



E maniti tino i nei tala – Elusive stories flabbergasted my physique.

Sufiga o tuā'oi e afeifei e 'upu o le gagana. Translating restrictions garbed with lexical semantics.

By Niusila Faamanatu-Eteuati (Lecture in Samoan Studies/PhD Candidate - Education Psychology)

The opportunity to study towards a Doctorate in Education Psychology unlocked a remarkable boulevard for myself as a Samoan educator to lecture in Matā'upu Tau Samoa (Samoan Studies Program) at Va'aomanū Pasefika Unit, in the School of Languages and Culture at Victoria University of Wellington. Va'aomanū means a canoe of good fortune and blessings, with tautai (navigators) nurturing success through its teaching philosophies for Pasefika students in Pacific and Samoan studies programs.

It is a privilege to lecture in courses to foster intercultural and interpersonal understanding of Samoan language and culture. University students of various ethnicities enrolled in courses I coordinate including basic conversational Samoan, Samoan literature, interpreting, and translation. I am fortunate to have grounded my education and pedagogical ideas to my funds of knowledge and experience in faasinomaga (heritage) and upbringing in Samoa. From a strong Christian and conservative āiga Sāmoa, I was taught about the values of what defines a tama'ita'i Samoa (Samoan lady) and a feagaiga (covenant), and the relational frontiers with people of all levels. Therefore, the way I transmit myself as a tama'ita'i Samoa should be reflected in behaviour and language used to express feelings and viewpoints to others. This goes with the Samoan saying – *'E iloa oe i lau tautala, tu ma au aga'*. *'You are demarcated by the way you talk, behave and perform'. You are a reflection of your faasinomaga and your achievement is an achievement for your village and tupu'aga (genealogy).*

Translation sanctions metacognitive thinking drumming into funds of indigenous knowledge (utugā'oa).

The request from a Samoan renowned novelist 'Sia Figiel' to translate a love letter in of her latest novel *Free Love* for her book launch at Victoria University of Wellington enabled myself to think beyond my thinking and explored the psycholinguistic side of the language as I struggled to search for appropriate words in Samoan language. At the same time, I theorised most of the ideas from English to Samoan language over a period to ensure that it makes sense conveying the spirit and the manner of the original text with a natural and comparable response. Being an old school is virtuous as I operate in two worlds and re-enter my reserves of homegrown fluency to Samoan lexicon. This allowed myself to apply the numerous theories in translation as I delve into the beauty of lexical semantics of Samoan language. It was quite a challenging task as elusive stories flabbergasted my physique. However, to embrace and appreciate other languages and cultures entails a thoughtful interpersonal and intercultural understanding in blending idiosyncracies, as in the Samoan



saying ‘e iloa le lima lelei o le tufuga i le soofau’. O le sufiga o tuā‘oi o ia lagona, e afeifei e upu o le gagana.

The School of Languages and Culture hosted an event at Victoria University of Wellington on 24th May, 2018 with invited lecturers from French, Spanish and Samoan translating and reading excerpts from Sia Figiel’s Free Love novel. The event highlighted the creative art of translation across multiple languages and culture.

Below is the English passage from the novel and its translation in Samoan – E maniti tino i nei tala!

186 ◆ SIA FIGIEL

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Dear Night, (*America is so strange. There is no place for solitude. I can't even see the stars. I can't see you, loage. You are fading. Fading. Fading. The only way for me to see you is to leave the mirror uncovered at twilight which puzzles my American cousins who don't know that you grow in me . . . you grow, loage, you grow . . .*)

The Day is so long. Much too long. Twelve hours is unbearable. I long for the Sun to disappear from the Sky and for the Clouds to be extinguished by the Moon. Every waking hour finds me yearning for you. Like a nocturnal flower I am dying a silent death at the thought of you away from me.

When you are near, I am exhausted. Exhausted from the very thought of you near me. The thought of your hands holding mine. Caressing my fingers between yours. Tracing your name in the middle of my palm, over and over as I close my eyes and imagine your breath on the nape of my neck.

- Benevolent Moon!
- Merciful Constellations!
- Sagacious Galaxies!

FREELOVE 187 ◆

O Bountiful Stars!
You hold my anguish in your cosmic memory exploding in the distance, illuminating the sky with your chaotic, stellar pulse.

I am Inosia Alofafua Afatasi. I am the Despised, Freelove, Unprecedented Descendant of the Sun. I am standing on the shores of the Is- Land of Dreams with a melancholic Wind, heavy on my back and a secret song of despair in the palm of my hand, calling out to the shadows at twilight.

Come to me Night! Come to me my dark, aging warrior with the long memory, the scarred body and hair the color of clouds. Look at me! Show me your Owl eyes. Press your once warring hands into mine. Cup my mountainous feet in your palms. Hold my oceanic face close to yours. Exhale into my lifeless nostrils and revive me with your mana. Ravish me with your riddles of existence that question the widths and depths of the Vast Expanse and Wo-Man's quest for immortality. Enthrall me with tall tales of how you received each scar across your face, each battle you've had to fight, each river you've had to cross, each mountain you've had to climb, each monster you've had to slay, each fear you've had to overcome and the men and women embedded in the memory of your skin.

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Passage from Sia Figiel’s novel ‘Freelove’ (p.186-187)

Samoan Translation by Niusila Faamanatu-Eteuati (Lecturer Samoan Studies)

Pele ea – Pōuliuli. (E ‘ese lava Amelika, e leai se taimi pāganoa, ua ta leiloa atu fetu o le lagi. Ua ta lē iloa atu oe Ioage, ua e mou, mou, mou atu lava. Pau lava le auala ou te iloa atu ai oe, o le lē ufiufiina o le fā‘ata i le tūlua o po, e



matuā fili i mafaufau o nai o‘u tauusoga i Amelika, ma le lē iloa, o lo o e ola i totonu ia te a‘u, Ioage, o lo o e ola....

Ua umi le aso, ua umi na‘uā. O le sefulu ma le lua itulā ua tau lē mafai. Maimau pe ana lēai se lā i le lagi, ma fa‘a‘umatia e le māsina puao. Ou te alafa‘i i le fia māfuta ia te oe. Ua pei o se fugālaau a mamae, ua uma lo‘u ola i le oti lēleoa, talu ai le manatu i lo ta valavala ai.

A e latalata mai, ua ou lelavā, lelavā ona o le mānatunatu, i lou latalatala mai. Le mānatunatu i lou uuina o lo‘u lima, ma solomili atu o‘u tamatamā‘ilima i ou va-i-lima. Faaolaola lo‘u igoa i le ogātotonu o lo‘u alofilima, ma fai ai pea a‘o moei‘ini o‘u mata ma mafaufau i lau mānava mai i lo‘u ua!

E, le masina fana‘ē!

E, le fepulafi o le vanimonimo!

E, le ofoofogia o le vaopuanea!

E, le mano o fetu o le lagi!

Ua e ‘avea lo‘u tu‘inanau, i lou lalolagi o mafaufauga, ma faama‘ape atu i le vasa, ua ītea mālama i lagī, i lou taulagalaga ma le maoa‘e o lou fitāituga.

O a‘u o Inosia Alofafua Afatasi. O a‘u o lē itagia, alofafua, o le suli o le la, e lē mafa‘atusalia. O lo o o‘u tu i le alititai o le atumotu o mafaufauga, ma le matagi agi fīsaga, ua pa‘i mai i lo‘u tua, faatasi ma se pese lilo auaalofa i lo‘u tuālima, ao vala‘au atu, i ataata o le vaeluaga o le po.

Sau ia te a‘u po, sau si o‘u au pogisā, le toa ma le toe ulutaia o mafaufauga – lou tino masofasofa ma lou lauulu sinasina. Vaai mai ia te au! Faaali maia ou mata‘ilulu. Toe ‘oomi mai ou lima mālolosi i lo‘u lima. Faa‘ofu‘ofu atu o‘u alofivae tetele i ou alofilima. Opo atu o‘u foliga mai le atuvasa, iā te oe. Mānava maia se ola i o‘u pogaiisu, ma faaola mai ia te a‘u i lou malosi. Faaola mai ia te a‘u i au tupua lilo, e te mate‘ia ai le loloto ma le lautele o le faamemelo a le fafine. Faasufi mai a‘u i au talatalaga, e faatatau i le mau faailoga i ou foliga, o au taua na e tau ai, o vaitafe na e asaina, o mauga sa e a‘eina, o toa sa e fa‘a‘umatiaina, o mea taufaafefe ta‘itasi sa e faatoilaloina, faatasi ai ma fafine ma tamāloloa ua mamanuina i le pa‘u o lou tino.



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Lecturers from the School of Languages and Cultures who worked on various translations.