A Response by Bradd Shore

Reviewing books, especially long ones, is frequently an onerous scholarly duty, taxing already strained work schedules. My thanks go to the three scholars who agreed to critique *Sala'ilua* in these pages.   I am particularly grateful to Jacob Love, whose careful and thoughtful review reveals, even in its critical moments, a sympathetic grasp of the approach and the questions that are at the heart of the book. Quite a few questions are raised by the reviews, several requiring extended response, and others more cursory treatment. I'll begin with methodological and organizational issues, leaving the more substantive and theoretical matters for last.

Several of the reviewers' questions concern the relevance of material cited in the book for a study of Sala'ilua. Implicitly, I think, the general question here is whether the book is intended to account broadly for the Samoan world view or for that of the single Samoan village of Sala'ilua. Thus Bindon expresses surprise that interviews from Manono and Upolu supplemented those from Sala'ilua, while Love questions the appropriateness of a Manu'an version of Samoan creation in accounting for Sala'iluan culture. My answer to these questions is contained in the title of my book: it is about Sala'ilua, but it is clearly intended as a *Samoan mystery.* My intent was to demonstrate that Sala'ilua's political organization was a distinctive variant on a more general Samoan model of power relations. Within the broader Samoan cultural context, these variations might be understood to have important consequences for village ethos generally and social control in particular in Sala'ilua. I deliberately drew upon certain material--the Manu'an myth, a set of drawings of a Samoan artist from outside Sala'ilua (p. 173), and interview material from sources from all over Western Samoa (about half from Sala'ilua)--to establish the generality of conceptions of person and action in Samoan thought and to implicate the residents of Sala'ilua directly in the significance of those conceptions. If this sounds as though I am claiming that Samoans share   a common world view that transcends village and island localities (and to some extent historical vicissitudes), that is precisely the point I want to make (see page 128 of *Sala'ilua*). Often voices of protest are raised against this kind of claim, citing the familiar Samoan penchant for localized variation in political or ceremonial organization, or for the idiosyncratic or even contextual locus of variation. But these are hardly mutually exclusive propositions, suggesting only that the relevant level of analysis has to be kept in mind.

My book gives considerable recognition to local variation in village organization. Indeed without the recognition of the importance of such variation, my whole analysis of Sala'ilua would lose whatever power it has. At quite another level of analysis, I point to the crucial importance of contextual variation in both behavior and thought in Samoa. And, beginning as it does with events of the moment and particularities of time, place, and personality, the book is hardly oblivious to the idiosyncratic in Samoan life. Nevertheless, if notions like local   *variation* or historical *change* are to have any analytic power at all, they can only be secondary epistemologically to a conception of broader cultural themes. Too often studies of change or local variation fail to clarify what may remain constant in spite of the variations, so that it is hard to gauge how deep we are to assume such variation runs. Thus I deliberately organized the book in

four (not two, *pace* Love) sections, moving from the idiosyncratic events of a moment, to the local structures of a village, to the more global Samoan meanings, and then back (though in a spiral rather than a circle) to reconsider the events.

While Sala'ilua is distinctive in a number of ways (as are all villages in Samoa) I try, by casting my ethnographic net widely in the archipelago, to demonstrate a level of thought at which Sala'iluans are Samoan. Indeed, conclusions that may be drawn about person and action in Samoan thought from Manu'an myth or interviews throughout Samoa seem to represent rather conservative aspects of Polynesian thought in general (see, e.g. Barofsky 1982 on Pukapuka, Smith 1981 on Maori, or Levy 1973 on Tahiti). Given the range of evidence I present on aspects of Samoan world view, it seems largely irrelevant whether Sala'iluans actually know the particular version of the creation myth I cite. They certainly appear to share the conceptions of person and action it suggests.

More to the point, however, is Love's wish that the book had included more historical material on crime in Sala'ilua to further support my claim that Sala'ilua was somehow distinctive. I can't but agree with him that a thorough history of the village (going beyond the oral and anecdotal history that I was able to collect) would be fascinating in light of my claims. I have recently (through the generosity of Marshall Sahlins) obtained a copy of Hocart's Sala'ilua fieldnotes which I did not know existed when I was writing my book. When these are transcribed (they are handwritten, not neatly) and translated (much is in Samoan) they may help to supplement the oral history of Sala'ilua as collected from modern villagers.

Bindon's query about the absence of three sources on Samoan culture in my bibliography is puzzling. My dissertation contains a more complete list of Samoan references and my bibliography on Samoa used for my master's oral exams in graduate school is even more exhaustive. But the book is not a graduate student's attempt to demonstrate a total command of the literature so much as a careful selection of materials that were found to be useful for the book's purposes. A list of such omissions might actually be lengthier than the bibliography itself. Questions about omissions only make sense, it seems to me, in relation to specific material or insights that the omitted works might have contributed to the book.

Both Bindon and Baker find the organization of the book somewhat incoherent in that the connections between the latter chapters on meanings and the murder in Sala'ilua seem strained or totally absent. Baker complains that the theoretical links among the seven chapters are unclear and that an explanatory introduction to this section of the book would have been helpful. Readers of the book will have to judge for themselves,

of course, whether further clarification is called. for, and whether the chapters on meanings sufficiently illuminate the events in Sala'ilua. Admittedly, my analysis goes far beyond Sala'ilua and the murder in order to provide the most general and deepest cultural context for the events. Had I stuck more closely throughout the book to a point-by-point explication of the murder, as Chagnon does in *The Ax Fight,* there would have been, I suspect, less of a tension between the specific and. general than *Sala'ilua* generates. But the book would have been a lot less interesting too. It does seem to me relatively clear in the book that each of the analytical chapters contributes directly and importantly to the final explication of the murder. Indeed, chapter 14 tries to make these connections explicit by replaying a number of the key events surrounding the murder in terms of the cultural analyses in the latter part of the book. A credible argument about the implications of the reversal of *ali'i* and *tulafale* rank in Sala'ilua requires, it seems to me, a thoroughgoing explication of the cultural underpinnings of Samoan social action. I cannot agree with Baker that my conclusions (and introductions) neither summarize the evidence nor the hypothesis. In fact, pp. 284-91 are quite explicit summaries of just this kind (see especially p. 290), while the elaborate appendix B (read so appreciatively by Love) is a diagrammatic summary of the cultural evidence elaborated in the book.

Finally, in a methodological vein, I should address Baker's somewhat skeptical question about clarifying the methodology for examining meanings. Do I detect here the positivist's exasperation with analyses of what Love so delicately calls the "intangibles" of life? While linguistics, structuralism, and ethnoscience have provided at least apparent methodologies for examining linguistic evidence for meaning, there has never, to my knowledge, been articulated a precise and fully impersonal method for insight into patterns of human meaning. I conducted hundreds of interviews, refining the questions as I went along. Texts of songs, speeches, recordings of meetings, and archival material on Samoa were all collected. Meanings were inferred from (a) patterns of behavior or language found to recur in a wide number of contexts; (b) the predictability of behavior-shifts as contexts altered; (c) cross-tabulations of responses on questionnaires (appendix A); and (d) the reactions of Samoans to my attempts at clarifying the intersubjective patterns that seemed to me to underlie Samoan thought and behavior. This latter criterion depended not on simple assent by Samoans to my suggestions (for Samoans are notoriously polite in such circumstances and likely to agree for the sake of smooth relations). Rather I was interested in the characteristic visceral excitement of perceptive informants when they discovered previously tacitly understood

patterns brought to the surface. In such cases, informants were usually able to extend my arguments by providing new examples of the conceptual scheme under consideration. Meanings may be studied carefully like anything else in human life, but it would be foolish to claim that personal insight (empathy, participation) on the part of the researcher can somehow be factored out. In this sense, the study of culture is not radically different from the analysis of literature or any other production of the human mind.

Bindon hints somewhat darkly at possible unrevealed biases that might have colored my perception of things Samoan. How does one address such a claim? Does this question somehow implicate me more than, say, anyone interpreting anything? How, one wonders, would Bindon respond to the question turned back on him, for biases are not unknown in physical anthropology. My own personal history of involvement with Samoa is laid out rather clearly in the preface, and Chapter 1 contains quite a bit of self-revelation. It is, of course, arguable (indeed hardly deniable) that personal biases always affect the foci of our work. In my own case, for instance, the book was the result of a ten-year attempt to untangle what had seemed to me a paradoxical society, one that had alternately exasperated and enthralled me as a Peace Corps volunteer. But such biases are not just personal. They are partly "objective" too, shaped by distinctive contradictions in Samoan ethos as attested to by the recent media coverage of Samoa.

My remaining comments will focus on more substantive ethnographic issues raised in the reviews. It might be helpful to underscore a point that Love makes in his review. While *Sala'ilua* is a rather broadly conceived ethnography, it is not intended as an exhaustive compendium of Samoana in the *Notes and Queries* tradition. There is quite substantial literature already on Samoa and my judgment was that what was needed was a self-consciously interpretive ethnography of Samoan world view as it bears upon social control and conflict. So much contradiction and paradox have dominated the literature on traditional Samoa that it seems to me the problem may well lie in the disparity between Western presuppositions about such concepts as "persons," or "structure," and Samoan thought. The time was ripe for attempting to get "inside" Samoan cultural categories. This self-conscious limitation of purpose lay behind the selection of data and background resources. Thus the book is not primarily about material culture, or economics, or even kinship, though it touches on each area. Love complains that the impact of the church has been all but left out of my book. I think this overstates the case. While the place of the church in Samoa was not at the heart of my research, it is certainly far

from absent in my account. A glance at the index to the book under Church and Church-based organizations will allow the reader to judge for him or herself. I think, however, it is possible to overstate the role of the church in shaping Samoan world view. It strikes me that Dr. Love's dependence on Biblical texts for evidence of *Samoan* understandings of behavior is somewhat misplaced. But more on that below.

Love also suggests that I focus (unreasonably?) on Samoan political experience. Any such complaints need to be qualified by a clarification of what might have been gained in relation to the problems I set out to explore by the inclusion of more material on the church, or consideration of Buck's *Samoan Material Culture,* or other than civic dimensions of Samoan life. Since it is impossible to describe any object exhaustively, any account must leave more out than it includes. Thus the simple statement that something is missing does not by itself argue for its inclusion.

In the matter of the stress on Samoan civic or political culture I would argue that any consideration of social control and conflict resolution in Samoa would of necessity require a detailed "pollitical" ethnography. As my book takes pains to point out, Samoan social control is predicated on the public control of private impulse; therefore the village has a much larger role than we are accustomed to in shaping private morality. On the other hand, no worthy cultural account could be so institutionally exclusive as to focus solely on politics. I am surprised that Dr. Love finds my perspective on Samoa narrow. *Sala'ilua* deals with kinship, politics, religion, language, dance styles, psychological constructs, and other matters as they have bearing on the relation of private desire to public behavior in Samoa. Other than perhaps a more thoroughgoing ethnography of the church in Samoa, I am not sure what omissions Dr. Love is alluding to.

Bindon suggests that my account of the organization of a Samoan village stresses the idealized circular shape of a village while neglecting to discuss the implications of the fact that most villages are linear settlements. Bindon would have liked me "to develop a model of spatial orientations on a linear village." This would be a useful criticism except that the issue is discussed at some length in *Sala'ilua* (pp. 49-50). The complexities of how Samoans conceive the "shape" of their villages and their spatial/moral orientations is actually more complex than the disjunction between an ideal circular village and a linear reality. The distinctions between front/back (or *tai/uta*) developed in my book are at some variance with the equally common orientation of center/periphery. Interestingly, both of these orientations (in Levi-Strauss' terms diametric dualism and concentric dualism [see *Sala'ilua,* p. 247; Levi-Strauss 1967]) are employed in different contexts in both circular and linear villages. In a yet

unpublished paper (Shore 1980) I explore in some detail the implications of these alternative ways of coding spatial orientation. My thinking on this was relatively rudimentary at the time *Sala'ilua* was being written.

Love seems puzzled by my alleged admission that I was "confused about intertitular relationships of rank" for chiefly titles. This does not quite resume the passage to which Love is referring. I actually said that I was unable to check carefully the formal relationships of rank subordination between specific titles because this formal relationship *(pito vao)* is not frequently discussed publicly and only became apparent to me toward the end of my field work. Any confusion about ranking of titles is as much a function of the intrinsic ambiguity in Samoan ranking as it is of any lapses of knowledge on my part (see pp. 60, 64, 67, 208-9, 211 in my book for discussions of ambiguity in title-ranking). Why Love should find it odd that precise title ranking and subordination may be problematical in Samoa is unclear to me.

As Love suggests, I do not try to define precisely what I mean by "esthetics," though the title of chapter 13 contains the term. Obviously it is not adequately defined as the emotional tone of relationships; I was trying to suggest that in Samoa a lot of information about relationships is conveyed esthetically, by which I mean through the formal qualities of ritualized interactions. The reference of the chapter title is to the expression of Samoan world view through highly formalized public ceremony, as in dance, oratory, speech stylistics, and ritual divisions of food.

Love is quite right in pointing out that the *siva/'aiuli* dance styles far from exhaust the catalog of Samoan dance types, and he properly suggests a few of the many traditional group dances of Samoans. Certainly I (and presumably Mead) did not intend to suggest that the *siva* was the only dance done by Samoans. My interest in the *siva/'aiuli* (by far the most common dance forms in modern Samoa) was, of course, in the metaphorical dualism that was expressed on the dance floor. While the distinction between perfect constraint and dignity on the one hand and pure impulse expression on the other is probably nowhere so clearly demarcated in Samoan dancing as in the *siva,* I suspect that a closer examination of other dance events would reveal the presence of this duality, whether in the structuring of tempo changes, or the distinction between graceful day dancing *(ao siva)* and the reputedly wild night dances *(pō ula)* (see Shore 1979).

While basically agreeing with my treatment of the phonological stratification in Samoan speech, Love finds the term "intimate" somewhat misleading as a description of the "k" form of pronunciation, frequently referred to in Samoa as "bad talking" *(tautala leaga).* I am not wedded to

any particular terminology and would happily adopt other labels for these registers other than formal/intimate if a better alternative were suggested. That "intimate"   does not convey the right impression to English speakers, given the use of "k" pronunciation in public kava ceremonies and cricket matches, is less important than that it convey the   *Samoan understanding* of the register. And here, I suspect that my gloss is relatively accurate, since I take pains to indicate how Samoans seem to categorize Samoan/Samoan relationships (i.e.,   "traditional" Samoan institutions) appropriate for the   "k" as intimate/symmetrical as contrasted with the more formal complementary relationships of Samoans to Europeans, where the "formal" register is appropriate. From my own experiences using both registers and from extensive interviews on the registers, all indications are that Samoans find speaking in the "k" a more intimate form of expression that the "t."   See pp. 273-83 for an extended treatment of this problem.

Love chides me for inventing a nonexistent problem in trying to account for the use of the formal "t" register in singing. While I admit that my own very hypothetical explanation for the association (which suggested that singing of traditional songs had been wedded to European-introduced hymn-singing in Samoan thought and thus assigned to the intimate register) may be on shaky ground, I am unconvinced by Love's attempted demystification of the issue. Love calls my argument "circular," though I don't see why it is circular reasoning to argue that if Samoans classified all singing with church-related hymns, they would likely adopt the formal pronunciation in both cases. His own explanation, that "Singing tends universally to be a formally marked speech-event, which, as such in Samoa, requires the [t]" is certainly no improvement. Moreover, it completely sidesteps the real ethnographic problem that other "formally marked speech events"   such as formal oratory and kava ceremonies properly are realized in the "k" and not the "t." It was this complexity of context-classification that originally impelled my long treatment of speech styles, and led to the analysis of the relation between lexical registers (chiefly language/common language) and phonological registers (t/k) as related but analytically distinct problems. I may not adequately have solved that problem, but I certainly did not invent it.

I have saved for the end the most important of Love's criticisms, that referring to my explication of the terms   *aga* ("social conduct") and *āmio* ("personal behavior"). As Love rightly points out, I have given considerable analytical attention to these words and treat them as a privileged example of the fundamental duality in Samoan culture and ethos. In recent months, Derek Freeman has made repeated public claims that not

only do I have these terms wrong, but that I have them actually back-
wards. I have pressed Professor Freeman for further clarification of his
claim but have as yet only the slightest notion of what he means. It is thus
with some interest that I read Dr. Love's analysis which, while not going
as far as Freeman's, suggests that there may be subtleties in their meaning
that I have not appreciated. Given the difficulty of pinning down Samoan
informants on matters of semantics (see Milner 1966, pp. xii-xiii) as well
as the inherent complexity of these concepts, Love may well be right.
Certainly in a number of my tentative formulations (such as associating
aga/āmio with culture/nature) I have invited the criticism of a perhaps
too facile rendering of Samoan concepts in English terms. Since Love's
analysis only serves to further complicate already complex matters and
does not present a clear alternative analysis for me to consider, it is diffi-
cult to respond to his caveats. As best I can make out, Love bases his res-
ervations on a long list of biblical quotations and dictionary entries in
which he claims (a) that *aga* may not, in compound forms, have more so-
cially "positive" connotations than those compounds made with *āmio* as I
claim (154-55) and (b) that based upon a translation from Ephesians 2:1 of
the phrase *āmio leaga ma agasala* ("trespasses and sins"), *āmio* implies
"outward and visible acts, while *agasala* are inward and spiritual
thoughts: *āmio* implies the outer self, the social being, and *aga* implies the
inner self, the psychological being."

Let me say outright that my assertion about the positive associations
with *aga* and the negative ones with *āmio* was based on impressions
formed by almost five years in Samoa spent listening to everyday dis-
course. While my analysis does not stand or fall on the correctness of
those impressions, it is important to note that they have been confirmed
in the work of a linguist who has recently studied child-language in
Samoa and suggests that her 18,000 pages of transcriptions of caretaker-
child intercourse confirm my more impressionistic conclusions (Ochs
1982, pp. 20-22). As for Love's partially disconfirming evidence, I am sur-
prised that he would find the Samoan translation of the Christian Bible a
convincing source of information on Samoan conceptions of behavior.
When one considers the Protestant emphasis on *personal salvation* (a con-
cept rather alien to traditional Samoan notions of sin and redemption), it
is hardly surprising that the European translators of the Bible stressed
compound terms in Samoan highlighting virtuous personal behavior
(*āmio*). This kind of evidence is illegitimate in modern linguistic analysis
of the contextualization of meaning in actual social discourse. This does
not mean that Love is wrong or I am right but only that his lengthy refu-
tation is largely irrelevant to the problem at hand. Certainly, as I point

out in my book, there are many occasions when *aga* is employed with negative connotations and *āmio* is used approvingly. At times, the two terms may even appear to be synonyms. It is only in certain contexts of maximum contrast that the implications of the opposition are highlighted. Thus, according to Lōia Fiaui, a knowledgeable Samoan and a graduate student in anthropology, *aganuʻu* refers to all of the dignified structures of a village, such as kava circles, *faʻalupegas,* etc., while *āmionuʻu* would refer to a description of base behavior of lower-class villagers. This contrast is perfectly consistent with my own analysis. It is also similar to Albert Wendt's recent comment (Wendt 1983) that Samoan culture comprises two opposed behavioral styles: the *tū faʻatamāliʻi* (noble conduct), the proper way to behave, and the *tū faʻatūfanua* (the base behavior of commoners), which Wendt associates with "beasts."

Love's second objection concerns an example he has found in which *aga* seems to refer to the inner, psychological man and *āmio* to the outer social man. Here it appears to me that Love has misapplied Western conceptions directly to Samoan terms, again an error partly encouraged by the use of Biblical texts in which European moral concepts are fitted improperly with Samoan terms. *Aga* is, of course, the ideal *center* of one's being, just as its correlates are danced out in the center of the dance floor or gracefully staged in the etiquette appropriate to the central *malae* of the village. But the center of the person, if I understand the Samoan notion correctly, is not the Western, private, psychological self, but something more like the "social self" derived from one's existence in the social world. What once was external--to the unsocialized child--eventually becomes one's center, one's *agāga* or "soul." In a Christian context, particularly in the context of Love's quotation, it is divine rather than human laws that are at the center of one's being, and thus *in that context, āmio* is employed for the relatively peripheral influences on human action. In a Christian context, and particularly in the context of Love's quotation, it is divine rather than human laws that are at the center of one's being, and hence responsible for one's *aga.* This apparent shift in meaning of *āmio* in relation to an implicit context is no more surprising than that the word *pitonuʻu* can refer to a "village" in one context (in which the generic term *nuʻu* refers to a district) while in another context (in which *nuʻu* refers to village) *pitonuʻu* refers to a hamlet or subvillage (*Salaʻilua:* pp. 51-52). The problem with pinning down the exact definitions of a Samoan term is that it is so often highly contextualized in reference. As one Samoan Wittgenstein told me, Samoan words don't have "definitions" but change from use to use. An overstatement of course, but revealing.

To conclude this rather lengthy response, I want to address the question raised gently by Love and rather combatively by Freeman as to the extent to which I intend my cultural analysis as a sufficient explanation of the events in Sala'ilua. How far, that is, can one go in attributing causal determination to the structure of ideas? This is, of course, a tired debate that has for so long pitted so-called materialists against so-called idealists. Let me be quite clear here, as I tried to be in the book. I do not argue nor do I hold that Samoan culture *caused* the death of Tuatō Fatu in Sala'ilua. As with any single perspective on human action, cultural analysis is a limited apprehension of the facts. Complex human behavior is not determined by any single factor but is, if anything, shaped by a complex interaction of different influences acting like vectors of forces on the motion of an object in space. History, personality, alcohol, socialization, biological constitution, and a hundred minute influences that impinge on any human life were at work on that day in Sala'ilua. Which is why no one could have predicted the murder. Nonetheless, that same human nature that suggests to some the regnant influences of biology suggests equally the need for external sources of information and control, general models of and for experience by which people orient themselves to the world. What we call "culture" and what I have tried to explicate for Sala'ilua are precisely such general cognitive and affective orientations. That they caused the death of a Samoan chief is a preposterous notion. But there is little doubt that they were involved, and to some considerable extent, in the tragic events of that hot Samoan afternoon. It was to the resolution of that mystery--the cultural one--that my book was dedicated.

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