

**“FA’I PEA LE POU I FALEOLO, AE SU’E LE
I’A A LEAOSAVAI’I”:**

**A SAMOAN INTERPRETATION OF
GENESIS 42:6-17
USING NARRATIVE CRITICISM**

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ABSTRACT

Genesis 37-50, the story of Joseph and his family, conveys numerous themes, such as reconciliation, salvation and forgiveness. It has been studied by several scholars with different perspectives since antiquity. The purpose of this thesis is not a disregard for these early perspectives, but to bring an alternative perspective on the character of Joseph in Gen 42:6-17. In this thesis, I will bring perspective to the character of Joseph, from the Samoan proverbial saying *Fa'i pea le pou i Faleolo ae su'e le i'a a Leaosavai'i* (Break down the post of Faleolo and look for the fish of Leaosavai'i), with careful analysis of the text using Narrative Criticism. The Samoan proverb parallels in meaning to the text, as both highlight one aspect of life common that will be the focus of this thesis, that being, ambition or *naunau*.¹ Ambition is a characteristic that can be good for self development and for the greater good of society but if it is misdirected then it can prove to be dangerous. This case study therefore probes into Joseph's motive, and his ambition behind his awkward treatment of his brothers as mentioned in chapter 42.

¹ G. B. Milner, "Ambition," in *Samoan Dictionary* (Pasifika Press, 1992), 326. Ambition is a noun which is translated as *naunau*, its adjective form highlights a negative sense translated as *fia tele*. Therefore we could explained someone as a *fia tele* person.

DECLARATION

I declare that this work has not used without due acknowledgement of any material that has been previously submitted for a degree or diploma in another institution. I also declare that the work has not used any material, heard, or read, without proper acknowledgement of the source.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. S. A.', written over a horizontal line.

Signed: _____

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DEDICATION

To my two angels Grace and Litara

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Psalms 147:1 *“Praise the Lord! How good it is to sing praises to our God; for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.”*

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INTRODUCTION

The story of Joseph in Genesis 37-50 has long been scrutinized in various critical studies. It was traditionally interpreted and handed down from antiquity through prominent scholars of the enlightenment right through to contemporary scholarship.² It is a story which contains a “treasure of world literature.”³ This means that the story not only comprises of literary riches for readers but it contains useful applications for everyday life.⁴

Genesis 42 is understood as a reunification of Joseph and his brothers, and also a stepping-stone to reconciliation. In addition, it can be seen as an amalgamation of the Jacob clan. One would therefore expect a sign of reprieve and joy among the long parted siblings, especially that prior to this reunification the character of Joseph reveals a good moral character where God’s will had channelled through, but as the narrative reveals, the brothers were treated harshly. As such, the rationale behind Joseph’s actions does not seem all that obvious.

Prominent scholars on the book of Genesis provide diverse opinions on the rationale of Joseph. Scholars such as Von Rad provide a positive interpretation, suggesting that Gen 40-42 portray the wisdom of Joseph due to his unique ability to

² Donald K. McKIM, ed. *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters* (Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 1998), 1-16, 17, 23. The first part of the book stated the works of the early interpreters of the Bible in Antiquity time such as Athanasius and Augustine of Hippo. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 37-50*, trans. John J. Scullion S.J. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 19. Julius Wellhausen had his book on source division of the story Genesis 37-50. Recent scholars are mentioned later on in the following pages.

³ William D Ramey, "The Literary Genius of the Joseph Narrative," In the Beginning. org, <http://www.inthebeginning.org/oldtestament/genesis/joseph/literarygenius.pdf>; (Aug 11 2015).

⁴ E. Terrence Fretheim, "The Book of Genesis, Introduction, Commentary, and Reflection," in *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 630.

interpret mysteries and dreams.⁵ On the other side of the spectrum, authors like James Montgomery Boice, interpret Joseph's motive as an act of distrust since he had kept the memories of what had happened in chapter 37.⁶

This paper does not discount the views above but seeks to answer the questions that arise concerning Joseph's sudden change of character in the course of the Joseph narrative from an alternative perspective. Joseph's moral character has been a role model for readers of this story mainly due to his ability to reject temptation and withstand hardships, however chapter 42:6-17 introduces a different character of Joseph. I contend that Joseph had a particular ambition or could be translated as *naunau*, which he strived to achieve. It is a matter which I will seek to highlight from the Samoan proverbial saying: "*Fa'i pea le pou i Faleolo ae su'e le i'a a Leaosavai'i.*" (Break down the post in Faleolo, and look for the fish of Leaosavai'i.) It is a proverbial saying, which either encourages one to strive for one's goal and not lose sight through distractions and obstacles, or from an opposite view which is to deny one's need for someone or something. In this paper a negative notion of *naunau* would utilize to consider Joseph's reaction. Genesis 42: 6 – 17 will therefore be the focal text for this rereading, and it also addresses contemporary related issues within families.

This thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter One focuses on a review of scholarly works on the Joseph's story particularly in the study text. Chapter Two consists of the study of the Samoan proverbial saying, in light of the theme of ambition or being *naunau*. Brief discussion of the narrative methodology would follow by. In Chapter

⁵ Ramey, "The Literary Genius of the Joseph Narrative" 3,4.

⁶ James Montgomery Boice, "God and the Conscience Part 2: The Pain of Harsh Treatment," in *Genesis Living by Faith* (Michigan: Baker Books, 1998), 994.

Three, a narrative exegesis of the text would be made from the Samoan Perspective. And in Chapter Four, the rereading analysis and the conclusion of this study formulates.

CHAPTER 1

SCHOLARLY REVIEW & ANALYSIS

1.1 Scholarly Review

Joseph's story has long been a subject of many discussions and interpretations which traditionally viewed this corpus from the theological perspective. But recent methodologies saw a shift in beliefs and thus resulted in diverse theories.

1.1.1 James Montgomery Boice

From a Christian perspective he regarded Joseph's action towards his brothers in chapter 42:6-17 as an act of integrity for their misconduct in chapter 37:18-36.¹ The brothers' earlier encounter with Joseph was extreme which requires a lesson for them to learn. He added that since Joseph is God's man whom God's voice channelled through, God also through Joseph punished the brothers. Joseph's actions were connected to the events where the brothers plotted to kill him. Thus his interpretation reveals that the brothers' sin in chapter 37 is remembered here in chapter 42 and God through Joseph punished them. However Gen 42:6-17, God was not mentioned until verse 18 when Joseph changes his mind from the previous testing he had mentioned.

1.1.2 Herman Gunkel

A prominent form critic in his commentary on Genesis concluded that Genesis 37-50 is a short story or a narrative prose.² He recognized the story as a unified piece of literature, despite in his attempt of fragmenting the narrative. He finds out that

¹ Ibid., 994, 95, 96.

² Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis* (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1997), 422.

chapter 42 begins the second part of the narrative which comprises of the encounters of the brothers and Joseph. Joseph had executed a purposeful trial with an ambiguous intention for the brothers, and incidents in chapter 37 remembered, but not revenge.³ Nevertheless he added that one should not treat Joseph as a Christian whom an easy forgiveness is to be expected, and any Christian ideas should be avoided. Therefore the interests behind Joseph's intention and also the notion of treating the story as a unified narrative would be useful in later consideration. Despite that he comprehends Joseph acts as for a good ending of their conflict but, he had also stated the obscurity of Joseph motive. Therefore he appears like he is giving a chance for reconsideration that Joseph is not a Christian that could easily forgive the brothers

1.1.3 Gerard von Rad

Argues that the Joseph story contains wisdom literature and pointed out strong didactic motive of the story as for instance is the rising of the character of Joseph and enduring hardship in chapters 39-41.⁴ However, he omitted the harsh treatment executed by Joseph in chapter 42 without any wisdom element. Donald B. Redford as cited by Lindsay Wilson critics that chapters 37 and 42-45, Joseph portrays no wisdom element at all.⁵ James L. Crenshaw criticised that von Rad's argument is vague in terms of an appropriate method.⁶ Therefore Redford could simply means that chapters 37 and 42 reveals the Joseph's was out of character

1.1.4 Claus Westermann

³ Ibid.

⁴ Gerard von Rad, *Genesis a Commentary by Von Rad* (Philadelphia: SCM Press Ltd, 1972), 367,437,39.

⁵ Lindsay Wilson, *Joseph Wise and Otherwise, the Intersection of Wisdom and Covenant in Genesis 37-50* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2004), 10.

⁶ Ibid., 9,10.

View the hardship which the brothers encountered with Joseph in chapters 42-45 as deliberately done by the narrator as a means of access toward their reunited scene that follows. Significantly in this study, he states that “it is a misunderstanding of the narrative to prescind from the course of events and to judge Joseph’s conduct morally, to defend it, or to gloss it over.”⁷ In his view this hard treatment by Joseph is a negative reaction rather than an appropriate move as many have perceived. He supported J. Skinner’s negative view about assuming that the writer traced all this for a continuous ethical purpose. He seriously considered Joseph’s harsh words playing an important part in the narrative as a whole. The mood of the story emphasised that could felt by any thorough reader. Therefore how could the readers make meaning with this sort of biblical text?

1.1.5 Gordon Wenham

Stated that the narrative underline the disparity between Joseph and his brothers in various ways. He had brought the bonds within the family which reveals the failure of Jacob since he had only favours Rachael sons regardless of the others. He even mentioned the gap which left out by the narrator for the readers themselves to find the meanings. One contributing point of Joseph’s untruthful, was that he had stated earlier that God has made him forgets but in this chapter he brought the issue again.⁸ As a result Joseph was not the only important character in the development of the story. And as mentioned in the introduction, chapter 42 is an integral part of the narrative, due to its relation to the previous and following chapters.

⁷ Westermann, *Genesis 37-50*, 107.

⁸ Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary Genesis 16-50* vol. vol 2 (Dallas: Word Books, 1994), 405.

1.1.6 Terence E. Fretheim

Supported those who were for Joseph by arguing that chapter 42 mirrors a testing that requires remembrance of their deeds in chapter 37. The dream he had dreamed of in chapter 37 comes to realization, but there was an issue that it has to be settle. Hence the narrator's idea of the brothers unaware of Joseph, benefits Joseph for his interrogation to be conducted. Therefore he uses the artificial relationship with his brothers to directly give them the harsh treatment.⁹ Interestingly in his work is the structure of the narrative, thus it highlights or strengthen the unity of the story.

1.1.7 Recent Scholarly views

Wilson's approach, considered the whole story of Genesis 37-50 as a single independent unit from the Pentateuch.¹⁰ This resulted from synchronising the scholars' view on the narrative. However he pointed out the biggest question why Joseph set up a test.¹¹ Interestingly he even cited scholars whom negatively interpreted Joseph motive as a form of revenge.¹² Hyun C. P. Kim read the story in his article as a Diaspora narrative for the implied readers of the Persian period. He had revealed the importance of Joseph and Judah's role in the story. He had emphasised as a theme the importance of love within relationships as God loves humanity.¹³ J. Gordon Mcconville had useful insights in his article which also plays a part in the wisdom elements of the story. His approach was not bias to any since he compared Joseph and the brothers in the

⁹ Fretheim, "The Book of Genesis, Introduction, Commentary, and Reflection," 627, 28, 29.

¹⁰ Wilson, *Joseph Wise and Otherwise, the Intersection of Wisdom and Covenant in Genesis 37-50*, 44,45.

¹¹ Ibid., 141,42.

¹² Ibid., 145.A. Wilvsky's book of Assimilation versus Separation, and Peter D Miscall's article which compares the character of Joseph and Jacob in the JSOT

¹³ Hyun Chul Paul Kim, "Reading the Joseph Story (Genesis 37-50) as a Diaspora Narrative," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 75, no. 2 (2013): 219-38.

development of their characters within the story.¹⁴ Aaron Koller historical approach in his commentary of Esther portrayed a comparative study of the Jews diaspora heroes such as Daniel, Esther with Joseph. He revealed that Esther was more or less the same with Joseph that it had negative effects on its earlier readers but Daniel is greater than Joseph in their interpretative potential.¹⁵

1.2 Analysis

From the different views mentioned above, there's a variety of perspective regarding the motif behind Joseph's action within their first encounter with his brothers in chapter 42. Other scholars and commentators like Gunkel and Wenham left Joseph's motive in chapter 42 are obscured of a precise interpretation, although many such as Boice, Fretheim and Wilson were given an interpretation that Joseph had tested his brothers. The story of Joseph (Gen 37-50) is recognised by Gunkel, Fretheim and Wilson as a unified piece of work that consist various themes. Very likely for this research was Von Rad and Westermann discovery that the character of Joseph within the study text contraries to his moral character revealed in the previous chapters. As Westermann disagrees with any attempt of concealing the attitude of Joseph presented in Gen 42. Recent scholars stated were focussed on the story in its present form rather concerning on its historical analysis. This shift of focus serves the reader's concern rather than a scientific approach which search for authorship and history. Also critical scholars like Kim and Mcconville widens their characters' analysis that proven the importance of all aspect of the narrative in accomplishing God's salvific purpose for his people. Gunkel and Wenham portrayed the significant placement of the study text

¹⁴ J. Gordon Mcconville, "Forgiveness as Private and Public Act: A Reading of the Biblical Joseph Narrative," *ibid.* 75, No. 4: 635-48.

¹⁵ Aaron Koller, *Esther in Ancient Jewish Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 81-85, 125.

within the narrative. From these various perspectives participated they had enabled the formulation of this thesis. These studies therefore formulate a ground of this interpretation of Joseph's motives in Gen 42:1-17. The above analysis confirmed that Joseph had implemented an intention, which means he was putting his interests first rather than the need of his brothers that they were separated for a long time. Thus this thesis argued that it was Joseph's *naunau* which grounds the harsh treatment of his brothers.

CHAPTER 2

A SAMOAN VIEW OF AMBITION & NARRATIVE CRITICISM

2.1 Introduction

Most of the Samoan proverbial sayings originate from either legends and myths or social engagements of the people in their everyday life. These engagements include sports, fishing, hunting, cooking and other social activities. Nowadays, these proverbial sayings are mainly used in oratory and also in teaching wisdom to the younger generations.

The purpose of these proverbial sayings is to provide comfort, encouragement, praise, and even contempt. They promote a sagacious understanding to all facets of Samoan life or *Faasamoa* both in the communal setting and in the family or *aiga*.

This chapter will focus on one aspect of Samoan life, that being ambition (*naunau*). Elders encourage the young to strive for excellence and remain ambitious for the betterment of family. This is evident through the Samoan proverbial saying '*Fa'i pea le pou i Faleolo, ae su'e le i'a a Leaosavai'i*' or "break down the post of Faleolo and look for the fish of Leaosavai'i."¹ It is a saying that implicates the need to focus on ones goals whilst avoiding any obstacles or distraction.

The discussion of this Samoan proverbial saying will highlight its origin, meaning, use and significance in the contemporary Samoan context. The structure of the chapter will reflect this exploration. Firstly, the origin of the saying is described

¹ Eric Schultz, *Samoan Proverbial Expressions* (Suva: Polynesian Press, 1980), 24.

through reciting of a legend that is generally believed to be the source of this proverb. Secondly, the meaning of the saying will be explained through the discussion of some important aspects of the legend. Finally, the significance and use of the saying in the contemporary Samoan context will be explored.

2.2 Fa'i Pea le Pou i Faleolo ae Su'e le I'a a Leaosavai'i: A Version of Its Origin

There is a Samoan saying: "E tala lasi Samoa" (Samoa has different versions of one story).² The story in which this proverbial saying originated from is of no exception, however the version of the story that is generally accepted by orators originates from Satuimalufilufi: a village west of Upolu in the province of A'ana.

It is told that one day, Leaosavai'i (literally meaning 'the head of Savaii), a high chief from Savai'i³ visited the village of Satuimalufilufi (Faleolo).⁴ When he arrived, his friend Tuia'ana Tamaalelagi Lilomaiava,⁵ a high chief of A'ana was with his carpenters constructing his new *fale* (Samoan styled house), and at the same time men who had been fishing arrived with their catch.⁶ Tuia'ana, as a form of respect and

²Mulitalo Maulolo Tavita, "Interview at His Falelauniu Resident," (August 17 2015). a Samoan Cultural Consultant, Tuala Selu Moevale, "Interview at Samoa College," (August 7 2015). a Senior Samoan Teacher in Samoa College. These two chiefs have minor differences in their versions of the story that does not violate the actual event that had happened.

³ The Samoan islands consist of four inhabited islands. These are Savaii, Upolu, Manono and Apolima. Savaii is the biggest island but Apia, the capital of Samoa, is on Upolu.

⁴ Moevale, "Interview at Samoa College." He states that Malietoa is the head of Savaii or Leaosavai'i; Tavita, "Interview at His Falelauniu Resident." He significantly mentioned that Faleolo was the name of the high chief's house and it is where the name of the village of Faleolo originates from.

⁵ Schultz, *Samoan Proverbial Expressions*, 24. He said Lilomaiava was the high chief, while the two interviews emphasised that the major title of the high chief was Tuiaana who was the king, however Tavita, "Interview at His Falelauniu Resident." He states that Lilomaiava could be one title of the chief but he prefers that since the incident happens in Aana its best to prefer the name Tuiaana. Moevale, "Interview at Samoa College." Moevale adds Tamaalelagi as another name to this same person. In an analysis, despite these different views what is important was that they also had major similarities that are very significant in telling the story.

⁶ Schultz mentioned that it was the high chief Tuiaana who went fishing while the interviews states that it was not but some others that relate to Tuiaana This in line with the cultural understanding that the high chiefs are not supposed to prepare or find his own food.

showing his hospitality took and laid the catch before Leaosavai'i. While he was spreading the catch, Tuia'ana told Leaosavai'i to pick any fish he wanted. Leaosavai'i then picked a little fish which was believed to be a *tifitifi* (butterfly fish). However the *tifitifi* was still alive and it sprang up and fell into a deep hole of one of the post of Tuiaana's *fale*. As this house was new and still under construction many of the posts have not been refilled properly with soil or rocks, therefore the fish went deep inside the hole and was difficult to retrieve. Lilomaiaava does a profound act of kindness and asks Leaosavai'i whether he still wants his fish of which he replies with a 'yes'.

Since the fish was deep inside the hole, the post needed to be taken out for the fish to be retrieved therefore Lilomaiaava puts Leaosavai'i's want before his own and tells the men to take out the post and find the fish '*Fa'i pea le pou i faleolo as su'e le i'a a Leaosavai'i.*' He does not think of the enormity of the task or that it will ruin his newly built *fale* but he demands that the fish be retrieved to appease his friend Leaosavai'i⁷

2.3 The Proverb's meaning

As mentioned earlier, this proverbial saying implicates a focus on one's ambition. To draw meaning from this proverbial saying one must understand the characters involved and the cultural significance of everything mentioned in the story.

2.3.1 Tuiaana Lilomaiaava Tamaalelagi and Leaosavai'i Malietoa

Tuiaana is the high chief of A'ana. Leaosavai'i's name as mentioned above signifies his high-ranking status through the title Malietoa. These two high chiefs were of equal standing. Tuiaana is depicted as an exemplary host who treats his friends with

⁷ Tavita, "Interview at His Falelauniu Resident; Moevale, "Interview at Samoa College." They give similar implication of the story here, they had mentioned that the *tufuga* (carpenters), the family and most importantly is the house of the high chief would be dismantled because Tuiaana wants to find the fish of his friend from Savaii. Moevale added that the post and all of the timber were from Safata and Siumu.

the highest regard, respect and kindness. This was apparent as he held no regard for his house and had the post taken out just to retrieve the fish his friend desired. Leaosavai'i, on the other hand is depicted as being hard to please in that he did not see the post as an obstacle to obtaining the modest *tifitifi*.

2.3.2 The Fish vs. The Post

In any Samoan function or gathering, food should be announced (*folafola*) so that everyone is made aware of what has been prepared. When the announcement is complete, those present will show to appreciation to whoever carries out this task. However, failure to *folafola* may leave the guests guessing whether something is amiss or that the host is not happy. Therefore, in spreading out the catch Lilomaiva was doing his part as the host of making known what he had to Leaosavai'i. And to do so in his house shows how much respect he had for his friend.

The two objects of the proverbial saying—the fish and the post—differ largely in cultural significance. The fish, the *tifitifi*, is a small fish compared to the many fish that are found in the oceans of Samoa. In Samoan culture, this fish would not have been considered worthy of preparation for a meal for those of high rank. A selection would have been amongst the *malauli* (bluefin and black trevally) or *anae* (mullet). Other than its attractive colours it really does not have any cultural significance, which is why it is puzzling why Leaosavai'i was so keen as to have it.

On the other hand, the *fale* is largely significant. Unlike European enclosed houses, the post of any Samoan open *fale* is of great importance not only to its structure but culturally. Every post is crucial for the stability and strength of the house, to withstand harsh environmental conditions that it may encounter. If one post is removed, stability is breached and the threat of collapse is imminent. The Samoan house is one's

shelter, place of comfort and peace. It is where the family is cared for, the place they come together to bond in love and harmony. It is also the protection of the most valued family possession and belongings. High chief's houses have names from family or village origin which serve as an identity to the family. For every house, posts have cultural implications for the chiefs. In particular, they signify the sitting structure of the house for any *fesilafaiga* (culture meeting) such as village meetings and *ava* (kava) ceremonies. Each chief of a village has a seating marked by a corresponding post. For instance, only the *matai alii* (high chief) sit at the side post of the house (*matua tala*), whilst the *matai tulafale* (orators) sit at the front posts (*tala luma*). The *taupou* (high chief's daughter) also has her allocated post with the untitled men at the back of the *fale*. Any act of violating this 'post'-defined structural format of the *fale* would cause disharmony within the gathering and lead to heavy penalties.⁸

It can be said therefore that from this comparison of cultural significance that the *tifitifi* fish is nowhere near in importance than that of the post of the *fale*. This is a significant contrast, because it highlights Leaosavai'i's selfishness in not being deterred that the house be impaired for an insignificant fish. In contrast, Tuia'ana regarded his friendship worth more than his valued *fale* and ensured the fish was retrieved.

The meaning of the word *pea*⁹ in the English translation of the proverb is not fully brought out. *Pea* in context means to breakdown the post 'anyway.' It heightens the sense that Tuia'ana did not care about the post. This further supports the impression

⁸ The two interviews both agree that the house of the King or Tuiaana is very important in the Samoan culture and especially the house is not yet finished and that all of Aana were contributing to its making since it was the house of their king. Tavita added that once the house is under construction the *tufuga* had a *tapu* (taboo) that there is no room for interruption in their work even the people of the family

⁹ George Pratt, *A Samoan Dictionary, English and Samoan and Samoan and English* (Apia: The London Missionary Society Press, 1862), 165. It means still, continue or yet

that Tuia'ana is a friendship honouring man, that he holds back nothing to please his honoured guest.

2.4 The Proverb's Nuance in its Significance and Use

Different nuances can be drawn from this proverb however, in light of its meaning commonly accepted in Samoan oratory, this paper will emphasize that of Leaosavai'i's ambition.

2.4.1 Leaosavai'i's ambition or *naunau*

To breakdown the post of the ongoing construction work is a massive ask on the builders' side. As they not only have to stop construction but to take out the post and replace it. It is not an easy task as the whole *fale* has been compromised. Therefore Leaosavai'i's wish for the fish is a radical implication of *naunau*. Leaosavai'i will stop at nothing to ensure that he is satisfied, but on a negative side, it provides negative ramifications as noted above. Nevertheless, the idea behind this proverbial saying is to get people to think of *naunau*, through the lens of someone who will stop at nothing to succeed.

2.5 Concluding remarks

The proverbial saying '*Fa'i pea le pou i Faleolo, ae su'e le i'a a Leaosavai'i*' holds various lessons for the way one should live his or her life. The emphasis on Leaosavai'i's *naunau* and disregard for his friend Tuia'ana's most valued *fale*, teaches us that *naunau* is good however when it becomes unquenchable to the stage where values are disregarded and loved ones are made to suffer, then it endangers harmony in a family or society.

In communal living, which is common in Samoa, possessions are shared; conflicts are discussed and resolved in the village meeting. These are all done so that every individual is cared for and not left wanting. Tuia'ana denied his own wants and desires and put Leaosavai'i's wishes before his. This is needed in society because when there is respect and love for one another then relationships and the bond inside a family or society becomes unbreakable.

This Samoan understanding of being ambitious would be the lens of the interpretation of Gen 42:6-17. Thus understanding the story mentioned above would help to reread the biblical passage, for this paper's case the ambition or *naunau* of Leaosavai'i will be applied to interpret Joseph's reaction in Genesis 42:6-17. In the process narrative criticism would be articulated as a method of reading the text.

2.6 Methodology: Narrative Criticism

Before the study embarks on the methodology first, it is crucial to apprehend what narrative is in meaning.

2.6.1 Meaning of 'Narrative'

'Narrative' is an account of a series of events, which can be either fictional or nonfictional.¹⁰ Richard N. Soulen and R. Kendall Soulen define the word as an adjective, denoting a part of an account.¹¹ It is not a full account of an event, but presents a certain point of view. Biblical narratives consist of a number of narratives as Soulen and Soulen contend. Gunkel specifies narrative (or prose) as a distinctive literary type "different from other kinds of biblical discourses such as lyric poetry, proverbs, or

¹⁰ Encarta Dictionary, Microsoft, Redmond.

¹¹ Richard N. Soulen and R. Kendall Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* (Louisville: Westminster 2001), 118.

law, which communicate through images propositions, or admonitions.”¹² Moreover, Fewell and Gunn maintain that, “[it] communicates meaning through the imitation of human life, the temporal ordering of human speech and action. It constructs a verbal world that centres on human characters, their relations, desires, and actions in time.”¹³

In terms of the story in Gen 37-50 it is certainly a narrative.¹⁴ It portrays issues and conflicts of reality, as communicated through its characters, namely Joseph, his brothers and Jacob. Gary Edward Shnittjer gives an interesting remark that “biblical narrative is a theological interpretation of the events that had happened.”¹⁵ It suggests that with each biblical narrative, there are theological markers, which the reader must search for.

2.6.2 Narrative Criticism

David Rhoads contends that the importance of Narrative Criticism is equal to other biblical criticisms such as textual, form, and redaction criticisms.¹⁶ It emerged in the late 20th century due to obsessive investigations by historical critics who tended to neglect the final form of the text. Soulen and Soulen stated that it is “less a methodology than a focus of inquiry employing and contributing to the methods and insights of structuralism, rhetorical criticism, reader-response criticism.”¹⁷

¹² Danna Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn, "Narrative Hebrew," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol. 4, ed. David Noel Freedman, et al. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1023-27.

¹³ Ibid., 1023.

¹⁴ Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (United States of America: Basic Books A member of the Persus Books Group, 1981), 137-40.

¹⁵ Gary Edward Shnittjer, *The Torah Story, an Apprenticeship on the Pentateuch* (Michigan: Zondervan, 2006), 14.

¹⁶ David Rhoads, "Narrative Criticism," in *The New Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible* vol 4 ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, et al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009), 222, 23.

¹⁷ Soulen and Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 118.

The similarity between these criticisms with narrative criticism is apparent in the shift of emphasis away from searching for the author's historical community to a search for meaning in the passage itself and its effect on the readers.¹⁸ Grant Osborne explains this shift of focus as the ignoring of authorial intention, textual historicity and the sacredness of the text.¹⁹ Narrative critics therefore addressed the unity and coherence of the text by focusing on the dynamic interplay between a specific passage and the larger literary unit as a whole whilst focusing on the holistic, sequential experience of an audience.²⁰ This study gathers the ways in which the impacts of the narrative may confirm, subverted or transformed the world of the audiences.

There are isolated incidents of a narrative as all incidents are significant parts to the narrative, so one must read a narrative attentively. Adopting Soulen and Soulen's definition, literary questions would be used to analyse the various configurations of plot, the means and methods of characterization, and the functions of the narrative settings. There are also rhetorical devices employed by the narrator to tell the story, such as repetition, irony, metaphors and imagery are relevant for analysis. The role of the narrator and the way which the narrator's point of view incorporates the diverse points of view of the characters, are also important.²¹ It is important to consider that Biblical writers' use of historical narrative provides mainly a nonfictional function. I will explain briefly common aspects of a narrative that are critical to read the Joseph narrative, such as plot, character, narrator, setting and other features.

¹⁸ Arthur Walker-Jones, "Hebrew Narrative," in *Hebrew for Biblical Interpretation* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature 2003).

¹⁹ Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral, a Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Illinois Inter Varsity Press, 1991), 164, 65.

²⁰ Rhoads, "Narrative Criticism," 222, 23.

²¹ Gunn, "Narrative Hebrew," 1024.

2.6.3 Plot

The plot of the narrative joins all incidents of the story that may or may not be in chronological order.²² It consists of three major parts; the first part consists of a conflict or exposition at the beginning. Secondly, is the climax within the body or the middle of the narrative, and thirdly, is the closure of the plot, which aims at providing a resolution. There could be several climactic points in the plot, but should not hinder the narrative's credibility as narratives could encompass separate plots. Alter and David Gunn endorse that the Joseph story is a unified narrative consisting of various stories that all partake in the overall story.²³

2.6.4 Character

Jones uncovers two types of characters: flat and round characters.²⁴ The former have only one or two personalities, while the latter is more complex, it fluctuates as the narrative progresses. Character's description in Hebrew narrative could be ambiguous.²⁵ But Jones reveals another way of characterizing was by considering the relation of speech to action, and its style.²⁶ Other significant parts of a narrative were the desires and ambition that influence the development of a narrative.²⁷

2.6.5 Narrator

Walker-Jones defines the narrator as "the person who tells the story. The narrator may or may not be identical with the author, and may or may not be a character in the

²² Walker-Jones, "Hebrew Narrative," 189-90.

²³ Gunn, "Narrative Hebrew," 1024; Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 3,4.

²⁴ Walker-Jones, "Hebrew Narrative," 190.

²⁵ William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Jr Robert L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Kermit A. Eckleberger (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1993), 433.

²⁶ Walker-Jones, "Hebrew Narrative," 190.

²⁷ Gunn, "Narrative Hebrew," 1025.

story.”²⁸ Narrative directive information is presented through the narrator’s point of view.

2.6.6 Setting

The setting is the time, place and environment of a story or play. In biblical stories it often occurs in places associated with religious and political significance. Joseph’s story presents various settings that could play an important part in interpretation.

2.6.7 Other Narrative Features

Soulen and Soulen once mentioned the close relationship of a narrative study and Literary criticism and others such as structural and rhetorical criticisms.²⁹ So it is no coincidence that narrative criticism adapts features such as repetition, chiasmus, inclusio and time and culture gaps.³⁰

For this research not all would be included due to lack of space and time. In this reading exegetical work for the text has to be done accordingly to this narrative methodology.

²⁸ Walker-Jones, "Hebrew Narrative," 190.

²⁹ Soulen and Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 118-19.

³⁰ Shnittjer, *The Torah Story, an Apprenticeship on the Pentateuch*, 14, 15,16.

CHAPTER 3

NARRATIVE EXEGESIS OF GENESIS 42:6-17 FROM THE NAUNAU OR AMBITION PERSPECTIVE

3.1 Introduction

Firstly an outline would be drawn in order to retrieve a clear placement of the studied text within the whole narrative.

3.1.1 Outline of Chapter 37 to 50

As mentioned earlier, one feature of narratives, which is commonly used in the biblical narratives, is the *chiasmus*. I contend that the structure of Chapters 37 to 50 follows a chiastic pattern that resonates with the narrative framework as argued by the scholars whom I mentioned in chapter 2.

- A. Joseph versus his brothers (37)
 - B. Judah and Joseph's failures (38, 39)
 - C. Joseph have had two prisoners received their fate (40, 41)
 - D. Pharaoh blesses Joseph (41)
 - E. The famine brought Jacob's son to Egypt (42: v 1-6)
 - F. Joseph's harsh Treatment of the brothers (42: 6- 44) *Inclusio*
 - χ God's Plan differs from man's plan (45: 5-9)
 - F' Pharaoh's lenient Treatment of the brothers (45:16-28) *Inclusio*
 - E' Blessing brought Jacob's family to Egypt (46)
 - D' Jacob blesses Pharaoh's (47)
 - C' Joseph's two sons received their blessings (48)
 - B' Judah and Joseph distinctive blessings (49)
 - A' Joseph united with his brothers (50)

The *chiastic* structure above is indicated by the letters A to F and mirrored by F' to A'. This depicts how the narrative develops from its *exposition* (point A) to its *climax*

(point χ) and ended up with a *resolution* (point F').¹ Each letter (A - F) matches with its own (A' - F'), in a reverse manner, example in point A, Joseph and his brothers separated matches with A' they united. This reveals how the narrative ascends to its turning point and descends to its closure. In point F and F' it shows an *inclusio* frame that encloses the turning point which signifies Pharaoh's action appears appropriate to the readers than Joseph's actions.²

The study text at point F, is sitting next to the centre. The harsh treatment of the brothers corresponds to its opposite, which is the lenient treatment of the brothers by Pharaoh. This comparison reveals that Joseph treated his brothers otherwise, and the treatment was not welcoming. In an attempt for a closer view of the study text, uniquely from the first part of the chiasmic structure above (A-E) it gives a plot with a chiasm.

3.1.2 Plot, Chapters 37 – 42 in *Chiasm*

A. Brothers' harsh Treatment(37)

B. Judah's fall and bore two sons (twin) (38)

. χ Intervention of God (39-40)

B'. Joseph's rise and bore two sons (41)

A'. Joseph's harsh treatment (42)

This chiasm could be similar to the first chiasm interpretation. For example the reverse manner in the corresponding points. A – A' depicts the reversing of the harsh treatment between the characters (Joseph and his brothers). In the same pair an *inclusio*

¹ Ibid., 14,15. Exposition is the conflict which starts the development of the story, resolution encloses the story when it comes to its ending

² Walker-Jones, "Hebrew Narrative," 190. *Inclusio* reveals repetition of features or elements at the beginning to encircle a unit or simply framing a specific text.

could also be drawn. This could pinpoint that this part is a unit of the narrative. Therefore Joseph's character in chapter 37 would be revisited and treated as a stepping stone to the study text.

This accumulates the development of the story until the story reaches its turning point, which reveals God's intervention into human conduct.

3.2 Joseph's *naunau* starts from Chapter 37

In verse 2, the NRSV translation had mentioned that Joseph was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, not only that, he was just seventeen years old. His insignificant character here contrasted with his actions, for example he made a bad report of the older brothers. His immature reputation and disrespectful attitude was that anything he does is right in his thoughts. Verse 3 which follows stated that the father loved Joseph more than anyone of his children. The reason of Joseph being favoured was because he was the child of Jacob's old age. This reason would be more reasonable if we treat this story not chronologically followed by the story of the birth of Benjamin and the death of Rachael in the previous chapter of Genesis. Also in Jacob's respond to Joseph's dream that follows he had mentioned Joseph's mother meaning that she is still alive. And if we considered the story of Benjamin's birth in chapter 35 we could there reflect that probably Rachael was still alive while Benjamin was not yet born. Once this sentence is read, it has to be understood that Joseph has been favoured by his father because he was the youngest.

3.2.1 Dreams that serves Joseph's personal interest

Joseph had dreams revealing his interests. This is so because his dreams differ from Pharaoh's and the prisoners' dreams. Joseph did not mention any act of God in its interpretation, although his brothers interpreted it for themselves. But neither the

narrator nor Joseph responded to the brother's interpretation if it was misinterpreted. It therefore discloses that the narrator is letting the characters revealed their point of view for the readers' interpretation. Thus the brothers and Jacob's interpretations was right in Joseph's mind. This idea of God being absent was also mentioned by commentators that the dreams of Joseph in relations with his brothers were an exception.³ The absence of God could therefore portray his self-motivation character. He in this time got a feeling of being favoured and reliable by his father for his report; the father had given him the taste of not being inferior to anyone of his brothers. Consequently his dreams revealed that he is superior to his brothers. The dreams had made the brothers more jealous since they know that there is a possibility, because Joseph is favoured by the father more than any of them. The Jewish process of elections would be no more to their family, but Joseph is the youngest of the eleven brothers not including Benjamin. Although that he is the elder of Rachael's sons but there were others before him. It therefore suggests that he want to surpass the birth rights of the sons of Bilhah, sons of Zilpah and the sons of Leah. He is also just a teenager, thus how could he conduct his role as head of the more experienced people. Therefore we could suggest that the character of Joseph revealed here is lack of respect for his brothers.

3.2.2 Joseph's *naunau* which causes conflicts

In verse 11, the father kept Joseph's dream in mind, could give the readers an impression that the father is reconsidering the causes of the radicle dreams Joseph had. And what he had kept in mind has been revealed in his next action. What follows could be the driven reasons why Jacob sent him to his brothers. In verse 13 to verse 14

³ Charles R. Swindoll and Roy B. Zuck, eds., *Understanding Christian Theology* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publisher, 2003), 30.

And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock at Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." He answered, "Here I am." So he said to him, "Go now, see if it is well with your brothers and with the flock; and bring word back to me."⁴

It is possible that Jacob here is giving Joseph a chance to exercise dominion upon his brothers, as he had kept the matter in mind. Jacob initiates Joseph's actions by asking the rhetorical question in verse 13. Joseph's respond to Jacob "here I am" shows that Joseph was willing and it was a pleasure for him. It is very likely that Joseph again is looking for reports of his brothers.

3.2.3 The Brothers act of Defense (Gen 37: 18-36)

When the brothers saw Joseph, their hatred of him provokes even more because ever since their fear of Joseph's dream of dictatorship have had with them, the image of Joseph was more like a spy willing to sustain his place in their father's heart, by making bad reports of them. As mentioned above Joseph is now exercising his dream. In verse 19 "They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; [...] and we shall see what will become of his dreams."" Joseph was called the dreamer here, giving the readers the interpretation to make, that Joseph is now going to fulfil his dream. So they did what they could have done to avoid Joseph from fulfilling his personal dream of *naunau*. In chapter 37 alone it can be seen as a single plot either. Its climax could be where Jacob supports the controversy by allowing Joseph to do what he had wanted. And in the resolution it was a cause of another effect which impacts the development of the whole narrative. Here we could see that the brother's poor conduct of Joseph was seen as an act of self defense and were considering the safety of the family.

⁴ New Revised Standard Version, "Genesis," in *The Holy Bible* (China Hendrickson Publishers Edition, 2008), 26.

3.3 Joseph's *naunau* within Gen 42:6-17

As an *inclusio* with chapter 37 the story once again shifts to its original setting. The reader therefore could notice the difference between the two settings (Chapters 37 and 42). Joseph is now elevated into a high position by Pharaoh. His moral character is also surfaced, since his act of rejection of Potiphar's wife and his wisdom which interprets Pharaoh's dream in the previous chapters. He had a family, Egyptian wife and children. All the luxuries that he had were totally opposite to his father and brother's situation.

Thus it contrasted with the beginning of this chapter that his family in Canaan, his father and brothers now were desperate for food to survive. The beginning of chapter 42 raises the reader's curiosity of Joseph's reaction to his brothers if they were to meet again.

3.3.1 Gen 42: 6-17 Joseph Encounters his Brothers

In verse 6, the two parties now finally come to meet. Notice how the brothers approached the governor without knowing that he was their brother Joseph. They showed a just attitude that anyone should do to someone with high rank without realising that Joseph is the one confronting with them.

Uniquely in this dialogue of characters is the role of the dream in chapter 37 that was suspended throughout until now. The dreams which Joseph had interpreted both in prison and in front of Pharaoh, were clearly stated by himself that interpretation belongs to God, thus the dreams comes to realisation. However, his own dreams now remembered, but his dreams were not interpreted in the formula used by the narrator to explained the prisoners and Pharaoh's dreams. Therefore the reader here could have a glue of what is going to happen. Joseph here as intended by the narrator remembers the

dream and manipulates his earthly power to make his dreams come to realisation. His action here could reveal how curious and ambitious he was. All of the memories he has had since he started to make use of his power to conduct harsh treatment of his brothers. Only his first dream had come to full realisation but the last one was not since he had mentioned eleven stars, sun and the moon.

This could provide the reader how personal Joseph's dreams are. Therefore one could have said that it is uncertain whether he had any dreams or he was using it to insult his brothers in the beginning of the narrative.

3.3.2 Conflict arises from Joseph's *naunau*

Interestingly in the use of the different titles for the brothers, in verse 5 the brothers were named as the sons of Israel, but in verse 6 the brothers were entitled as the brothers of Joseph. This reveals that the narrator here is giving the irony that the brothers should love and unite rather than fight against each other. Joseph knew his brothers but in light of chapter 37 he hereby wanted to bring back the events which had happened. His dreams were revealed by the narrator that he remembered. This gives the reader an insight of the relationship of his dream to what is going to happen. Joseph disguises himself. The readers therefore question whether Joseph would forgive or punish his brothers.

Disguising himself from his brothers could be interpreted as putting a barrier between them or setting him aside. He finds the chance to take control of his own brothers and proves them that his attitude was just in chapter 37. He even accused them of being spies, and to see the nakedness of the land, that is quite similar to how the brothers treated them in chapter 37. Therefore one reason why Joseph as a character

recalls the events in chapter 37 which is presented by the narrator was to let the readers know that Joseph is continuing his ambitious character in chapter 37.

The brothers were giving valuable answers to defend themselves however Joseph still insisted that they were spies. He even gave an Egyptian vowed that as Pharaoh lives, this portrays an image of Joseph that he undergoes a complete change, and intends to separate from the brothers. The brothers were all kept in prison for three days, thus this mean that the narrator had given the readers an understanding that Joseph is letting them know of his power.

3.4 Development of *naunau* within the Plot.

The plot mentioned above has been embodied by an *extended echo effect* which revealed Joseph's *naunau* within this first part of the narrative chapters 37-42.⁵ Thus it happens to be repeated throughout the different settings of the narrative.⁶ Joseph had experienced favourable times followed by unfavourable times. He had been promoted in status several times then chased by a certain fall. First it started from the outset of the Joseph narrative where he had been favoured by his father among his older brothers but he was then sold by his brothers as a slave. Second he was favoured by Potiphar in chapter 39 but was then ruined by Potiphar's wife. Third in the end of chapter 39 he was favoured by the chief jailer but was forgotten by the cup- bearer whom his release from prison has been relied on.

In chapter 41 Pharaoh had promoted him into a very high position in Egypt which oversees the whole land of Egypt. Therefore in our study text the narrator gives a *gap*

⁵Shnittjer, *The Torah Story, an Apprenticeship on the Pentateuch*, 14,15. Extended echo effect is an ongoing parallel effect which use by the author/ narrator to emphasize a point

⁶ Ibid.

for the reader to insert Joseph's reaction when seeing his brothers.⁷ The brothers here to Joseph were more like trouble makers than beggars. Thus Joseph's reaction towards his brothers prevented him from any possible fall that could cause by them. Especially they were the one who had caused the hardships which he had faced. His ambition heart to be above his brothers was the major cause behind his actions. There it had prevented him from doing any good.

3.5 Turning Point of the Narrative

The two chiasms reach its climatic point at God's intervention in human conduct, which is the turning point of the narrative. It emphasises God's salvific acts, which is a common theme in the Pentateuch. Therefore it aligns with the theological theme of Genesis which is "the sovereignty of God [...] is both universal and eternal."⁸ Shnittjer discloses that the centre usually indicates the turning point of a story leading to its ending.⁹ The intervention of God henceforth marks a turning point to the character's deeds, in particular, Joseph's life.

Joseph's harsh treatment of his brothers was twisted by God's intervention, which harbours the brothers' warm treatment by Pharaoh. Hence we could perceive God's salvific act for the brothers as a turning point in Joseph's character. Evidently, Joseph's character is not always God-like throughout the narrative. In Gen 42:18, Joseph's fear of God stops him from resuming his harsh treatment of them. Thus God turns the

⁷Walker-Jones, "Hebrew Narrative," 190,200. Gaps were marks that creates by the author/narrator for the reader to fill the story. This is device that reflects the dialogue between the narrator, text and the reader.

⁸ Swindoll and Zuck, *Understanding Christian Theology*, 172, 73.

⁹ Shnittjer, *The Torah Story, an Apprenticeship on the Pentateuch*.

character of Joseph from his cunning intentions “to naught and turns [his] evil intent to [God’s] own ends ...”¹⁰

3.6 What is behind Joseph’s reaction to his brothers?

As mentioned earlier, God is seen as the instigator of Joseph’s change, however from a narrative critique, God is largely silent and is absent as a character besides references made by Joseph. As seen throughout the Joseph narrative, Joseph largely depends on God and is blessed by God (Gen 41:52). But when he confronts his brothers, the brothers are oblivious to who he is. Being dependent on God, and having his pain of the past removed by God (Gen 41:51), it is largely out of character for Joseph to treat his brothers harshly. As a man of God, it would be fair to assume that he would act righteously, much like the manner his patriarchal ancestors did, and therefore seek immediately to reconcile. Yet Joseph does not do so as his first point of order with his brothers is to put them through a series of tantalising tests. So what is it that causes this change in Joseph’s character? What drives him? These are questions that require an alternative perspective, as the chiasmic structure above is not clear on this.

¹⁰ William Sanford LaSor, David Allan Hubbard, and Frederic Wm. Bush, eds., *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 48.

CHAPTER 4

A SAMOAN RE-READING OF GENESIS 42:1-17 &

CONCLUSION

4.1 Implications for Re-Reading

As determined through narrative criticism, the character of Joseph undergoes changes to his character throughout the story. Although the study focuses on a specific part of the narrative, it is believed that the focus of the study which is to determine Joseph's motive behind his harsh treatment to his brothers in Gen 42:6-17. In the study above we were able to perceive that something or someone motivated Joseph's character change, which this chapter seeks to determine.

In Gen 42:6-17 Joseph causes pain to his own brothers but he does so in pursuit of something. He should have forgiven his brothers since they were seeking food as the famine had reached Canaan and affected Jacob's family. But his intentions are not as cunning as one may seem as he still provides food, as opposed to rejecting them. It would also seem that Joseph did not consider Jacob's condition that he was an old man whose life was at stake. But the narrative does not imply this. So what is it that moves Joseph to act this way? Joseph's words in 42:6-17 indicate that he is determined to prove what he was longing for to happen. As a result, Joseph's *naunau* prevents him from an easy forgiveness in Gen 42:1-17. In the next section, I shall bring perspective from the proverbial saying as discussed in chapter 2, to address Joseph's *naunau*.

4.1.1 Searching for Leaosavai'i's Tifitifi: What is Joseph's Tifitifi?

As a proverb of *naunau*, *Fa'i pea le pou i Faleolo, ae su'e le i'a a Leaosavai'i*, indicates that the *naunau* is evident in Leaosavai'i's search for his fish or *tifitifi*. Whilst radical, the implication of the proverb is that Leaosavai'i stops at nothing to achieve what he desires. It resonates with one's ambition to stop at nothing in order to reach one's goal. So in terms of the proverbial saying, who or what is Joseph's *tifitifi*? Who or what drives Joseph? As Leaosavai'i highly regards this *tifitifi*, it is clear from this reading that Joseph desires to be in charge or boss around his brothers. This is what he really wants, and will stop at nothing to accomplish it. However, God's intervention had dismantled his personal attempts of *naunau*.

4.2 Conclusion

Naunau, as this thesis finds, moves Joseph into uncharacteristic behaviour that threatens to drive a wedge between him and his family. As the Samoan proverbial saying '*Fa'i pea le pou i Faleolo, ae su'e le i'a a Leaosavai'i*' highlights, achieving those goals must not be hindered by distractions or obstacles. In other words, Leaosavai'i seeks to break down his host's post, and compromising the *fale* in search for his fish. It is precisely the attitude that is definitive of Joseph's intention because as Gen 42:1-17 shows, Joseph is ruthless in the way he sends his brothers back and forth between Canaan and Egypt. It is this ambitious drive that leads to intense conflicts within the narrative. The question that remains is what is the *fish* in the narrative that Joseph seeks, and threatens to compromise the *fale* of Jacob? When the Joseph narrative is re-read using this Samoan perspective of ambition call *naunau*, we find that the *tifitifi* is the Joseph's act of boss around his brothers. This attitude of Joseph has been introduced in the beginning of the narrative and once he finds his chance he had nailed it. In conclusion, it is worthy to reconsider these findings from a theological

perspective. God is a constant point of reference for Joseph, despite God having no direct dialogue with Joseph as He did with the patriarchs. But did Joseph neglect God in pursuit of his negative attitude? To answer this question, it is important to consider that in the lowest moments in Joseph's life, God was with him. God appears in the background as Joseph rises to power from slavery. But does Joseph momentarily forget God as he pursues his ambition? I contend that although Joseph appears to be evil, the underlying aim is that of goodness, he had amalgamated with God as evident in the narrative study. This is the goodness of God which drives Joseph, in spite of his controversial and radical methods. As a result, '*Fa'i pea le pou i Faleolo, ae su'e le i'a a Leaosavai'i*' becomes an exhortation for Christian living; that it is necessary to break down posts and shake foundations, in bringing about God's goodness. This is essentially Christ's divine mandate, as He sought to redefine Jewish parameters of societal relationships. Through His radical teachings, Christ was able to reveal God's goodness, which had been suppressed by those who were obsessed with the law.

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