions of moral authority. Whether their descent group is of high or low rank, their chastity will be guarded in accordance with the esteem of the group. Since they represent that esteem, their kin will watch over them to the extent that they value their own social status.

The contrast of rank and behaviour implicit in a sister-brother and which, at least metaphorically, characterizes other relationships described by this term, is expressed in a dance called a *taualuga*. The central performer, ideally a girl of high rank, performs a dance (*siva*) in which her restrained, delicate, graceful movements and air of dignity and calm are highlighted by a number of secondary performers, usually young men. They *'aiuli*, which is to dance or leap about, emitting challenging cries (*ususū*) expressing vigour and abandon. A *taualuga* does not express
gender distinctions as such, for, in an all female gathering, if a female member of the descent group performs a *siva* a woman who is an affine may perform the 'aiuli; if the central performance is by the wife of an *ali'i*, then the wife of a *tulāfale* may complement it with an 'aiuli.

The biological fact of a sister's sexuality is ignored as a social reality. Whatever her age, she is referred to as either a 'girl' or a 'lady', never as a 'woman'; in fact, to refer to a female co-descendant or to an unmarried female of any age as a 'woman' is insulting, since it implies she is sexually active. Whether she is or is not is immaterial, female sexuality may only be politely recognized when she is living as a married woman. The ascription of chastity or non-sexuality to female co-descendants is the principal source of tension in sister-brother relationships. If an unmarried girl is discovered by her brother in an illicit sexual relationship, he will beat her. For she is by such behaviour denying the honourable moral qualities she represents on his behalf.

The first basis of peer-group, cross-sex interaction is the restrained relationship of sister and brother which forbids sexuality or even overt knowledge or mention of one another's sexuality. This raises the question then of how young Samoans learn to define who are potential sexual and/or marriage partners and how the restraints of the brother-sister relationship affect their attitudes to sexual expression, courtship and marriage.
Life in a typical Samoan village and household is extremely public, there is little opportunity for privacy in settlements consisting of closely juxtaposed open-walled houses and domestic arrangements in which main houses are used for sitting, working, eating and sleeping depending on the time of day. Even fale pālagi - "European houses", which are becoming very common as the main building in a household cluster of buildings, follow traditional Samoan open-plan design.

They may be rectangular timber or concrete iron-roofed dwellings with glass louvred windows, but inside they will usually lack the "European" spatial demarcation of sitting rooms, bedrooms, and washing, cooking and toilet facilities will often be in separate buildings. Where bedrooms are walled off, they will most often only consist of one end of the house sectioned off by half or three-quarter wall partitions, often with no doors, or merely curtains. The privacy of these bedrooms is nominal since they screen sight but not sound.

This is no problem for most Samoans because if bedrooms are included in a house layout, the partitions separate categories of people and not individuals, just as in the more traditional Samoan household, different categories of people sleep in separate houses. Indeed, to sleep alone
is distasteful to most Samoans, to sleep together with numbers of other people of the correct category is comforting and reassuring. When staying overnight in Samoan households where I was not well known, my preference for sleeping alone in my own mosquito net at some distance from the other occupants of the house was regarded with concern. I would be asked: "Aren't you afraid?" "Won't you be lonely?"

That children and unmarried girls usually sleep in the same house with married couples, means that they become aware at a very early age of the basic facts of heterosexual love-making, even though this awareness may only stem from sounds they hear at night rather than from direct observation. More explicit information is soon acquired from other children of the same sex, from overhearing sexual joking between persons of the same status category and from observations of animal behaviour. There is no formal "telling of the facts of life" to children, they simply acquire sexual information as part of growing up. Moreover it would be very inappropriate for explicit sexual matters to be discussed between persons of different generations and status categories.

Despite the lack of privacy in Samoan households, strict bodily modesty is observed by persons of all ages past early childhood. Early accounts of Samoan behaviour suggest that in the pre-Christian society this was not so. Usually only
the genitals were concealed and their inadvertant exposure was not considered particularly shameful. John Williams, the pioneer missionary of the London Missionary Society recorded in his Journal of 1832 that he had offered blue beads to a young woman in return for the *ie sina*, a woven garment of bleached shaggy fibre, which she wore around her waist. Accepting the beads (a priceless valuable in Samoa at that time) she removed her garment and stood naked, apparently unembarrassed and exciting no particular attention from Samoans nearby. Only William's rebuke concerning comparable standards of female modesty in England caused her to share the *tītī* (leaf skirt) of her companion to cover her crotch.

Bodily modesty was probably observed, as in many other oceanic cultures where a minimum of covering is worn, by posture rather than concealment.

Contemporary standards of modesty appear to have grown out of missionary influence and teaching, European attitudes and behaviour during the colonial period, and simply the prurience which develops from the habitual wearing of clothes whereby what is concealed increases its sexual significance.
When I first visited Samoa in 1959, women of all ages showered under public water pipes or in bathing pools with their bodies from the waist down carefully concealed with *lavalava* cloths which are worn by women from waist to ankle (and by men from waist to knee or mid-calf) but no attempt seemed to be made to conceal the breasts or any upper part of the body.

Nowadays, women usually shower or bath with their *lavalava* tied under their arm pits to conceal the breasts, especially if they are young.

In most households, older women may expose their breasts indoors after bathing or while resting, but it is very rare to see the breasts of a girl or young woman thus unselfconsciously exposed. Both sexes may change in the same house or room after Sunday church, for instance, but the divisions of status categories are maintained. Youths change at the back, girls at one end, and older people at the other end of the house. This is done deftly, under the cover of *lavalava* with the strictest modesty.

My accounts to Samoan women of nude or topless sun-bathing by the young on Australian beaches, were heard with amazed disbelief.
The more sophisticated women of Poutasi who had visited the United States or New Zealand agreed that such things happened, and they joked about the moral freedom of the papalagi (Europeans). I found this amusing, in view of the preconceptions about bare-breasted maidens and free love in the south seas which are still so widely held among Australians.

III

Samoans are not puritanical, and the Samoan attitude to sexuality in itself is positive; sexual expression is regarded as pleasant and desirable, and I have never encountered any suggestion that sexuality is "dirty" or bad in itself. In appropriate company, that is in the context of persons of the same status category and sex, sexual joking is frank and explicit and tends to emphasise how pleasant sexual intercourse is, often taking the form of accusing others jokingly of wanting to have sexual intercourse. For example - "Where are you going? To the plantation? Ah, I think you are hoping to find your lover up there waiting for you?" - was the kind of banter often exchanged between married women.

During a women's committee inspection of household goods, one elderly woman, the wife of one matai, produced a new rather unusual green mosquito net. The middle aged wife of another matai looked at it and remarked - "Ah, I'll bet
your husband gets excited when he comes to sleep with you and sees you lying there under such a beautiful cover!"
This exchange took place in front of all the women of the village over the age of sixteen and created great merriment.

Similar joking takes place in gatherings of males as well, however, I was assured by several Samoan men, that the sexual joking of women was far more explicit and ribald than that of men.

Unmarried girls are not supposed to make jokes about sexual matters, however, in company with their peers they often do. When the tama'ita'i of the village get together for their Sunday lunch or in a working group, the younger girls and unmarried women form an appreciative audience for the older married women's bawdy humour.

IV

Samoan attitudes to male sexuality are linked to the kind of gender ascription or definition of masculinity that envisages men, particularly young men, as aggressive and subject to uncontrollable sexual impulses. To refer again to Chodorow's illuminating discussion of the psychological factors in the formation of male gender identity, she writes:-

A boy, in his attempt to gain an elusive masculine identification, often comes to define this masculinity largely in negative terms, as that
which is not feminine or involved with women. There is an internal and external aspect to this. Internally, the boy tries to reject his mother and deny his attachment to her and the strong dependence on her that he still feels. He also tries to deny the deep personal identification with her that has developed during his early years. He does this by repressing whatever he takes to be feminine inside himself, and, importantly, by denigrating and devaluing whatever he considers to be feminine in the outside world.

As a societal member, he also appropriates to himself and defines a superior particular activity and cultural (moral, religious and creative) sphere.

(Chodorow, 1974:50)

Chodorow's argument has some relevance to the understanding of the self-perception of adolescent males in Samoa. As I have shown however, by adolescence, his complex feeling about his mother will be further complicated by yet another dimension of femininity, his relationship with and his comparison of himself to his sister. As we have seen, growing up for a boy incorporates two stages of distance between himself and his mother, the first when he is weaned and handed over to the care of older siblings, the most powerful of who will be teenage girls. The second is when he passes the age of about ten, and is gradually permitted to take larger and larger steps away from the household arena into exclusively male company performing exclusively male work.
At this second stage, he is most likely to perceive
the greatest contrast in terms of sex roles between himself
and his sister or sisters with whom, until recently, he
had been treated on equal terms with the adult and adolescent
members of the household. Now, just at the time that he
begins to feel the first urges towards heterosexual
experimentation and is admitted to the audience of young
boys who listen to the sexual boasting of their elders, he
also learns that females are sacred, to be respected and
treated as morally superior creatures.

How does he learn this? Because he must avoid all contact
and intimacy with them. He goes to sleep out the back,
the place of lowest status, while his sisters remain sleeping
within the main house. He serves food to his elder
sisters and eats after them. While he works long hours
cooking, gardening and fishing, his sisters remain around
the house resting a lot between doing such chores as weeding
the grass around the house and washing the clothes.

The following comments might illustrate the point of view of
young men concerning the activities of unmarried women in
the village:

"They just sit around and eat"
"They don't do any work but sleep when they like"
"All they have to do is eat"(2)

---

2. These comments were extracted from essays written in
English by first year teachers college students on
"The Role of the Aualuma".
In their attempt to define themselves negatively in relation to females, Samoan adolescent males make a virtue out of the hard work they perform and speak with some contempt of the supposed idleness of their female peers. In Dagua, a New Guinea Village (East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea) in which I lived for three years, young men spoke in precisely the opposite terms. Since it was they who sat around the village all day while their mother's and sisters toiled away in the swamps beyond the village making Sago, or up in the foothills cultivating sweet potato, they made a virtue out of their relative idleness and spoke contemptuously of women's industriousness.

Young males perceive the centre of authority as being the fono of matai and thus of the universe in terms of male superiority and control. But what of their dominant, intractable and uncontrollable mothers and their sisters who are attributed higher rank than themselves? This places them in a situation of some difficulty, for despite the public, formal focus on male authority in the village, they perceive largely egalitarian relationships between mature husbands and wives at the domestic level and a higher value being placed on their female peers. They are, aside from small children and young in-marrying women, the lowest status category in the household and the village.
The origin of the value placed on female virginity undoubtedly derives from the wish of high ranking males to be assured of their own paternity of their children. It is also associated with the possession of sacred value in females and might thus be considered to be symbolic of the high status of females as sisters at all levels of society. The aggressive sexual behaviour attributed to all young Samoan males and the enactment of this ideal by significant numbers of them during this long period of low status must be understood in terms of two factors. Firstly, the competition for status with their male peers which this system engenders, and secondly, the highly ambivalent attitudes that they hold towards women.

Young males will thus be acting out two drives beside that of sexual gratification when they rape or attempt to illicitly seduce girls. The first is the drive to compete with other males, the brothers of the girl in whose chastity their honour and public esteem is invested and with the men who might seek to marry the girl eventually. By being the first to have a girl, or by claiming to other males that they have been the first, they achieve both victories. The second drive is to undermine that very attribute, chastity and virginity, which underlies the superior status of their female peers. Years of playing second fiddle to girls in the domestic arena, of having to cope with deeply repressed sexual urges towards females of
prohibited status categories seem to underlie the ambivalent attitudes of young men to their female peers. At the same time, they will have an interest in eventually obtaining a girl as a wife who is a virgin, one to whom no other male has "beaten them", so to speak.

V

In contrast to the process of negative self-definition experienced by males, Samoan girls pass from the low status of childhood to the high status of restricted, un-fulfilled and carefully guarded female sexuality. They learn, by observing the various fates of older girls, that an intact hymen gives them value to men of all status categories, their father, brothers and future spouses included.

They learn that they are "women" yet at the same time "not women" as long as they remain virgins or retain the reputation of being virgins. By implication, actual female sexuality is devalued. An adolescent girl experiences no discontinuity in moving from childhood to puberty in the sense of her acquiring an external identity away from the domestic arena, unless she attends secondary school or goes to live in the Pastor's house. Even in the latter case, her role is similar to that that she would fulfil in her own household, the difference is that there is greater esteem associated with residence in the Pastor's house.
An adolescent girl has a wider range of immediate female role models than her male counterpart does. While he has only the status of increasing age and the hope of ultimate matai status ahead of him, the adolescent girl sees her older married sisters suffer in one sense, a reduction in status through marriage in relation to their husbands and their husbands' family. But she is also aware of their continued high status in relation to their own family and the manner in which, with increasing maturity, they are permitted increasing rights of participation in the decision making processes of their own family and, if their marriages are successful, increasing, though de facto, influence in their husband's family affairs. Most of all, she will be aware that her status in her own family is something that is hers by right of birth. She does not have to compete as her brothers do, for the right to take a leading adult role in family matters through election to a matai title.

Thus Samoan girls will tend to value their virginity as a symbol of their status as sisters, their enduring claim to high status, compared to the risks of marriage. I say risks, because a married woman's status is entirely relative to that of her husband. If he rises in the world, so does she, if he remains an untitled male all his life, her status is restricted by his lack of rank.
Samoan girls know that even if they make a bad choice in relinquishing their virginity, and become the object of some youth's sexual boasting, and even if they are beaten by their brother, their conduct would have to be one of extreme delinquency to be permanently denied the respect and high status of sisters in their mature years.

VI

The sexual dilemma that is faced by most Samoans is thus one which attends the period of their lives in which they are sexually mature and unmarried. Young men are attributed little capacity for restraining their sexual impulses towards women outside the prohibited categories of kinship. They are expected to adopt a belligerently protective stance to these women while adopting at the same time what are assumed to be predatory and exploitative motives regarding the sisters and the potential wives of other men.

This places a considerable emotional burden on most young men since it emphasises their initiatory role and links aggression with sexuality; a most demanding view of virility. It also tends to engender a suspicious and pessimistic attitude towards male behaviour in young women.
The development of stereotypic male and female sexual ideals in the pursuit of the sexual control of females is by no means unusual and its existence in Samoa will only surprise those who conceive of Polynesia in terms of one of the few corners of the earth which had libertarian sexual ethics before the intrusion of puritanical missionaries.

There is considerable evidence that Samoan sexual ethics have always been subject to the constraining ideology of rank and its attendant estimation of virginity in women as an essential means of maintaining purity of descent. There is also evidence that the relationship between sisters and brothers has always emphasised the value of chastity in women as sisters and has been the source of the ambiguity of female status and the origin of certain of their sacred attributes. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter Seven of this thesis.

VII

In Samoa, there is a form of sexual "guerilla warfare" called moetotolo. This involves a young male creeping into a house (of a household other than his own) and attempting to copulate with a girl sleeping there. While severely disapproved of, and heavily punished, a youth who is known as a successful moetotolo - sleep crawler -
acquires considerable prestige among his male peers. 
Mead refers to this institutionalised crime as a "curious form of surreptitious rape, ... resorted by youths who find favour in no maiden's eyes" (Mead, 1928:76). 

She continues:

"The moetotolo is the only sex activity which presents a definitely abnormal picture. Ever since the first contact with white civilisation, rape in the form of violent assault, has occurred occasionally in Samoa. It is far less congenial, however to Samoan attitudes that moetotolo, in which a man stealthily appropriates the favours which are meant for another. The need for guarding against discovery makes conversation impossible, and the sleep crawler relies upon a girl's expecting a lover or the chance that she will indiscriminately accept any comer. If a girl suspects and resents him, she raises a great outcry and the whole household gives chase. Catching a moetotolo is counted great sport, and the women, who feel their safety endangered, are even more active in pursuit than the men."

(Mead 1928:77)

Mead, citing her case material, suggests that revenge may motivate a youth to approach a girl in this manner after she has slighted him or failed to keep a tryst with him. She also offers what she claims is a Samoan explanation namely, that it is resorted to by youths who cannot "win a sweetheart" by legitimate means, but then she reports with some bewilderment that some of the most notorious moetotolo in her field work village were among the most charming and good-looking youths of the community.
"... once caught, once branded, no girl will ever pay attention to them again. They must wait until as older men, with position and title to offer, they can choose between some dreary and bedraggled wanton, and the unwilling young daughter of ambitious and selfish parents".

(Mead; 1928:78)

In my view moetotolo is neither abhorrent nor abnormal in the context of the Samoan attitude to sexuality. In my field experience, it is quite untrue that known moetotolo are thereafter rejected by girls. Moetotolo, while highly illicit, is a challenge for young men, involving considerable danger, possible subsequent humiliation (as Mead has correctly noted), but also considerable potential peer group prestige.

The object of moetotolo may be to take a girl's virginity:- Apparently the goal of digitally breaking a girl's hymen was the traditional form of moetotolo(3) By such an action a youth may succeed in forcing a girl to elope with him, or suffer the shame of his public declaration that he had been "the first". This occurred once during my field work period in Poutasi - an academically gifted girl in the fifth form at high school shocked her family and teachers by abruptly eloping with a village boy who had left school the previous year. Her mother explained her daughter's action as having been motivated by "shame for a thing the boy had done".

3. Freeman, 1978, personal communication. Freeman has commented on the high incidence of rape and indecent assault cases brought to court in Western Samoa involving digital insertion.
The notion that the boy who succeeds in "breaking" a girl's virginity and causes her to "fall" (pa'ū) as Samoans phrase a girl's loss of virginity, has conquered that girl and acquired rights over her because sexuality is perceived by Samoans in terms of male conquest and domination. The Samoan term for 'strength' is mālosi, and the term for both conquerors and rulers is mālō.

It is this perception of sexuality which causes Samoan males to place so high a value on the chastity of their sisters and daughters, and for women themselves to value virginity. For a male to have illicit sexual relations with a girl is for him to conquer her and, by extension, the descent group whose esteem she represents. Most Samoan marriages, in fact, are initiated with an elopement which is conceptualized as the boy 'stealing' the girl, regardless of her willingness and connivance.

That some young men still believe that first access to a girl gives them rights over her is attested to by two incidents reported to me by Samoans. Both took place at weddings. In the first incident, a youth angrily threatened a clergyman who was about to perform the marriage rites for a young couple. The boy insisted that the girl was "his wife" and that it would be "sinful" for the clergyman to marry her to another man.
The second incident, during a church wedding service, when the clergyman asked the formal question "if any person present knew of any impediment to the marriage about to be solemnised", a man sitting at the back of the church jumped up. Holding up three fingers of his left hand, he shouted: "With this, I have already made her my wife!" (He was hussled out of church and beaten by the bride's brothers).

In the past, the virginity of the bride in a marriage between persons of high rank was tested. The pre-Christian ritual for a taupou and an ali'i took place on the malae in public, the groom or his tulafale breaking the girl's hymen by digital insertion. The blood which flowed stained the girl's ie sina (the white woven garment worn by high ranking virgins) and gave it enormous value. The ritual of fa'amaseiau involved more than the satisfying of the groom's side that the girl was not pregnant to another man in order to maintain the purity of their descent line. From the girl's point of view and that of her descent group, the rite had sacrificial elements; it was a proof of the honour and dignity of their side which was represented by the virgin and which was being in a sense surrendered in order to create an alliance with the groom's side. The stress on virginity in many parts of Polynesia, whatever its functional origins were, was associated with sacredness. This will be discussed in relation to traditional Samoan marriage alliance and religious belief in Chapter Seven of this thesis.
The formal public testing of virginity is no longer practiced in Samoa as far as I know. However, one middle aged woman, the wife of a high ranking chief, was said to have had her virginity tested after a church wedding during the 1920's. The test was not requested by the husband's side but by her own, who wished to derive the prestige of the public acknowledgement of her virginity. The test was made by her husband, and the following day a blood-stained white sheet was proudly shown to the wedding guests by the tama'ita'i of the village.

Deflowering a virgin is seen not merely as a traditional and manly tactic of obtaining a wife. It may be an act of revenge upon a girl who humiliates a youth in some manner, or an act of revenge or calculated insult to her family. It may also be, as I have mentioned before, an act of sheer bravado carried/with the object of obtaining peer group esteem; but moetotolo is strongly condemned, the failed moetotolo becoming an object of public ridicule.
The most sacred and inviolable dwellings in a Samoan village are those of the highest ranking ali'i and the village Pastor. These are approached with deference and respect, and offences against persons or property in these households is held to be so serious an offence that offenders are beaten and expelled from the village. The Pastor's house has assumed, in modern Samoa, the role of a sanctuary for unmarried girls of the village. (This had formerly been the fale tele of the highest ranking ali'i, the residence of the aualuma).

In pre-Christian Samoa, an ultimate provocation to war was for a man to attempt to rape (moetotolo) a taupou of another village in this sanctuary, and to elope with her. Such an action, from the point of view of the aggressors, was a most heroic deed. It was said that a taupou thus deflowered would have no honourable alternative but to elope with her aggressor, even though she risked punishment by death from the men of her Āiga. The same mystique is now associated with girls who sleep in the Pastor's house. To commit moetotolo in the Pastor's house is a dreadful deed, but one of great heroism to a youth who succeeds. In one Samoan village, the late 1950's a young man boasted to his peers that he was going to attempt this act, and enlisted the assistance of another youth who was known for his lack of interest in the opposite sex and his shyness and
taciturn manner (he was not, however, a transexual). The prospective *moetolo* asked the other youth to creep into the Pastor's *fale* and discover where a particular girl was sleeping. His accomplice agreed and crept in and out of the house after midnight one night, and informed his friend of the location of the girl. The *moetolo* removed his clothing, oiled his body and crawled into the mosquito net indicated by his friend, only to discover the sleeping body of his own sister. He hastily withdrew and nobody in the house was awakened, but his accomplice mirthfully spread the story. Since nothing was proved, and no rape took place, the matter was never brought before the *fono*. However, it is still, over twenty years later, a well known underground joke in the village where it occurred, and one supposes it has been a lifelong embarrassment to the would-be rapist.

This incident, despite its humourous overtones, illustrates the ambivalent attitude of Samoans to an act which is considered, depending on the context, to be both a grave offence and an act of masculine bravery. This ambivalent attitude explains why, during my field study, a number of cases in which an unmarried boy and girl were discovered together in the night in the household of the girl were held to be *moetotolo*, even when it was generally believed that the couple had been consenting lovers prior to their
being discovered. To label the incident as moetotolo is the most face-saving explanation for both the 'aiga of the girl and of the boy.

Unless it is clearly established that a girl has encouraged a moetolo, girls suffer no public blame from such incidents. It is, in fact, extremely difficult to prove a girl's connivance, and both she and her family will be likely to deny it, in order to maintain their reputation.

The matai of the boy will be fined and suffer censure from the village, but the boy himself will be unlikely to suffer any lasting shame once a formal apology and settlement has been made between 'aiga.

In contrast, if a case of rape or indecent assault (the legal definition of rape by digital rather than penile insertion) is taken to the police and thence to the courts Western legal procedure will be for the defence counsel of the man or boy to attempt to prove willingness or provocation on the part of the girl or woman.

Although Freeman (1978) reports a high incidence of such cases on police files, there is still a preference for such offenses to be settled according to Samoan custom by the matai of the village which will involve the levying of a fine on the 'aiga of the rapist and will often require them to make an ifoga.
The *ifoga* is a ceremonial act of apology and penance, in which the 'āiga of an individual who has harmed a member of another 'āiga in a serious manner makes reparation to them. The penitents assemble outside the main house of the 'āiga they have wronged carrying firewood, stones and banana leaves. These symbolise their submission for these are the basic equipment to make an earth oven - thus the message is "you may kill, cook and eat us as though we were pigs". The penitents also cover their heads with 'ie toga. The duration of their wait will depend on the severity of their offence, but once the matai of the family to whom the *ifoga* is being made accepts the *ietoga*, the matter is considered to be forgiven and the dispute settled.

The Public Prosecutor of the Justice Department of Western Samoa informed me that when a case of rape is brought before the Supreme Court, if a traditional settlement has been made, the court will take this into account in passing sentence on the accused.

A public trial for rape or indecent assault is a most humiliating experience for the victim, as it is in most western legal systems. In contrast, a village *fono* will never expose a girl to humiliating cross-examination. To take temporary sexual advantage of a female in any status category may be a challenge to males, but it is formally regarded as a criminal act according to custom.
This is because it is an offence between groups, not individuals. To rape or to moetolo to a girl is to violate the dignity of her descent group and therefore, when the matter is settled in the village council, the details of the incident are not discussed, nor is the willingness or non-willingness of the girl an issue if the incident took place in the village area. The attitude of the fono may be less severe, however, if the rape occurs in the bush of plantations beyond the village, or in town, because the girl was outside the protection of her 'āiga and village. Thus, customary law only offers protection and redress to women who abide by the traditional moral code which restricts the freedom of movement of women and girls and demands that they be guarded by their relatives at all times.

VIII

The assumption that males are potentially sexually violent, aggressive, dishonourable and untrustworthy is one held by Samoan girls and women as well as by men. They are aware that if they enter into an illicit liaison with a man or boy and it is discovered, it is he who will take the public blame, and his 'āiga who will be punished, for if it reaches the public arena, the council of matai, it will be phrased as a "rape" or moetotolo. They also know that it is they who may suffer through the condemnation of their peers.
If a girl elopes with a young man, lives with him publicly for even as short a time as one or two weeks, and then returns to her own family and finds that she is pregnant, the child is regarded as legitimate, since the child was conceived in the household of the male with whom she was publicly co-habiting. It is fairly unusual for an eloping couple to remain in the girl's household - the fear of the brother's hostility, the couple's shame, the irregularity of such an initial step is obvious. But occasionally, if a couple is discovered to be having an affair, and if the girl becomes pregnant, then even her brothers will accept that the young man moving in with them and living with their sister publicly is preferable to the illegitimate pregnancy.

Illegitimate pregnancy is a source of great shame to the family of the pregnant girl. The laws of most Samoan villages prescribe that the matai of the girl's 'āiga be fined. An illegitimate pregnancy is a fact which cannot be ignored as many more discreetly conducted illicit sexual irregularities are. The pregnant girl or woman without a husband is embarrassing evidence that she has been doing that which is socially denied, thus her 'āiga and her matai are held responsible for not guarding her more carefully and are fined by the village.
The male responsible for her pregnancy will receive no formal blame or social disgrace. Samoan girls are usually extremely reluctant to admit who is the father of their child, often because of the anger and shame which will be experienced by the men of her 'āiga. But the belief and the fear that withholding the name of the father of an illegitimate child will cause a prolonged and agonising labour eventually causes the girl to confess his identity. A girl or woman with one or more illegitimate children finds it extremely difficult to find a husband, the following case study illustrates the problems involved.
Case Study No. 6 - Illegitimate Pregnancy

Tuli had an illegitimate pregnancy which resulted from a brief affair with a married man when she was living away from her family as a trainee nurse. She was expelled from nursing school and the father of her child denied any association with her when her father went to see him. She returned to her parents' household in her village and lived a very withdrawn existence, seldom leaving the household area. When her child was weaned, her parents sent her to live with a family in Apia as a domestic servant.

There she met a young man who was attached to a neighbouring household in the part of town where Tuli was employed. He told Tuli he wished to marry her and they commenced an affair, but after two weeks, the boy received a six month visa to visit New Zealand, and left without informing Tuli. Tuli went home to her parents once more.

After she had been with her family a few weeks, a young man from a nearby village called on Tuli's family and asked for their permission to take Tuli to his village for the day to meet his parents. He said that he wanted to marry Tuli but wanted his parents to meet her. Tuli's father, an untitled man, agreed, but asked that Tuli be brought back the same day, to which the young man agreed.
The couple took the bus to the young man's village and Tuli immediately went out to the cooking house when she arrived and began to help the young women of the household prepare food. She then helped to serve the young man's parents and the senior members of his household their midday meal, eating afterwards with the wives of the young man's untitled male relatives. She began to get anxious as the last bus passed by the village and the young man had made no mention of her returning home again. She spoke to him and he told her that he had to play cricket but would escort her home the following day.

After prayers in the evening the young man's father told Tuli that she would not be an acceptable wife for his son because there was a connection between the genealogies of Tuli's 'āiga and his own. Tuli slept with the girls of the household that night and made it clear to the young man that he was not to attempt to visit her. The next day she helped with various household tasks and the young man was nowhere to be seen, apparently he had gone off with some other boys to watch football. She spent the night in the household again, feeling very embarrassed and bewildered. The next morning her father arrived and escorted her home.

Tuli discovered that in fact there was no genealogical connection between her 'āiga and that of the young man; and she was told later that his family objected to her as
a wife for their son because she had an illegitimate child. Furthermore, the young man himself had not known of it and was embarrassed, after bringing her to the village when his mother had told him.

Tuli was sent to Apia once more to help in the household of her father's sister's family, and discovered she was pregnant (to the young man who had gone to New Zealand). She suffered acute depression, going about her everyday tasks but refusing to eat and barely speaking. Her aunt, guessing the reason for her behaviour, asked her if she was pregnant. Tuli told her the whole story and said that she wanted to kill herself. Her relative comforted her and said she could continue to stay with them, but she must tell her parents. This Tuli did the following weekend, and her parents wept for the whole day. But she was not beaten, her father was a gentle, affectionate man who loved his daughter, and Tuli had only one brother who was still a child. Tuli remained with her aunt until her seventh month, then went to stay with some relatives of her mother, who were not related to her 'aiga in her own village. She refused to stay with her aunt because they were of a common descent group and she felt that to give birth from their house would shame them. She refused to have the baby in her own village. Her matai had been fined by the village council on her behalf and her mother was reproved by the leaders of the women's
committee because of Tuli and her sister, who was also illegitimately pregnant.

Tuli is a beautiful, gentle, rather modest girl. At 28, she is still unmarried. Her mother takes care of her two small children and Tuli is once again working for relatives in Apia. It seems unlikely that she will find a husband in the foreseeable future for few eligible young men have the courage to formally court a girl with two illegitimate children, for fear of the disapproval of their 'āiga and the gossip of their peers. If Tuli marries, it will probably be to a man who has been married before and who is past the sensitivities of youthful manhood.
In Poutasi there were seven women with illegitimate children. Three women had been once married and then separated and had legitimate children from the marriage and had subsequently had illegitimate children from illicit affairs. Four never-married women had illegitimate children and of these, a nineteen year old girl had one child, a twenty-six year old woman had two, a thirty year old woman had one and a thirty-seven year old woman had three children.

Once the initial scandal of an illegitimate pregnancy has died down, the situation is accepted philosophically by the woman, her relatives and fellow villagers, ostracism or unkindness is not commonly shown to unmarried mothers in daily life. Neither are particular problems experienced by illegitimate children although their lack of a father may occasionally be scornfully mentioned by other children. In the case of illegitimate males their opportunities to acquire a matai title are more restricted than legitimately born males, but I have heard of instances of illegitimate sons receiving titles from their maternal āiga.

The lack of a birth certificate often presents problems for an illegitimate child, their mother being too embarrassed to apply for a piece of paper which bluntly states: "father - unknown". Since children require a birth certificate to obtain a place in school, the matai
of their 'āiga, or other married relatives may apply for a birth certificate for the child putting their own names as the parents of the child.

Illegitimate children may be acknowledged after they are born either by the father, through signing a birth certificate for the child, or by other relatives of the father.

In two cases I was informed about, the mother of a boy who had sired an illegitimate child, took an 'ie toga to the child's mother's 'āiga and presented it to the child's mother's mother. This fa'afailelegā tama (presentation at the birth of a first child) will often be made by the genitor's mother if this is the first child he has sired, and if it is also the firstborn of the mother. Samoans believe that a firstborn child has special importance. By making the presentation she is acknowledging her son's paternity and signifying that the child will be accepted as a member of it's paternal 'āiga.

Young children are considered to belong by right to their mother and only she has the right to give her child to another in adoption or fosterage, or to give her illegitimate child to the 'āiga of the father. But older children are considered negotiable assets and may be passed from the maternal to the paternal 'āiga by arrangement. A child over ten is considered to have a right to his or her own choice of residence.
The rather extreme dichotomy of attitudes towards male and female sexuality and its attendant contradiction leads to a significant number of people who decide to opt out of the game or who assume androgenous roles or males who become transexuals. I met one elderly woman who had never been known to have had a lover, or to have any interest in marriage. She was described by some of the women of her village as having been a "tomboy" (*fa'atama*) in her youth. It was said that when she reached her late twenties, the *matai* of the village had requested that she wear her hair longer and tied back in a bun in the usual manner of Samoan women, and desist from dressing in so casual and "masculine" a manner. She was the senior lady of her descent group by this time, and her mother's brother's son, the *matai* of her *aiga* was one of the four senior ranking *tulafale* of the village. It was thus considered to be appropriate for her to assume a more "feminine" role, for while the wives of untitled men may be seen striding around the village, wearing men's shirts and their *lavalava's* worn tied in a business-like manner and reaching only just below their knees, the "ladies" of the village are expected to assume more dignified appearances in public.
Another man in his forties was not known to have ever had an affair and when teased about his wifeless state, would become embarrassed and angry. He was a hard working, solitary individual whose sole enthusiasm apart from work seemed to be in playing cards with the village youths. Some people said he was a "fa'afafine" - a transexual, but this was not meant seriously, but rather it was a perplexed comment on his asexuality. He was a man without political ambitions, and was extremely self effacing. Although the rank of his 'āiga entitled him to serve kava and to take a leading role in the 'aumaga, he rejected these opportunities. Some people took this as evidence that he was simple-minded, citing his lack of ambition, bachelor status and highly taciturn manner as proof. But he was certainly not. His skill at cards and farming were evidence that he was of perfectly normal intelligence.

X

Reference to the presence of transexual males has been made in accounts of many Polynesian societies. In ancient Tahiti the role appears to have been a social institution (Gunson 1966:58). Levy (1973:132-141) reports that transexuals or māhū have an accepted and clearly defined social role in contemporary Tahiti.
In Samoa transexual males are referred to as fa'afafine -"to be like women". I was informed by many people that such persons, though known in Samoa, were uncommon.

However, one evening I attended a women's committee concert in a small village (about 150 adults or people over 21) and my companion pointed out to me two males in an otherwise all female performing group, dressed as women. One was in his twenties, the other in his late teens. Both had long hair and one wore it in a feminine "bun", both were from the same village. I came to realise that by "uncommon", people meant that there were only one or two transexuals in each village.

Samoans do not have the same perception of homosexuality that is found in contemporary western society. A male who acts in a manner which is socially defined as "masculine" and who has sexual relations with a fa'afafine is considered to be availing himself of a substitute female and is not considered "queer". Such behaviour is considered only to be mildly shameful and to be comparable with masturbation. Fa'afafine have low social status, since they fulfil neither of the honoured requirements of either the male role or the role of females as sisters with its attendant dignity and high status. The term fa'afine - woman - may only politely be

4. I am referring here, of course, to popular attitudes and do not deny that there are Samoan men with secure male gender identities with homosexual preferences.
used of a female who is married and cohabiting with her husband. It implies then, that she is sexually active.

The fa'afafine is thus only "like a woman" in her less honoured, functional state. Many fa'afafine are quite celibate, refraining from sexual interaction with males or females, although attempting to dress and live as women. I say "attempting" because in some villages, the council of matai will reprimand the matai of an 'āiga who has a male member who dresses in too overtly feminine dress. However the workday dress of adult Samoan men and women is a lavalava and a shirt or tee-shirt, and it is not difficult for a transexual male to assume a feminine appearance without actually dressing in the more formal Samoan women's garments or dresses or puletasi (lavalava with matching overdresses).

This low status is one of structural position in society and role ambiguity. Samoans appear to be generally tolerant of male transexuals and while women enjoy their company and friendship, men also appear to accept them as worthy of courtesy and respect.

Urban fa'afafine who have adopted western-style "high camp" affectations, who wear pālagi female attire, makeup and jewellery or who prostitute themselves to tourists, are regarded with more hostility by Samoan men, but they continue to be accepted by Samoan women with an urban lifestyle.
There are, doubtless, many complex psycho-sexual factors which contribute to the personality development of each individual Samoan transexual, but the large number of such individuals and the semi-institutional nature of the role suggests that there are two main contributing factors to be found in Samoan culture.

The first, as I have mentioned in Chapter Two, is the lack of emphasis on gender distinctions in the behaviour of children under ten. This would allow a male child to develop a female gender identity, to wear girls clothing and help with women's work with little or no comment. The mother may notice the development of feminine identity in her son, but may have her own reasons for tacitly accepting it. A father would be unlikely to notice such development until the boy failed to play a defined male role in adolescence, and as I noted, his anger, and the teasing of a transexual's peer group would be likely to reinforce the boy's assertion of a feminine gender identity, with its more expressive and less aggressive attributes.

The second factor is the association of masculinity with aggressive and predatory sexuality. The social expectation that young males must prove their masculinity through sexual conquests and an avoidance of female companionship threatens some boys. Such was the experience of one transexual male who from adolescence to the age of about twenty-four was regarded as an extreme fa'afafine who avoided male company and spent most of his time with women
and girls. However, at that age he migrated to New Zealand and was reported a year or two later to have assumed a male gender identity and to have been married. He had found that it was easier to assume a male role there than it had been in Samoa.

XI

(5) A significant percentage of young Samoans seem to have their first love affairs with boys or girls to whom they are related, when the relationship is sufficiently distant to prevent them from feeling inhibited by the brother-sister taboo, but close enough for them to be able to meet. Usually both parties are quite aware that they cannot marry according to the rules, but in some instances, so strong an attachment develops, that they elope and cause great concern and scandal.

From a girl's point of view, an affair with a boy to whom she is related affords her a better chance of keeping the matter secret. A boy will be unlikely to boast about the affair since the prestige of having won a girl is cancelled out by the shame of mataifale.

This term may be glossed as "incest" but means literally "to look in the house". Incest is considered a particularly unmanly action since it involves seeking sexual satisfaction with women of the same household rather than the manly action of conquering girls from other 'āiga.

5. I do not intend to imply here that I have comprehensive statistical data on the matter, but that of those informants I had, a significant number admitted that their early sexual experiences had been with persons who were 'āiga to them.
There is an established etiquette for formal courtship in Samoa, (apart from the now almost extinct custom of fale tautū or aumoega, the courting party for a taupou). This requires a suitor of honourable intent to find himself a go-between (fa'asoa) who will discover discreetly whether the girl he favours likes him, and whether her family might accept him as a husband for her. If the go-between is able to give him an encouraging report, the suitor may call on the girl's family, taking with him a gift of food (tāuga). If the gift is accepted, it is understood that he may formally court the girl by visiting her at her home until a marriage is arranged. This ideal process is fraught, in reality, with problems. A girl's brothers are often suspicious and resentful of even an apparently honourable suitor. One man described the anxiety he felt having plucked up courage to visit a girl formally in this manner, as he was acquainted with several of her brothers, but not on close terms with them. On his way home from visiting her, he was stoned by people hiding in the bush by the roadside and felt certain it was the brothers of the girl. He did not call on her again, feeling that this was a warning to him that he was not acceptable to them.

What usually happens in Samoa is that after a very discreet and secretive courtship in which the girl plays an active part in planning, the couple abruptly elope to relatives of the boy who, according to the couples calculations, will
shelter them until the wrath of their respective families diminishes sufficiently for them to be able to decide where they will reside more permanently.

But even in elopements, girls can be tricked and suffer injury to their reputation. Sometimes a boy will convince a girl that he wants her as his wife on a permanent basis and get her to spend the night with him in the bush or in a house somewhere, then disclaim the whole thing the following day.
Case Study No. 7 - An Abortive Elopement

A sixteen year old girl was having a secret affair with a twenty-three year old single man, but was a little careless one evening, and the young men of her household discovered that she was missing. When she returned to the house she was informed by some children that the boys were searching the village for her. She panicked and grabbed a basket of clothes and rushed to the household of her lover and slept the night there. His family was already sleeping and the boy was afraid to rouse them by arguing with her and possibly attracting the attention of the search party of boys from her household.

The next morning the lover rejected her, telling his surprised parents that the girl had come to seek refuge from her angry family, but that it had nothing to do with him. The girl went home and was beaten by her uncle, the matai of the household, but very discreetly. He then charged the matai of the boy with whom she had spent the night with abducting his niece from his household and because of his high rank and various factional undercurrents in village politics, the fono agreed that the boy's āiga should be fined, thus removing the shame from the āiga of the girl. She was despatched to another village shortly afterwards to live with other relatives.
Had the young man had serious intentions of taking the girl as his wife, which she had believed he had, then she would have sent for her belongings and remained in his household as his wife. Her family would have been angry but unless they had serious objections to the boy or his family, they would probably have accepted it as *fait accompli*. Had the boy's family disliked the girl, their strategy would have been to treat her unkindly in the hope that she would leave, thereby breaking up the marriage unless her husband was sufficiently fond of her to leave and move with her to her own family.

******

While elopement is the way in which most Samoan marriages are initiated, early elopements appear to have a high failure rate: of three young couples who had begun cohabitation with sudden elopements during my first year in Poutasi, two had broken up when I left a year later and one was reputed to be in the throes of disintegration. A girl who has been "married" in the customary sense, through an elopement, and who returns to her own family when the marriage fails, does not suffer any particular stigma, her children, if she has any, are considered legitimate, and she resumes her status in the household as a young unmarried woman. She has no more freedom of movement and in relationships with the opposite sex as a result of having been married. Formally, she is regarded as a "girl" once again. Her temporary status as a "wife" is not alluded to within the village, and she once again has the responsibility to maintain the honour of her family through circumspect behaviour. However, having been married, having been living away from her own family, seems in
the case of many girls, to give them a greater degree of self-confidence and independence.

The irony of the Samoan courtship dilemma, like double standards of morality anywhere, divides women into categories of "good" and "bad" depending on which set of male desires they fulfil. The masculine demand for female chastity produces "good" women, while the masculine desire for temporary sexual satisfaction produces "bad" women. The denial of female sexuality as a social fact inhibits Samoan girls from the kind of frank discussion and seeking of explicit sexual information and techniques and sexual boasting that young males engage in. It causes girls to be extremely secretive about their lovers. However, Samoans do not deny as in Victorian English puritanism, for instance, that females require sexual satisfaction in heterosexual intercourse, so it is tacitly accepted that males must be knowledgeable in sexual techniques in order to retain the interest of a female partner. This one sided view of the matter at least relieves young girls from the burden of feeling that they have some ideal standard of sexual performance to live up to. The socially ascribed belief in female sexual passivity is more likely to create masculine rather than feminine anxiety. And despite the view of the male
initiatory role and male "conquest", if a girl decides voluntarily to have an affair, in view of the possible consequences, it is usually she and not the boy in whom she is interested, who initiates and plans the strategy of the affair. Because she is so carefully chaperoned, it is virtually impossible for the boy to play his ascribed initiatory role outside the framework of rape or moetotolo.

Despite the portrait of Samoan male *machismo* that I have drawn in this chapter, it should be stressed that there are few parallels with Islamic, Mediterranean, Latin American and Melanesian cultures where it is linked to a belief in the inferiority of and devaluation of females. I have already stressed above that females have intrinsically high value in Samoan culture in terms of their status as sisters. This theme will be developed and explained in Section Six of this thesis.

In White Sunday Bible plays, the part of Jesus is often played by a teenage girl. Dressed in white robes, her hair looped under at the shoulders, her face set in an expression of gentle melancholy, except for the absence of a beard, she does look a little like some of the more insipid representations of Christ in Roman Catholic Holy Pictures.
In Poutasi the part of Christ was annually rotated between
the younger adolescent daughters of Meleiseā and
Tuātagaloa, although in the case of Meleiseā, he had a
handsome, well spoken son of sixteen. I enquired about
this:-

"Why is Jesus played by a girl?"
"It is because Jesus has long hair and girls have long hair", it was explained.
"But Jesus is often depicted wearing a head covering. Why
can't a boy play Jesus with a head covering?" I persisted.
"The face and manner and the voice of a girl are more
suitable for the part, it looks better". I was told.

Samoan Christianity is highly syncretic, and it is often
said that the Congregational Church is one of the bulwarks
of Samoan custom and tradition. The choice of a teenage
girl to portray Christ in Bible plays illustrates clearly
the priority that Samoans give to contextually defined
qualities rather than gender itself.

In adolescence, boys have the least honoured status of
males - being young, lacking in judgement, potentially
aggressive and sexually unrestrained, profane and
utilitarian. But at this same age girls pass through a
period which accords females their highest ritual estate, that
of asexual virginity, and its association with dignity,
purity, honour and restraint.
These qualities are seen as more "Christlike" than those opposite qualities associated with their brothers, and thus the logic of having an adolescent female play the role of a male Christ is based on a perception of their shared characteristics — purity, chastity, asexuality and sacredness.

XII

Although young women are not thought to be sexually aggressive, there is one aspect of female behaviour which has strong overtones of sexual aggression and which is the special weapon of middle-aged and elderly women; sexual satire.

After a formal women's meeting, the committee usually separates into its three divisions. The senior tama'ita'i and the faletua ma tausi gather at opposite ends of the women's meeting house to chat and play cards, while the wives of the untitled men and younger tama'ita'i go off to cook lunch. Each group, especially those of older women, whether those seated in the house at the front, or those working in houses at the back, will be talking and especially laughing. Committee meeting days are nearly always characterised by these groups of rather noisy laughing women after their rather long, formal and very sober meeting.
After they have eaten, especially if they have guests, the committee will have a *fiafia* (merry-making occasion) with singing and dancing and continual laughing. Passing males hurry past the women's meeting house with an air of studied indifference unless they are adolescents in which case they might hang about attempting to observe and listen - from a dignified distance of course.

Many young men dislike their wives attending the committee activities, and joining working groups of older women. One young married woman told me:

"About a week after I was married, some members of the *tama'ita'i* (older married women) were in the kitchen of our household preparing some food for the Pastor's house. I went out to help them and we were all laughing and joking. When I came back inside my husband was very angry. He accused me of joining in bad talk, talk about the married life, what men and women do. He told me to keep away from those older women, he said they were bad. It is true, they are very bad. (She laughed loudly). Losa is the worst of the lot of them. When ever we are together, that is what she talks about. That's why (my husband) hates those women".

Young husbands are the most likely to feel threatened and victimised by female joking, as the early years of marriage are the most strained and difficult, and the years in which men try hardest to assert control over their wives. Males boast of their sexual exploits before marriage, but it is considered very bad form to discuss your wife with other men or even to mention your marriage. With women, it is the other way around, they
may not discuss their pre-marital adventures or mention sexual matters when they are single, but once they are married, they are free to do so. This is never done seriously (it would be shameful or embarrassing for women to talk seriously about sexual matters) but always takes the form of joking and satire.

Samoan men seem to imagine that somehow their performance as sexual partners gets to be discussed by the women, what actually happens is that young wives are teased about their husbands by the older women of the same status category. The younger women smile and laugh at the comments but rarely join in. I have no doubt that sexual joking and satire is aimed at men and is a form of retaliation for the sexual restriction which women are surrounded with. The usual tenor of women's sexual joking is in reference to the supposedly insatiable sexual needs of men and women's liking of this - or disliking of it.

For example:

"Where are you going? To sleep at the women's house?"

"Ah, you need the rest from your husband I suppose".

"I certainly do, he is wearing me out".

"Yes, while you sleep peacefully with the ladies, he'll be lying there with his hands between his legs, poor old man".

This exchange took place between two women in their forties.
Both members of the \textit{tama'ita'i} (their husbands were not related to any other women present, being from outside the village) in front of forty women of all ages and status groups, their exchange was greeted with roars of laughter by everyone present.

Women's dancing often parodies sexual intercourse. One elderly and dignified \textit{tama'ita'i} is celebrated among the women of her village for a particular dance she does, completely silent and straight faced using eye movements to express passion, resignation, pain, strain, surprise and release, she parodies a whole sequence of events in sexual intercourse, enacting both the husband and wife roles.

The women of another village \textit{komiti} have a dance which is also performed by the older \textit{tama'ita'i} in which the whole group of them, with the precision of the Radio City Rockettes, perform a stylised dance par\textsuperscript{o} parodying sexual intercourse. The performance is extremely funny, and even those women who have seen it performed time and time again, laugh until they cry. One of its most humorous aspects are the totally unsmiling earnest expressions of the performers.
PLATE 8a.

A senior member of a tama'ita'i group performs a comical dance.

PLATE 8b.

A young woman performs an uninhibited 'aiuli dance.
Sometimes women use sexual satire to embarrass or intimidate men. A Samoan male school teacher told me the following story.

I had to stay in a village in Aleipata district while doing some work for the government, together with one other man. Some ladies came over to the house that we were sleeping in and were singing and playing the ukelele. There were about seven of them. They asked us to dance but I was tired and I lay down on my mat at the end of the house and did not join in. My friend was dancing with them. I was trying to sleep but they were all laughing very loudly, I took my sheet away from my face and found that one of the ladies was dancing beside me, lifting her legs over me as I lay there, so I could see up her *lavalava* and she was wearing no undergarments.

The women's committee got a man of another village who owns a truck to come and fetch stones for them (for a village project). He drove the truck to a beach where there are lots of stones and waited while the women went to fetch loads of stones to put on the truck. Three old ladies (*tama'ita'i*) waited with the driver as they were too old to carry stones. When the other women had left, they started to tease the driver, they joked and mocked him and pulled up their *lavalava* and showed him their private parts and asked him why didn't he have intercourse with them all. He was very ashamed.
Such sexual teasing is intended to ridicule men and not to stimulate them. It only takes place when women outnumber men and the women who may behave this way without censure are the elder members of the *tama'ita'i*. It is they too, who perform dances of sexual satire at meetings of the *komiti*. They are not and were not in the past the wives and sexual partners of any village men, thus they do not infringe the brother-sister taboo by their behaviour\(^4\). Wives of village men are more restrained in comparison, they mainly engage in verbal sexual joking in the company of their peers and restrain themselves when the *tama'ita'i* are present. The point is that women may not sexually mock the brothers of other women who are present at a gathering.

In pre-Christian times, salacious dancing and exchanges of sexual taunts between men and women occurred when a visiting party (*malaga*) from one village was entertained by another. Williams offers the following description of such an occasion. Having remarked on the propriety and decency of most Samoan dances, he continues:

"They have however, some low, blackguard dances which exceed in obscenity anything I ever read or heard of. The performers are divided into companies ... the young virgin girls taking the lead. They now enter the house entirely naked and commence their dance; the full grown women then follow. After them come the elderly

\(^4\) Members of the *tama'ita'i* who marry men from the same village as themselves must leave that group and join that of the wives. This is because it is a breach of the brother-sister taboo for the wife and sister of the same man to belong to the same social category and group."
women, all of them entirely naked. During their dancing they throw themselves in all imaginable positions in order to make the most full exposure of their persons to the whole company. In addition to this, there are several persons supplied with flambeaus which they hold as near to the dancers as possible; during the whole time of performing the females are using the most vile, taunting bantering language to the men. This scene concludes by the men approaching the virgins and with their tongues perform what one beast does to another. The men then enter and being rather more bashful than the fair sex, they generally enter with a narrow leaf in their hands which they hold before them or a small strip of cloth. The ladies, however, will not permit this or be content with this return for the full and free exhibition they have made and commence a furious attack on them in language suitable to the occasion. The men at length throw away their apology for a covering and make a full exposure of their persons, using lights as the females had done before them. All the time they are dancing, they use the most vile language in order to shame the females out of the house, but the Samoa ladies, not possessing a great deal of modesty that adorns the female sex, the efforts of the gentlemen generally prove fruitless for there is nothing like shame in the dancing house. There is always a person appointed to keep order on these occasions who acts as a kind of master of ceremonies; any language used in the dance house must be noticed afterwards or taken as an insult.

--------------------------------------------

5. Each "side", the hosts and the guests, at a Poula is made up of male and female performers. The two sides take it in turn to entertain one another and the interaction Williams refers to between males and females is between those of different sides.

6. Williams comments elsewhere: "men careful to keep essentials covered - only old men or a few chiefs cover up behind - women would laugh at them if they did, accusing them of being ashamed of the shape of their bodies, or of having a disease". "Women ... are immodest, often go naked".

(Williams, 1832:12)
This form of the erotic battle of the sexes has been long forgotten by modern Samoans, but vestiges of it remain in the behaviour of the tama'ita'i in their dances and songs and their entertainment of male visitors. It reverses the whole order of everyday sexual values and norms - aggressive initiatory women taunting and shaming men and goading them to respond in kind. It is even more striking that the tama'ita'i, the classificatory virgins, ladies or girls, have retained in modern times the sexual licence of ritualised erotic insults and challenge, which was traditionally aimed at males from other villages who were potential husbands.
CHAPTER FIVE

HUSBANDS AND WIVES
In Tahiti, Tonga and various other parts of Polynesia, during the nineteenth century, particular missionary churches were able to gain sufficient influence to legislate in matters of morality and marriage. In Tonga, for example, the earliest codes of law required couples to obtain a marriage licence and to go through a Christian marriage ceremony before cohabitation, and this law still stands today. In Samoa, although the London Missionary Society had the greatest influence and the church it founded, the Christian Congregational Church of Samoa, today has the support of over half the population, there was powerful support given by important chiefs to the rival Methodist and Catholic churches. Chiefly and sectarian rivalry thus prevented the enactment of national legislation on matters of sexual morality. Although the most elaborate forms of traditional chiefly marriage have now disappeared, the tendency observed by 19th century writers for most marriages to be contracted informally by elopement and to be regularised later if the union was successful, is still the case today. In contemporary Samoa, the decision to formalise a common-law marriage with a religious ceremony is usually motivated by a desire for greater social status or to obtain birth certificates for children or a passport for travel overseas.
The consideration of status is that Christian churches deny the sacraments to informally married couples. To hold office in the church, such as that of a Deacon or elder, a man must be a member of the communion and this requires that he be married according to the rites of his church to his wife. Thus, when a man acquires a matai title he may also desire the added dignity conferred by a position of leadership in his village church and formalise his marriage in order to become eligible.

Marriages which begin with elopement may fail in the early years, but those which are stable and which result in children are usually formalised afterwards. The formalisation of such marriages is usually effected by the couple going off quietly to the village clergyman and having a brief ceremony, often with nobody present but the official witnesses. There may or may not be a subsequent exchange of property between the husband's and wife's families. If they have children already, it is probable that this exchange will have already taken place at the birth of the first child. The custom of the wife's side giving toga¹ (ie toga) and money and the groom's side giving 'oloa (goods and money) is still followed.

1. The contemporary term for bridewealth is mālō and refers to the traditional category of toga. The term means "winners" in this sense (See Chapter 7).
TABLE: 2

Formal and Informal Marriages in Poutasi (1976)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Informal Union of married women</th>
<th>Informal Unions now formalised</th>
<th>Formal* marriage</th>
<th>Total no. of married women of each age sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 - 20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2**</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 - 50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 70+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all ages</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Marriages solemnised in Church or in a civil ceremony prior to cohabitation.
** These marriages were of the daughter of Meleisea and the sister's daughter of a Catholic Priest.

II

Formal marriages accompanied with a large redistribution of property, public ceremonials and feasting are extremely prestigious. In these kinds of weddings, it is regarded as a necessity that the bride has not publicly co-habited with a man previously, although the groom may have been married either formally or informally before.

Arranged marriages still occur\(^2\), although girls have the right to be consulted regarding their family's choice of a husband and the right to refuse a match they dislike. The considerations of arranged marriages are likely to be based on economic and status factors, a

\(^2\) I have details of three arranged marriages in recent years but these represented a minority of my case studies.
desire to make an alliance with a family that is of high rank or of wealth, or with a family in a village which offers economic and status advantages. Young people who are well educated and in wage employment usually arrange their own marriages to the extent of nominating who they wish to marry, and precede cohabitation with a formal wedding. This is in keeping with the high status that educated people have in Samoa.

The custom in contemporary Samoa is for formal ceremonial marriages to take place in the village of the bride, the opposite of that which prevailed in pre-Christian Samoa. Modern weddings incorporate a blend of Western and traditional Samoan customs.

Once a couple have decided to marry and their respective families have agreed to the union, the two sides meet to discuss the arrangements. There will then be an interval of one or two or more months while the two sides collect the toga of the bride and the oloa of the groom. This is done by canvassing the entire kindred for support. The matai of the bride, or her mother and father will ask and receive 'ie toga from all their senior family connections. The number of fine mats which are collected is extremely important to the collective status of the 'aiga of the bride. The bride's brothers and their affines, and those kin who stand in a tamatane relationship to the bride, with their

3. It appears that when the rank of the bride was higher or equivalent to that of her husband, the marriage was celebrated in her own village. When her rank was lower than that of her husband, the ceremony took place in his village.
affines, have a particular duty to contribute on this occasion. The collection of a bride's toga is the principal expression of the economic reciprocity between brother and sister and tamatane and tamafafine. Brothers contribute substantially to the toga of their sisters and sisters' daughters while sisters in turn contribute to the toga of their brothers' daughters, in effect withdrawing from the toga that they receive from the marriage of their sons. When a brother receives toga from his son's marriage, his sister has the right to the best 'ie toga, (which she might reserve for her own daughter's toga). Thus, while on the public level, marriage is an exchange of goods between affines, the collection and the subsequent redistribution of the toga and olioa is a focus for the reciprocity between brothers and sisters and their respective descendants.

Marriage was a focus of cross-sex sibling reciprocity as a sister, by marrying out, created an alliance for her brother with another 'aiga, and if she was of high rank, with another village polity. Thus she earned for him, by her marriage, economic and political allies. He was bound in return to show her lifelong generosity and respect. This aspect of Samoan marriage, linked as it was to traditional modes of alliance formation, is by no means as clearly defined as it once was. Nevertheless, respect

4. Affines are expected to contribute generously to the fa'afalavelave of their spouses' 'aiga. According to the ideology by which sisters marry out while brothers bring wives in; wealth flows through marriage connections from a woman's husband to her brother.
given to women in the category of "sister" has survived erosion of structural aspects of marriage and continues to be expressed through the substantial contributions which brothers make to the toga of their sisters, and the privileged share of toga which sisters receive from the marriage of their brothers' sons. The lifelong rights of sisters to rights in land and property in their own 'āiga after marriage is also still respected. Both toga and oloa include substantial amounts of cash in contemporary Samoa. In addition, the traditional association of imported or foreign categories of goods with oloa is no longer clear cut, as the custom of giving wedding presents, ornamental and household goods, is becoming increasingly popular in Samoa (as is the custom of inviting non-kin to weddings). Wedding gifts are given as in European custom, to the bride. These gifts are treated by Samoans as part of the toga; they are not set aside for the bride and groom to keep, but are redistributed with the toga. The bride and groom often receive nothing.

Once the bride's and groom's respective sides have amassed the toga and the oloa, there still remain other matters to be decided. It is common for both the bride's and the groom's sides to provide a wedding cake, and sometimes the various branches of the sides of the couple provide more than one cake each for the wedding. Weddings often
feature four or five wedding cakes of varying size and splendour. The same situation prevails with the wedding dress. Samoan brides frequently change wedding dresses several times during the course of the celebrations, as they often receive several dresses from their own and their husband's relatives.

The exchange of the *toga* and *oloa* usually takes place after the wedding service at the church. This is usually officiated over by *tulāfale*, one or more representing each side present. Each item is ceremoniously displayed and announced by the presiding *tulāfale*. Portions of both the *toga* and the *oloa* are redistributed on the day of the wedding to the highest ranking guests present, which will include the *matai* of the bride's village and those who have accompanied the groom and who are not members of the *'āiga* of either party. The remaining goods are redistributed after the wedding amongst those members of the bride's and groom's *'āiga* who contributed to their respective *toga* and *oloa*.

The bride will have one or more bridesmaids. These should ideally be selected from among her peers with special preference for the highest ranking unmarried girls of her *'āiga* or from the unmarried daughters of the village clergyman if he has any. She will also be dressed up and
escorted to and from the church in procession by the aualuma (tama'ita'i) of her village who, if it is a big wedding, and if the girl is of high rank, will wear new uniform outfits for the occasion. Bridal processions often feature a village band, followed by the bride and her parents, followed by her bridesmaids who are followed by the aualuma, who are also often followed by the faletua and tausi and the wives of the untitled men, all in uniform or elaborate dress. The procession parades around the village from the house of the bride to the church.

At one village wedding which I attended, although the church was only one hundred yards from the house of the bride's family, there was yet another kind of parade after the wedding ceremony. The groom and his best man hired several taxis and two buses. These were decorated with ribbons and flowers, the bride and groom entered one taxi, the chief bridesmaid and best man another, other members of the wedding party entered other taxis and the two buses took the aualuma, faletua and tausi respectively. This automotive procession then set off with much tooting of horns to drive ten miles down the road and back again for a tafa (aimless excursion). This custom, of course, is a feature of European weddings where the church is some distance from the bride's home and the venue of the reception. In Samoan village weddings, it has no useful function, but nevertheless is often incorporated as an extra bit of ceremonial.
The three sections of the village women's committee usually contribute significantly to weddings. Each member of the committee is usually asked to weave a sleeping mat for the *toga* of the bride, and in addition, each *faletua* and *tausi* contributes a 'ie *toga* or *siapo* (tapa) on behalf of each *'aiga* in the village. The *aualuma* usually decorate the church and two *fale tele* which are set aside for the *gafa*, the family and guests of the bride, and the *paolo* the family and guests of the groom. The wives of the *matai* supervise the wives of the untitled men in the preparation and serving of refreshment to the guests and the *paolo* before and after the wedding ceremony. On the occasion of big weddings where the groom is accompanied by *matai* from his village, or he himself is a *matai*, a kava ceremony precedes the wedding ceremony.

After the wedding ceremony, the exchange of *toga* and *vloa*, the processions and the redistribution of portions of *toga* and *vloa* to guests, a large feast is set out and consumed. This is now usually provided by the *'aiga* of the bride, and cooked and served by the village as the wedding takes place in the bride's village. This is another reason for the breakdown in the distinction between the type of goods given as *toga* and *vloa*. Traditionally, the wedding being in the groom's village, food and large heavy goods were conveniently included as the *vloa*. But with the contemporary custom of holding the wedding in the bride's village, the custom is no longer convenient, nor always feasible. The portability of cash makes imported foodstuffs for redistribution a convenient substitute.
Following the consumption of the feast, speeches are made, prayers are offered by the clergyman/celebrant and the wedding cake is cut with the portions being divided and allocated by the bridesmaids on the basis of the rank and status of the senior ranking persons present. After the wedding and at intervals between the various events, there is dancing, led by the aualuma.

At one wedding which I attended, the bridal procession left the church and proceeded to the house of the clergyman who had officiated. The bride and groom sat at the front of the house, with their respective parents and matai and attendants on either side of them. The pastor sat at one end of the house with his wife and the leader of the aualuma sat at the other. The remaining members of the women's committee sat at the back. After the tama'ita'i had passed around large glasses of soft drinks and cakes (which they had prepared) the women sang and beat rolled mats for dancing, with all the important persons present dancing in sets. After about half an hour, the bride's family and guests went and sat in one of the decorated fale tele of the village, and those of the groom in another. Then the bride and groom and their attendants and the women's committee visited each house in turn for further dancing (the bride having donned another wedding dress for this stage of the celebration).
The lavishness of a wedding is to some extent circumscribed by rank. No expense or elaboration of ceremony is spared for the marriage of a girl who is from the 'āiga of a high ranking ali'i (especially his daughter or sister's daughter), or the daughter of a Pastor. But the daughters of lesser ranking matai or untitled men, if they have a formal wedding, are expected to make a more modest display and will receive less support from the entire village.
Case Study No. 8 - Weddings and Status Rivalry

A wedding became a focus for the expressions of status rivalry between the 'āiga Lualua and the 'āiga Tasi in the village of Nu'u in 1976.

A wedding was planned for the sister of a matai of minor rank in the village, who had been employed in New Zealand for several years and was as a result wealthier than any other matai of the village in terms of his cash income.

The bride's mother planned a wedding which was to be almost identical to that of a daughter of Tasi held in the village two years previously. As such, it required the full assistance of the women's committee to produce the mats for the bride's toga and to organise the entertainment of the guests.

The president of the committee was the wife of Tasi. She was placed in the rather invidious position of having to organise a wedding for a girl of minor rank on the same scale as that of her own daughter. The bride's mother had asked the wife of Lualua to formally preside over the wedding arrangements on behalf of the 'āiga, since her son's 'āiga was a lesser branch of the 'āiga Sā Lualua, thus it was incumbent upon the wife of Lualua to make sure that the wedding was not on a scale inappropriate to the rank of the bride. It appeared at
first that she was not going to do this, but was going to allow the wedding to replicate that of Tasi's daughter. She herself had no daughters of marriageable age whose status would be compromised by a wedding of this scale.

Tasi's wife agreed gracefully to the wedding plans and instructed the women to provide the mats. Her only demonstration of protest was to insist that the wedding be deferred for several weeks in order that the preparations be made as the committee had "other more important matters to attend to in the mean time". She also refused permission for her unmarried daughter to be a joint bridesmaid with a daughter of Lualua, and on reflection, the wife of Lualua also decided not to make her daughter a bridesmaid.

The wedding went ahead on a grand scale, although deferred and with only one bridesmaid of lesser rank. Tasi and his wife were absent from the village during the wedding.
Weddings, like any other major ceremonial event, are not only subject to the delicate politics of status rivalry, but also the preceding description will make it clear that the reasons discussed for initiating marriage with an elopement in the previous chapter do not tell the full story. A "proper" Samoan wedding is a lavish, expensive and time-consuming matter that is hedged about with the politics of rank and status. Young (and unimportant) people will have to give their respective 'āiga good reason for going to the expense and trouble of arranging a formal wedding that involves the contribution of goods, cash and services of hundreds of people.

Their choice of spouse will need to be very acceptable to their 'āiga, and they themselves will need to be in good standing with both their 'āiga and the village before so much effort will be considered worth expending. Their 'āiga will need to be both economically strong and in good standing in the community in order to gain the necessary support of that community. Nor is it easy for an 'āiga to simply stage a small and modest wedding in the village for their daughter, unless they are willing to make a public expression of their own lack of wealth.

Esteem is both demonstrated and earned by the scale of a wedding. Modest weddings are usually held in Apia if the couple and their family wish to avoid expense and also loss of esteem. But the usual and least problematic

5. Large town weddings with a reception at a hotel or a hired hall, are extremely prestigious. But a small private wedding in town is a respectable alternative to the expense of a traditional village wedding.
method of getting married is to elope, (unless the
girl is the daughter of a high ranking matai).
An elopement spares the girl and the boy the scrutiny of
their entire 'āiga as to their choice of a spouse in
terms of the large contribution that will have to be
made and the necessity of so much expense.

III

Samoans disapprove of the marriage of people who are known
to be related in any way, through blood, affinity, adoption
or ascriptive co-descent. By "ascriptive co-descent"
I am referring to maximal 'āiga in which a group of matai
titles are held to be related and therefore all descendants
of former holders of those titles as well as all the
descendants of the current holders of those titles are
held to be kin or 'āiga to one another, even though few
people related in this way are able to state the basis
of the relationship.

This broad and inclusive definition of the rules of
exogamy derives partly from the symbolic and structural
principles of feagaiga, the opposition of brother and
sister and male and female lines of descent. This has
been discussed by Shore (1976:275-98) and will be
examined further in the second part of this thesis. Another
reason is that the social aim of marriage is to provide
as wide a network of alliances to other 'āiga as possible
for economic, ceremonial and political support.
Village endogamy is also disapproved of for much the same reason. Given that the average Samoan village in the preceding generation comprised between 200-300 people containing from 20-50 'āiga, even a small number of marriages in the preceding generation would narrow the range of permissible intra-village marriages in the present generation.

TABLE 3:
Falefitu villages: Village endogamy and exogamy (1976)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Spouse from same village</th>
<th>Spouse from outside village</th>
<th>Total Marriages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poutasi</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saleilua</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaovai</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matautu</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4:
Comparative sample from 12 other villages*(1977)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Same Village</th>
<th>Outside Village</th>
<th>Total Marriages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fagamalo</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fusi</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leulumoega</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lufilufi</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levf</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magiagi</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naua</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matafåa</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solosolo</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savaia-tai</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utualii</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sample taken from currently married couples with children (including adopted and foster children) under 3 years of age.
In Poutasi, of fourteen intra-village marriages, four were between related persons. These marriages were strongly disapproved of at the time they were contracted, and still provoke comment occasionally. In each of these four cases, the couples eloped and resisted the attempts of their families to break them up. Even between unrelated persons, it is felt that marriage within the village complicates kinship relations, restricts the kinship range of children of the marriage to their disadvantage and to that of their 'aiga, and causes strain between matai whose formally and ceremonially defined relationship is complicated by an additional and inappropriate relationship of affinity. Another reason is that of economics. Samoan 'aiga at their maximum span include many hundreds of people living in many parts of Samoa. The core group of a given 'aiga are those people who reside on the 'aiga estate in the village to which their matai title belongs. The larger the network of connection of the 'aiga, the more impressive and prestigious the amount of food, goods, money and 'ie toga that will be assembled through these connections to mark the important rites de passage or faalavelave of the 'aiga. Intra-village marriage narrows the range of useful 'aiga connections and creates a situation, which as one woman put it, "we are constantly giving away things to one another", or as another woman saw it "we make our village poor".
IV

Post-marital residence choices are made on the basis of a number of factors. The norm is for virilocal marriage. Samoan alliance systems are based on marrying out as will be discussed in Chapter eight of this thesis and Table 4 illustrates that despite considerable social change in Samoa in the past century. The overall trend for couples to reside virilocally is still strongly marked in contemporary behaviour. Harrison (1978) demonstrates with an array of population statistics, that apart from customary norms, such as residing uxorilocally during the time that a wife is having her first child (often prolonged for several years to allow a woman to obtain assistance from her own mother and kinswomen) uxorilocal residence is often dictated by economic advantages. And in villages in which there are attractions such as proximity to the Apia urban area and wage employment, or other developed areas offering wage employment such as the Asau area of Savaii, or an abundance of cultivatable land, there is a higher incidence of uxorilocality.

Marriage means, for the majority of Samoan women, a considerable reduction in formal status. As unmarried women, even when young, they have a privileged status vis a vis their brothers and other junior males, and also vis a vis the wives of untitled men of their 'āiga
and in the village. The lowest status category in a Samoan household, other than young children, is the wives of untitled men. They are expected to work hardest in the sphere of women's work, and if the household is short-handed on the male side, to do plantation work and outdoor domestic chores as well. As outsiders, their status is particularly difficult as they are expected to maintain some social distance from their husbands' sisters. They acquire through taking their status from their husbands, the obligation to respect his sisters - and may find themselves competing with other in-marrying women in the same status category, rather than enjoying any feeling of alliance with them. This is because the young wives of untitled men are often placed in a situation of being rivals for esteem in the eyes of their husbands' 'āigas. The ladies of the family and their husbands' mothers are able to play off in-marrying women against one another by praising or blaming one at the expense of another, a tactic which tends to make young wives feel that they are constantly the target of unfavourable comparisons. At the same time young men often feel mildly shamed in the early years of cohabiting with their wives, and avoid their company for fear of ridicule or of appearing uxorious. Young husbands usually avoid being drawn into conflicts between his wife and other women of the household by refusing to discuss them with their wives.
TABLE 5:

Residence choices of 434 women's committee members in 17 villages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>virilocal</th>
<th>uxorilocal</th>
<th>living apart from husband in own family</th>
<th>no. of women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Apia area</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magia'gi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaoala</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upolu, north coast</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le'ei (Sagaga)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leulomoeoa</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lufilufi</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fusi (Saluafata)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solosolo</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utualii</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upolu, south coast</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savaia-tai</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mata'afa</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poutasi*</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saleilua*</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaovai*</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mata'utu (Fa'alili)*</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Savai'i</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fagamalo</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauga</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Villages with an asterisk have the complete figures of married women in residence in 1976. The remainder are a sample of those women of each committee with a child under three years (adopted and foster children included) taken in 1977.
expected if they hope to receive a matai title in later years. Thus a man will have a greater interest in establishing himself with his maternal, paternal or other consanguinal 'āiga. Men occasionally receive titles from their wives' 'āiga in the absence of other suitable male heirs, but this is unusual. Secondly, if it is difficult for an in-marrying woman in the domestic sphere of her husband's 'āiga, it is also difficult for an in-marrying male in both the domestic and the wider village sphere in his wife's 'āiga. In his own family he may attempt to exert his authority over his wife by ignoring her, scolding her or beating her but there are many constraints to his behaving this way to her when residing with her family. A woman's brothers, no matter how they treat their own wives, are outraged if they see their sister treated unkindly by her husband, and while it is unusual for brothers to intervene directly in such cases, they will make their disapproval known by cold-shouldering their sister's husband and making life difficult for him. A uxorilocally resident wife has the moral support of her family, the high status of a sister, and she retains her membership in the aualuma (unless she has married within the village) which offers her a sense of security and belongingness there. But her husband is regarded critically by her brothers, has ambiguous status as a sister's husband, and feels he is an outsider. His

6. Wives who find favour in the eyes of their husbands' mothers and other female kin, or who represent an advantageous alliance, will often get the support of their husbands' families in quarrels between themselves and their husbands.
ambiguity of status affects his position in the world of men in his wife's village as well - the āvā tau'ale'a
the wives of untitled men who are residing virilocally, are an institutionalised working group in a Samoan village and have a lowly but still recognised and respected status. However, uxorilocally resident untitled males have no recognised place in the 'aumaga, the society of untitled men, as they have no place in its status hierarchy which derives from the rank of the respective 'āiga of its members. Thus a uxorilocally resident male has peripheral status, he may work together with the 'aumaga, but he has no ascribed formal place within it. He has no land rights in his wife's village, although his wife may ask for a piece of land for him to cultivate individually, and although this is commonly done, his security of tenure is dependent on his relationship with his wife.

To be married, to take a husband, is referred to in Samoa as nofotane, it also means "to live with the family of the husband". Similarly, to be married, to take a wife, is termed faiāvā, but this term also means "to serve a wife" in the case of the uxorilocally resident male, and has vaguely disagreeable connotations, since according to social ideology at least, a wife serves her husband and his family, and not the reverse.
The most ideal circumstance to be faʻaʻavā is, as I have said of the woman who is nofoʻotane, to be in wage employment since the contribution of cash and goods has greater prestige than the contribution of labour, even though the latter may be of greater actual value in the case of males. It is only in families where there is a shortage of able-bodied men that the faʻaʻavā is likely to be esteemed for his services in labour, and to receive, ungrudgingly, portions of land to cultivate commercially as well as for subsistence. He may, in a situation where he is not competing for status and resources with his wife's kinsmen, acquire high status as a producer and provider.

This should clearly illustrate that there is a conflict of interest between husband and wife, particularly in their youth, about post-marital residence. This conflict may break up the marriage in its first year or so. Couples whose affection survives this period often spend the first ten years of married life living alternately with 'āiga of the husband and 'āiga of the wife. Even in an urban setting with one or both partners in employment, such moving to and fro is quite common. When the advantage of one partner's village clearly outweighs that of the other's in the early years of marriage, the couple may base themselves permanently there, but establish an independent household. Young Samoans often establish themselves as far as practicable away from the main village
Taulele'a carry baskets of food to feed guests of the Village, which is dished out (below) by the āvā taulele'a.
settlement area, either on the access road leading from the main road to the village or the inland plantation, or by the main road itself. They still render service to the matai of the 'āiga with contributions of food, cash and services, and participate in village affairs as required by their respective status groups, their church, and their 'āiga and matai. Young couples who attempt to live too individualistic a life-style may be asked to go and establish themselves elsewhere.

There is also a conflict of interest between husband and wife in the matter of contributions to fa'alavelave. This is a common source of marital conflict, each partner wishing to divert a greater share of resources for the use of their own 'āiga. Although women do not often derive direct rewards for service to their 'āiga such as matai titles, most women retain a fairly intense interest in the welfare, social standing and internal dynamics of their own 'āiga, and usually seek to promote the interests of their brothers by giving them economic assistance.

One man commented to me: "There would be a great advantage in having a foreign wife. You would not be constantly required to give things to her family".
According to most of the Samoan men with whom I raised the subject, adultery is an offence which is to be expected and forgiven in husbands, but not in wives. Most Samoan women saw the matter differently, declaring that it was as unforgivable in men as it was in women. Most of the women I talked to said that a woman would leave her husband if she found him guilty of infidelity. They agreed that men would not tolerate adultery on the part of their wives.

From instances which I had a chance to 'investigate' it appeared that adultery was rarely the cause of a marriage breakup. Two widely publicised cases of adultery in Poutasi earned the women involved a beating from their husbands and in one case, a formal apology and presentation of *ie toga to the matai of the wronged husband from the matai of the guilty man. But in neither case was there a permanent breach between the couples, or between the adulterous males and their wives.

Adultery on the part of a woman is considered shaming to her husband because of the implication that he is not man enough to satisfy his wife. In the case of one couple, it was said that the husband pretended to ignore his wife's adultery because he was so shamed by the potential publicity of his taking a stand on the matter.
Women are not as shamed by the adultery of their husbands because of the social convention that men are naturally unfaithful. Their anger is usually directed at the women with whom their husbands have committed adultery, for not rejecting these advances. There have been cases recorded of Samoan men attacking men whom they suspect of an adulterous relationship with their own wives, but such behaviour does not seem to be institutionalised in the same sense that female vengeance on adulteresses is.

In earlier times, according to many informants, a wife would round up her female kin (which would often include her husband's sisters) and attack a woman who committed adultery with the wife's husband. Having cornered an adulteress, it was said that the angry wife would bite off her nose or ear. Turner records the case of a woman who bit the nose of her husband's girlfriend, and subsequently that of her husband. (Turner 1861:336-337).

Two cases of revenge on adulteresses occurred while I was making this study. On one occasion an angry wife and two of her female relatives caught a girl who had been seen regularly with her husband in Apia night clubs, while she was walking down the road to her family home. They beat her soundly and cut off her hair with a knife. The other case involved a woman who found her younger brother, whose wife was away staying with her own family, sleeping with a girl at his family's house. She

---

7. This refers to cases of which I have detailed information, but many other cases were reported to me by informants.
attacked the girl, who fled, then slapped her brother across both sides of his face, which he meekly endured.

The focus of blame on the adulteress, by the wife of an adulterer is consistent with the sexual ideology which I have reviewed in Chapter Three, above. Men are considered to lack self-discipline and control in sexual matters, and it is thought that women should be controlled by their families to keep them safe from improper male attentions. Women who encourage married men are made a focus of blame by their own families, and by men as well as women(8).

VI

Samoan women, John Williams remarked in his Journal (1832)

"...don't seem to be oppressed as formerly in Tahiti... men have great confidence in their wives, entrust them with their property, consult them on matters of state (ie: the chiefs do this)..."

This is as true an observation of contemporary Samoa as it was to Williams of Samoa in 1832.

8. A possible negative sanction upon male infidelity is the widespread belief that such conduct will cause illness to their children. This is thought to be caused by the supernatural consequences of his wife's anger and more importantly, as a punishment from the ancestral spirits of the husband's 'āiga. See Chapter 8.
The wife of an ali'i is referred to as faletua, a term which is also a polite usage for the wife of a man of any status, although a man does not refer to his own wife by this term, using the term āvā (wife) or fafine (woman), or if he wishes to be courteous tama'itia'i (lady). The term faletua means literally "house at the back". The widow of one of Samoa's paramount chiefs offered me the following explanation of the significance of the term:

"The house at the front is the fale tele, the house in which guests are accommodated and in which ceremonies are held. But most of the time that house in the front is kept swept clean and empty. The house at the back, that is where people live, where the work is done - where everything goes on each day. The wife of an ali'i is his faletua because all the work of the household, the people who live there, the life of the family is her responsibility, just like the house at the front represents the responsibility of the ali'i.

The wife of a tulāfale is referred to as tausi which means "to care for". The term has similar connotations to that of faletua since it refers to the duty of the wife of a tulāfale to take care of her own family and also that of the ali'i whom her husband serves.

The wives of matai not only take their status in the village from their husbands but they may also represent their husbands on occasions when they are too busy, or for some reason do not wish to represent themselves. Thus, the
wives of matai often attend ceremonial occasions, make speeches, even accept a cup of kava as representatives of their husbands. The wives of matai usually play the major decision making role when it comes to contributions to ceremonial redistributions of property, choosing which 'ie toga will be presented, how much money will be collected (often themselves going about the 'aiga connections to collect 'ie toga and money) and as they become older and more experienced in such matters, actively promoting and maintaining the multitudinous kinship network of the 'aiga of their husbands. This is done through taking a keen and watchful interest in the daily affairs of the kindred - through keeping in touch with its members, particularly women. Matai are usually content to leave this to their wives since matai status is restrictive in the sense that it limits a man's range of communications, he may not interact informally with other people other than with his peers. This limits the opportunities of a titled man to gather information about other people although such information is vital to his proper performance of his formal role.

The status of matai's wives is not so circumscribed and their roles as in-marrying "outsiders" also free them from the restraints of "femininity" as it is associated with women in the role of sisters. Their role is a utilitarian one, and once they have passed their twenties, they have freedom of movement and action. This freedom
allows them to plan their own activities and come and go from their households as they please. While it is expected that the wife of a matai will devote a considerable portion of her time to the service of her husband's title and 'āiga, she also has recognised obligations to her own 'āiga, and has the right to attend to these as she sees fit. Few women feel that they need to obtain their husbands' permission to go about their duties, even when these take them away from the household and village. Women consult their husbands about their intentions and plans as do husbands their wives.

The belief in the independence of Samoan married women, particularly the wives of matai, was emphasised by the view many Samoans have of European women who are not seen as more "liberated" or independent than Samoans, but very much less so. When I asked both Samoan women and men whether they saw any contrast between Samoan wives and pālagi wives, European women were often described as being very dependent on their husbands and as living very private "husband-oriented" lifestyles. Samoans do not consider it particularly essential for husbands and wives to appear together socially or to accompany one another on errands concerning the affairs of the 'āiga or economic requirements of the household. It is common for the wives of matai to sit with their husbands after the evening prayers and meal and give them an account of village and family matters to keep them informed about events which they might not otherwise learn about.
It is rarely necessary for the matai to keep their wives thus informed, since women have access to information concerning men's activities from other sources. For example, when the village fono of matai meets, women do not sit about on the house platform outside and listen to the matters under discussion, but the untitled men do. They also serve meals and tea to the matai on meeting days and usually receive help from their wives and those of the matai, thus the affairs under discussion in the house at the front are relayed back to the houses at the back where they are often discussed, commented on and even joked about.

The status of the wife of a matai, while derived from that of her husband, offers a woman a position of leadership in the affairs of her household, and in the affairs of women in the village. Although she is not a member of her husband's 'aiga and is subordinate in status to his sisters and in a formal sense to her own daughters, she has an accepted right to deputise for her husband in the affairs of the 'aiga. Thus she has a considerable amount of influence and informal authority in her husband's 'aiga and older women are frequently, in terms of decisions taken, the de-facto heads of their husband's 'aiga.

This modifies the uncomfortable position of in-marrying women in their husbands' households, for if they can stick out the early years, or better still, spend those years with their husbands living uxorilocally, maturity confers greater status. Thus virilocal residence becomes increasingly attractive to women as they grow older. An
intelligent supportive wife can do much to enhance her husband's standing with his 'āiga and aid his chances in being given a matai title, which rewards her as well as him with the right, at last, to sit down and be waited upon by others, to have a right to speak and be listened to in family and village affairs, and to take a part, in most villages, in the executive section of the village women's committee and to be eligible for selection as one of its leaders. (Women's committees are discussed in detail in Chapter 9 and 10).

VI

Women never become in any sense incorporated into the 'āiga of their husbands. Marriage is a contract based on the mutual consent of the husband and wife and may be dissolved by either party at will, by their simply taking whatever property they consider to be rightfully theirs and returning to their own 'āiga. According to traditional custom, widows are returned to their own kin after the death of their husbands and whatever status they took from them during their lifetime ceases upon his death. This is expressed ceremonially after a man's funeral when a party of the widow's relatives, which will be characteristically led by one or more of her brothers, comes to the village of the widow's husband to escort her home with them. A special and valuable i'e toga, a mavaega, is given to her by her husband's 'āiga as a parting gift. If the rank of her
husband was high, the entire village of the widow often make the most lavish presentation of *i e toga and money at his *lagi (mortuary redistribution of valuables) and some weeks later the matai of her own village will accompany the representatives of her *'āiga to collect her, which obliges the village of her husband to receive them with ceremony and gifts.

This custom is still followed scrupulously in contemporary Samoa, even though it has become increasingly common for a woman to remain in her husband's village after his death as the dependant of her adult sons and daughters. If her son succeeds to her husband's matai title, it is especially likely that she will opt to remain in the village into which she married, in order to advise and assist her son and his wife. In some cases, where a matai and his wife are living away from the village to which his title belongs, his mother, if she is the widow of the previous holder of the title, will continue to represent her *'āiga as a faletua. In many villages the widows of former matai who have opted to remain in the village with their adult children, are given honorary membership of the aualuma of the village to permit them to continue to play a part in the public affairs of the village. In other cases a widow who continues to reside virilocally will simply retire altogether from public affairs in the village and devote herself to the household of her children.
Case Study No. 9
Widowhood and Loss of Status

After the death of Tasi Ioane, and on the afternoon following the ceremony of saofai in which the Tasi title was bestowed upon one of her sons, the members of the 'āiga potopoto formally requested his widow not to return to her own village of Aluga, when her brother the ali'i Alagi, came to collect her.

The 'āiga potopoto took it in turns to make speeches of thanks to the widow, recalling her lifetime of service to the Tasi title and to the village of Nu'u. They said that the new Tasi was young, as was his wife, and both had much to learn if they were to carry out their new roles as Tasi and his wife had done. They also mentioned that none of the elder generation of the 'āiga Tasi lived at Nu'u. The elder brother of the dead chief was a clergyman in another district, his widowed sisters all lived in Apia with their sons and his father's brother's children were attached to other 'āiga through titles they held in other villages. They expressed the hope that the widow would stay in Nu'u and represent them and that she would be willing to continue to serve the Tasi title for the sake of her son.
The widow, although only fifty-seven, must now retire entirely from her active role in village and district affairs. Her status as president of the village and district women's committees and leader of the deacon's wives in the pulega (church district) was terminated with the death of her husband. Were she to return to Aluga she would have an honoured place in the aualuma there; but she has lived away from Aluga for over thirty years now, and she would find it hard to go back there.

The decline of the aualuma as a residential group (see Chapter 9) has had a profound effect on contemporary marriage and on the status of older women who are widowed or separated from their husbands. Whereas in pre-Christian times a woman returned to an honoured and independent status in her own community when her marriage ended, nowadays if she returns to her own community at all, she must establish herself either in her own separate household or attach herself to the household of a kinsman as his dependent.

In many villages today, the aualuma only meets as a group on Sundays for to'ona'i (Sunday luncheon) and in all other respects are inseparable from the village women's komiti, except in terms of their formal ceremonial status. It is no longer an institution which offers adult women an alternative and respected role to that of being a wife.
The alternative for a single, widowed or divorced woman today is to become the dependent of her brothers or of her own children.

Relatively few widows have the resources to establish themselves in their own separate households in their own natal villages and unless their children have an attachment to their mother's community, which is unlikely to be the case if they have grown up in that of their father, her children are unlikely to want to establish their mother in a new house in her own village. It also appeared to me that relatively few widows wished to return to their own villages as dependents of their brothers. Many women cited attachment to grown-up children living patrilocally, antagonism to their brothers or brothers' wives, loss of contacts and emotional ties to their natal community and reluctance to leave the place where their husband has been buried.

The problem that widows face is thus one of enforced retirement from public life upon the death of their husband. Since the status of married women in the village of their husbands; in the komiti and in the church, is entirely derived from that of their husbands, women become formally "invisible" upon the death of their husbands if they remain virilocally resident. Uxorilocally resident males, in one sense suffer the same fate unless they have a matai title.
recognised by their wife's village, however uxorilocally
resident males have no public role in their wives' villages
at any time if they are untitled, whereas the public role
of a matai, wherever he resides, is his until he dies or
becomes senile.

The wives of untitled men may have little to lose in terms
of formal status when their husbands die, and may even
enjoy their freedom from obligations to the women's committee,
which are largely those of service. In contrast the wives
of matai, particularly those of high rank, lose a great
deal of public status and social importance if their husbands
predecease them.

Despite the disadvantages in terms of loss of public roles
faced by widows, there are a number of economic factors which
have contributed to the modern trend for widows to remain
virilocally resident: A common aim of Samoans working
overseas is to save money to build a house of permanent
materials in the European style for their parents. In the
past ten years there has been a dramatic increase in the
number of residential buildings of this type build in all
parts of Samoa. Even on the small island of Manono, where
building materials have to be transported in small boats,
over half the houses on the island are constructed of per­
anent materials, many of concrete and timber with enclosed
walls and glass windows.
There is no individual land tenure in Samoa except in small areas of freehold land in the Apia area and other parts of Samoa which were acquired by Europeans last century. Land in this category is scarce and very expensive. When Samoans build permanent material dwellings on customary land several problems result: in the past *fale tele*, the large reception houses are built in the traditional style and last fifty or more years if maintained and rethatched every few years, were considered to be property which went with a title, thus rights over such houses were transferred to the new title holder even if he was not a direct descendant of the previous title holder. *Fale tele* however are built not merely from the personal resources of the *matai* and his immediate support group, but usually from the pooling of traditional valuables as well as cash from the maximal "*aiga* to reward the *tufuga* and his assistants who built the house. Only *matai* built *fale tele*, and only *ali'i* of high rank had the right to build them on high multi-tiered stone platforms. In contemporary Samoa, probably the majority of children hope to build family homes of permanent materials for their parents to live in, regardless of the rank of their parents. Furthermore they expect to inherit these houses from their parents when they die. This is in conflict with traditional custom which dictates that all property on the estate of an "*aiga* comes under the control of the incumbent of the *matai* title with which that estate is associated.
A group of emigrants who work for years in New Zealand to save money for a *fale pālagi* in Samoa do not look sympathetically upon the idea of a valuable and prestigious asset passing into the control of a distant relative through his succession to a *matai* title.

This problem of reconciling security of tenancy and rights in private property with traditional customs is often a contributing factor in the splitting of *matai* titles, where one title is held jointly by several incumbents.

It also has a relationship to the increasing tendency of widows to reside virilocally, for a *fale pālagi* built by emigrant children for their parents is considered by them, if not by Samoan custom, to belong by right to their mother after their father dies. Two strategies are adopted to get around this problem, the first is to build *fale pālagi* on portions of the *āiga* estate adjoining a road, away from the traditional central settlement of the village (for house sites in this area are strongly associated by custom with particular *matai* titles).

The other is that having established a new location for a main house, to lay claim to it for the immediate descendants of the husband and wife who occupied it, by burying them after they die, just outside the front door or to one side of the house, rather than in the village cemetery. The
presence of a number of graves, often of imposing construction, add the dead to the living as guardians of the family home and the portion of land surrounding it. This may in fact represent a return to traditional customs since during both the German and New Zealand colonial period, officials insisted upon burials in a village cemetery, rather than around the houses as had been the ancient custom. During colonial rule, only the highest ranking ali'i were permitted to be buried in the residential area of the village (in large tia, graves topped by a stone terraced rectangular monument or in European-inspired tombs).

Fale pālagi built in rural villages, on customary land, usually have a grave or two near the house, also built in the European style featuring a concrete slab and headstone, and often with a small pitched corrugated iron roof to shelter it, supported on neatly painted timber or cement posts. These are kept decorated and at Christmas often feature an illuminated Christmas tree (along the north coast in villages with an electricity supply).

VII

Widespread attempts to establish rights in private property such as family homes not only pose new challenges to the system but they also favour an increasing emphasis on the conjugal family unit. As stated above, young couples generally prefer to establish their own household, preferably at a distance from the main household of the 'āiga. In large households, older women have very little in the way of domestic duties such as cooking, cleaning, washing and so forth, this
is done by children and adolescents and young in-marrying women. Older women (past their mid-thirties) are able to devote their time to committee and 'āiga matters, to making mats, house blinds, thatch and all social activities which involve interaction with other women and relatives.

However, women who have established themselves in separate households at some distance from the main village settlement, residing with their own conjugal family, find themselves far more tied to the house and less able to spend the day working with groups of women from other households. If their older children attend school, they are not available to look after younger children and for most of the day, women in this situation complained of loneliness and sometimes boredom. They showed mixed feelings, on the one hand drawing my attention to the fact that there were not a lot of adults to cook and serve for only themselves and their husbands, that they were less bothered by the demands of others; and on the other hand wishing they had more freedom to get away from the household and work with the others.

The women who were living in the "neolocal" manner also had as many children as women living in a large household, and showed no differences in attitude - saying that a big family gave them security in old age, offered a greater prospect of ultimate prosperity from the cash incomes and labour of their children when grown up. The notion that their own children would also establish themselves in separate and distant households and provide them with a minimum of economic assistance (as they were doing to their own 'āiga) did not seem to occur to them.
Thus the trend in contemporary Samoa to a greater desire for individual enterprise, conjugal family life and the independence of younger people has as yet had no significant affects on the attitude of women to the number of children they wished to bear.

A survey conducted in 1971-72 under the auspices of the World Health Organisation of 900 married Samoan women showed that those women in the survey who had been married twenty years or more had undergone an average of eight pregnancies and that the total average of live births per woman in the whole sample was 5.4. (Sun, 1973).

The population of Western Samoa in 1900 was 32,815 according to census figures. In 1918 the pandemic of Pneumonic influenza reduced the population by approximately one fifth, the greatest death toll being among the infant and elderly population. In the census of 1926, the population stood at 40,231, which was about the same as had been estimated by missionaries as the population in the 1830's. (Stair, 1897:58). The latest published census figures refer to 1971 and record a population of 143,547. These figures do not include large emigrant populations of Western Samoa in New Zealand and the United States.
There is some evidence to suggest that motherhood was traditionally regarded as a function of women rather than a social role as it is today, and that women did not always desire large families. The Rev. George Turner records:

"Infanticide ... was unknown in Samoa. Nor were children ever exposed. After they were born they were affectionately cared for. But the custom of destroying them before that, has prevailed to a melancholy extent. Shame, fear of punishment, lazy unwillingness to nurse and a dread of being too soon old looking, were the prevailing causes. Pressure was the means employed; and in some cases, proved the death of the unnatural parent. (1861:175)

Turner's opinion that infanticide was not practiced depends on how one interprets the post-natal treatment of new-born infants. He observed that for the first three days after delivery, infants were fed on chewed and strained coconut. On the third day, a "woman of the sacred craft" tested the mother's breast milk by heating it in a coconut cup two or three times a day for several days. Only when the milk did not "coagulate" was the mother considered ready to begin breast feeding. While waiting for the testing period to be completed, the baby was fed on coconut and sugar cane juice. Obviously,
only the most robust infants would have survived this type of artificial feeding prolonged over several days, and Turner noted that as a consequence of the custom, the infant mortality rate was high. That Samoans were well aware of the consequences of deprivation of breast milk is suggested by the following passage:

"occasionally the father or some member of the family through whom it was supposed that the god of the family spoke, expressly ordered that the (newborn) child have nothing but the breast for an indefinite time. This was a mark of respect to the god and called his "banana". In those cases the child grew amazingly, and was soon literally as plump as a banana."

(Turner 1861:176)

This form of passive infanticide, combined with the absence of modern medical treatment, and the less stable traditional marriage patterns, and the traditional prohibition of sexual intercourse between husband and wife during lactation, resulted in a lower birth rate, a smaller number of surviving children born to each woman, and family sizes which rarely exceeded four children.

Missionary teaching and official programs promoting maternal and infant welfare have now resulted in a state of incipient overpopulation in Western Samoa. Over half the population is under the age of fifteen years and a strain on land and food resources is beginning to be perceived in some areas
of the islands. Since 1971 a family planning program has been promoted by the Health Department stressing the desirability of larger birth-intervals rather than the limitation of births. My interviews with women in 27 villages (see Fig. 5) indicated that younger Samoan women desire smaller families but few are willing to use contraceptives until they have produced the number of children which either they or their husbands desire. Thus the official goals of encouraging longer birth intervals are impeded by social attitudes.

The attitude of younger men towards family planning, according to a number of younger married women, was one of suspicion. One young wife told me that her husband threw away her contraceptive pills and threatened to leave her if she resumed any kind of contraceptive practice. He accused her of wanting to commit adultery and said that he would regard it as proof of adultery if she tried contraceptives again. It appeared that in the case of this man at least, contraception was perceived as deeply threatening to his sexual control of his wife. However, after two pregnancies in two years, his wife informed him that they must sleep apart according to traditional custom, unless she obtained his permission to use contraception and, after reflection, he agreed to her attending the family welfare clinic for an I.U.D. insertion.
Sample survey of women's committee members in seventeen villages, 1977.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of live births correlated to ages of mothers.

Table 6.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Method / Acceptors</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>35</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>45</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>55</th>
<th>60</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- Method abbreviations:
  - I = IUD
  - T = Tubal Ligation
  - K = Contraceptive Injection
  - J = Spillage, overkill or other untested method.

**Table 7:** Acceptance of family planning*
A district nurse who has been advising village women on family planning techniques since they were first made available to Samoan villagers in 1971, considered that only a very few men really opposed their wives using contraceptives, although few showed any interest in using them themselves. She could think of only a few cases in which men had refused to allow their wives to use contraceptives and remarked that some Samoan men measure their virility by the number of children they sire, but some women, equally, take pride in the number of children they bear.

She considered that Samoans, both males and females, would accept the use of family planning techniques only when they could see the value of doing so. The official policy of the Family Welfare Section of the Health Department is to encourage couples to space births rather than to limit the number of children they produce.
VIII

The elevation of the status of wives through Christian teaching in Samoa was achieved at the expense of the status sisters. This point is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9, while I examine traditional marriage in terms of exchange and alliance in Chapter 7. One of the consequences of the reduction in status and independence of the aualuma group in modern society is that it provides women with a strong motivation to either make an intra-village marriage, or to try to persuade her husband to reside uxorilocally after marriage. If it is true, as has been argued by Freeman (1978) that Samoan society was more patrilineally ordered in Pre-historical times, then the system must have been maintained by the women marrying outside their own communities and by a predominant mode of virilocal post-marital residence. Although virilocal post-marital residence is the dominant mode in most of the villages I surveyed, as Table 4 illustrates, the incidence of uxorilocal post-marital residence is high and in two villages it exceeded virilocality. A high incidence of uxorilocality and, as a result, of children being raised matrilocaly rather than patrilocaly must therefore have modified the earlier patrilineal character of the social structure, if this was indeed the case.

It is with this regard that preferences in post-marital residence choices become a significant factor in social change. Widows, who in defiance of most explicit custom, continue to reside virilocally because they preferred to remain with their
adult children rather than to return to their own brothers, seemed from my observations include many women whose natal 'aiga had dispersed, and who in effect had no "home base" of supportive kin to return to. But there were also many women who had at least one alternative source of support and place of residence besides that of her patrilocally resident children, who preferred the latter despite the social disadvantages this choice entailed.

Moreover the uxorilocally resident couples in Poutasi, Vaovai, Saleilua and Matautu were of all ages and statuses; there was no evidence to suggest that uxorilocality, in those villages at least, was an aspect of a domestic cycle that is ultimately virilocal. As I have said above, uxorilocally resident males may have made their choice because of advantages which they perceived in the location or resources available in their wives villages, but it seemed to me that the wishes of their wives to reside uxorilocally was also quite frequently a factor in the eventual choice of post-marital residence.

The insecurity of widowhood in contemporary Samoan society is also the source of a strong motivation in women for giving birth to a large number of children; a big family, particularly when a woman is virilocally resident, ensures a woman with support in her old age or if she is widowed in middle age.
The right of a woman to continue to reside in her husband's village after his death is considered to be stronger if one of her children has a matai title from their father's village, this fact also provides women with a stronger personal interest in the internal politics of their husbands 'āiga and village than they are supposed to have as outsiders.

It could be that the aualuma as a residential group which offered a home as well as a respected public role for unattached female agnates of the village 'āiga also functionally maintained both a predominantly patrilineal pattern of descent and inheritance in earlier centuries, without detracting from the high status which women had in their capacity as sisters with regard to their brothers. The principle that brothers must respect and provide for their sisters is stronger than that which decrees that women marry out and reside virilocally. Moreover a woman's claim to rights of membership and property in her own 'āiga are supported by supernatural sanctions against her kinsmen, should they fail to recognise her rights (see the following chapter). Thus the breakdown of an institution which provided for unattached women by offering them a place of residence and an esteemed social role in their own villages appears to have generated a greater tendency for sisters and their offspring to compete with their male agnates through uxorilocal post marital residence.