

## **Fiction, Fact, and Imagination: A Tokelau Narrative**

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Some years ago I read and later published (1981a) a short paper proposing that Polynesian oral narratives be viewed as creative art rather than sacrosanct “tradition,” and that this change in perspective called for a very different approach to the study of narratives. Instead of seeking the authentic “tradition,” scholars would listen to and record many renderings of the same narrative (or similar narratives) and talk about them with their tellers and audiences. I concluded (221): “If we listen to the same ‘tale’ again and again, finding it always different, and appreciate these variations, we will be celebrating creativity.” This proposal arose from my own studies of Tokelau narratives but was largely motivated by my disquiet with the veneration of “tradition” by Polynesianists and Polynesians at the expense of creativity (cf. Wendt 1983).

What follows is one outcome of following my own prescription.<sup>1</sup> By way of several versions of a rather intriguing narrative, I explore the distinction between “fact” and “fiction” in Tokelau narrative. Although the primary question has to do with the status of the “narrated event,” it entails consideration of the “narrative texts” and “narrative events” (see Bauman 1986), and also consultation with the tellers.

### **Fact and Fiction**

Tokelau raconteurs normally preface a narrative by declaring either “I shall relate the *kakai* of. . .” or “I shall relate the *tala* of. . .,” and end it by at least announcing either “The *kakai* is finished” or “The *tala* is finished.” As well as framing the narrative, these statements tell and remind the audience what kind of narrative it is, and how it is to be appreciated or judged.

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<sup>1</sup> That prescription of course was not my unique concoction; it drew upon recent work on performance (Bauman 1977), context (Ben-Amos 1972), and creativity (Finnegan 1970), as well as a rather neglected essay by Paul Radin (1915).

A *kakai*, here glossed “tale,” is a fictitious narrative told to entertain. An accomplished raconteur enhances a tale’s entertainment value by choice of words and phrases, by pacing, pause, mimicry and intonation, and so forth. An audience judges a particular rendering of a tale primarily in terms of performance, and rarely is a performer faulted for embellishing well-known episodes and even adding bits to the tale. Of course most of the audience knows the tale, so the rendering should fulfill their expectations. Chants, songs, and key phrases spoken by protagonists should be repeated exactly as they are known, even though their meaning may be somewhat opaque. A performance may be criticized if the raconteur deletes an episode—a *potu kakai* (“part of the tale”) has been forgotten—or leaves out a linking transition between episodes so that the tale does not *hohoko* (“hang together”). In short, raconteurs of *kakai* have a good deal of latitude to elaborate or play with their text to entertain their audiences, but their performances are marred if they fail to include what their listeners expect. They may add, but they should not forget.

A *tala*, here glossed “account,” tells of something that reputedly did happen at some time from *i te kaloā* (“in the beginning”) to *i te ahonei* (“in the present day, recently”). I am concerned here with *tala* ascribed to a generalized past that should faithfully recount past happenings.<sup>2</sup> These are what are variously labeled myths, legends, historical narratives, oral traditions, and so forth by scholars; Tokelauans call them *tala anamua* (“accounts of the past”), which have been transmitted from their pre-Christian forebears, from one generation to the next, as true and accurate. *Tala* are told less widely and less frequently than *kakai*, and, although they may indeed be entertaining, their purpose is to inform. What they impart is knowledge, or intimations of knowledge, and they are judged in terms of their content. The issue is whether the raconteur has recounted the narrative accurately; the listeners’ judgments are of course based on what they know as the correct account. If something is left out, it is usually regarded as a memory lapse, which may be either remedied by a tactful comment or simply disregarded by listeners who know better. However, any recognized addition or change is viewed with suspicion, for it is assumed that the *tala* has been tampered with for some reason, and, even if there is no apparent motive, one is suspected. Consequently, raconteurs are apt to be cautious about relating *tala*, both in how they tell them and to

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<sup>2</sup> Narrators are granted a good deal of freedom of exaggeration in their *tala* of recent events, which are sometimes acted out at public gatherings. The responses of their audiences, some of whom have witnessed the events, encourage this elaboration. What really happened may become the mere kernel for a hilarious farce, which is constrained only by the fact that it may compromise real relationships. Some of these acted-out *tala* become set pieces. Hypothetically, recent *tala* should in time become “accounts of the past” and an analysis of this transition would be an intriguing study. (See Huntsman and Hooper 1975:415ff for examples.)

whom they tell them. They may delete bits they know are controversial, for it is better to appear forgetful than to seem devious—unless one wants to provoke controversy.

I have used the most neutral English lexemes—“tale” and “account”—to gloss the Tokelau terms *kakai* and *tala*, respectively, for it makes little sense to try to assign them to some more specific foreign category or genre (cf. Burridge 1969:197-98). Tokelauan has no term which subsumes them both; I use “narrative” as a neutral non-differentiating term. The Tokelau lexical distinction is in no way unusual in Polynesian languages; in Tikopia there are *kkai* and *tara*, in Tongan *fananga* and *tala*, in Samoan *fagōgō* and *tala*, in Futuna *fananga* and *fakamatala*, all of which roughly correspond to Tokelau *kakai* and *tala*. What the salient contrastive attributes of each are may vary from place to place, and whether a particular narrative is one or the other may be debatable in some instances. The important point is that a distinction is made and the relevant inquiry is “what is the difference” (rather than what foreign genre is each most like). Tokelauans are very clear about the matter: *kakai* should be *mālie* (“entertaining”) and *tala* should be *hako* (“right, straight”), not *hehē* (“wrong”) or *piko* (“crooked”). Since raconteurs always preface their narratives by identifying them as *kakai* or *tala*, any collection of Tokelau narratives may be confidently divided into their two genres.

Indeed, I did just that when recording in the field and soon thereafter decided to first attend to the *kakai*.<sup>3</sup> Sometime later, when I was well acquainted with the tales, I happened to play a tape labeled *tala* and immediately recognized the narrative as a version of a *kakai*. It was not a case of mislabeling; the raconteur introduced it as a *tala*. Furthermore, it

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<sup>3</sup> Most of the narratives were tape-recorded between 1968 and 1971. The performance contexts were structured to the extent that it was arranged during the day that I would be present at some named place in the evening with a tape recorder and so would one or more raconteurs. Venues varied and so did the size and composition of the audience. The situations were “natural” but the performances were not wholly spontaneous, and the sessions often attracted additional audiences and other raconteurs. Listeners were urged by others to tell “their *kakai*” and all narratives offered were recorded. Narrators frequently proposed a *kakai*, asking if I had already recorded it. I always urged them to tell it even when I honestly admitted that I had previously recorded it, and they usually did. Several *kakai* were even recorded from the same raconteur on different occasions. The corpus includes about 150 texts, and, excluding repeats, about 80 items. The texts were transcribed by native speakers and then checked back against the tapes by me. I take responsibility for the translations, although I consulted with English-speaking Tokelauans. They, however, could rarely explain meanings which escaped me, so for these I consulted the raconteurs, none of whom spoke English. I have come across no cognates of the Taetagaloa narrative in published collections, though I have not made an exhaustive search. Since most well-known Tokelau *kakai* have cognates elsewhere in Polynesia, this is notable.

is the only instance I know of where versions have been presented as both,<sup>4</sup> so there is no reason to question the Tokelau distinction between *tala* and *kakai*. Rather I take this instance as an opportunity to explore specifically what marks a narrative as a *tala* rather than a *kakai* and to raise questions about the relationship between them, questions which impinge upon the old debate about the degeneration and creation of folk narratives. But before beginning I should provide some context.

Tokelau consists of three atolls—Atafu, Nukunonu, and Fakaofu—located north of the Samoan archipelago, east of the Tuvalu atolls, south of the Phoenix atolls, and west of the northern Cook atolls. Some facts about Tokelau pertinent to this paper are: (1) it is tiny in size and population (the total land area is about 12.2 sq. km. and the largest population ever recorded was 1900); (2) the three atolls are well out of sight and not within easy voyaging distance of one another; (3) Tokelauans speak a distinctive Polynesian language and have a common ancestral and cultural heritage; (4) yet, the separate atoll populations are largely endogamous and assert their social distinctiveness; (5) in the 1860s Tokelauans became Christians, in particular Atafuans became London Missionary Society Protestants and the people of Nukunonu Society of Mary Catholics; and (6) on each atoll there is one clearly bounded, densely organized, and tightly controlled village community.<sup>5</sup>

### **Narratives of Taetagalua/Tae-a-tagalua**

I first recorded a *kakai* about Taetagalua<sup>6</sup> as Kave told it one evening in Nukunonu. He introduced it as “The Tale of Kui and Fakataka,” but I recognized it as a version of “The Story of Tae-a-tagalua” published by Gordon Macgregor (1937:85-86) that had been told to him, through an interpreter, by Mika at Atafu in 1932. Mika died in 1935 having, it is said, reached his 100th year, and it was from his daughter, Lili, and his grandson, Ioane, on separate occasions that I recorded at Atafu “The Tale

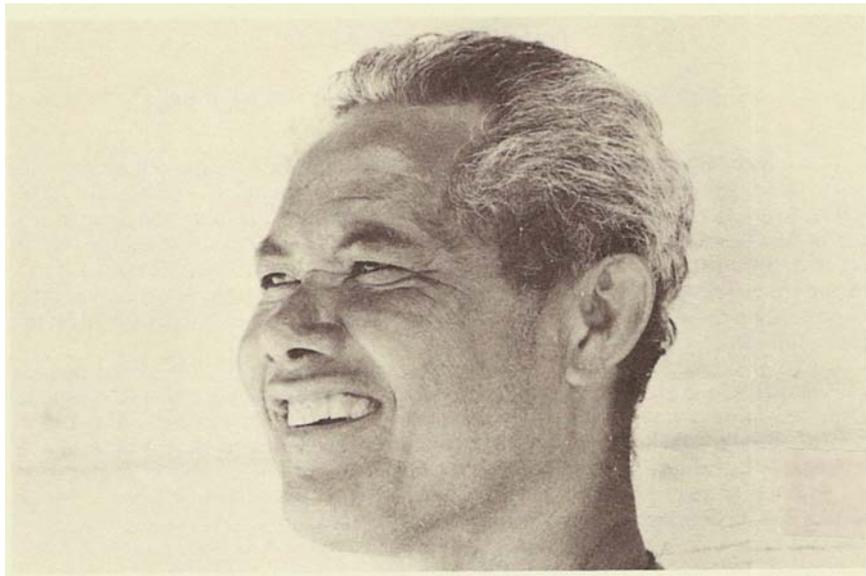
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<sup>4</sup> Whether a particular text is a version of another or a quite different narrative is debatable in some instances, but not, I think, here.

<sup>5</sup> For further ethnographic and historical information about Tokelau see Hooper 1985; Huntsman 1971, 1981b; Hooper and Huntsman 1973; and Huntsman and Hooper 1975, 1976, 1985.

<sup>6</sup> The focal character of the narrative is named either Taetagalua or Tae-a-tagalua. If the latter, Tagalua, the ubiquitous Sky God/father of Polynesia, has a role, and the Tae-a-tagalua, literally “Tagalua’s shit,” is bestowed by him. Henceforth I shall refer to the narrative as that of Taetagalua.

of Tae-a-tagaloa,” which they both said they had learned from Mika. I have no reason to doubt their assertion that they learned the narrative from Mika. Others of his children and grandchildren have been raconteurs of some reputation telling many of the same narratives, although each renders them somewhat differently. But this was sometime after Palehau had told me his “Account of Taetagaloa” at Nukunonu. He emphasized that it was a *tala* and I failed to realize that it was a version of Kave’s *kakai*.<sup>7</sup>



Aloisio Kave Ineleo, 1968

Here I provide the Tokelau texts and English translations of three versions of the narrative of Taetagaloa. The first two are from Nukunonu—Kave’s *kakai* and Palehau’s *tala*—and serve as the main texts for the discussion that follows. The last is Lili’s rendition, which stands for all three Atafu versions and which I chose because it is most like her father’s, of which there is no Tokelau text. The reason for its inclusion will become apparent in due course.

An exhaustive analysis and interpretation of the texts is not undertaken here, although a few explanatory notes are appended to each and an overview of the narrative is provided to facilitate the discussion that follows. That discussion addresses two issues: (1) what makes Palehau’s narrative a *tala*, and (2) what is the relationship between the two narratives

<sup>7</sup> For simplicity I refer to the Tokelau raconteurs by a single name. Their full names are Alosio Kave Ineleo, Manuele Palehau Leone, Lili Fakaalofa, Mika Tinilau, and Ioane Toma.

told contemporaneously at Nukunonu, one as a *tala* and the other as a *kakai*. The story is about an importuning loner who exhibits extraordinary abilities, first as a craftsman, then as a fisherman, and finally as a man endowed with supernatural knowledge and power.

### *The Narratives*

#### Narrative 1 (by Kave)

#### **KO TE KAKAI O KUI MA FAKATAKA**

E i ei te tahi ulugaalī nae nonofo i te tahi fenua, ko Kui ma Fakataka. Nonofo nonofo te ulugaalī kua manava kīkī ia Fakataka. Oi olo ai lā kua fia olo ki te tahi fenua—olo ai. Fano fano lava te vaka, agi ai te matagi, kua hou te moana, goto ai te vaka. Oti ai ia Kui ka kua kaukau ia Fakataka. Kakau kakau ia Fakataka, ake ki te tahi fenua. Fano ai oi nofo i te papa i nā tāfeta i te papa, oi fānau ai tana tama, he tamaiti tāne. Oi fakaigoa ai kia Taetagaloa. Kua fanau lā te pepe kae lele mai te tuli oi tū mai i te papa. Oi fakaigoa ai lā e te fafine iē tahi itūtino o te tamaiti kua kamata i te igoa o te tuli: tuliulu, tulilima, tulivae.

Olo ai ki gāuta i te fenua. Tauhi tauhi te tamaiti kua matua, kua mafai ona fano oi tāfao. Fanatu nei i te aho nei kua hōhō atu, kua mamao heleka atu ma to lā fale, oi hau ki to lā fale. Fai fai lava kua matua lele te tamaiti oi fano kua tāfao mamao atu ma te mea e nonofo ai. Fanatu e fai mai te gāluēga a te tahi tamana ma tona ataliki. Ko Likāvaka te igoa o te tamana—he tufuga, ka ko tona ataliki ko Kuikava. Fanatu loa lava ia Taetagaloa oi tū mai i te ika o te vaka kae lea—kae fai vē tana kupu: “Ko te vaka e piko.” Meākē ko Likāvaka kua ita ki te kupu a te tamaiti. Lea atu ia Likāvaka: “Ko ai lava koe kua hau ai koe ke lea mai ko te vaka e piko?” Lea atu ia Taetagaloa: “Hau oi tū atu i kinei oi kikila ko te vaka e piko.” Oi fanatu ai ia Likāvaka oi tū mai i te mea nae lea mai ai ia Taetagaloa i te ika o te vaka. Kikila atu e hako ia Taetagaloa, ko te vaka e piko. Toe hehele ai nā tūta o te vaka kae toe fakahako nā lākau. Kua fakahako lā nā lākau. Kua muamua ona toe hauni nā lago, tuku tonu ai nā lākau ki ei, kae fanatu lava ia Kuikava te ataliki o Likāvaka oi tū ki luga i te tahi lago. Kae oho atu lava tona tamana ia Likāvaka oi tā tona ataliki ia Kuikava i te toki. Oi oti ai lā ia Kuikava. Fanatu loa lava ia Taetagaloa oi toe fakaola te ataliki o Likāvaka ia Kuikava. Kae toe tuku tonu e ia nā lago ma fehoahoani kia Likāvaka i te faiga o te vaka. Fai fai te vaka—uma.

Ka ko te fenua foki tenā ko te fenua o atu, ka ko te mea e hēai lele ni atu ma na vaka e maua. Kua uma te vaka, kua laga ai e fanatu ka fano ki moana. Fano ai lā ia Taetagaloa kua fano oi kave te vaka o Likāvaka. Fano ai te vaka ālo, fano fano fano te vaka fetau ma te inafu. Lea atu te fāoa: “Taetagaloa, tātou fano ki te inafu tēia.” Kae lea atu ia Taetagaloa: “Hēai, ko te inafu e kavaifo e ni lakia.” Kalaga ai ia Likāvaka: “Ko atu nā, ko atu kukū, ko atu manuheku, ko atu e hēki tiu i te faga o Lākulu.” Fano ai te vaka kua tiaki te inafu tēnā kae fano. Fano fano te vaka toe fanaifo foki te inafu. Lea atu te fāoa: “Taetagaloa, tātou fano ki te inafu tēnā.” Kae kikila atu foki ia Taetagaloa ko te inafu e kavaifo foki e ni lakia. Kae lea atu foki ia Likāvaka: “Ko atu nā, ko atu kukū, ko atu manuheku, ko atu e hēki tiu i te faga o Lākulu.” Fano te vaka e hēki ino ki te taumanu. Fano fano te vaka kae lea atu te fāoa, “Te inafu tēnei e fanaifo!” Kikila atu ia Taetagaloa ko te inafu e kavaifo e nā lefulefu ma te akiaki. Lea atu lava ia Taetagaloa: “Ko atu nā, ko atu manogi, ko atu kakala, ko atu kua tiu i te faga o Lākulu.” Fanaifo ai lā te inafu ko hēki pā atu te vaka o Taetagaloa ki te fakamanu ka kua hī ia atu e takafakauli. Hī hī hī ia atu e Taetagaloa, goto te vaka. Hau ki gāuta. Hau ai kua tufa nā atu ki te nuku kua fai te fakahoa.

Nonofo nonofo i te tahi aho meākē nei ko Likāvaka kua fia fano oi folau ki Hāmoa. Fano ai lā te vaka kua fano ki Hāmoa. Kae i ei foki te tagata e vē he hāuui e nofo i Hāmoa ko Likāvaka foki tona igoa. E hē mafai he vaka ke hao ki gāuta. E fanatu lava he vaka ki ei oi tuhi ifo te lima o Likāvaka oi oti te fāoa. Ka ko Taetagalooa foki e i ei ona hāhā, e poto foki i nā mea fakahāuui, e vē foki e i ei hona itū hāuui. Fanatu ai te vaka o Taetagalooa, koi fanatu te vaka kua lata atu ki gāuta, kae lea atu ia Taetagalooa ki tona fāoa: “Ko koutou lava ke uhitaki mai kia te au. Ko te itū e lea atu au ko koutou kalo ki ei kafai e tuhi ifo te tuhi i gāuta a Likāvaka oi kalo ki ei. Nahe tino e kalo kehe kae oti.” Fanatu te vaka kae tuhi ifo ia Likāvaka i gāuta o Hāmoa. Kae lea atu ia Taetagalooa: “Kalo ki ama.” Kalo te fāoa ki ama, oi hē oti i te tuhi a Likāvaka e fai ifo i gāuta. Toe tuhi ifo ia Likāvaka, lea atu ia Taetagalooa: “Kalo ki katea.” Kalo te fāoa ki katea e hē oti foki. Kae vē ake lava te kupu a Likāvaka: “Ko ai nei lava tēnei tagata kua ia faia mai te vaka nei!” Kae kalaga atu ia Likāvaka i gāuta: “Hua.” Kae tali mai ia Taetagalooa i gātai:

Hua ma tukutuku  
 Mata-fenua mata-haua  
 Kae mulihau ki te katomea—Hua!  
 Lauputupu laumānunu  
 Fauhia ki he kaho lakulu  
 Ma noa koi tua o manunu—Hua!  
 Tū kita i he kava  
 Tatalo kita ki he kava niuata  
 Keli ake te ika he pāloa  
 E tatao ma te taotao a Makula.

Vēake lava ia Likāvaka: “Ko ai nei tēnei tagata kua ia iloa mai nei oku hāhā nei?”

Fanake fanake lava te vaka kua pā ake ki gāuta kua hē oti te fāoa. Fanake lava. Ko Likāvaka tēnā nofo ifo i gāuta o Hāmoa e vē kua mātaku ia Taetagalooa. Fanatu loa lava ia Taetagalooa fakafetaui ma Likāvaka. Uga ai lā ia Likāvaka ke nofo i te tahi itū o Hāmoa, ka kua nofo ia Taetagalooa i te mea nae nofo ai Likāvaka.

Kua uma ai lā te kakai.

### English Translation

#### *THE TALE OF KUI AND FAKATAKA*

There is a couple residing in one place named Kui and Fakataka. After the couple stay together for a while Fakataka is pregnant. So they go away because they wish to go to another place—they go. The canoe goes and goes, the wind roars, the sea churns, the canoe sinks. Kui expires while Fakataka swims. Fakataka swims and swims, reaching another land. She goes there and stays on the upraised reef in the freshwater pools on the reef, and there delivers her child, a boy child. She gives him the name Taetagalooa. When the baby is born a golden plover flies over and alights upon the reef. And so the woman thus names various parts of the child beginning with the name “the plover” [*tuli*]: neck [*tuliulu*], elbow [*tulilima*], knee [*tulivae*].

They go inland at the land. The child nursed and tended grows up, is able to go and play. Each day he now goes off a bit further away, moving some distance away from their house, and then returns to their house. So it goes on and the child is fully grown and goes to play far away from the place where they live. He goes over to where some work is being done by a father and son. Likāvaka is the name of the father—a canoe-builder, while his son is Kuikava. Taetagalooa goes right over there and steps forward to the stern of the canoe saying—his words are these: “The canoe is crooked.” Instantly Likāvaka is enraged

at the words of the child. Likāvaka says: “Who the hell are you to come and tell me that the canoe is crooked?” Taetagalua replies: “Come and stand over here and see that the canoe is crooked.” Likāvaka goes over and stands right at the place Taetagalua told him to at the stern of the canoe. Looking forward, Taetagalua is right, the canoe is crooked. He slices through all the lashings of the canoe to straighten the timbers. He realigns the timbers. First he must again position the supports, then place the timbers correctly in them, but Kuikava the son of Likāvaka goes over and stands upon one support. His father Likāvaka rushes right over and strikes his son Kuikava with his adze. Thus Kuikava dies. Taetagalua goes over at once and brings the son of Likāvaka, Kuikava, back to life. Then he again aligns the supports correctly and helps Likāvaka in building the canoe. Working working it is finished.<sup>8</sup>

As for that land it is a land of skipjack, but the thing is that not a single skipjack is caught by any canoe. The canoe is finished, the canoe is readied to go off to go to sea. Taetagalua goes in it, goes to direct the canoe of Likāvaka. So the fishing canoe sets off, going going going the canoe encounters a school of skipjack. The crew says: “Taetagalua, let’s go to the school over there.” But Taetagalua replies: “No, black-noddy are marking the school.” Likāvaka shouts: “Those skipjack, smelly skipjack, scruffy skipjack, skipjack which have never frolicked in Lākulu’s trap.”<sup>9</sup> The canoe goes on rejecting that school and going. The canoe goes goes another school appears downwind. The crew says: “Taetagalua, let’s go over to that school of skipjack.” Taetagalua looks over as before, the school is marked by black-noddy too. While Likāvaka speaks as before: “Those skipjack, smelly skipjack, scruffy skipjack, skipjack which have never frolicked in Lākulu’s trap.” The canoe goes off not entering among the flock of birds. The canoe goes goes and the crew says: “Here the school is being marked!” Taetagalua looking out sees the school is marked by sanderlings and terns. Taetagalua speaks out at once: “Those skipjack, fragrant skipjack, biting skipjack, skipjack which frolic in Lākulu’s trap.” They go right down to the school and before Taetagalua’s canoe reaches the swarming birds the skipjack rise in abundance. Taetagalua hooks hooks hooks skipjack, swamping the canoe. It returns to shore. Returning there and distributing the skipjack to the village so that all have an equal share.<sup>10</sup>

Staying staying until one day suddenly now Likāvaka wants to go and journey to Samoa. So the canoe goes off going to Samoa. But there is the man who is like an ogre living in Samoa whose name is also Likāvaka. No canoe is able to reach shore safely. A canoe approaches there and Likāvaka’s finger points down and the crew expires. As for Taetagalua he also has some spells, he also is wise about things ogre-like, it seems that he is part-ogre. The canoe of Taetagalua goes along, the canoe is still going along coming near to shore, when Taetagalua speaks to his crew: “You all must obey me. The side I tell you that you must dodge to when Likāvaka points down his finger from shore you must dodge there. No one must dodge otherwise or he dies.” The canoe approaches and Likāvaka points down from ashore in Samoa. But Taetagalua says: “Dodge windward.” The crew dodges to windward, and is not killed by the pointed finger of Likāvaka ashore.

<sup>8</sup> Tokelau canoe hulls are constructed of three logs hollowed, shaped, and lashed together upon which irregular timber planks are lashed to build up the sides. Before final shaping the logs are set in supports to hold them in their correct position, so that they can be shaped to one another and lashed.

<sup>9</sup> Schools of skipjack rising to bait-fish are recognized from afar by flocks of birds feeding upon the same tiny fish. The trap (or bay) of Lākulu is an esoteric reference to another *kakai* that relates how a primeval pearlshell lure was recovered from a fishtrap for skipjack set in the sea by the fisherman Lākulu.

<sup>10</sup> This is the ordinary and proper way of handling a catch of skipjack.

Likāvaka points again, Taetagaloa says: “Dodge to leeward.” The crew dodges to leeward and again is not killed. Likāvaka says to himself: “Now just who is this person who directs that canoe?” Likāvaka shouts out from shore: “Turn.” But Taetagaloa replies from the sea: “Hua ma tukutuku. . .”<sup>11</sup> Likāvaka says to himself: “Now who is this person who even knows my spells?”

The canoe goes up goes right up to shore and not one of the crew is dead. They go right ashore. Now that Likāvaka who lives down inland in Samoa seems to be afraid of Taetagaloa. Taetagaloa goes immediately to encounter Likāvaka. He dispatches Likāvaka to live at the other side of Samoa, while Taetagaloa stays at the place where Likāvaka formerly resided.

The tale is finished.

### Narrative 2 ( by Palehau)

—Ka fai atu taku tala. He tala e ō te atu Tokelau tēnei ka fai atu.

### ***KO TE TALA O TAETAGALOA***

Ko Taetagaloa nae nofo i Nukunonu. Hau ai te folau i Atafu oi fano ai lā ia Taetagaloa ki Fakafo. Kua hopo ai i te malaga ki Fakafo. Ko te folau na kaumai e nā toeaina ko Fakatakā ma Pāua. Fano fano te folau, tau ki tua o Motuakea, ki te Ava-o-te-Hue. Ko te Ava-o-te-Hue e i lalo o Motuakea. Oi lea atu te tahi tino o te tokalua toeaina na ki lā kaumaia te malaga: “Ko te vaka ka fano i lago o te Alofi.” Kae lea atu te tahi toeaina: “Hēai. Fano i te pine. Tuku ake te vaka ki nā kaupapa.” (Ka fai pea te tala. Fakalogo mai, kāmea heu mai.) Ko te Ava-o-te-Hue e i lalo o Motuakea. Ko nā lago iēnā e fanatu e fetau ma te Utua o Fenualoa i Fakafo. E kite loa ia Fenualoa, tau tonu te vaka ki gāuta. Ko lago o nā kaupapa (o lototonu) e fanatu, e tau ki Fenuafala. Kae ko lago o te tuafenua, ko te Fatu-o-Kava. Ia, tēnā. Fano ai te folau tēnā, pā atu loa ki te Ava-o-te-Hue, fai te miha. Kua lea atu te tahi toeaina o Fakatakā ma Pāua: “Ko ki tātou ka fano i nā lago o te Alofi.” Kae lea atu te tahi toeaina: “Hēai. Tuku ake kī na lago o lototonu.” Kua hē mau tonu te tokalua, kae kua miha. Ko te mihaga tēnā, oi tūtaoho ki lalo i te tai. Kua fano ia Fakatakā kua liu fahua-taka, kae fano ia Pāua oi liu pāua. Kae kua kave te folau e iētahi toeaina fakamātuatua. Fano fano fano te folau, tau ki Fakafo. Kua ōifo foki ia aliki o Fakafo oi tali te folau. Kua kavake ki gāuta oi kave ai ki te fale e fai ma ō latou faleapitaga. Kua nonofo ai te kau folau ma Taetagaloa.

Nonofo nonofo i te tahi aho, kua fano ia Taetagaloa oi takamilo i te fenua. E fanatu, e fai te faigā-vaka. Ko te tufuga e ia faia te vaka ko Likāvaka. Fano ai lā ia Taetagaloa oi nofo i te mea e i ei nā tino fai-laukafa. E nofo lā ia Taetagaloa kae vēatu lava ki nā tino: “Ko te vaka e piko.” E lagona mai lā e Likāvaka oi lea mai ai: “E, vēhea ake kō te tama?” Kae lea atu nā tino i tafa o Taetagaloa: “Heā kō te tokaga ai koe? Fai te tātou gālua.” Kae nau mai lava te tufuga: “E vēhea ake tana kupu?” Oi kua lea mai nā tino: “Heā kō! Ko te mea nei e lea mai ko te vaka e piko.” Ia. Kua lea mai loa ia Likāvaka kia Taetagaloa: “Tama. Tū mai ake.” Oi kua lea atu ia Taetagaloa: “Fai kō te galuega.” Kae nau mai lava te tufuga: “Tū tahi mai ake!” Oi kua tū atu ia Taetagaloa. Olo ai, tutū mai i te haumi mua kae kikila. Kua lea atu ia Taetagaloa: “Ko te mea tē, ko te mea tē.” (Ko te mea e i ei tana kupu—ko te vaka e piko.) Kua olo ki te haumi muli oi lea atu ia Taetagaloa: “Ko te mea tē, ko te mea tē. E piko.” Oi kua lea atu ia Likāvaka ki te kau faigaluega: “Ā, e tonu te tama nei—e tonu.”

<sup>11</sup>This chant is included (with some variation) in all versions of the narrative. I have taken a stab at translating it in Palehau’s *tala* that follows, since it was he who gave me the clearest explanation of its words and meaning.

Io. Tuku ai lā te gālua, kua fai e Taetagalao. Ko te vaka nei kua kafamate nā lakau. Kae na toe vete uma lele e Taetagalao, auā ko te gālua kua tuku kia te ia. Vete vete vete te vaka—uma. Fakatātia nā lago—uma. Tuku te lākau matua ma kua fakatātia tonu. Toe nei ko nā haumi. Kae hau nei lava te ataliki o Likāvaka e igoa kia Pepelekava. Kua hau nei lava oi tū ki luga i te lago. Puke atu lava ia Taetagalao oi tūlua te ataliki o Likāvaka i te toki kae lafo tana kupu: “Ko te mea nei he mea e hā! Ka fakatakoto lelei nā lago o te vaka, e hēai lele he tino e lalakā, pe he tino e tū ki luga. E hā te mea tēnā.” Ko te ataliki o Likāvaka, ko Pepelekava, na tā e Taetagalao, toe puke atu lava ia Taetagalao. Tapō tapō te itūmanava oi tapō tapō te itūmanava oi kua toe ola te tama. (Kae tēnā lā tana tautalaga na fai. . . i te mea nei. . . ka tātia nā lago o te vaka, nā he tino e toe tū ki luga i he lago, nā he tino e toe lalakā he lago. Tēnā lava e ki tatou lagona kafai e lalago he vaka. E lea mai te toeaina—te tufuga: “Te lago nā toe gaioi! Nā he tino e toe tū ki luga i te lago! Auā lā kua uma te fakatātia tonu.”)

Ia. Fai fai te vaka—kua uma. Hiki ifo ai ki te Afagā—te Afagā tēnei i Fakaofu. Kave ai te vaka kua fakakatea. Kua fufuli te taumua ki Hālavā kae fufuli te taumuli ki Haumā. Kae uku ake te momoipu i te Afagā oi fakauta ki luga, popoga ifo ma te mokomoko i te niu oi fakauta ki luga. Kae tāvelovele te vaka ki Fenualoa ma Fenuafala i loto lava i te Afagā. Io. Kua uma te vaka oi kua lea atu ia Taetagalao: “E lelei nā lago.” Ia. Kua uma te galuega tēnā.

Nonofo nonofo te kau folau, pā ki te tahi aho tū atu foki ia Taetagalao kua fano oi takamilo i te fenua—i Fakaofu lava. Tāmilo tāmilo, fanatu foki e i ei te huigālā. Ko te lā e ō Moa. E hui foki e Moa te lā. Kua fano foki ia Taetagalao oi nofo i te mea e nonofo ai nā tino e fai-laukafa kae kikila ki te huiga o te lā. Nofo nofo oi vēatu foki ki nā tino a failaukafa ki latou: “Ko te lā e hehē te huiga.” Na lagona mai foki e Moa, kae vēmai lava: “E vēhea ake ko te tama?” Kae lea atu foki nā tino e failaukafa: “Heā kō te tokaga ai koe?” Kae nau mai lava ia Moa: “E vēhea ake tana lea?” Oi kua lea atu nā tino nae nonofo fakatahi ma Taetagalao: “Heā kō! Ko te mea nei e lea mai ko te lā e hehē te huiga.” Kua lea mai foki ia Moa? “Tama, tū mai ake.” Oi kua lea atu foki ia Taetagalao: “Heā kō. Fai vēnā.” Lea mai ia Moa: “Tū mai!” Oi kua tū atu ia Taetagalao. Kua fanatu nei ia Taetagalao kua tutū ma Moa i te ululā, kua fakahino: “Ko te mea tē e kino, ko te mea tē e vēia.” Toe olo ki te mulilā, toe fakahino: “Kikila ki te tilātū, kikila ki te tilālalo.” Kua fakahino vēnā e Taetagalao. Oi kua lea mai foki ia Moa ki tana vāega: “Ha. E tonu te tama nei!” Lea atu loa ia Moa kia Taetagalao: “Hui e koe te lā.” E hēki ai lele ni kupu e lahi ma Taetagalao. Tago atu loa ia Taetagalao oi toe vete uma lele te lā. (Ko nā lā o tātou i nā aho anamua ni moega.) Ia. Tui tui tui te lā—uma.

Ko nā aho iēnā e fai te taumanu i Fakaofu. Ko te taumanu e fanaifo i matagi mai te Utua i Fenualoa. Pā ai ki te tahi taeao, fano ai ia Taetagalao oi nofo i te Papa o Tautai. (Te papa lava tēnā i tua e koutou iloa uma lele.) E fanaifo he vaka oi lea atu ia Taetagalao: “Hopu atu au ma hoa o te vaka.” Kae ko te tautai e hē tokaga lele mai kae fano lava te vaka. Ia. Hao atu tēia vaka. Kua fakaholo vēnā lava te fuāvaka. E fanaifo he vaka e vēnā lavā. E fanaifo he vaka e vēnā lava. E nanau lava ia Taetagalao ko ia ke hopu atu, kae hē amanakia lele e ki lātou. Fanaifo loa te toe vaka oi kua tapa mai ia Taetagalao: “Hopu atu au ma hoa o te vaka!” Io. Kua lea mai te tautai: “Tuku atu mua ke hopu mai te toeaina.” Kae lea mai te fāoa: “Aua! Nāhe fakahopo ifoa.” Oi kua tū lava ki lalo te tautai, kua tāofi mai te vaka, kua fakakatea mai ki te mulipapa e i ei ia Taetagalao. Kua hopo lā ia Taetagalao, kua hopo i te liu. Oi kua fano te vaka.

Fano fano fano te vaka, hovē lava e pā atu te vaka ki tua o Nukumatau kae kitea atu kua fanaifo te taumanu. Kua tapa mai lā te foemua: “Te manu te kua fanaifo nei.” Oi kua lea atu ia Taetagalao: “Kikila atu pe kavaifo e te manu ā.” Kua lea mai te fāoa: “E kavaifo e te takupu ma te lakia ma te katafa.” Kae tali atu ia Taetagalao: “Nāhe aveva autou foe. . . Ko atu nā, ko atu manuheku, ko atu nā ko hēki tiu i faga o Lākulu.” Kae kua ifo ki ei te fuāvaka tēnei na fano muamua. E fanatu nei te fuāvaka tēnā—ko kakahi, ko takuo. Kua tagau nā kofe, tamotu nā pā, tagau nā maga. Kae fanatu lava to lātou vaka e hē papale ki ei. Fano fano fano te vaka, toe lea mai te fāoa: “Te manu tēnei e tau pakū ifo.” Kua fehili atu

foki ia Taetagaloa: “Kikila atu ake pe ni manu ā.” Kae kua lea mai te fāoa: “E kavaifo nei e te akiaki ma te lefulefu.” Lea atu loa ia Taetagaloa: “Tāofi atu lā autou foe. . . Ko atu nā, ko atu manogi, ko atu tutuha. Ko atu kua tiu i faga o Lākulu, ko atu kakala.”

Ia. Kua fano. Ko te inafu e. . . .! Te mātolu! E lea mai, e fakaulu te vaka i te potu i mua, hula i te potu i muli, kae hēai lele he atu e vēvēake ki te pā. Liliu mai te vaka. Hau kui luga mai ō atu, e hēai lele he atu e kalopā. Toe liliu atu, e vēnā foki. Oi kua lea atu ia Taetagaloa: “Fanatu au lā oi faitaki?” Kae lea mai te fāoa: “Aua! Aua! E fano koe ki fea!” Kae lea mai te tautai: “Hau kō te toeaina oi faitaki.” Lea atu te fāoa: “Aua!” Toe fai foki ta lātou gālua i te tuliga o te inafu—ki te potu i mua—ki te potu i muli. Fano fano oi kua lea mai te tautai: “Hau kō te toeaina ke faitaki.” Kua mālilie foki lā te fāoa. Kua lea mai foki ia Taetagaloa, auā e nofo i te liu: “Mai ake kia te au te kofe i kinei.” E lea mai, e hēki pā tonu atu ona lima ki te kofe kae halafaki te atu. Ia. Ko te inafu na hī lava i te liu. Na fai ai te tūlaga i kinā. Na kave kave kave kave lava oi goto te vaka. Oi kua lea mai te fāoa: “Hoia kō auā te vaka ka goto.” Ia. Kua fakauta te kofe ki luga i te ama kae kua hau te vaka ki Falē.

Ko te fuāvaka tēnei e hēai he atu, kua maumau uma ō latou kope. Kua tagau nā maga, kua tagau nā pā, kua tagau nā kofe. Kae kua hau te vaka o Taetagaloa, hau hau hau te vaka oi ofi i te ava. Kua tū ake ia Taetagaloa. E lua ana atu na fano ma ia, kua fanake ma ia. Fanake ai ma te tahi atu oi togi ki te vao, kae fanake ma te tahi atu kua kave oi huhulu ki te tala o te Tolugafale. Ia. Tēnā nā atu e lua. (Tēnei lava e koutou lagona, e mau ai te hikupā o te atu, e mau ai te hikupā o te pāla. E vēnā foki nā taipāla i te nofo-a-pui-kāiga i Fakafofo. Ko te tautai e mānumalō i ta lātou fefaiakiga, e lea mai, nae fano lava ma te kaukaiga o ai. Hovē kua koutou iloa, e hē kō takua atu.)

Nonofo nonofo i te tahi vaitaimi, kua tāupō te malaga e fano ki Hāmoa. Kua fakamoe nei ko te vaihao ka fano ai te folau. Kua fano foki ia Taetagaloa oi nofo i te Papa o Tautai, kae kua fakaholo atu lā te fuāvaka. Lea atu ia Taetagaloa: “Hopo atu au ma hoa o te vaka.” Kae lea te fāoa: “Aua!” Kae lea ifo foki te tautai (te tino matua) i luga i te vaka: “Tuku ifo kō te toeaina ke hopo.” Lea atu te fāoa: “Aua! Tiaki ma te mamafa.” Ia. Fano tēia vaka. E fanatu he vaka, e vēnā foki. E hē fakahopoa lava ia Taetagaloa. E vēnā lava ana mihi, ke fanatu ia ma hoa o te vaka. Fanake foki te toe vaka oi kua lea mai foki ia Taetagaloa: “Fanatu au ma hoa o te vaka.” Oi kua lea atu te toeaina i luga i te vaka: “Tuku mai te vaka.” Kua tū ifo te toeaina matua oi tatakia ake te vaka ki te papa e nofo ai ia Taetagaloa. Oi kua hopo.

Kua fano lā te vaka, kua fano te folau. Fano fano fano te folau, kua mao gātai, kua galo nā fenua. Fano fano fano, kua pō tahi, kae kikila atu—ko te aho! Kua hēai he tafatafakilagi e kitea, kua pōuli kautatau. Oi kua atu foki te folau ki te aho kua fai vēia, oi kua vēake te fāoa: “Tēfea nei kō lā te tino na lea mai ke hau ia ma hoa o te vaka? Heā nei tana e fai? Ko ki tatou nei lā ka mau vēhea?” Kua lea atu ia Taetagaloa: “Io, kua lelei.” Tū ai lā ki luga ia Taetagaloa i luga i te vaka. Auā ko nā vaka ni fualua, kua tū lā i luga i te folā o te vaka. Kua hiki tona tokotoko kae taufōlua. E vēnei ia taufōlua a Taetagaloa:

O! Fakauliuli kae ni taefeke, fakauliuli kae ni taefeke!  
O! Tafi ake, tafi ake lau malama!  
Tūlia! Honia!  
Kā ni lolouau, fai ki te utāfenua!

E kikila atu nei te folau, tatafi te itūlagi tatafi te itūlagi, kae kua mālama lele te aho. Io. Kua teka te mea tēnā.

Kua fano pea te folau. Fano fano pe kua fia ake foki ni pō, kae kua hēai he oho oi kua mihi foki te fāoa. Kua vēake foki: “Heā nei kō tā te tino? Na lea mai foki ko ia e fanaifo ma hoa o te vaka. Ni ā nei tāna ka fai? Kaumai ke kai!” Ko Taetagaloa ka kai e te fāoa auā kua uma te oho. Ia. Kua lea atu foki ia Taetagaloa: “Io, kua lelei.” Kua tū foki ki luga kae hiki te tokotoko ki te lagi. Na hiki ake loa lava te tokotoko o Taetagaloa ki te lagi kae malili ifo—ko te popo, ko te uto, ko te takataka, ko te hua, ko te mokomoko—ki luga i

te vaka. Oi kua faimatahi foki te fāoa: “Hoia! Te vaka ka goto! Te vaka ka goto!” Io. Kua kakai mākokona ai te fāoa o te vaka i te mea tēnā a Taetagalooa na fai. Ko te fuāvaka tēnei na fano muamua, e hēki i ei he vaka e ake. Na gōgogo uma i te moana. Kae nā ko te vaka tēnā nae i ei ia Taetagalooa, ko te vaka tēnā na hao i te matagi.

Fano fano fano lava te vaka, tau ki Hāmoa. E lea mai te tala a nā toeaina, ko te vaka na tau tonu lava ki Apia. Ka ko hēki tau atu lā ki gāuta kae kua fai te tukutukuga a Taetagalooa. Kua lea vē atu: “Kikila! Ko ki tātou kafai e fano ki gāuta, e i ei te tino e nofo ifo i gāuta e igoa foki kia Likāvaka. Kafai ia au e lea atu—Ko ki tātou ke fakatulolo ki katea, ko ki tatou uma lava ia. Ka lea atu au—Ko ki tātou ke fakatulolo ki ama, ko ki tātou foki ia.” Io. Kua vēnā lava. E fano lā te vaka kae mātau atu e Taetagalooa, kae tū ifo lā te tagata mai gāuta. Ko te tino e tū ifo i gāuta e fai ifo tana tuhi, ko Likāvaka foki te igoa. E fakapoi ifo te lima kae kalaga ia Taetagalooa: “Fakatulolo ki katea!” Kalo uma ia tagata ki katea. Toe nofo tonu kae kikila atu foki kua fakapoi ifo te lima o Likāvaka. Oi lea atu foki: “Fakatulolo ki ama!” Oi fakatulolo foki ki ama te fāoa. E lea mai lā ko te tino i gāuta kua vēake tana kupu i gāuta: “Ko ai tē i gātai nei?” Auā lā ko te uiga o te tuhi e vē ni hāhā e o ia, ia Likāvaka, e mamala. E mamate uma te fāoa kae kua hao te vaka tēnei. Lea atu ai lā ia Taetagalooa: “Ia. Kikila! Kikila ki gāuta!” Tuhi atu ia Taetagalooa i gātai, fano uma te itū tēnā ki te Vāimauga. Tuhi atu foki i gātai lava, e lea mai, ko te itū foki tēnā ki Faleata, e tokalahi foki te kau na feoti ai.

Ia. Kae fanake te vaka ke gāuta. Kua ake ki gāuta, ōake ai kua nonofo i kinā. E lea mai—Ko te folau na nonofo i Matafele. Nonofo ai nonofo ai nonofo ai nonofo ai, e i ei te tagata e igoa foki kia Likāvaka e nofo i nā motu i te Alofi Aana. E i ei foki ona hāha. E fano lā ki ei nā malaga matamata. Kafai lā e fanatu nā malaga māmoa ki ei, kae hē ki lātou taliagia nā taufōlua foki a te tino tēnā e igoa foki kia Likāvaka, ko iēnā tagata e mamate uma foki. Kae ko nā aho foki iēnā e tāupō ai foki te malaga tēnā e i ei ia Taetagalooa. Pā ai ki te tahi aho kua fano te malaga. Fano ai lā ia Taetagalooa, kua fano i te malaga tēnei—ko ia lava tē i te muli-malaga, auā ko te malaga he malaga hāvavali, ko ia lava te tūpito ki muli. Fano fano te malaga, tau ki te fenua. Kua iloa e Taetagalooa kua tali pā ki te fenua. Fano fano, kikila atu ko te tagata e nofo mai i he fale maualuga. E fai mai tona tiketikega e nofo mai ai. Io. Oi kua tau atu nei te mua-malaga ki te mea e nofo mai ai ia Likāvaka, kae kua kalaga mai lā ia Likāvaka mai luga i tona nofoaga. Kua kalaga mai: “Hua!” Kae hēai he tino e tali. Toe kalaga mai: “Hua!” Ia. Ko Taetagalooa e fakalogologo lava ki te kau malaga, e hēai he tino e tali. Toe kalaga mai: “Hua!” Fakatafa ake loa lava ia Taetagalooa, kua fakahula kae kalaga:

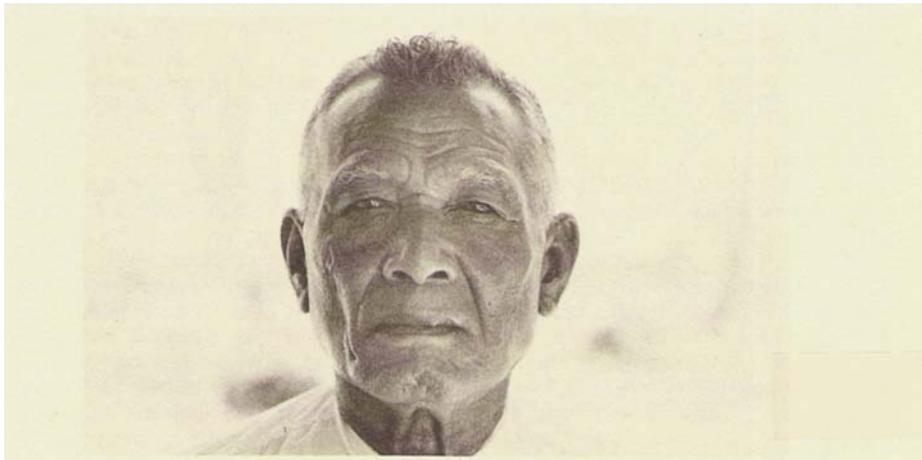
Hua ma tukutuku  
 Mata-fenua, mata-haua  
 Kae mulihau ki te katomea—Hua!  
 Lauputu, laumānunu  
 Fauhia ki he kaho lakulu  
 Ma noa koi tua o Manunu—Hua!  
 Tū kita i he kava  
 Talo ki uta i he kava  
 He niu mata  
 Keli ake he ika he pāloa  
 E tatao ma te taotao a makulu.

Kua hao te malaga tēnā. Ko lau iēnā a Taetagalooa kua fai kua hao ai te malaga, auā ko hāhā o Likāvaka kua iloa kia Taetagalooa. Ko te uiga tēnā o ana taufōlua e fai—Hua, tēnā foki nae lau atu.

Ia. Nonofo ai foki lā i kinā kua tali foki te malaga e te fenua. Kae i ei lā te mea e fai e te fenua tēnā i nā aho iēnā. I nā aho tonu o te māhina fanake, te fakatahi ma te fakalua o namo, e i ei te tino e taka ai i to lātou kakai. Oi ko te tino kua fai ma a lātou mahani te tuli, e tuli ke popoki. Kua āhoa foki ta lātou faiga. He aho, hula te tino. Kua ki lātou iloa lava

tēnei te tino. E tuli nei, e hē maua. E hē iloa lele te mea e mou ki ei. Oi tuli ai kae i ei te malaga. Lea atu loa ia Taetagaloa: “Tuli!” Ko te tino e takua vē he mānaia, ko Pepe te igoa o te mānaia. Tuli ai lā i te pō tēnā na tuli ai. Na fano ai lā ia Taetagaloa oi tuli. Tuli tuli, mou te tino. Kua hē iloa e te nuku kae iloa e Taetagaloa te mea kua fano ki ei. E lea mai—Ko Pepe e fano oi ulu ki te tūgamau o te mātua o tona mātua. Ko tēnā te mea e mou ki ei. Na tāofi lā e Taetagaloa i te pō tēnā. E ulu atu ia Pepe i te tahi tuliga, e nofo mai ia Taetagaloa i luga i te tūgamau—oi kua talanoa. Talanoa talanoa, vēatu loa te kupu a Taetagaloa—auā ko Taetagaloa, vae atu, ko te kili, e hē tākua foki te kili o nā manu te māfiafia, ko te mageho, te kili kino atili o te tagata. Kua fai lā ta lā talanoaga ma Pepe. Kua lea atu ia Taetagaloa kia Pepe: “Kaumai foki kō to kili ke kō faitakia, kae kavatu foki toku kili ke kē faitakia.” Oi kua mālie ki ei ia Pepe. Kua ui te kili o Pepe, kua fōki mai kia Taetagaloa, kae ui te kili o Taetagaloa, kua fōki kia Pepe. E lea mai lā—E hēki uma te fakamauluga o nā lima o Pepe ki te kili o Taetagaloa, kae kua vē he mea e lolomi i he fatu fuaefa. Kua kokoma ai ia, ko ia foki ka mate. Na iku lava ina mate ai ia Pepe, kae fano ia Taetagaloa ma tona kili mānaia—ko te kili o Pepe.

Ia. Ko te tala faka-Tokelau tēnā kua uma.



Manuele Palehau Leone, 1968

### English Translation

—I shall relate my *tala*. This is a *tala* of the Tokelau islands that I shall recount.

### *The Account of Taetagaloa*

Taetagaloa was living in Nukunonu. The voyaging party comes here from Atafu and Taetagaloa goes with it to Fakaofu. He joins it on the journey to Fakaofu. The voyaging party is guided by the elders Fakatakā and Pāua. The voyaging party goes, coming to the oceanside of Motuakea, to the Passage-of-the-Pufferfish. The Passage-of-the-Pufferfish is on the leeward [western] side of Motuakea. There one person of the two elders who have guided the voyage speaks out: “The canoe shall proceed by the route markers of the Alofi.” But the other elder speaks out: “No. Go to the mark. Point up the canoe to the reefs.” (I will explain the matter further. Attend to me, stop me if I am wrong.)

The Passage-of-the-Pufferfish is to leeward of Motuakea. From there the markers go off to meet with the Fenualoa Reef Shelf of Fakaofu. As soon as one sees Fenualoa, the canoe heads straight to land. The markers of the linking reefs (of inside) go off, heading to Fenuafala. While the markers of the backland, they are to the Fatu-o-Kava.<sup>12</sup>

Well, that's it. That voyaging party goes then, arriving right over at the Passage-of-the-Pufferfish, the quarrel breaks out. One of the elders Fakatakā or Pāua speaks out: "We will go by the route markers of the Alofi." But the other elder responds: "No. Point up to the markers of the inside." The two of them do not consult properly, rather they quarrel. That is the quarrel, and they plunge down into the sea. Fakatakā going is transformed into a large clam, while Pāua going is transformed into an abalone. Then the voyaging party is guided by other elders rather less old. The voyaging party goes goes goes, getting to Fakaofu. The chiefs of Fakaofu come down directly and receive the voyaging party. They are taken up inland and taken to the house assigned as their billet. Here the voyaging party and Taetagalua reside.

On one day after staying awhile, Taetagalua goes and strolls around the land. Going along a canoe is being built. The craftsman who is making the canoe is Likāvaka. Taetagalua goes over there and sits at the place where there are the people making sennit line. Taetagalua sits there and just says to the people: "The canoe is crooked." Likāvaka senses something and speaks to them: "Hey, what did the boy say?" But the people next to Taetagalua reply: "What is bothering you? Just do our job." But the craftsman keeps insisting: "What were his words?" So the men reply: "Not to bother! The creature here tells us that the canoe is crooked." Well. Likāvaka speaks forth immediately to Taetagalua: "Boy. Stand up forthwith." Then Taetagalua replies: "Just do the job." But the craftsman is insistent: "Stand up here at once!" So Taetagalua stands forth. Going then, he stands right at the bow and inspects. Taetagalua speaks out: "The place there, the place here. It is crooked." Then Likāvaka speaks over to the working party: "Eh, the boy here is right—it's true." Yes the work is halted right then, Taetagalua takes over. Here is the canoe with the timbers aligned and roughly bound. But it is all completely taken apart by Taetagalua, because the job has been handed over to him. The canoe is undone undone undone—done. The supports are set in place—done. The main timber is positioned and laid straight. Still to come are the bow and stern timbers. But now here comes the son of Likāvaka named Pepelekava. He comes right here and stands on top of the support. Taetagalua seizes hold and splits the son of Likāvaka in two with his adze while he proclaims his statement: "This thing is a thing forbidden! When the supports of the canoe are all laid in place, not a single person may step over, or a person stand on top of them. That thing is forbidden." As for the son of Likāvaka, Pepelekava, who has been struck by Taetagalua, Taetagalua takes hold of him again. Pressing pressing the side of the belly and pressing pressing the side of the belly and the boy is again alive. (That then there was his statement given. . . about this matter. . . when the supports for the canoe are laid, a person must never again stand on top of a support, a person must never again step over a support. That truly we feel when a canoe is supported. The elder—the craftsman—tells us: "The support must not be moved! No person must ever stand on top of the support! Because the canoe has already been set properly in place.")

Well the canoe is made made—done. It is lifted down to the Bay—the Bay here at Fakaofu. The canoe is taken here its clear side [the side opposite the outrigger] to shore. The bow is turned towards Hakavā and the stern is turned towards Haumā. Then a broken coconut shell is brought up from the Bay and placed upon the hull, a drinking nut from a palm is twisted down and placed upon the hull. Then the canoe is thrust back and forth

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<sup>12</sup> The "markers" referred to here are land-marks at Nukunonu which by back-sighting provide direction to particular land-marks at Fakaofu, though in the middle of the voyage neither Nukunonu nor Fakaofu can be seen. Motuakea, an islet on the easterly side of Nukunonu's southern reef, is an appropriate departure point to Fakaofu, which lies to the southeast.

towards Fenualoa and Fenuafala right inside the bay.<sup>13</sup> Yes. The canoe is complete and Taetagaloa speaks out: “The setting is good.” Well. That task is completed.

The voyaging party stays and stays on, until another day comes when Taetagaloa again steps out and goes and strolls about the land—right in Fakaofu. Strolling strolling, a sail also is being sewn. The sail belongs to Moa. Moa too is sewing the sail. Taetagaloa goes as before and sits at the place where the people making sennit line are sitting and watching the sewing of the sail. Sits sits and says as before to the people who are making sennit: “The sail is being sewn wrong.” Moa too senses something, and he speaks out at once: “What did the boy say?” But again the people making sennit reply: “Why do you pay any attention to it?” But Moa keeps insisting: “What is it he says?” So the men who are sitting together with Taetagaloa reply: “What’s this! The creature here tells us the sail is being sewn wrong.” Moa speaks back: “Boy, do stand up.” So Taetagaloa replies as before: “It’s of no matter. Just carry on.” Moa replies: “Come here.” So Taetagaloa stands up. Going over now Taetagaloa stands with Moa at the head of the sail, he points out: “The place here is wrong, the place there is too.” Also going to the foot of the sail, again pointing out: “Look at the standing boom, look at the boom below.” Then Moa too speaks out to his company: “Damn. This boy is right!” Moa says to Taetagaloa: “You sew the sail.” Yes. Taetagaloa does not waste words. Taetagaloa simply takes over and takes the sail completely apart. (Our sails in those days past were mats.) Well. The sail is laced laced laced—done.

In those days there are birds circling in Fakaofu. The feeding birds are going down to windward from the Reef Shelf of Fenualoa. When one morning comes, Taetagaloa goes over and sits at the Rock of Fishing Captains. (The very rock at the ocean-side you all know very well.) As a canoe goes down Taetagaloa speaks out: “Let me come aboard as crew of the canoe.” But the captain does not pay any attention to him and the canoe just goes. Well. That canoe passes out through the channel—the fleet of canoes proceeds past just like that. A canoe goes down Taetagaloa speaks out: “Let me come aboard as crew of the canoe.” But the captain does not pay any attention to him and the canoe just goes. Well. That canoe passes out through the channel. The fleet of canoes proceeds past just like that. A canoe goes down the very same thing. Taetagaloa keeps insisting he be allowed to come aboard, but they pay no heed to him. Finally the last canoe is going down and Taetagaloa calls out: “Let me come aboard as crew of the canoe!” Yes. The captain speaks forth: “Let us steer over and take the elder aboard.” But the crew replies: “Rubbish! Don’t let him board.” But the captain stands right down, halting the canoe, bringing the clear side over to the reef edge where Taetagaloa is. So Taetagaloa comes aboard, boarding at the center. Then the canoe goes.

The canoe goes goes goes, perhaps the canoe has just reached offshore of Nukumatau when the feeding birds are seen going downwind. The bow paddler then calls forth: “The birds over there are descending now.” So Taetagaloa speaks out: “Look at what kind of birds are marking it.” The crew replies: “The red-footed booby and the white-capped noddy and the frigate bird are marking it.” Then Taetagaloa responds: “Do not bend to your paddles. . . . Those skipjack, scruffy skipjack, those skipjack have not yet frolicked in the trap of Lākulu.”

But this fleet of canoes that went before run down there. That fleet now enters them—yellow-finned tuna, giant tuna. Poles are broken, lures snapped, hooks broken. But their canoe goes right on not altering course to them. The canoe goes goes goes, again the crew of the canoe speaks out: “A bird here is diving down to feed.” Taetagaloa asks over as before: “Do look out at what kinds of birds are marking it.” And the crew replies:

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<sup>13</sup> The Ahagā or Bay at the lagoon shore of Fakaofu is a broad sloping beach where canoes are drawn up, protected by reclamations on either side. The built-up land to the south is called Hakavā and that to the north is called Haumā. Correspondingly, Fenualoa is an islet at the southern tip of Fakaofu atoll and Fenualoa islet lies at the most northerly point. The hull is tested in the calm bay to see if its movement is steady and true.

“White terns and sanderlings are marking here.” Taetagaloa speaks out at once: “Bend then to your paddles. . . . Those skipjack, sweet-smelling skipjack, fragrant skipjack, skipjack who have frolicked in Lākulu’s trap, stinging skipjack.”<sup>14</sup>

Well. They go. What a school. . . ! The multitude! I am told, the canoe enters at the front side, passes to the back side, but not a single skipjack rises up to the lure. The canoe turns back. Coming passing right over skipjack, not a single skipjack rises to the lure. Again coming around, the same thing again. Then Taetagaloa speaks out: “Might I go over and have a try?” But the crew responds: “No! no! where do you think you’re going!” But the captain replies: “Let the elder come and try.” The crew speaks out: “No!” Yet again they bend to their paddles to keep up with the school—to the front side—to the back side. Going going and the captain speaks out: “Let the elder come and have a try.” The crew are finally agreeable. Taetagaloa speaks out too, for he is sitting in the center of the canoe: “Pass me the pole here.” I am told, his hands are not yet properly settled on the pole when skipjack converge. Well. The school is hooked right there at the center of the canoe. He makes his stand there. He carries on carries on carries on carries right on and the canoe is almost submerged.<sup>15</sup> Then the crew says to him: “You better stop or else the canoe will swamp.” Well. The pole is placed on top of the outrigger and the canoe returns to shore.

As for the rest of the canoes not a single skipjack have they, all their fishing equipment is completely ruined. The hooks are broken, the lures are broken, the poles are broken. So the canoe of Taetagaloa returns, the canoe coming coming coming enters the passage. Taetagaloa stands up. Two of his skipjack go with him, go up with him. He goes up with one skipjack and tosses it into the bush, then he goes up with the other skipjack and inserts it in the gable of Tolugāfale. Well. That is what he does with the two skipjack. (This you all know well, the tail of skipjack is testimony, the tail of wahoo is testimony. It was like that too in wahoo season at the time when the original families resided in Fakaofu. The captain who triumphed in his endeavors, it is told, this continues right on within his family. Perhaps you all know it, I will not tell you.)<sup>16</sup>

Staying staying for another period of time, there is a counting of nights to the departure of a voyaging party going to Samoa. It is now determined the week in which the voyage will depart. Again Taetagaloa goes and sits at the Rock of Fishing Captains, while the fleet proceeds past there. Taetagaloa speaks out: “Let me board as crew of the canoe.” But the crew says: “No!” But the captain (the eldest man) upon the canoe says as before: “Turn down so the elder can board.” The crew replies: “No! Reject him because of the weight.” Well, that canoe goes. A canoe goes over, like that again. They will not let Taetagaloa board. He keeps repeating his same wish, that he go along as crew of the canoe. The last canoe finally goes along and again Taetagaloa speaks out: “Let me go along as crew of the canoe.” Then the elder in charge of the canoe speaks out: “Halt the canoe.”

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<sup>14</sup> See Kave’s kakai, note 9.

<sup>15</sup> A *tūlaga* in skipjack-fishing is a single session of continuous casting by one fisherman. A pearlshell lure with an unbarbed hook is attached to a pole about 500 cm long by a strong line. The lure is made to skip along the surface, resembling the tiny bait-fish. A hooked fish is brought towards the canoe with a single motion and caught by the fisherman, releasing the hook, so that the lure may be immediately cast again, while the caught fish dropped in the bottom of the canoe thrash about. “Stands” are taken at the stern of the canoe and a fisherman who has taken 100 skipjack (or more) in a “stand” is renowned (see Macgregor 1937:110-12 and Hooper 1985).

<sup>16</sup> This parenthetical aside is meant to be enigmatic; Palehau “knows” but he is not telling all. Tolugāfale was formerly one of the *falepā* (men’s houses) in Fakaofu; today the name refers to a family homestead.

The old elder stands down and guides the canoe up to the rock where Taetagaloa is sitting. And he boards.

The canoe goes then, the voyaging party departs. The party goes goes goes, far to sea, land had disappeared. Going going going, one night passes, but look out—what a day! There is not a horizon to be seen, all is in darkness. And the voyaging party is very anxious about what such a day bodes, and the crew speaks up: “Where now then is the person who asked to come as crew of the canoe! What now will he do? What now shall become of us?” Taetagaloa speaks out: “Yes, all right.” Taetagaloa stands up right there above on the canoe. Because the canoes are double-hulled ones, he stands there upon the platform of the canoe. He raises up his staff and shouts. The shouting of Taetagaloa is thus:

Oh! Black as octopus ink, black as octopus ink!  
Oh! clear up, clear up bright sky!  
Chase away! Pour down!  
If there be torrents, make them on the land!<sup>17</sup>

The crew looks out now, one side of the sky clears the other side of the sky clears, and the day is dazzling bright. Yes. That difficulty is surpassed.

The voyage continues going. Going going uncounted nights pass, and there are no more provisions and the crew appeals again. They speak up as before: “What now about the man? Did he not say before that he is going along as helper of the canoe? What now is he going to do? Bring him to eat!” Taetagaloa will be eaten by the crew because the travel provisions are finished. Well. Taetagaloa speaks out again: “Yes, all right.” Again he stands above while raising the staff to the sky. As soon as Taetagaloa’s staff is lifted to the sky then spills down—mature coconuts, sprouting coconuts, dried coconuts, drinking coconuts, sweet coconuts—on top of the canoe. The crew chorus together: “Stop! The canoe will swamp! The canoe will swamp!” Yes. The crew of the canoe eats their fill from the thing that Taetagaloa did. As for the fleet that departed earlier, not a single canoe survived. They all sank in the sea. But that canoe that Taetagaloa was on, only that canoe escaped with the wind.

The canoe just goes, reaching Samoa. By the account of the elders, the canoe fetched up right at Apia. They had not yet reached the land when Taetagaloa gave his instructions. He spoke out thus: “Look here! When we go towards shore, there is a person staying down inland who is also named Likāvaka. When I speak out—All of us lean to windward—every single one of us do so. When I say out—All of us lean to leeward—all of us must do so.” Yes. It is just like that. The canoe goes along with Taetagaloa gazing ahead, and a man stands down there at the shore. The man standing down on shore points down his finger, Likāvaka is his name too. As the finger aims down Taetagaloa shouts: “Lean to windward!” The men all dodge to windward. They are sitting straight as before when looking out again the finger of Likāvaka is aiming down. So speaking out again: “Lean to leeward!” And just so the crew leans to leeward. I am told that the man on shore said to himself ashore: “Who is that offshore now?” That is because the result of the pointing which is really a spell of his, of Likāvaka, is disaster. It kills all other crews but this canoe has survived. Taetagaloa speaks out then: “Yes. Look! Look to shore!” Taetagaloa points to shore, all are gone from that side towards Vaimauga. Pointing over again right at sea, I am told, towards that side of Faleata, again a great many

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<sup>17</sup> This chant, as is the case with many chants, is opaque. The gist of it has perhaps been captured in my translation.

people were killed there.<sup>18</sup>

Well. The canoe goes up to shore. They go up inland, they go up then and stay there. I am told—the voyagers reside at Matafele. Staying here staying here staying here, there is the man also named Likāvaka residing at the islands in the Alofi A’ana. There are his spells too. Sight-seeing parties often go there. Now when the curious travellers go over there, but do not reply to the calls of that man, who is named Likāvaka too, those people too are all killed. When in those very days such a trip is anticipated Taetagaloa is there. The day arrives when the traveling party goes. Taetagaloa goes along with it, he goes on that visitation. I am told—he was right at the back of the traveling party as the party is traveling by foot, he is right at the very rear. The journeyers go go, reaching the place. Taetagaloa realizes they have nearly reached the place. Going going, looking out there is a man seated at the front of an elevated house. It is said there is his stool on which he sits. Yes. And now the forward party has reached the place where Likāvaka is sitting, and Likāvaka shouts out to them from his high sitting place. He calls out: “*Hua!*” Well. Taetagaloa attends closely to the traveling party. Not a person is responding. Again calling out: “*Hua!*” Taetagaloa quickly slips towards the front, shouting as he approaches:

Turn towards swells coming off the land  
 Reflections of land smells of land  
 And shortly the reef is reached—Turn!  
 Cluttered bush lucid bush  
 Bound to a breadfruit rafter  
 And still tied at the seaside of Manunu—Turn!  
 We stand at a reef passage signal landwards a kava a drinking coconut  
 Dig up the fish a wahoo  
 Set with the pipe-fish of Makulu.<sup>19</sup>

That traveling party is spared. That speech made by Taetagaloa has saved the traveling party, for the spells of Likāvaka are known to Taetagaloa. That is the reason for the responding calls he made—*Hua*, as was recited above.

Well. Staying here too the traveling party is hosted by the community. Now there is the thing that happens in that place on certain days. On the exact days of the rising moon, the first and the second nights of lagoon rising, there is the man who roams about in their village. And their custom is to chase the man, to overtake and capture him. They have tried for many days to catch him. A day, the man appears. They recognize clearly this is the man. Now they chase him, but do not catch him. They have no idea where he vanished to. And they chase him while the visiting party is there. Taetagaloa immediately calls out: “Run!” The man is spoken of as a handsome person, Pepe is the name of the handsome one. Here he is pursued on that night he is regularly chased. Taetagaloa went along then in pursuit. Pursued pursued, the man vanished. The villagers do not know

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<sup>18</sup> Vaimauga and Faleata are districts to the east and west of Apia, respectively.

<sup>19</sup> This is not a definitive translation of the chant that is central to the narrative and always articulated very fast. There is some variation in its recitation (see Lili’s *kakai*) but the comparable lines can always be identified, even if they are differently interpreted. Palehau gave me the fullest, most coherent interpretation of the lines and stanzas present in all versions, which is the basis of my translation. He explained that the first stanza refers to signs of land yet unseen, the second to the sighting of land, and the third to arrival at land—an appeal for refreshment. The final line is an oblique reference to the last episode of Palehau’s *tala*—to the hiding place of Pepe. Although this line appears in all recitations of the chant, the episode Palehau said it refers to is unique to his telling of the narrative. See Lili’s *kakai*, note 23, for another stanza.

where but Taetagaloo knows the place that he goes to. I am told—Pepe goes and enters the grave of the mother of his mother. That is the place to which he disappears. He is intercepted there by Taetagaloo on that very night. During one chase as Pepe approaches, Taetagaloo is sitting down on top of the grave—so they have a chat. Chatting chatting, Taetagaloo suddenly voices his proposal—because Taetagaloo, do pardon me, as for the skin, it is not even comparable to the skin of animals the thickness of it, the itchiness, the absolutely disgusting skin of the man. During the course of his chat with Pepe, Taetagaloo suggests to Pepe: “Why don’t you give me your skin to try on, while I hand over my skin for you to try on.” And Pepe is agreeable to this. The skin of Pepe is stripped off, given over to Taetagaloo, while the skin of Taetagaloo is stripped off, given to Pepe. It is told thus—Not even before the arms of Pepe were completely inside the skin of Taetagaloo, it was like being pressed beneath a huge rock. It squeezes him, he is completely paralyzed. In the end Pepe expires, while Taetagaloo goes off with his beautiful skin—the skin of Pepe.

Well. The Tokelau account of Taetagaloo is finished.

### Narrative 3 (by Lili)

#### *KO TE KAKAI TENEI O TAEATAGALOO*

Ko Kui ma Luafatu, ma Fakataka ma Paua, ko te vāega tēnā na olo ki moana, oi agi ai e te afā. Kua tō ma ua, goto ai te vaka. Fanaifo lava ia Fakataka, goto ki lalo o te akau i te moana. Tēnā lā e i ei ai nā fahuataka i te moana. Vēnā foki ia Paua, goto foki ki lalo. Tēnā lā e i ei ai nā paua e pipiki i nā akau. Vēnā foki ia Luafatu, na goto foki ki lalo o te moana. Tēnā e i ei ai nā fatu. Kae tagi kakau ake tahi ia Kui, nā ko ia lava tautahi. Fano fano ia Kui, oi kua fai tana momoko e vēnei:

Ko au ko Kui e oku luga e oku lalo  
Ke akahi ifo oku vae ke tū ki he kauāfua.

Na akahi ifo lava te vae o Kui kae tū ki te kauāfua. Fanake nei ia Kui ki gāuta, he motu. Ka ko Kui kua tali fānau. Na pā atu loa ki gāuta i te ologahu, fakapakū loa ki lalo, fānau loa tana tama, kae oti ia Kui. Ko te tama e tātia, e fānau ifo e kafua, e ufiufi i he mea e vē he kafukafu.

Oi kitea ifo ai e Tagaloalagi mai te lagi, oi uga ifo ai e Tagaloalagi te Tuli ke tatui e ia te kafukafu e ufiufi ai te tamaiti: “Kae kē lea ki ei: Ko koe na uga ifo e Tagaloalagi ke fanaifo ke fakaola koe. Io, ko tā igoa foki ko Taeatagaloo. Ka ko Tagaloalagi tēia, ko te tamana ia, e nofo ifo i luga o te lagi.” Ia. Fanaifo loa te Tuli, tatui tatui tatui. Oi kua tū ake te tagata, he tagata kua matua. Oi fōki ai te meaalofo a Tagaloalagi ki te tama, na fanaifo ma te Tuli. He ualoa ma he atupa (ni toki), ko tana meaalofo tēnā na ia Tagaloalagi.

Pā ai ki te tahi aho, fano ai te folau, ni vaka e olo oi hīhī atu i moana. Fano ai ia Taeatagaloo oi tū i te Papa o Tautai, kae kalaga ki nā vaka: “Fanatu au lā.” Kae tali mai te fāoa o te vaka: “E fano koe faia? Te mea papahu, te mea pona, te mea lalagoa. E fano koe ki fea? Ni ā te kē iloa? Nofo ko koe e hē fano.” Ia. Toe fanaifo te tahi vaka, e fai lava te faiga tēnā a Taeatagaloo, nā ke pā lava ki te toe vaka. Oi toe kalaga ifo foki ia Taeatagaloo: “Fanatu au lā.” Oi mumuna mai foki te fāoa o te vaka, kae lea atu te tautai: “Tuku vē mua keinā fanaifo, pe he ā te fia fano ai oi tāfao i moana.” Fanatu lava te vaka ofi ki moana.

Kae lea mai te fāoa o te vaka (te vaka tēnei e i ei ia Taeatagaloo): “Ko te fuāvaka nei kua kalele mai, kua hī mai nā atu.” Kae lea atu ia Taeatagaloo: “Aua, nā hē taua ki ei. Ko atu nā, ko atu e manuheku, e hēki tiu i te faga o Lākulu.” Ia. Toe fano te vaka, fano fano te vaka. Toe lea mai te fāoa: “Te inafu tēnei e fanaifo.” Fehili atu ia Taeatagaloo: “Ni manu ā?” Tali atu te fāoa: “E kaumai e he katafa, ma he akiaki, ma he lefulefu.” Lea atu loa ia Taeatagaloo: “Io, tau ifo lā ki ei te vaka. Ko atu nā, ko atu manogi, ko atu kakala, ko atu

kua tiu i te faga o Lākulu.”

Fanatu loa te vaka, fakaulu atu ki loto. Tū atu te tautai, ki kō ki ei, e hēai he atu fokotahi e kai. Kae vēatu lava ia Taeatagaloa: “Fakamolemole kō ke fanatu au, ke kō faitaki tahia.” Oi kua mumuna mai te fāoa ki ei, kae lea mai te tautai: “Tuku ake mua ke hau.” Fano loa ia Taeatagaloa ki muli, na tago atu lava ki te kofe, togi te afo ki te tai, kae teki lava kua gugulu mai te mulivaka, kua hī mai te matuā atu. Toe togi atu te afo, vēnā foki. Tūlaga tahi ia Taeatagaloa. Kave kave lava, tumu te vaka i atu. Kua kalalaga mai te fāoa: “O! Ko te vaka ka goto, te vaka ka goto!”

Ia. Oake loa ki gāuta, fanake te vaka, pā ake ki gāuta i te mea e tutū ai ia tautai. Oi tū ake ai ia Taeatagaloa ma nā atu e lua e kuku i tona lima. Fanatu lava ia Taeatagaloa, fano ki te ologahu e tātitia ai nā ivi o tona matuā oi togi ai ki ei te tahi atu. Kae fano ma te tahi atu, kua kave ma tona afafine. Ko te igoa o tona afafine ko Lemalamafitikia.

Ia. Toe pā ki te tahi aho kua laga te folau, ka fano ki Fiti. Fano foki ia Taeatagaloa oi tū i te Papa o Tautai, kae kalaga ifo ki nā vaka: “Fanatu au lā.” Lea mai te fāoa: “E fano koe faia?” Tali ifo ia Taeatagaloa: “E fanatu au ma oho o te vaka.” Lea mai te fāoa: “Ha, te mea papahu, kae kave vēhea koe ma oho o te vaka?” Ia. Fai vēnā, fai vēnā lava, pā foki ki te toe vaka. Kalaga atu foki ia Taeatagaloa: “Fanatu au kō.” Oi kua lea atu te tautai ki te fāoa: “E! Tuku ake mua ke fanaifo. Ke fanatu la ma oho o te vaka.” Fanaifo, tigā lava te fāoa e ita mai ki ei, ka kua fano lava e tuha ma te kupu a te tautai.

Fano ai te folau, ka fano, ka āgai ki Fiti. Hovē lava kua tali hula ia Fiti, kae vēake lava te fāoa o te vaka: “Tēfea ko lā te mea na kaumai ma oho o te vaka? Ko ki tātou nei kua fia kakaia. E hili te kaumai o Taeatagaloa ke fīnau.” Vēatu lava ia Taeatagaloa: “E! Na ke koutou popole i te itū tēnā.” Puke ifo lava ia Taeatagaloa, oi fālō tona tokotoko ki te lagi. Ola! Kua malili ifo ia meakai kehekehe kua tumu ai i loto te vaka. Ia. Tatago atu loa te fāoa, kua kakai kakai kakai, kua totoe, oi kua toli ki te tai. Oi toe lea mai te fāoa: “Kikila mai, ko ki tātou ka oti i te fia inua.” Oi lea atu ia Taeatagaloa: “Tatago ki te hua liu tēnā o te vaka oi feinu ai.” Tatago ifo te fāoa oi inu ake, e māgalo.

Ia. Fano fano te vaka, kua kite ia Fiti. Oi kua vēatu lava ia Taeatagaloa: “Kikila, kafai koutou e fakalogo mai kia te au, ko koutou manuia to tātou fāoa ma to tātou vaka. Kae kafai koutou e hē fakalogo mai, ko te ikuga o nā vaka muamua e pā atu ki tātou, ko luga o nā fagautua kua opeopea ifo ai ia tagata kua oti, kua fai ifo i nā mea faka-taulaitu a Tui Fiti i gāuta. Kae kafai koutou e uhiuhitaki mai kia te au, ko ki tātou e manuia. Kafai lava toku lima taumatau e hiki ki luga, ko outou lima foki ia. Kae kafai e hiki ki te itū tauagavale, ko outou lima foki ia.”

Fano fano te vaka, kua pā atu nei, kua i gāuta i te uluulu. Kikila atu nei kua tū ifo ia Tui Fiti, ka ko luga o te tai kua opeopea ia tagata kua oti ma nā vaka. Tū atu lava ia Taeatagaloa ki luga, kua fālō tona lima ki te itū taumatau kae kalaga. Kua tū i luga o te puke o te vaka, vēnei:

Hua. Hua ma tukutukua  
Mata-fenua mata-haua  
Kae fakamuli ma te tokamea—Hua.  
Hua lauputupu laumānunu  
Keli ake he ika he pālaoa  
Fakatatau ki he tapatapa ma ula—Hua.  
Tuku ifo kō aliki keināola  
Ko au ko Taeatagaloa.

Ia. Hēlekaleka atu te vaka ki gāuta, oi tū foki ia Taeatagaloa oi kalaga vēnā foki:

Hua. Hua ma tukutukua  
Mata-fenua mata-haua  
Kae fakamuli ma te tokamea—Hua.  
Hua lauputupu laumānunu

Keli ake he ika he pāloa  
 E fakatatau ki he tapatapa ma ula—Hua.  
 Tuku ifo kō aliki keinā ola  
 Ko au ko Taeatagaloa.

Kae fakalogo atu nei ki gāuta i Fiti, kua pā ifo te lauaitu, kua mate te tupu o Fiti i nā mea faka-aulaitu a Taeatagaloa. Oi kua fanatu te vaka o Taeatagaloa, fanatu fanatu, pā ki gāuta. Oi kua lea atu ia Taeatagaloa: “Omai lā olo, olo oi matamata. Olo foki oi kikila ki te oti tēnā, ko te tupu o Fiti kua oti, kae ke nofo au i kinei oi fakatali atu ai.”

Ia. Olo uma te fāoa, kae nofo ia Taeatagaloa. Ko te afafine o Taeatagaloa na kave, oi e tau i tona tua. Oi kua lea atu nei ia Taeatagaloa ki tona afafine, e tau mai i tona tua: “Hau lā oi fano ki gāuta, ko koe ka fano oi fakaola te tupu. E fanatu lava koe, e tū ifo te niumululi, he niukafau. E fanatu loa koe fetau ma te niu tēnā, tago loa koe oi gagau mai te hikuhikulauniu, popoga ma te mokomoko, fano loa ma koe ki te fale tēnā e i ei te oti. Kāfai lava koe e ulu atu ki loto fale, kae kikila atu koe e i ei ni tino e hē mālie mai kia te koe, oi ko koe e hē tokaga lele ki ei. E ulu atu loa koe ki loto, fakavāvā i nā tino, fanatu loa koe nofo ki ulu o Tui Fiti. Oi tago ai oi pepē te mokomoko ki te ulu o Tui Fiti, kae tapilipili i te hikuhikulauniu. Kae lea vē:

Tui Fiti ala mai, Tui Fiti ala mai,  
 Ko au ko Lemalamafitikia.  
 Ko au na uga mai e toku tamana i tai nei  
 Ko Taeatagaloa.  
 Io, nofo mai ki luga!

Fanatu lava te teine, kua fai tana gālua tēnā, kua tā te mokomoko ki te ulu o Tui Fiti, kae kalaga:

Tui Fiti ala mai, Tui Fiti ala mai,  
 Ko au ko Lemalamafitikia.  
 Ko toku tamana e nofo i tai nei  
 Ko Taeatagaloa.

Oi kua taufōlulua ia tagata o Fiti: “O! Ko Taeatagaloa, ko Lemalamafitikia ma Taeatagaloa!” Ia. Oi kua kikila uma lele mai te nuku ki te mea kua tupu. Ko te tupu kua nofo ki luga, kua vēake tana kupu: “He ā te mea na pā mai kia te au?” Oi kua lea atu nā tino, ko ia na oti. “E hē kō iloa.” Oi kua lea mai nā tino: “He tagata e nofo i tai, ko Taeatagaloa, ko ia tēnei nae ia faia mai koe i ana mea faka-aulaitu.”

Ia. Fekau loa e Tui Fiti ke fanake. Fanake ai ki gāuta, fai ai a lā tala. Kua lea atu ia Tui Fiti: “Ko au e fakafetai atu kia te koe, auā kua ola nei ia tagata uma talu ai koe. Ka na hēai he tagata vēnā ko koe, ko tagata uma e ōmai ki Fiti, e hēai he tagata e ola. Ka kua lelei. Hau keinā fano ki tō fenua.” Fōki loa ma te meaalofa a Tui Fiti kia Taeatagaloa. Ia. Fano loa ia Taeatagaloa, kua toe fōki ma tona fāoa, ka kua nofo ia Tui Fiti.

Oi kua uma te kakai o Taeatagaloa.

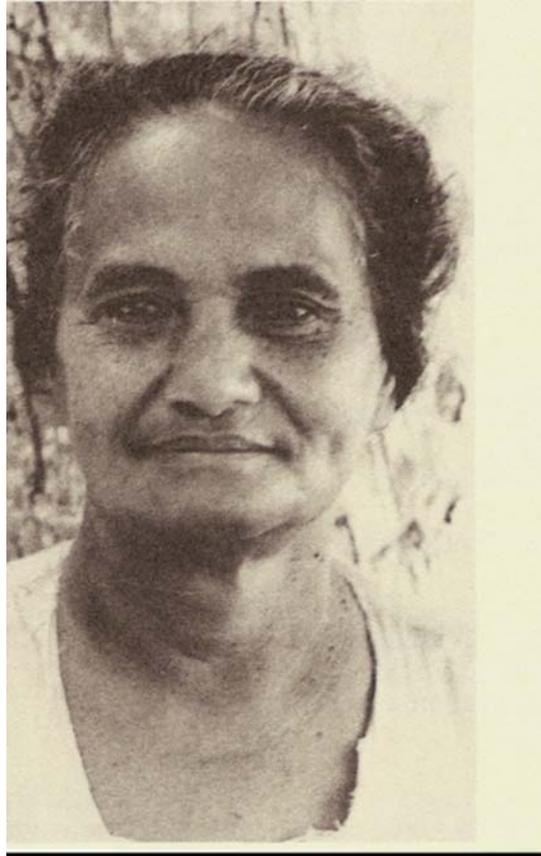
## English Translation

### *This is the Tale of Taetagalua*

Kui and Luafatu, and Fakatakā and Pāua, that party have gone to sea, where they are struck by a storm. Rain descends upon them, the canoe sinks. Fakatakā goes down, sinking below the reefs into the sea. That is why there are the giant clams of the oceans

deep. Pauā like that too, also sinks below. That is why there are *pāua* (shellfish) clinging to the reefs. Luafatu like that too, also sinks below the sea. That is why there are rocks. As for Kui she alone swims along weeping, just she herself alone. Kui goes and goes, while making her wish like this:

I am Kui of the heights and of the depths  
Let my feet be set down to stand upon a sandbank.



Lili Fakaalofa, 1970

Kui places the sole of her foot right down and stands upon a sandbank. Now Kui goes along towards shore, an islet. But Kui is just about to give birth. Just as soon as she reaches the grove of saltbush at shore, she suddenly collapses, immediately delivers her child and Kui herself dies. The child is left lying, delivered in a caul, wrapped up in something like a shroud.

When Tagaloalagi looks down at this from the sky, then Tagaloalagi dispatches the Golden Plover down there to prick the covering in which the child is wrapped: “Then you tell him, ‘I was sent down by Tagaloalagi to come down and to give you life. Thus your name is Taetagaloa.’ As for Tagaloalagi, the father himself, he remains above in the sky.” So it is. The Golden Plover goes right down, pecks pecks pecks, and the man, fully grown, emerges. (According to the tale.) The gift of Tagaloalagi, which came down with the Golden Plover, is presented to the child. His gift from Tagaloalagi is a long-necked

adze and short-handled adze.<sup>20</sup>

There comes one day when the fleet is going, some canoes are going to fish for skipjack in the ocean. Taetagaloa accordingly goes and stands at the Rock of Fishermen,<sup>21</sup> and calls to the canoes: “Let me go along.” But the crew of the canoe answers him: “What are you going to do? Scabby thing, pimply thing, fly-blown thing. Where do you think you’re going? What do you know? Stay there you aren’t going.” Well. Another canoe goes down, Taetagaloa does exactly as he did before, until the very last canoe comes along. Then again Taetagaloa calls down as before: “Let me go along.” And the crew of the canoe abuse him too, but the captain speaks out: “Let’s stop and let him come aboard whatever the reason he wants to go and play at sea.” Going right off the canoe passes through the channel out to sea.

Then the crew of the canoe (this canoe with Taetagaloa) says: “The rest of the canoes are within a school of skipjack, skipjack are being hooked.” But Taetagaloa replies: “No, the canoe must not join them. Those skipjack, scruffy skipjack, have never frolicked in Lākulu’s trap.” Well. The canoe goes on, the canoe goes and goes. The crew again speaks: “Here’s birds diving to a school of skipjack.” Taetagaloa asks: “What kind of birds are there?” The crew answers back: “A frigate-bird, a white tern, a sanderling are marking them.” Taetagaloa responds at once: “Yes, steer the canoe down there. Those skipjack, fragrant skipjack, stinging skipjack, skipjack who have frolicked in Lākulu’s trap.”<sup>22</sup>

The canoe goes right over, entered into the midst of them. The captain takes his stand, over there over here, not a single skipjack rises to the bait. So Taetagaloa suggests: “Please let me go over, let me have a single try.” But the crew abuses him, though the captain says: “Why not let him come?” Taetagaloa goes right to the stern, immediately takes up the rod, casts the line to the water, suddenly there is thrashing at the stern of the canoe, a huge skipjack takes the lure. The line is cast again, it happens again. Taetagaloa makes a single stand taking taking them in, the canoe is swamped with skipjack. The crew cry out: “Hey, the canoe will sink, the canoe will sink!”

Well. They go directly up to shore, the canoe goes on up, coming up to shore to the place where fishermen disembark. Now Taetagaloa stands up there with two skipjack grasped in his hand. Taetagaloa goes off directly, going to the grove of saltbush where the bones of his mother lie and tosses to them one skipjack. With the other skipjack he goes, taking it to his daughter. The name of his daughter is Lemalamafitikia.

Well. There comes another day when the fleet is readied, it is going to Fiji. Taetagaloa goes as before and stands at the Rock of Fishermen, and he calls down to the canoes: “Let me go along.” The crew replies: “You are going to do what?” Taetagaloa answers them: “I shall go along as provisions of the canoe.” The crew retorts: “Ha, scabby thing, who would want to take you as canoe provisions?” Well. It happens like that, just like that, until it comes to the very last canoe. Again Taetagaloa calls out: “Do let me come along.” Now the captain speaks to the crew: “Hey! Do turn up so he can go down. Just go along as provisions of the canoe.” He goes down, in spite of the anger of the crew towards him, but just going in accordance with the word of the captain.

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<sup>20</sup> The adzes are for making canoes. In her father’s version the episode of canoe-building follows, as it does in other versions. Lili has deleted (or forgotten) this episode, but kept the necessary gift. I was told a lively version of the canoe-building episode by an accomplished Atafu carver as a *potu kakai* (part of a tale); he said he did not know the rest.

<sup>21</sup> The *Papa o Tautai* is a sort of land’s-end where senior fishermen (*tautai*) await their canoes that have been readied at the lagoon shore and guided over the reef by the crew to the point where they can step or climb aboard.

<sup>22</sup> See Kave’s *kakai*, note 9.

The journey goes, goes on, proceeding towards Fiji. Perhaps Fiji is nearly in sight when the crew of the canoe starts muttering: "Where then is the thing brought along as provisions of the canoe? Now we are famished. It is just as well we brought along Taetagaloa to kill." Taetagaloa simply replies: "Hey! Don't get all fussed about that matter." Taetagaloa reaches down, and then stretches out his staff to the sky. Amazing! All kinds of things to eat tumble down filling up the canoe. Well. The crew just reaches out, they eat eat eat, and what is left over they throw into the sea. Then the crew speaks again: "Look here, we are nearly dead for thirst." So Taetagaloa says: "Take up the bilge water and drink it." The crew scoop down and drink up, it's sweet water.

Well. The canoe goes goes, Fiji is sighted. Just then Taetagaloa speaks out: "Look here, if all of you listen to me, then you will bring good fortune to our crew and our canoe. But if you all do not listen to me, we will meet the fate of previous canoes, for over the reef edges men who have been killed are floating down, done in by the extraordinary powers of Tui Fiji on shore. But if you all obey me, we will be fortunate. Whenever my right arm is raised on high, all your arms must be likewise. But when raised at the left side, all your arms must be likewise."

The canoe goes and goes, now approaching, they are inshore and within the channel. Looking out now Tui Fiji is stepping down, while upon the sea are drifting dead men and canoes. Taetagaloa steps forward to the front, stretching his arm to the right side calling. He stands upon the bow of the canoe, pronouncing:

Hua. Hua ma tukutukua. . .<sup>23</sup>

Well. The canoe draws closer to shore, and Taetagaloa stands again and calls again as before:

Hua. Hua ma tukutukua. . .

But attend now to what is happening ashore in Fiji, the spell is cast down, the king of Fiji is dead from the extraordinary powers of Taetagaloa. So Taetagaloa's canoe proceeds, going going along, reaching shore. Then Taetagaloa speaks out: "Come why not go, go and look around. Be sure to go and observe that wake for the king of Fiji who is dead, while I just stay here and wait awhile."

Well. The whole crew goes, while Taetagaloa stays. Taetagaloa's daughter was taken along bound to his back. Now Taetagaloa speaks to his daughter, who is clinging to his back: "Come along and go inland, you will go and resurrect the king. As you go along, the young coconut palm, a palm of large green nuts, stands inland. You go straight along until you encounter that palm, you reach up and break off the very tip of the palm frond, and also twist off the immature nut, going with them to that house where the corpse lies. As soon as you enter inside the house, you will see there are many people who are angry at you, but you won't pay any attention to them. You just enter inside, you force your way through, and go directly placing yourself at the head of Tui Fiji. Then reach out and crack the coconut upon the head of Tui Fiji, while fanning him with the frond tip. Then speak

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<sup>23</sup> See Palehau's *tala*, note 19. The chant here is similar to the others until the final stanza, which is present in all Atafu versions. Its meaning is absolutely clear; the English is:

Let down chiefs that they may live  
For I am Taetagaloa.

The tale's ending is prefigured in this part of the chant, but is more explicit in Lili's father's version. Arriving voyagers (or chiefs) who have been killed by Tui Fiji's spell are strung up in trees, and Taetagaloa lets them down and revitalizes them.

thus:

Tui Fiji awake, Tui Fiji awake  
 I am Lemalamafitikia  
 I have been sent by my father still at the beach  
 He is Taetagaloa  
 Yes, sit yourself up.

The girl goes off directly, does those tasks given her, striking the coconut upon the head of Tui Fiji, while calling:

Tui Fiji awake, Tui Fiji awake  
 For I am Lemalamafitikia  
 My father still sits at the beach  
 He is Taetagaloa.

Then the people of Fiji chorus: “Oh! It’s Taetagaloa, Lemalamafitikia and Taetagaloa!” Well. Then all of the villagers gaze upon the thing that transpires. The king sits up, uttering his words: “What is the thing that happened to me?” And the people tell him that he was dead. “I did not know it.” The people tell him: “A man is sitting at the beach, Taetagaloa who did you in with his extraordinary powers.”

Well. Tui Fiji immediately summons him to go up. He goes up inland, they speak together. Tui Fiji speaks out: “I extend thanks to you, because all men shall now live on account of you. Were there not a man like you, all the men who come to Fiji, not one would live. It is just as well. Come you must go to your land.”

The gift of Tui Fiji is presented to Taetagaloa. Well. Taetagaloa just goes, returning to where he came from with his crew, while Tui Fiji remains.

Thus the tale of Taetagaloa ends.

## ANALYSIS

The narrative structure is divisible into five episodes, each marked by at least one invariable image.

1. *Introductory episode*: While quite variable, as beginnings are apt to be, one or more people always disappear into the ocean depths.

2. *Canoe-building episode*: Taetagaloa’s assertion, “The canoe is crooked,” marks the episode. (As noted, this episode is missing in Lili’s version, although it is anticipated by Tagaloalagi’s gift, and is present in her father’s version.)

3. *Skipjack-fishing episode*: The counterposed poetic descriptions of schools of skipjack epitomize the episode.

4. *Voyaging episode*: Taetagaloa’s instructions to the crew in order to avoid lethal powers emanating from shore mark the episode.

5. *Arrival episode*: The long rhythmic chant—“Hua. . .”—within this otherwise highly variable episode is the enigmatic emblem of the whole narrative.

### What makes Palehau's narrative a *tala*?

Even a cursory comparison of the narratives as told by Kave and by Palehau reveals numerous contrasting features. In terms of content, their beginnings and endings are so different that they could be utterly distinct narratives if it were not for the protagonists Taetagaloa and Likavaka, and, although the episodes follow in the same order and contain the same marked images, Palehau's narrative incorporates episodes parallel to the central ones (for example: sail-making, dispelling of storm and provisioning, and the second encounter with Likavaka), as well as adding introductory sequences to episodes 3 and 4. Palehau's performance is embellished with authoritative asides and explanations, and specification of places; his narrative style is discursive and varied, incorporating sequences of dialogue. In short, his narrative is expanded, elaborated, and obviously much longer than Kave's.

But simple identification of how the two narratives differ, or even an intensive study of the differences between them, does not answer the question of why Kave's is a *kakai* and Palehau's a *tala*, or more broadly what features are salient in discriminating between the two genres. Raconteurs have characteristic narrative styles and strategies. Kave's style of narrating is direct and sparse, a string of short, punchy phrases separated by pauses. He does not waste words whenever he speaks. Palehau's style is discursive and varied, a complex series of rapidly articulated phrases contrasts with cryptic statements. He is known as an eloquent speaker and speaks with recognized authority. His asides and commentaries on the previous or lasting significance of actions and objects—whether direct or obscure—may be taken as assertions of his authoritative knowledge. His performance strategy is quite unique.

Raconteurs also tailor their performances to their audiences, and here I should note that Palehau told his *tala* to a small, select audience, while Kave performed for a diverse bunch of people who had gradually assembled from neighboring houses to listen to him and others tell *kakai*. Finally, the source or sources a raconteur has heard the narrative from and the matter of how “firmly stuck” (*mau*) the narrative is in mind may account for some variation. These factors I shall set aside for the moment.

By knowing the raconteurs and the context in which a narrative is performed, it may be possible to account for some features of difference, and I could go on to compare Palehau's *tala* with other *tala* to see what they have in common. Intensive comparative detective work might in the end answer my question, but is it not simpler (and sounder) to ask the expert (see Mead 1983:16)?

I asked Palehau and he answered without hesitation. His narrative of

Taetagaloa was a *tala* because of its *pine fakamau* (“fixing signs/attached marks”), specifically, the naming of known places. Again comparing the two narratives, this difference is immediately striking. Palehau’s *tala* is littered with place-names: all three atolls are named, reefs and islets of Nukunonu and Fakaofu are specified, areas and places in Fakaofu village are identified, as are districts and villages of Upolu (Western Samoa). These literally “ground” the narrative as an account of events that happened at known, named places. Kave names only one place, Samoa, as the destination of the voyagers, and this reference, like those to Fiti (Fiji) or Toga (Tonga) in other *kakai*, is simply to somewhere other than Tokelau where strange happenings can be anticipated. Thus, what makes a narrative a *tala* are specific place-names that “ground” it.

Once stated, the answer is obvious from other *tala*, and this feature of *tala* is common elsewhere in the Austronesian-speaking world. Take Roti (Eastern Indonesia), for example, of which Fox (1979:16-17) writes that “true tales” or “historical narratives” are “fixed” in place by geographical naming and in time by genealogical naming of past rulers. Tokelauans, unlike the Rotinese, are not particularly concerned to “fix” their *tala* in time. Although recent *tala* of the nineteenth century do feature named ancestors as actors, past *tala* at most make vague reference to genealogical personages. Genealogies and *tala* are not calibrated as they often are in Tonga (Bott 1982:89-155), Aotearoa (Grey 1855, Best 1976), and elsewhere. It is therefore irrelevant that Taetagaloa does not figure in Tokelau genealogies.

Another raconteur commented one day when I had my pencil poised to take a note, “The song is the Tokelau paper.” That is, the song is the equivalent of a written record. This spontaneous remark did not refer to just any song, but to songs attached to memorable events and to accounts of memorable events, and extended to chants and phrases reputedly spoken by named actors in those events. These fixed utterances, whether as short and straightforward as “The canoe is crooked” or as long and enigmatic as the “*Hua*” chant, do bring to mind events (or accounts of them). The fixed utterance is comparable to a quotation, and therefore should replicate the exact words of the original utterance, and may be faulted if it does not. However, although fixed utterances are always found in *tala*, they also appear in *kakai*, so they do not serve to discriminate between the two genres. In both, getting them right is evidence of accurate memory, of having firmly retained (*mau*) the narrative. In *tala*, where veracity is at issue, such utterances are also *pine fakamau*, which, like place-names, validate the account, so raconteurs and their audiences are more concerned that they are “right.” But although getting them right is important, what they mean is often opaque. Raconteurs, especially in *tala* performances, may assert or allude to their meaning, but more often no explanation is

given. As a translator I have frequently asked performers to explain their meanings, and have received quite different explanations or even admissions that they do not know, adding that this is what they heard from their forebears who presumably understood the meaning and they themselves neglected to ask what it was. We might conclude that getting these marked utterances right gives authenticity to a narrative, since if nonsense is accurately remembered then sense must surely be.

The emblematic chant of the Taetagaloa narrative is virtually identically rendered by Kave and Palehau, but Lili's (and her father's and other Atafu) versions are substantially different. An Atafu raconteur asserted that Palehau's rendering was incorrect, and this volunteered judgment would presumably invalidate Palehau's narrative as a *tala*. This, however, is of little consequence, since Palehau tells his *tala* to Nukunonu people who accept it as such because it is his version of the chant they know. But then what is the status of Kave's *kakai*?

### Degeneration and Creation

The question impinges upon the old, outdated debate about the relationship between popular tale and heroic myth; are tales "broken-down myths," residues or survivals of great mythic traditions, or are epic myths the constructions of great raconteurs who have combined and elaborated simple tales? These two hypothetical processes may be labeled degeneration and creation, respectively, and Boas long ago marshaled abundant evidence that both happened, though he emphasized the role of creation in reaction to the bias of his time (1966 [1896]:429; [1914]:482).

The issue is readdressed in a rather different way, but one more germane to the problem at hand, in the scenario proposed by Fox (1979). He suggests that a memorable event involving known persons and places becomes abbreviated to a simple vignette as it is told and retold, but then gradually incorporates motifs and themes prevalent in fictitious tales, while retaining the personal and place-names which "fix" it. Thus it comes to be elaborated as a historical narrative or oral tradition, although in time it may become just an entertaining tale if the personal names (attested in genealogies) and place-names which "fix" it are forgotten. This trajectory from event to vignette to historical narrative to just a tale (*ibid.*: 23-25) is plausible and attractive, but is it so linear?

Returning to the question: is Kave's *kakai* a degenerate, "dwindled-down," unfixed version of Palehau's *tala*, or is Palehau's *tala* an artistically elaborated, imaginatively created version of Kave's *kakai*? Additionally, what is the relationship of them both to Lili's *kakai*?

I pondered these questions. Palehau had frankly told me that he

contemplated the *kakai* he told and devised ways to make them more *mālie* (“entertaining”) to his audiences. There was no doubt in my mind that he had the imagination to transform a *kakai* into a *tala*, but it would have been impertinent, if not downright insulting, to ask if he fabricated a *tala*. Yet, a quote from Boas seemed so apt—“the more thought bestowed. . . the more complex tales become, and the more definite are the local characteristics that they develop” (1966 [1914]:406). Palehau’s narrative was indeed more complex and definite. But then Palehau had also told me who his mentors had been—two men reputed to have had great knowledge and wisdom—and Palehau himself is renowned throughout Tokelau as an “archive of tradition.” Furthermore, Catholic Nukunonu had not suffered the intense denigration of local entertainment and art in the latter half of the nineteenth century, nor so heavy an imposition of Samoan forms via the Protestant Church, that Atafu and Fakaofu had (see Huntsman 1980:x-xxi for a fuller discussion of the effects of Christianity and of Palehau’s background and reputation). So it could be reasoned that the *kakai* versions of Taetagaloa were simplified, degenerate versions of the *tala* Palehau told. Still, it seemed strange that Kave told the narrative as a *kakai* in the same small community where Palehau told it as a *tala*.

Again, an answer, or at least partial answer, to my quandary was provided by an expert, this time Kave. His response to my question about the two versions was characteristically direct and self-effacing. He explained that he had “read” the *kakai* (Mika’s version) in Macgregor’s book, of which a teaching Sister had a copy. (Kave is not an English-speaker, so his statement should be understood as follows: the Sister related the English translation of the *kakai* to him in Tokelauan.) Kave further explained that the tale had not been firmly fixed (*mau*) in his mind at the time, but from what he remembered he had developed his own version, and furthermore, since he had not obtained and retained the narrative from his knowledgeable elders as Palehau had, Palehau’s version was undoubtedly more accurate.

This revelation, by way of an answer to my question that was utterly unanticipated, cast the relationships between the versions in quite a different light. Kave’s inspiration for his own version had come from hearing Mika’s version once. But if any version is degenerate it must be Mika’s version, not as he told it in 1932, but as Kave heard it some decades later, for it is possible to trace a history from Mika’s telling to Kave’s hearing quite closely. Mika related the tale to Macgregor and an English-speaking Tokelau interpreter, who probably interrupted the narrative from time to time in order to translate it for Macgregor, who was jotting the translation down in his notebook. (It is in the early pages of his notes and obviously written with haste.) The published version is an expanded and heavily edited version of the notes. (In both the skipjack-fishing episode is

missing. Did the interpreter neglect to translate it? Did Mika forget it, what with all the interruptions, or did he just leave it out because telling the tale via an interpreter was so tedious? It is present in both Lili's and Ioane's versions.) Thus the Mika/Macgregor version, although the oldest recorded, is the least authentic; the recently recorded Atafu versions probably reflect more accurately Mika's rendering of the *kakai*. Finally, a Catholic Sister translated Macgregor's English version back into Tokelauan for Kave to hear.

In a real sense, Kave created his own version and it can be compared to the one he reports he heard. How does his creation differ from the Atafu version? Four obvious differences (or changes) have close parallels in Palehau's *tala*, indicating Kave's acquaintance with Palehau's version and perhaps other Nukunonu versions of which there is no permanent record. First, there is no mention of Tagaloalagi; he has no role in the birth of Taetaloa, although the Golden Plover has a minor one. Second, both the canoe-building episode (missing in Lili's version) and the skipjack-fishing episode (missing in Mika's version) are included. Third, the destination of the voyagers is Samoa where Likavaka's powers are neutralized rather than Fiji where Tui Fiti is overcome. Fourth, the emblematic chant is identical to Palehau's rendering of it. Kave's version is thus, in several respects, a creative amalgamation of Atafu and Nukunonu versions, possibly in order to conform to the expectations of a Nukunonu audience. Yet Kave told the narrative as a *kakai*, and said that Palehau's version should be given precedence because Palehau had learned it from their elders, whereas he had only "read" it from a book. But was it just the mode of acquisition that made the difference? After all, people also learn *kakai* from their elders. Recall that Kave also said that he had developed his version from what he remembered. Logically his narrative could not be a *tala* because he created it. He had reshaped what he remembered from what he had heard once, drawing upon what he knew already and his own imagination. The conclusion of Kave's *kakai* is, as far as I know, unique.

Still unanswered is the question of the status of Palehau's *tala*. Did he, or one of his mentors, or someone generations ago create a *tala* by weaving *kakai* together and adding named places, as Boas suggested, or is the *tala* of Taetaloa based on real "grounded" events that have been imaginatively elaborated, as Fox proposes? Whatever its past history, I would presume that the Tokelau creative imagination has shaped this *tala*, just as Kave shaped his *kakai*.

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The study of versions of the same narrative raises questions, and pondering these questions throws light back upon the narratives, and more

widely on human creativity and imagination. Scholarly experts can question and ponder in their studies and libraries, but their questions need not simply be subject to their own speculations, plausible and persuasive as many of their proposed answers are. The raconteurs are experts too, who are aware of what they have done and what they are doing. Consulted sensitively and specifically about the narratives they tell, I have found that they give frank, and often expansive, answers. Of course, some questions cannot be asked of them (for example, I could not ask Palehau if he had created his account of Taetagaloa), and they, for their own reasons, may avoid answering questions posed. Yet they should be consulted; they may often respond to our questions with answers we might have anticipated—but possibly with answers unimagined.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Obviously this article could not have been written without the collaboration of Tokelau raconteurs past and present, and most of those who contributed directly to it have passed on. Mika Tinilau died the year I was born, so I know him only by his reputation in Tokelau and reports of Gordon Macgregor, who died in 1983. If I appear to slight Macgregor's contribution, it is only because times and technology have changed. His fieldnotes are invaluable and testify to his dedication and skill as an ethnographer, despite his short two-month stay in Tokelau. Both Alosio Kave and Manuele Palehau passed away in 1986, but I tend to write of them in the present tense because they are present to me in the narratives they told. For very substantial help in transcribing and translating the narratives I thank Ropati Simona, Pio Tuia, the late Toloa Poasa, Robin Hooper, and the raconteurs themselves. Recording and discussing *tala* and *kakai* have been entertaining evening diversions during my stays in Tokelau. These visits have been made possible by grants from the United States Institutes of Health, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, the New Zealand Medical Research Council, and the University of Auckland.

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