

**MĀLOSI: A PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLORATION  
OF MEAD'S AND FREEMAN'S WORK  
AND OF SAMOAN AGGRESSION**

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This article's intent is to take a step toward clarifying the nature and the place of aggression in Samoan social life. Aggression has always had a focal place in Samoan culture. In pre-Christian times, Nafanua was the only divinity who was worshiped throughout the Samoan islands (Stair 1897:220). Nafanua was a war goddess.

The importance of aggression in Samoa is evident not only in religious history, but also in the language. *Malosi* is the Samoan word for strong, forceful, and even violent behavior, but unlike the English word aggression, *malosi* has positive rather than negative connotations. When people ask "How are you?" ("O a mai 'oe?"), a common response is "Malosi." Indeed, the Reverend George Pratt, who wrote the first Samoan dictionary, translates virtue itself as *mālosi* ([1862] 1977: 152).

*Mālosi* is also the word for strength and in Samoa strength is the very hallmark of manhood. For example, should a son show reluctance to do heavy physical work, his mother might say, "E *leai se aogā, e fai ai le na mea tautau!*" ("There is no use your having that hanging thing!"). Although physical prowess is not a definitive attribute of female gender identity, girls and women also take great pride in their ability to win a fight.

To truly understand a word, and the concept it reflects, one must also examine related words and root words. Malolo is to be brawny or muscular, like a boxer. Maloloina is the word for health. Thus health and brawn are equated in the Samoan vocabulary. Malo (the root word of *malosi*, *malolo*, and *malololina*) is a common greeting. However, malo also means to be victorious in war and is the word for government. Fa'alemalo, which literally means to make victory or to make government, actually refers to politics. Politicking is, after all, a method for becoming victorious.

A unique characteristic of the Samoan language is that nouns and adjectives can be made into verbs by adding the prefix *fa'a*, or *fia*. *Fa'a* means either to make, or the way of, or the manner associated with an object or an adjective. For example, to speak Samoan translates as *fa'asamoa*. *Fia* means to want to make or to do. For example, *ai* means to eat; *fia'ai* is to be hungry. *Fia*, inasmuch as it entails a desire to be rather than a state of being, can also have connotations of imitation, and sometimes even caricature. *Fiapalagi* means to want to be like a *palagi* (Caucasian); it is a deprecatory term.

When *mālosi* becomes a verb, it takes on negative connotations similar to those of aggression in English. Whereas *fa'amālosi* can mean merely to force or to enforce, it also means to rape.<sup>1</sup> *Fiamālosi* means to be looking for a fight. Although Samoans believe it is admirable and necessary to be strong, "making" strong is the object of social disapproval. And so, despite all the positive associations in the Samoan language of strength and force, Samoans are in fact deeply ambivalent about aggression.

To be potent (*e i ai le malosi*) is expected of every man and a lack of children will provoke derisive comments about a man's "power." Nonetheless *fa'amalosi*, which means to prove one's manhood with an unwilling girl, is deplorable. To win (*malo*) is the best, but merely to be looking for a fight is base. As the common etymology of these words signifies, the roots of the desire to win, to politick, to govern, and to aggress are the same in the Samoan language, as is their psychological source. It is this source - t h e root that is both the origin and the bond linking the significance of all malo words-that this paper seeks.

Exploring the real nature of Samoan aggression is a pressing matter in current Pacific ethnography, because a great deal of confusion about the Samoan psyche, and specifically about Samoan aggression, has arisen as a result of the Mead/Freeman controversy. Mead and Freeman address fundamental psychological questions. These questions concern the nature of child development in Samoa and its effects, both on the tenor of

Samoan adolescence and on the prominence of aggression in adult personality.

Mead offers Samoa as a radical alternative to socialization in our own society. In her Samoa the social environment is so tolerant and non-threatening that aggression has lost its *raison d'être* and is as invisible as a phantom (Mead [1928]1973). Freeman portrays Samoan childhood as extremely violent and intimates that this violence leaves a smoldering aggressive undercurrent in the personality that expresses itself in "outbursts of uncontrollable anger:" "acts of suicide," and states of possession (1983a:219-221). Shore disapproves of Freeman's book, but says its value lies in presenting the "darker strain" of the Samoan psyche (1983:937). Others accuse Freeman of slandering Samoans. They argue that Freeman replaces an extremist view of Samoan personality as exceedingly erotic with a view of Samoans as wildly fierce (Ala'ilima 1984:91-92; Wendt 1984:92-99). Felix Wendt, of Western Samoa, complains that Freeman makes Samoans "appear like the gang hoods in Charles Bronson's 'Death Wish II'" (1984:95) and contends "that the overriding characteristic of the Samoan ethos is *alofa* (love)" (ibid. :96). Leacock tells tales of nineteenth-century fire-and-brimstone missionaries who were aghast at the permissiveness of Samoan parents toward their children (1987: 182-183).

The tendency in American anthropology has been to divide the two sides of this controversy into the good guy (namely Mead) and the bad guy (namely Freeman) and to dismiss the bad guy. Goodness knows Freeman, in his manner of writing, gave us ample excuse (McDowell 1984). However, now that the dust has settled, it is time to admit that this maneuver is too easy. In the analysis of culture the issue is how to combine a cacophony of information into a harmonious perspective in which apparently contradictory elements make a common sense. In the present case, what is wanting is a perspective from which these conflicting statements about Samoan aggression dovetail.

To resolve the enigma of Samoan aggression, two kinds of inquiries are necessary, inquiries that I will undertake in the pages to follow. First it is necessary to bring to light the psychological biases implicit in both Mead's and Freeman's work and the stance on aggression entailed in these biases. When their positions on psychology in general, and on Samoan psychology and aggression in particular, are elucidated, it becomes possible to adjudicate the merits of their respective arguments.

However, to truly fathom Samoan aggression, a further study of Samoan culture itself is in order. My analysis will draw on the copious

ethnographic data that exist on Samoa and on my own six years of residence and research in Samoa. My experiences as the wife of a Samoan, as a member of a Samoan *'āiga* (extended family), and as a teacher at a Samoan college will also provide a source of data. In the course of this analysis, I will show that while (as Freeman vehemently argues) Mead's work is marred by her unwillingness to acknowledge the presence and importance of Samoan aggression, Freeman's is marred by his tendency to assess and judge Samoan aggression in Western terms. Freeman is right that, socially, aggression finds its roots in and takes its character from early relations with authority figures. However, what is needed is to understand these relations in Samoan terms. Only then can we ferret out the place of Samoan aggression in adult personality.

I will begin at the historical origins of this controversy, by unearthing the psychological biases of Margaret Mead. Within these biases we can discover her stance on Samoan aggression.

### **Mead: Psychological Biases and *Coming of Age in Samoa***

Boas's influence on Mead has been the subject of much comment over the past few years, but Freud was another major influence on her early work. Mead's career as a whole had its genesis in psychological concerns.<sup>2</sup> At Barnard College Mead majored in psychology. Her circle at Barnard has been described as "intensely involved in Freudian psychology" (Sheehy 1977:334). In the 1920s, for those anthropologists who, like Mead, were concerned with psychological development, Freudian ideas represented a major, if not the major, theoretical paradigm.<sup>3</sup>

Mead discusses the initial relationship between Freudian and anthropological influences on her thinking in *Blackberry Winter*: "I entered my senior year committed to psychology, but I also took a course on psychological aspects of culture given by William Fielding Ogburn, one of the first courses in which Freudian psychology was treated with respect" (1972: 111). Clearly Ogburn was not alone in his respect for Freud; Mead shared Ogburn's admiration. Ogburn had a lasting influence on Mead's work.<sup>4</sup> He and his wife were her lifelong friends. Ogburn himself, Mead says in her autobiography, was one of those who "left their mark on my life forever" (ibid. :287).

When she was halfway through her master's thesis, Mead decided to shift her focus to anthropology. Nonetheless the questions Mead took to the field were essentially psychological ones. Of her work in Samoa Mead says, "the principal emphasis of my research was . . . psychologi-

cal rather than ethnographic" (1969:3). In her own words she had merely switched the locale of her work from the psychology lab to the South Seas, but as she so eloquently clarifies in her introduction to *Coming of Age in Samoa*, only the "laboratory" had changed, not the substance of her psychological inquiry (Mead [1928] 1973:3-4).

If Mead's intellectual interests were psychological in nature, why did she become an anthropologist? Anthropology united the various strands of Mead's personality and thought: the psychologist and the adolescent girl who had wanted to be a minister's wife and help in the work of redemption (Mead 1972:84). Ruth Benedict, seeking a convert to anthropology and to Boas, appealed to the missionary in Mead. Mead became convinced that traditional cultures had to be "saved" not from paganism but from extinction (ibid.:114). Where Christianity had blazed the trails, anthropology followed. By writing about these seemingly frail and perishing specimens and the psychosocial options they represented, Mead meant to carry on her own very sophisticated version of the work of salvation. Anthropology became the means to a vocational mantle that was archetypal in nature, lending Mead's thought, her speeches, and most certainly her writing both verve and numen.

Mead, however, was no colonialist in her orientation. She did not believe that only traditional cultures needed rescuing and, therefore, she subtitled her book *A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization*. Mead meant to redeem not only the more exotic blossoms of the species, but her own culture as well, by presenting Americans with moral lessons on human development. *Coming of Age* is one such lesson, an apologue informed by Freudian humanism.

As Freeman points out, *Coming of Age* speaks to the greatest psychological debate of the 1920s: the nature of adolescence as a phase of psychological development. The idea that psychological stages of development might be correlated to biological maturation had long been gathering weight in Western thought. In *Centuries of Childhood*, Philip Aries argues that childhood was a new concept in nineteenth-century Europe. Before the Industrial Revolution, children were regarded merely as miniature adults rather than as having their own distinct identity. Because the idea of childhood was novel in the nineteenth century, it was also preoccupying and magnetic (Aries 1962). The novels of Charles Dickens, peopled with naively sagacious children, exemplify this nineteenth-century love affair with childhood.

If the nineteenth century was the era of the child, then surely the twentieth century is the era of the adolescent. Toward the end of the

nineteenth century, the job market in America reached complete saturation for the first time. No longer was there a great need for young workers. In the cities adolescents began to hang about the streets and to form gangs. Concurrently public schools and a prolonged education for young people became increasingly popular. These historical sparks brought a new stage of life into florescence, one with its own unique problems (Bakan 1977: 16-22).

In psychology these adolescent problems provoked a dispute that has been known ever since as the nature/nurture controversy. The bone of contention was to what extent were the problems of youth caused by hormonal changes and to what extent did their origins lay in historical and social conditions. Was it nature or nurture that was responsible for the emotional tempests that beset puberty? <sup>5</sup> As Mead put it, "Are the disturbances which vex our adolescents due to the nature of adolescence itself or to the civilization?" ([1928] 1973:6-7). The time of life Mead examines in *Coming of Age* was determined by a number of factors: Boas's interest in Stanley G. Hall's work (Freeman 1983a:316), her own age and sex (Mead [1928] 1973:5), and so on. However, her answers to these questions as to the nature of adolescent problems can be traced back to her more private and older interest in psychology and in the writings of Sigmund Freud.

From a Freudian viewpoint psychological problems, including those of adolescents, are born of an inherent conflict between social mores and individual instinct. In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud writes: "The two processes of individual and cultural development must stand in hostile opposition to each other and mutually dispute the ground" ([1961] 1962:141). Why? Because, Freud believed, society profits from individual frustration. Energy that cannot be released in immediate gratification is redirected, through sublimation, to higher social aims.

However, Freud also argued that, while a margin of profit was to be gained through the social exploitation of the individual, society had gone beyond the limits of that margin. Modern Western society had begun to damage the mental health and stability of its basic resource, upsetting the ecology of the self.

According to Freud, the superego (the internalized agent of the state) "in the severity of its commands and prohibitions . . . troubles itself too little about the happiness of the individual" (ibid. : 143). Freud reasoned -and his reasoning has changed the course of Western social history- that civilization could demand less of the individual to the benefit of both. This is the position Mead takes up in *Coming of Age*.

## Mead's Samoa

American society was not singular in marking off an intermediate phase between childhood and the established roles of adult life. In Samoa, according to Mead, incessant industriousness was required of the child and adult life was laden with heavy social responsibilities. But between childhood and adulthood there was an intermediate phase, often more prolonged than Western adolescence. As Mead described it, this Samoan adolescence was a moratorium in Erikson's sense of the word (Erikson 1963:262). Responsibilities lightened and possibilities for play and exploration opened.\*

Because Samoan society shared this phase of life with our own society, it offered a comparative frame of reference. Mead used this reference point to assay Freud's belief in the essential contrariety of the individual and the social order. In *Coming of Age* Mead is concerned with questions that are Freudian in nature. This is not to say that she always agrees with Freud about the answer to those questions. In fact *Coming of Age* is meant as a foil and a counterpoint to much Freudian dogma.' However, Mead has no argument with Freud's basic premise. Freud believes that society's intolerance of instinct is internalized by the individual at key points in childhood and adolescence. These internalizations generate intrapsychic conflicts. The conflicts in turn lead to mental illness (S. Freud [1961] 1962:99-118). If Mead's Samoa represents a saner solution to the problem of socializing the individual, it is precisely because Samoan society had resolved those problems of development that had been posed by Freud. Whereas Freud, more pessimistically, leans toward the idea that the conflict between the human body and the body politic is fundamental to the nature of society itself and is therefore universal, Mead sets out to prove that it is neither necessary nor universal.

Mead presents Samoa as a picture, call it a hypothetical picture, of how harmony between the individual and society could be achieved, and at what costs, for Mead was also aware of the costs. Whether or not Mead's portrayal of Samoa was accurate and, therefore, whether or not Samoa was in reality such a sane society is an issue I will consider later in this paper. For the moment, the issue is merely that Mead saw Samoa as a kind of vindication of those positive potentialities of human society, which had been disparaged in Freud's work.

Freudian theory has, of course, been the object of decades of critique by both anthropologists and psychologists. Nonetheless we will see that Mead's use of Samoan society to explore certain of Freud's ideas is per-

suasive and that her specific developmental foci in *Coming of Age* are derived from her early work with Ogburn and his Freudian biases. Boas conveyed nothing to Mead as to what her methodological approach to the problems of adolescence should be (Holmes 1987:5) and gave her but a half hour's advice before her departure for the field (Barnouw 1983:431). In her 1959 memorial lecture to the Philadelphia Association for Psychoanalysis, Mead tells us who was responsible for the direction of her Samoan research.

Then in 1925, Franz Boas (who was, it must be remembered, a product of the German culture of his time and who had, in fact, competed for a scholarship in psychology) set me a field problem on adolescence. . . . I had read quite thoroughly in the available psychoanalytic literature of the day, in the unique course through which Columbia University students were introduced to psychoanalysis by William Fielding Ogburn. What this provided me with as a background to research was primarily a directive to look closely at family life, at the early relationships of parents of the same and opposite sex, and at children's relationships to their own bodies; it also alerted me to conflicts arising between the springing sexuality of adolescents and the authority and jealousy of parents and elders who sought to control them. (Mead 1959:60)<sup>8</sup>

In regard to Ogburn's clearly Freudian directive, Mead saw Samoa as presenting a series of radical and appealing contrasts to American society. For example, Mead says American adolescents of the 1920s were "denied all firsthand knowledge of birth and love and death, harried by a society which will not let adolescents grow up at their own pace, imprisoned in the small, fragile and nuclear family from which there is no escape and in which there is little security" ([1928] 1973:ix). Samoans, however, were acquainted with the facts of life from childhood: "All of these children had seen birth and death. They had seen many dead bodies. They had watched miscarriages and peeked under the arms of the old women who were washing and commenting upon the undeveloped foetus. There was no convention of sending the children of the family away at such times. . . . In matters of sex the ten-year-olds are . . . sophisticated, although they witness sex activities only surreptitiously" (ibid. :74-75). These children, Mead writes, also had some firsthand familiarity with sex. During latency children indulged in "homosexual play as experimentation without any expectation of, or fear of, permanent object deflection" (Mead 1959:61). Thus,



“the facts of life and death are shorn of all mystery at an early age” (Mead [1928] 1973:75), and the frightening misinterpretations and mythification of these facts, which Freud associates with the child’s crises and complexes in Western society, could not arise.

American youth, Mead argues, were encouraged to achieve to the extent of their abilities and thus to direct their energies to the fulfillment of public and social ends. Contrarily, Samoans were taught to keep their places. *Tautalaititi*, the Samoan word for cheeky, specifically implies presuming above one’s age and thus insinuating oneself into the next rung of the social hierarchy. Instead of encouraging youth to progress, Samoans encouraged them to be patient and wait for age to carry them up the social ladder (ibid.:110). Although Samoan adolescents were expected to do the bulk of physical labor in their communities, it was far from all-consuming. Holmes, for example, tells us that only three days per week were spent procuring a week’s supply of food (1987:34). No one demanded that adolescents funnel the remaining portion of their energy into some form of getting ahead.

Whereas Samoan social development had a preestablished pace, personal development was not a matter for parental concern or pressure. As Samoans were not overly attentive to calendar age, they had no strong expectation about how a child of a particular age should behave. Mead, of course, believes this laissez-faire attitude extended to sexual development as well: “Both boys and girls slipped out of the latency groups in their own time, at their own speed. No one insisted that because of their age they should begin to show heterosexual awareness” (Mead 1959:61-62).

In Freudian theory and in Western society, discord between the individual and society had its roots in the nuclear family. Here the boy was necessarily tied to his father- once bitter rival, always the representative of an oppressive civil order- and to his mother, long desired even if that desire was later to be denied and half forgotten. The girl was likewise caught in inescapable cathexes. But in Samoa there was an easy escape when the stress caused by the nuclear family became acute. Children simply moved to the household of another relative. Relatives were bound by ancient tradition to give sanctuary to runaway members of their extended family (*‘aiga potopoto*) (Mead [1928] 1973:24). These alternative homes were grouped close together. Moreover there were no walls between them. The Samoan *fale* (house) lacks walls and traditionally divisions between families within an *‘aiga* were slight. Within Samoa’s generational kinship system, aunts and uncles were all referred to by the same word as parents, and were similarly regarded.

For Freud, socialization is achieved through an Oedipal conflict

between father and son. The boy loses the competition for his mother around the age of five. In lieu of possessing his mother, he identifies with the person who does, his father. However, his father represents moral authority to the boy. Hence when he internalizes his father, he also internalizes a set of social interdictions. In theory, the girl goes through a roughly parallel evolution vis-à-vis her mother. Mead thinks that in Samoa the Oedipus complex itself was undermined.

In Samoa, the nuclear family . . . was imbedded in an extended family; ties between mother and child were diluted by ties to other females who could succor and breastfeed the child. The close identifications necessary for the sort of super-ego formation which was recognized in our culture were diffused as young children were cared for by child nurses and many other members of the family. Authority was vested in a senior titled male-seldom the father of the young child-who presided over the whole group, not as a jealous head of a horde but as a responsible and honored organizer. (Mead 1959:61)<sup>9</sup>

Because childcare was turned over to a slightly older sister, the Samoan incest taboo was aimed at the brother/sister bond, rather than centering on the mother/son relationship.<sup>10</sup> Mead says that Samoan development included a "conspicuous period of latency" (ibid.:61-62). The onset of this period was marked by a new-found shyness between brothers and sisters and their consequent avoidance of one another (Mead [1928] 1973:24-25).

If the family did not lend itself to Oedipal conflict in Samoa, presumably socialization proceeded along another route. Mead realized that it occurred for the girl through her role as a sibling caretaker. The girl's primary responsibility was to keep the little imp quiet so adults were undisturbed. If the tot made noise, the sister was punished. This interdiction created a balance of power between the older sister and her *tei*.<sup>11</sup> If adults were nearby, it was necessary to placate the child in order to control him. Thus she became something between the toddler's sovereign and his drudge. Her own willful behavior was mastered, not by one-to-one conflict with an authority figure, but rather by adjusting to the willfulness of her *tei*. Producing conformity in another brought temperance to the child's own behavior (ibid.:14).

From Mead's description of the *tei* relationship, one might also reason that this childcare situation provided other mollifying elements that eased the process of socialization in Samoa. The sister had authority

over her charge. Should she punish him, elders would support her action unquestioningly. The necessary identification with authority was produced, not by a conflict with a parental figure, but by her role.

In *Coming of Age* Mead even anticipates the developmental problems posed by later Freudians and provides solutions for them. Anna Freud attributes the rebelliousness of the adolescent to the reemergence and final resolution of the Oedipus conflict at this time (A. Freud 1946).<sup>12</sup> If, as Mead suggests, the Samoan Oedipus complex was focused on the relationship between brother and sister, then when this complex re-emerged at adolescence it would be less likely to generate antagonism between adolescents and parents.

Erik Erikson later argued that the tumultuousness of adolescence is due to an identity crisis. When the Oedipus complex resurfaces, developing individuals reject the shoulds that were earlier imposed by parental figures. In lieu of these strictures, adolescents seek to articulate their own values. They find these values among the alternative moralities proffered by modern society. The process of value selection amounts to a quest for individual identity and creates a crisis (Erikson 1963).

In *Coming of Age* Mead likewise attributes adolescent stress to the panoply of moral choices presented to the adolescent by modern society, choices that create confusion and intrapsychic conflict. In contrast to this she poses the moral placidity of Samoan adolescence.

In religion they [American adolescents] may be Catholics, Protestants, Christian Scientists, Spiritualists, Agnostics, Atheists, or even pay no attention at all to religion. This is an unthinkable situation in any primitive society not exposed to foreign influence. . . . Present-day Manu'a approximates this condition; all are Christians of the same sect. . . . Similarly, our children are faced with half a dozen standards of morality: a double sex standard for men and women, a single standard for men and women, groups which advocate that the single standard should be freedom while others argue that the single standard should be absolute monogamy. Trial marriage, companionate marriage, contract marriage—all these possible solutions of a social impasse are paraded before the growing children while the actual conditions in their own communities and the moving pictures and magazines inform them of mass violations of every code. . . . The Samoan child faces no such dilemma. Sex is a natural, pleasurable thing; the freedom with which it may be indulged in is limited by just one consideration, social status.

Everyone in the community agrees about the matter, the only dissenters are the missionaries who dissent so vainly that their protests are unimportant. (Mead [1928] 1973: 111-112)

The reader may well admit that Mead is preoccupied with Freudian issues in *Coming of Age*. However, she seems more interested in debunking Freudian views than in defending them. Indeed there was a great deal of Freud's work that Mead wished to argue with and did. As she comments in her lecture to the Philadelphia Association for Psychoanalysis, "I made my study in one of the few cultures in the world in which the vicissitudes to which children and adolescents are subjected were reduced to a minimum in just those areas which our early understanding of psychoanalytic theory had named as important" (Mead 1959:61). In what sense, then, can one say that *Coming of Age* was written under the sway of Freudian influences? Later in the same talk she asserts that "I believe that to the extent that psychoanalytic theory ascribes the Oedipus complex to the actual relationship between contemporary parents and children within a family, the Samoan findings confirm rather than dispute analytic findings" (ibid.:64).

In *Coming of Age*, Mead is simply taking the Freudian argument to its logical extreme. Freud says that mental illness finds its genesis in society's unreasonable demands upon the individual, demands transmitted largely by parental figures and in opposition to human "nature." Mead replies that a society could be created, indeed had been created in Samoa, that was not against nature but in accord with it. In Mead's Samoa the civilized source of psychological discontent was thus eliminated and adolescence was, therefore, "freer and easier and less complicated" (Mead [1928] 1973:x).

It must be added, however, that Mead feared eliminating discontent would also undermine intensity, individuality, and involvement with life. These were the qualities she found missing in her Samoan model of social harmony (ibid.). If Mead did not doubt that the conflict between the individual and society could be resolved, she had reservations about the wisdom of doing so. But while Mead had the sophistication to cast a critical glance at her own argument, it was nonetheless a psychoanalytical perspective from which that argument derived.

Mead critiqued analytic theory because she had always seen it as an extremely valuable tool, albeit one that required the corrective perspective offered by ethnography. She ends her memorial lecture with the very plea that underlies *Coming of Age*, a plea for psychoanalysts and anthropologists join hands so that "we might generate a joint psychoan-

alytic-anthropological theory upon which to base responsible recommendations for social change, as it affects the way we educate our young people" (Mead 1959 : 74).<sup>13</sup>

**Freeman: His Interpretation of Mead's  
Psychological Position and His Stance  
on Samoan Aggression**

In Margaret Mead and Samoa, Freeman portrays Mead as taking a cultural relativist position on human personality and in doing so underrating the importance of biological factors. Freeman does not ignore the centrality of psychological concerns in Mead's work. On the contrary, after constructing for the reader an anthropological polarity between cultural determinism and biological determinism, Freeman draws a parallel polarity in psychology between the "environmentalists" and the "instinctivists" (1983a:1-112)- and misplaces Mead within these polar sets.

Early in the twentieth century, Freeman tells us, the field of anthropology was dominated by a debate between the cultural relativists and the biological determinists. Biological determinism was, during the second decade of the century, taken up by the eugenic movement. Human nature, eugenicists argued, was hereditary and, therefore, biological. This claim was used to assert the genetic inferiority of certain races (ibid. :8). Rallying against racism, says Freeman, Boas was forced into a cultural determinist position and therefore contended that biology, and with it instinct, were not determining factors in human nature. In Freeman's portrait, Mead is a defender of the faith of cultural determinism, that faith preached by Boas. As a result, Freeman argues, both Boas and his student, Mead, underrated the importance of biological factors.<sup>14</sup> However, Freeman bases this "biological" censure of Mead's work on a recourse to the history of psychological theory.

In the twenties, Freeman tells us, psychology was the stage for a debate roughly parallel to the one that raged in the field of anthropology. On one side of the debate, he says, were the "instinctivists." Freeman argues that "instinctivist" theory was the psychological analogue of biological determinism. On the other side, Freeman places the behaviorists, who were, like Boas, in a battle against hereditarian ideas. "Limiting the purview of psychology to overt behavior . . . led to the rejection of theories of genetic determinism and gave rise, in about 1920, to the anti-instinct movement" (ibid.:54). Freeman uses J. B. Watson to represent the behaviorists. Watson stressed the importance of

environmental factors in determining human nature and was "almost savagely against the notion of human instinct" (*ibid.*). Thus, Freeman suggests Boas, and Mead with him, are anthropological versions of J. B. Watson.

However, precisely which psychologists should be taken as representative of the "instinctivists" remains a mystery in Margaret Mead and Samoa. In light of the polarity that Freeman establishes, one can only presume Freud. Watson considered Freud his intellectual adversary, referring to psychoanalytic theory as a "mentalist fiction" (Lindzey, Hall, and Thompson 1978:21). Freud certainly is responsible for forwarding the idea that human behavior is instinctually motivated.

Freeman's implication, that Boas and Mead with him are behaviorists, is far from accurate. In fact, Mead crusaded against behaviorism.<sup>15</sup> In the preface to the 1973 edition of *Coming of Age in Samoa*, Mead says that "the pleas for a harsh, manipulative behaviorism among some psychologists make me wonder whether the modern world understands much more about the significance of culture than was known in 1928" ([1928] 1973:x-xi). Mead goes on to say it is, "alas," still necessary to stress the concept of culture "when psychologists dream of substituting conditioning for cultural transmission, just as the crudest behaviorists did in 1920" (*ibid.* :xi).

If *Coming of Age* represents one side of a dialectic (is Freeman really the synthesis?), this dialectic is surely not based upon a simple dichotomy between instinct and environment. For in *Coming of Age*, alongside her belief in Boas and cultural relativism, Mead was preoccupied with Freudian theory.

Freeman implies that the nature/nurture controversy of the 1920s centered on whether psychological problems stemmed either from biology or from culture. "If . . . these problems were caused by the biological processes of maturation, then they would necessarily be found in all human societies. But in Samoa . . . life was easy and casual, and adolescence was the easiest and most pleasant time of life" (Freeman 1983a:xi). Mead, like Freud, never says that psychological problems are either cultural or biological. She did not take issue with the universality of biological processes but with the necessity of a concomitant spiritual storm. Mead does not insinuate that biology fails to function in Samoa. The pubescent girls of whom she writes are surcharged with erotic feelings, but these biological impulses do not put them in opposition to their society.

It is not the biological element of human nature that Mead portrays as fluctuating from one culture to another, but only the nature of the

clash between the vicissitudes of the body and those of custom. The question is whether the culture at issue takes a stance that is essentially opposed to or in harmony with instinct. Mead's queries pertain not to biology, but rather to our Western civilization ([1928] 1973:6-7). Like Freud, Mead believed that the degree of dissonance between culture and nature suffered by our own society, and particularly by adolescents in our society, was unnecessary.

Freeman accuses Mead of favoring environment over instinct in the formation of human personality and, therefore, of ignoring the "genetic" for the "exogenetic" (Freeman 1983a:25, 29, 31). We have seen that this characterization of Mead is incorrect. However, Freeman's argument has yet another flaw. He is extremely vague about the nature of the "biological" factors that Mead purportedly neglects. Because his definition of biology is never explicit in Margaret Mead and Samoa, it must be deduced.

We do know that Freeman sets out to correct Mead's "deficiencies" through his own research. In the chapters where he attempts to supplement Mead's work, Freeman discusses sexual repression, evidence of social maladjustment such as suicide, and various forms of aggressive behavior. One can hardly argue that either sexual repression or social maladjustment are genetic problems or due to "phylogenetically given impulses" (ibid.:300). Thus one is left to conclude that Freeman sees aggression as the biological element missing from Mead's account.

In a few pages toward the end of the book Freeman's real position becomes fleetingly visible. Culture, Freeman believes, imposes conventional modes of interaction over "highly emotional and impulsive behavior that is animal-like in its ferocity" (ibid.:301). "Ferocity" and "animal-like" are the key words here. Freeman, sitting cross-legged for endless hours in the Samoan *fono* (chiefly assembly), observes the overlay: "incensed chiefs, having attained to pinnacles of elaborately patterned politeness, would suddenly lapse into violent aggression" (ibid. :300).

Thus Freeman's position on human aggression is ethological. Inasmuch as we are aggressive we are "animal-like." While he implies, however, that Samoan aggression is merely a local version of a universal and ethological phenomenon, Freeman most often traces Samoan aggression to child-rearing practices. I would like to disentangle Freeman's propositions and consider each separately: (1) that Mead underplayed Samoan aggression in *Coming of Age*, (2) that when humans are aggressive they are "animal-like," and (3) that Samoan aggression is tied to the strictures placed upon children.

### Mead on Aggression in Samoan Society

It is true that we hear rather little about aggression in *Coming of Age*. There are quarrels and fallings-out among relatives, but Mead would lead us to believe that Samoa is a quintessentially pacific society; it is essential to her argument. Perchance in *Coming of Age* Mead was influenced by Freud's early work, in which aggression took second place to the libido and to Eros. Freud first assumed aggression to be self-protective in nature. Defense would be unnecessary in a society as permissive as Mead believed Samoa to be. Only in Freud's later work did the death instinct assume preponderant importance; only after a world war did Freud begin to believe in the constitutional inclination of human beings toward aggression (S. Freud [1961] 1962:111-145).

Undoubtedly, times have changed, and Samoan character with it, and any one construction of the past must be at best tenuous. Nonetheless as a resident of Samoa, as the wife of a Samoan, I find it difficult to believe aggression was as absent or as unimportant in the 1920s as Mead suggests, I would like to relate a 1975 story of jolly pugnaciousness in Manu'a.<sup>16</sup> This pugnaciousness is so characteristically Samoan one is hardly tempted to put it down to Western influence, although it cannot be denied that, in this case, a Westerner ignited these Samoan fire-works.

A *palagi* (Caucasian) student of mine, Bill, married a Samoan woman shortly before 1975. The couple had met in the States but decided to visit Manu'a. There the wife's family lived and she had land they someday hoped to use for their home. Manu'a was still relatively isolated. The only way to get there was via a rather dilapidated freighter. It was an overnight excursion and passengers slept on the deck with the chickens and pigs.

Manu'a had no dock, and so the boat anchored off the reef. Transportation to the beach was provided by a canoe that passed through a rough and narrow *ava* (canyon in the reef). After this harrowing journey, as my student first set foot on shore, a pickup truck screeched to a halt before him, out of which jumped a big Samoan man, axe in hand, who knew enough English to say, "You wanna fight?" This seemingly ferocious individual turned out to be Bill's new brother-in-law, and his offer was only a jocular greeting. The feint, however, was soon to be followed by the real thing.

By noon of the next day a young woman was bruiting it about the village that Bill had been her boyfriend in Hawaii. As the afternoon began to wane, out in front of his relative's *fale* this girl and Bill's bride's sister



stood facing each other, the former to physically assert her claim to Bill, the latter to physically defend her sister's honor. <sup>17</sup> Pomade coated both girls' hair so that if, during the ensuing fight, one grabbed at the hair of the other she would not get a grip. The scuffle was soon joined by other villagers and later by those from the far side of the village, who came down screaming, "We'll get you this time!" Finally, in the evening, the *faifeau* (village minister) broke up the fray. One of the Samoan minister's focal roles is to reassert a sometimes very tentative peace (Shore 1982:6).

The missionary Stair, writing toward the conclusion of the nineteenth century, tells us these pugnacious tendencies are by no means new. "Wars amongst the Samoans were for a long time frequent and bloody; indeed, it was seldom that the islands were free from actual warfare or local quarrels, which were often decided by an appeal to arms. . . . Wars originated from various causes, sometimes the most trivial. Amongst others were bad language, irritating songs, jealousy, quarrels relating to women, murders, political rivalry, and, in addition to these, old feuds, which frequently needed the merest trifle to fan the flame" (Stair 1897:222-225). As in our own society, aggression has played all too prominent a part in Samoan social life.

Mead does acknowledge the place of aggression in her other works on Samoa, works in which she was not painting Samoa as a model of mental health. Like the early Freud, Mead links aggression with conservative attitudes toward sexuality. These attitudes Mead finds in Samoan hierarchical contexts. In *Coming of Age* Mead only hints this conservatism exists by telling the reader that the adolescent girl is extraordinarily careful to conceal her affairs from all elders ([1928] 1973:38,51). But in Mead's other works on Samoa, when hierarchical relations are involved, attitudes toward sexuality are not represented as indulgent, nor is aggression depicted as inappreciable.

In *Cooperation and Competition among Primitive Peoples*, for example, Mead says, "Any man committing adultery with the chiefs wife was put to death by village edict," and she attributes intervillage hostilities principally to adultery, especially when the adulterer was younger or of lower status than the cuckold (1937:284,302,303). In an appendix to *Coming of Age* Mead discusses attitudes toward sexuality in missionary times, reporting that in those days, if an ordinary girl was discovered to be unchaste, she was cruelly beaten and her head shaved ([1928] 1973, app. 3:153). Mead goes on to indicate that the higher one's place in the Samoan hierarchy, the more extreme this attitude toward sexuality became. Before the Navy prohibited the ceremony in

which the *taupou* (village ceremonial virgin) was ritually deflowered, a *taupou* who failed to bleed was stoned to death (ibid.).

Christianity, Mead says, softened the Samoans' treatment of their children. Nonetheless, if Samoan methods of punishment for sexual indiscretion were moderated by Christianity, it is unlikely Christianity liberalized Samoan sentiments about it.<sup>18</sup> The fact that premarital sex was publicly disapproved of during premissionary times implies that it was also publicly disapproved of during missionary times. It should also be added that heads are still being shaved and girls beaten today, not only for actually having sex but for being caught in a situation that might be interpreted as leading in that direction. In *Coming of Age*, Mead does not give aggression the weight it bears in her other works on Samoa, nor could she, for it would not support her Freudian argument.

### **Aggression and Ethology**

Even allowing that Mead failed to discover a society lacking significant aggression, it does not follow that she, therefore, neglected the animal side of human nature. Freeman's ethological perspective on aggression requires scrutiny, both in regard to how well it becomes an extremely vocal proponent of "interactionalism" and as to how just a characterization of human aggression it produces.

Like Lorenz in *On Aggression*, Freeman traces an "opposition" between the genetic patterning of animals and the cultural patterning of human beings (Freeman 1983a:300).<sup>19</sup> In an earlier essay, "Aggression: Instinct or Symptom," Freeman clarifies the nature of this opposition.<sup>20</sup> He gives examples of Samoan behavior that he believes directly parallel aggression in animals (Freeman 1971:70). For example, Freeman describes Lagerspetz's experiments with mice in which, once the mice had begun to fight, they tended to persist in aggressive behavior (ibid. :69-70). Here, Freeman says, the physiological state itself appears to function like a drive. Likewise in Samoa, "when serious fighting was stopped by chiefs, the aroused opponents commonly displayed a marked tendency to re-instigate attacks upon one another" (ibid.:70).

If this parallel seems to imply that aggression is an instinct, Freeman is quick to assure the reader that aggression involves the interaction of "both internal and external variables" (ibid. :71). However, the interaction to which he refers is between biology and those social factors that are precultural. Thus Freeman tells us that dominance hierarchies among animal and humans limit aggression, while crowding and learn-

ing can stimulate it, but he bases these conclusions on various experiments carried out with rhesus monkeys and with laboratory mice (ibid.:69-71). Freeman mentions two experimental studies of human behavior. In both cases, however, they exemplify similar findings in work with animals (ibid.:68-69).

In the field of psychology this parallel with animal behavior has been overused for decades. What those who work with our animal brethren fail to recognize is that new abilities emerge at the human level.<sup>21</sup> Human beings have language and construct symbol systems—such as cultures—and because of this fact our behavior does not necessarily resemble that of other species. Needless to say, we have something to learn from animal studies. However, it would seem that an interactionist model should take human culture into account, and culture is not reducible to those social behaviors we share with our evolutionary predecessors.

Animals are, it is true, genetically programmed to respond when their vital interests are threatened. But this disposition is not toward violence per se. Fight, flight, or submission are equally likely to follow such a threat, depending upon the adaptiveness of each reaction in the environment (Fromm 1973: 16-32).

Biological research does imply that some human aggression can be interpreted as an analogue to this animal reaction, but this is a distortive comparison and one that culture often turns back against biology. Humans, like animals, will rally when their vital interests are threatened, but to a great extent these interests are defined by society. For example, stratified Mediterranean societies have a concept of honor, although the definition of this concept varies. Men, women too, will fight if their honor is in jeopardy. But as Falstaff points out in *Henry IV*, honor is a cold bedfellow, especially when the bed one shares with it may well turn out to be a grave. One wonders: is this analogue or antinomy?

Furthermore, human aggression ranges far beyond the scope of the dubious parallel with nonhuman animals, for unlike animal instinct, human aggression is not merely reactive in nature, but often gratuitous and malignant. The source of this latter form of aggression may be cultural or, as Erich Fromm suggests, it may be existential (1973:218-433), but fortunately Freeman is wrong to trace it to the animal in us. In regard to aggression, as in so many other areas, humans appear to be an unnatural animal; or in the terminology of many traditional cultures, one might say we are, for better or for worse, not raw but cooked.

***Malosi: The Roots of Samoan Aggression***

If there are problems with Freeman's indictment of Mead and with his position on aggression itself, he may not be altogether wrong in linking Samoan aggression with punishment in childhood. In Samoan social philosophy, childhood is a time of service. Gerber describes the demands of parents upon the child as heavy and exacting (1975:37-48). Mead says of the child, "So closely is the daily life bound up with . . . servitude and so numerous are the acknowledged relationships in the name of which service can be exacted, that for the children an hour's escape from surveillance is almost impossible" ([1928] 1973:41).

Good Samoan children are supposed to listen silently to the commands and instructions of all elders; in Samoan terms they should be *usita'i* (obedient). However, Samoans say that children are *fa'alogogata* (disobedient; literally, hard to listen). Today at least, as Freeman documents, when children talk back rather than listening, harsh punishment follows (1983a:205-210). No one denies that the corporal punishment of children is common in Samoa today. The moot point is whether it is an intrinsic part of the *Fa'aSamoa* (Samoa Way), or whether this form of punishment is merely due to the socioeconomic conditions that have arisen in recent years during the process of modernization.<sup>22</sup> I will first consider the tie between the chastisement of children and uniquely modern circumstances, and then the place of discipline in the *Fa'aSamoa* itself.

### Samoa Today

Many of the traditional checks and balances to which Mead attributed social harmony and individual sanity in Samoa have begun to decay. There are, furthermore, elements of the Samoan social cosmos Mead did not consider that also helped to maintain the social equilibrium she observed. In recent years, many of these subtler aspects of *Fa'aSamoa* have also been modified in a manner that tends to undermine mental health and happiness.

Musical Chairs, Samoan Style. The major obstacle to parental severity Mead observed was the children's ability to change their residence should their natal homes prove in any way inhospitable. Today, escape from one's nuclear family is no longer as simple as once it was. Aunts and uncles have come to be regarded in a different category than parents, although adoption is still common and often children will grow up with near relatives other than their parents. But now aunts and uncles

more often shut their doors to runaway children, no matter what the cause of their having left.

'*Aiga* enjoyed a parallel freedom in relation to the *nu'u* (village). Formerly, if a family was severely shamed by the behavior of one of its youngsters, it could escape the village's ire through a change of residence. Although the elaborate guest houses (*faletele*) through which an 'aiga demonstrates status were expensive to construct, a simple *fale* could be built in a few days by a man and his close relatives. Land for new plantations could easily be cleared and one had a right to land wherever one had ancestral lines. The only real disadvantage the family suffered was that its hereditary avenue toward titles and thus power would probably be more distant in the new village. But if the family so chose, it could return to the former village in a few years and all would be forgotten.

Unfortunately, such blithe migrations have grown more complicated. Families who today borrow money from the bank to build their *palagi*-style houses are reluctant to abandon the village in which they build. The new *palagi* homes wall in families, which are becoming more nuclear. Maintaining the family image before a village that one hesitates to leave for economic reasons means that parents can ill afford serious social blunders. They are, therefore, more vigilant about their adolescents' behavior. The resulting tendency is to keep adolescents, especially girls, within the house and under parental eyes. Within the tightening net of a more limited and more nuclear family, direct confrontations between authority figures and children are now more likely.

Childcare. A decrease in the importance of the child nursemaid's role in the socialization process also insures added strife between parents and children in Samoa today. Now older siblings go off to school. Although in some cases the lack of child nursemaids means that the mother becomes a primary caretaker, childcare is not the traditional occupation of adult women in Samoa. Many of these women work. Due to the unavailability of sibling caretakers, the child is often left with its grandparents.

Samoa society is organized in an age-grade hierarchy (Mead [1928] 1973:12). Those who are lower in the hierarchy demonstrate their *fa'aloalo* (fealty) to those above them through *tautua* (service).<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the most typical form of parental communication is the command (Gardner 1965: 145,146; Sutter 1980:36-41). However, in the life of the child, this severity is balanced by relations with grandparents. Grandparents and young children are clearly different in age. In rela-

tions between persons with sharply demarcated differences in status, the need to assert this distinction seems to fade. Consequently grandparents, rather than exerting their authority, enjoy spoiling the child. Traditionally this spoiling was intermittent, as was the association between grandparents and children. Today, when grandparents are often the primary caretakers, they continue to indulge their grandchildren. Sometimes an adult babysitter is hired instead; in American Samoa a Tongan woman, in Western Samoa an older and grandmotherly woman. The hireling's job is to serve. Being cared for by a servant inverts the normal status relation between adult and child and thus presents the child **with** a model for relationship that does not fit the hierarchical mold of Samoan social life. The resulting adolescent is not socialized according to parental expectation.<sup>24</sup>

Choice. The moral uniformity that Mead noted in the Samoa of yesteryear no longer exists. Today there are a very large number of Christian religious sects represented in Samoa. Oriental fishermen who have made a home in Pago Pago have brought their religions as well, although the vast majority of Samoans are still Christian. Because of the influx of the modern world-including radio, movies, television, and videos-the vast array of potential choices that Mead describes as beleaguering American adolescents in the 1920s is familiar to the Samoan adolescent. However, especially in Western Samoa, the freedom to make these potentialities actual is certainly less than it is in the United States. But, if Samoa is a socially and economically more limited society than our own, these factors hardly mitigate adolescent intrapsychic conflict. On the contrary, such limitations may intensify it,

Modern Western Samoa recently suffered an epidemic of suicide, reaching a high point in 1981. In American Samoa suicide was less widespread. It has been argued that the difference in suicide rates between the two Samoas is due to the fact that American Samoans have a good deal more opportunity to make the various choices presented to them by the media than their Western Samoan cousins (see Bowles 1985:15-35; Macpherson and Macpherson 1985:36-73; Oliver 1985:74-87; Leacock 1987: 184-185).

Contexts. If parental severity is balanced by the attitude of grandparents, a strict formality between parents and their children is offset by relations with peers. The Samoan social cosmos is divided into hierarchical contexts and peer contexts (Shore 1982:221-292). As parents are of higher social standing than their children, the parent-child relation-

ship is hierarchical. Hierarchical relations require deferential behavior in which the personal desires of the subject are politely cloaked. Consequently, within the confines of the parent-child relationship, sexuality and all the more personal impulses of the self are hidden. However, this circumspection is abandoned among peers. Here teasing and ribaldry are the rule.

Between 1966 and 1969 Richard Moyle recorded the sexual songs, dances, and poems that were once part of formalized joking between peers. For example, when the youths of one village paid a formal visit to the maidens of another, a kava ceremony was held and poems such as the following were recited:

*Sulitu 'ua 'e ita.  
'Ua pa'fi lou ma'i masina.*

*'Ua ou tago atu,  
Se'i a'e lamulamu.  
'O a'u nei 'o Pili.  
Le tagata 'ai mea nanamu.*

*'Āfai e te fia fa'alogo  
I le gase o le pona tolo,  
Na'ona 'e fa'aloloa,  
Pei 'oe funa e te 'ai suamoa.*

Sulita, you are angry.  
Your clot of menstrual blood has fallen.

I reached out,  
Snatched it up and chewed it.  
I am Pili.  
The one who eats strong-smelling things.

If you want to hear  
The noise of the sugarcane node,  
Just lie back, girl,  
As though you were eating boiled chicken. (Moyle 1975:233)

Moyle explains the allusions in the song as follows. "The reference here is not so much to the node as to the base of the sugarcane stalk, a metaphorical expression for the erect penis. The noise is that of the sugarcane moving in the wind, a reference to the sounds involved in copulation . . . chickens are usually cooked on their backs, the legs spread' (ibid.).

Actually *fu'alogo* is the verb for "to feel," as well as for "to hear." *Gasese* is a rustling noise, but also a light slapping caress, like that of the breeze on the skin. Moyle rightly suggests that the reference to chicken has to do with the position of the legs of boiled fowl, but the line also equates the pleasure of eating and of lovemaking.

Salacious songs and poems have largely fallen into disuse. Peer relations are far from straight-laced, but bawdy humor no longer appears to have such a firmly institutionalized place. In any case, when young girls are expected to stay constantly at home, peer relations cannot balance hierarchical restraints.

Today, when adolescents do escape the hierarchical context of the family and evoke some public comment, there is always the traditional solution. Severe lashing with a coconut frond is the traditional penalty for any child who calls down shame upon the *'aigu*. This form of sanction for shaming one's family was clearly in evidence in Mead's time. Mead describes it as the prescribed treatment for a girl who was found not to be virgin in the defloration ceremony that preceded her wedding. How easily an *'āiga* was shamed in the 1920s and, therefore, how easily beatings were precipitated is a matter for speculation.

Undoubtedly today the likelihood of young people's embarrassing their families is greater. When modern adolescent norms for behavior differ so severely from the traditional norms, parents can hardly avoid feeling shamed by their children, nor can children avoid the consequences. A deeply enraged adolescent girl will sometimes intentionally get pregnant, using her ability to bring shame upon her parents as revenge against them. Such behavior constitutes an effective weapon, but it is self-destructive. Suicide represents the same sort of stifled rebellion in Samoa. Neither is a happy analogue for the greater latitude adolescents found in peer relationships in former times.

### Samoa Yesterday

This examination of current social conditions still leaves us at a loss as to the intrinsic place of physical censure in Samoan childhood. Eleanor Leacock tries to resolve this puzzle through her work in the London Missionary Society Archives (1987: 193). She quotes missionaries who recount elements of Samoan social philosophy that, Leacock believes, once mitigated parental violence against their children. According to these missionaries, nineteenth-century Samoans thought that their children could not be coerced and were careful of their children's dignity.

Leacock cites one story in which a child refuses to accompany his par-



ents to a *pōula* (night dance). Instead of beating the child when he repeatedly refuses, they merely turn him over to the missionaries—lock, stock, and barrel (Leacock 1987:183). Poula tended to be extremely bawdy (Williams [1832] 1984:247-248). The boy, by his refusals, had demonstrated Christian inclinations. The missionaries were probably delighted by the boy's reluctance to attend such "ungodly" entertainments. However, the parents cast the boy out, and even if this reaction did not entail violence, it hardly constitutes a mild punishment. Leacock's missionaries tell another story in which a boy's parents, after beating the child, fix him special food to help repair his injured dignity (1987:183).

These tales are worth considering because one finds similar ideas about children elsewhere in Polynesia. In Tahiti, for example, Levy found both the idea that the child has "an inviolable will of his own" and remnants of an earlier and possibly related idea that the child had more *mana* (spiritual force) than its parents (1973:423,432). In Polynesian social philosophy *mana* and dignity are associated concepts.<sup>25</sup>

The belief that children cannot be coerced seems to fit with Mead's assertion that adults indulged a child who was *musu* ([1928] 1973:68). *Musu* (to refuse) refers particularly to a stubborn noncompliance with an order given by someone with authority over the individual. My students tell me, however, that one cannot be *musu* with a *matai* (chief) or with one's parents. They mean that refusal is, at least today, not an acceptable response to those in authority and while it does occur, a *musu* attitude usually earns the recalcitrant individual a proper beating. In fact the whole process of socialization in Samoa is directed toward rooting out the child's willfulness (*loto*). It must be added that Samoans are the first to admit that the *loto* is *ma'a'a* (hard to uproot) (Mageo 1986).

There is a strong connection between punishment and dignity or, more precisely, between punishment and status. To be punished in Samoa is to have one's lack of status firmly asserted. To be served, and particularly to be served food, is a validation of status, so the dynamics of Leacock's second tale are credible as well. On the other hand, Freeman points out that the missionary Stair noted both permissive and harsh behavior on the part of Samoan parents. Stair says that sometimes children were "indulged in every wish" and at other times they were "severely beaten for the most trivial offence" (quoted in Freeman 1983a:205).

It is in fact likely that both Leacock's sources and Stair are correct. The apparent contradiction between them, however, can be resolved

only through a deeper understanding of Samoan social philosophy, specifically of the feelings predicated between parents and children.

### *Alofa and the Parent-Child Relationship*

Samoans believe that the primary feeling of the parent toward the child is *alofa* (love). Therefore, in order to understand this relationship we must investigate the meaning of this Samoan word and of related Samoan words.<sup>26</sup>

When expressing *alofa* the phrase "Talofae ia 'oe" is most commonly used. Talofae, however, is said in sympathy for the problems of another, rather than as a term of affection. Talofae is a variation on the word talofa, what is typically said in greeting. The word *alofa* can also be used. For example, instead of "Talofa," an individual might say "Si o'u alofa" ("Regards!"). Both of these forms of greeting mean more than welcome. All *alofa* words indicate a willingness to give aid (*tautua*, commonly translated as service).<sup>27</sup>

For example, the word for true love is *alofafafutu*. *Futu* is the name of a difficult boat channel in Taga, Savai'i. Safe entrance through this passage requires the aid of the local people.<sup>28</sup> *Fealofani* means mutual love and respect, which is expressed typically by a willingness to share unstintingly and to serve the other. The first description a Samoan ever gave me of *fealofani* is as follows. Suppose there were two sisters. Each sister had a big job to do, like weeding one section of a plantation. Both had been allotted the same amount of work, but one finished sooner. If the faster sister was *fealofani* to the slower sister, she would help her finish her work.

Similarly, individuals who have an *alofa* disposition (*lotoalofa*) share with and defer to anyone who comes to them. If you visit such individuals they serve you food. They make a shelter for you. And they would be grieved to go against any of your wishes.

Parent-Child. Although parents feel much *alofa* for their children, they try never to show it and never, ever, to speak of it. Should they do either, they fear they would spoil their children. In light of the meaning of the word *alofa*, it becomes clear why. Indeed parents may be brimming over with *alofa* and may, in consequence, want to cook for the children and to defer to them, but their relative place in the status hierarchy legislates against it.

The preparation of food is a primary Samoan sign for fealty and submission. For example, one's obligations to the *matai* are called *tautua*.

*Tautua* actually means service, but the manner in which this *tautua* is most commonly given is by bringing the *matai* food for his Sunday lunch. Children, likewise, cook for their parents. So definitive of the parent-child relationship is this service that the parents Gerber interviewed in her 1972-1973 fieldwork in Samoa could not imagine that American parents cooked for their children (1975:39). These Samoan parents were also told that American children, unlike their Samoan counterparts, leave home when they became adults. "But who cooks for them?" was the parents' astonished comment, meaning who cooks for the forsaken parents (ibid.).

Service is not expected of babies. Neither can they be expected to appreciate their low degree, so they are consistently indulged. However, with the child it is a different matter. Children need to practice fealty to parents and must learn, through experience in their immediate family, to defer to others in authority in their *'āiga* and in their *nu'u*.

If parents do not insist upon the deference due them, but show their *alofa* instead, children become confused about cultural signs. By displaying their *alofa*, the parents would be treating the children as if they were of a higher status than the parents. As a result, children might come to assess themselves wrongly, that is, as of a loftier status than they actually hold.

*Spoiling Samoan Style.* The most serious social sin a youngster can commit is to be *tuatalaititi*. Many Samoans are bilingual speakers of English and Samoan. Most translate *tuatalaititi* as cheeky. The actual term is applied only to children and teenagers. Cheeky behavior implies presuming above one's station. Since children are utterly without status and teenagers relatively so, almost any strongly assertive behavior on their part is cheeky. Samoans will also call a child who is often *tuatalaititi* spoiled.

"Spoiling" Samoan style can be a very serious social problem. Samoan strictures have to do with obedience to authority. Appropriate deference is tantamount to moral conduct. Normally, therefore, the child's guideline for behavior is simply to obey parents and other elders in the *'aiga*. If too much *alofa* has led a child to believe that he or she is of a higher status than elders (because that child has been treated as such), then the guideline of obedience appears not to apply.

Standards of conduct do not apply equally to all in Samoa. High-status people have a great deal of freedom of action. It is considered impolite for anyone lower in the hierarchy to question them or any of their actions. The assumption is that, as they have been through the ranks,

they are fully socialized and, therefore, can be trusted to act in the interests of their group. Should children come to consider themselves high-status individuals, they might draw the conclusion that they also can do whatever they like.

Just because parents are afraid to spoil their children, this does not mean that they never show their *alofa*. In the old days occasionally parents would feed a child until he or she lay down sick, saying, "Now you see how much *alofa we* have for you." When a child is hurt parents often become very emotional. Sick children are treated much as babies are. At the local hospital the ailing offspring will be carried about in a father's or a mother's arms. Parents will sleep beside a convalescent child and cook for them. But such practices, if too frequent, would have a corrupting influence.

This is why Samoans believe that, if one has *alofa* for one's children (in the sense of sincerely wanting to aid them), it is necessary to hide the desire to serve and defer to them. Instead one teaches children proper social conduct by giving them much practice in service and in following instructions without question, and by whipping (*fue*) them when they fail to obey.<sup>29</sup>

Punishment functions as a reassertion of status, which has been challenged by the child's malfeasance. Freeman describes the characteristic feature of parental beatings in Samoa. The child demonstrates submission by sitting down before the parent, crossing the legs, and silently enduring-without tears-the treatment doled out by the parent (Freeman 1983a:206-207).

***The Tei Relationship.*** The Samoan child gets practice deferring not only to parents but also to older siblings. Like parents, older siblings have much *alofa* for their little charges. Mead speaks of the older child's attitude toward the younger as "maternal enthusiasm" ([1928] 1973: 44). Parents frequently admonish children to "*Tausi lelei si ou tei!*" ("Take good care of your *tei!*") and the *tei* relationship is the fondest bond that exists in the culture.

This attitude of tenderness toward a younger sibling remains in adulthood. When my husband's sister gave birth to her first child, my husband was in his early teens. This older sister had been his caretaker when he was little. He moved in with his sister in order to take care of her baby girl. Today he still dreams of rescuing small girls from peril. He flirts with female babies and compares their good looks. He keeps a baby picture of me on his desk.

Samoans will go great lengths to foster, sponsor, and protect younger members of their *'aiga*. Emotionally speaking it is the bond, or in the language of modern physicists, the charm, that binds Samoan society together. Jobs and advancement will go, when possible, to the person in authority's *tei*. This system of hiring and promotion is called *fa'a'aiga* (the way of the family).<sup>30</sup> Today it meets with social disapproval. Nonetheless most Samoans admit that it is the manner in which the Samoan social system functions.

Older relatives not only sponsor, but censure the *tei* as well. In these matters parents do not intervene, nor do they try to assess the fairness of the older child's treatment of the *tei*. To do so would be to undermine the older child's authority, and with it the whole Samoan system of childcare. Levy gives an example of such a parental stance in his study of Tahiti. I include the story here because the *tei* system of child-care-taking is trans-Polynesian (Ritchie and Ritchie 1979; Levy 1969:4-33).

Levy lived with a Tahitian family on the island of Huahine. One day, the younger daughter of his hostess scurried into the house chased by her older sister. The younger girl ran tearfully into the arms of her mother. The older girl had a switch and when she caught up with her sister, enfolded in their mother's arms, proceeded to beat her junior about the legs with the switch (Levy 1973:435). Although the mother held and comforted the younger girl, she did not interfere with the beating. If she had articulated her attitude, the mother might have said something like this, "*Talofae*, too bad, I know how you feel and sympathize, but we all must accept the authority of those above us in the hierarchy."

*Intent and Attitude.* In regard to punishment, the gravity or triviality of the offense is not as significant to Samoans as the attitude an action conveys. A *tuatalaitiiti* attitude is always reprehensible, no matter how trivial the action through which it is communicated. Attitude plays the same role in the assessment of culpability in Samoa as motive does in our own culture. For us a person's motive is more important than the deed itself, be it grave or trivial. To Samoans it is the doer's attitude that is primal.

These divergent orientations as to what is reprehensible stem from the difference between Western and Samoan identity. In the West identity is based upon the ego. The ego is the idea of oneself as a unique person, separate from others (S. Freud [1961] 1962:66-67), and is built from the inner world of the subject. In Samoa identity is based upon the persona. The persona is a self-image (Jung 1966:158) and is derived

from social relations. Because our identities are based on the ego, subjective inner events, like motive, are viewed as primary. For Samoans, social events, such as attitudes, are all important.

### *Hierarchy, Dominance, and Aggression*

Freeman argues that the physical punishment that the Samoan system metes out to children generates aggression in the adult. So far so good. There is, after all, a great deal of psychological evidence that physical punishment in childhood creates more aggressive adults (Aronson [1972] 1984:215-221). However, Freeman would also lead us to believe that Samoan aggression stems not just from these punishments in themselves, but also from their arbitrary character. Much as his missionary predecessor Stair, Freeman sees Samoan chastenings as often unfair and capricious (1983a: 208-209).<sup>31</sup>

Although parents and other relatives can be unfair in Samoa, just as anywhere else, and although the precipitating factors for correcting a child are different in Samoa than in Western society, these censures are not at all arbitrary in Samoan terms. Nonetheless, the Samoan hierarchical system of child rearing may contribute, as Freeman suspects, to aggressiveness in adult hood.

In his 1971 essay on aggression, Freeman notes that dominance hierarchies restrict the expression of aggressive impulses. In *Margaret Mead and Samoa*, however, he implies that this restriction ultimately results in a building up of aggressive impulses that express themselves in uncontrolled outbursts of rage, states of possession, and so on (Freeman 1983a:216-225).<sup>32</sup> In my view hierarchy tends to increase aggression because requiring submission from children stimulates a contrary desire to dominate. In an age-grade system children have numerous supervisors. In Samoa these supervisors enforce their right to tell children what to do through punishment. Because the assertion of status in Samoa is equated with the ability to inflict physical punishment, punishing another may come to be regarded, in later life, as an assertion of status.

John Parton, former assistant district attorney of American Samoa, was wont to comment on the respect he was shown by the prison inmates he had defeated in the courtroom. Instead of hating him for being involved in their demise, these inmates seemed to be primarily impressed with him. By putting them in jail, and thereby punishing them, Parton had validated his high status.

To us these inmates seem to lack a normal aggressive response, but by not directing their anger toward Parton they were conforming to the

pattern of relationships that is established in Samoan childhood. Because it is those individuals with superior status who punish the child, aggressive feelings are originally generated in hierarchical relations. However, in Samoan social philosophy no one lower in the hierarchy has the right to express such sentiments to anyone above them. Before one's betters, only compliance is called for, and anything short of compliance is met with a harsh and physical chastening.

The aggressive feelings that stem from the child's treatment in hierarchical relations have two potential outlets. The only immediate outlet for the child's feelings is in peer relations, an outlet that remains important in later life.<sup>33</sup> Here competitive and jocular attempts to dominate are socially acceptable. As the child develops and as the youth reaches adulthood, a second outlet for the desire to dominate is secured. Individuals gain positions of authority and require deference from underlings. I will consider these outlets consecutively.

*Peers, Punishment, and Dominance.* In Samoa peer interaction normally consists of teasing banter and friendly rivalry. Childhood teasing gives voice both to the aggression silenced in hierarchical relations and to the desire to dominate fostered by childhood subservience. Children and young people will brag about their *'aiga*. Conversely when children tease others, they often do so by calling the name of the other children's parents. The teaser means to take the parents' name, and in a larger sense the family name, in vain. Thus they rile their friends. Sometimes children will reveal or fabricate stories about an undignified peccadillo in which one of the other children's parents was involved prior to marriage. When children and youths tease one another about their respective families with too much *joie de guerre*, teasing can become brawling; this brawling is an attempt to put down the other child and his or her *'aiga*.

The aggression that is expressed in peer relations is—at least within the context of the *'aiga*—marginally acceptable, because in peer relations individuals function as representatives for their groups. Therefore, peer fights sometimes generate small wars between families. Even if the topic of gibes is not the other youth's family, when peers get the better of a family member, the *'aiga* frequently behaves as if it has been insulted. For example, my father-in-law's favorite daughter, Pili, was once beaten by the girls of another *'aigu*. The genesis of the fight was unclear, but undoubtedly the girls had felt insulted by Pili and subsequently attacked her. When Pili returned home from this beating my father-in-law assembled his eight other children. He divided them into a female

battalion and a male battalion and marched them over to the 'aiga of the delinquent girls, demanding that the other family send its children out to fight.

Rivalry among peers is a traditional entertainment in Samoan society, as in our own. In traditional times war games were put on between villages (Stair 1897:236-238). Today, cricket is the national pastime and has replaced these games. A village will usually sponsor both a male team and a female team. Competition is between villages. As a team member, the individual represents the *nu'u*, rather than the family.

Because Samoans have a strong desire to dominate, due to enforced submissiveness in childhood, they are not always the best losers. Losing a game can and does awaken a desire to assert dominance by "punishing" the other team. The losing team at a cricket match sometimes attacks the winning team. As teasing between friends can become war between families, games between teams can become riots between villages. One of my informants described a car being stoned as it drove through a village, merely because its passengers had rooted a little too hard for the cricket team of an opposing village.

***Hierarchical Relations and Aggression: Overstepping the Proper Bounds.*** In Samoan social philosophy, parents and others in authority justly reassert their dominant status through punishment. This punishment is intended as well-meant instruction for the callow and the forgetful in the rigors of the Samoan social hierarchy. However, as we have seen, a personal desire to dominate, and specifically to dominate by punishing another, may result from having to submit to others with such consistency in childhood. Normally this need to dominate fuels the Samoan hierarchical system in a highly functional manner, resulting in responsible supervision. However, Samoans also acknowledge that sometimes the personal need of the individual in authority to dominate, and therefore to punish, may get out of hand. When those below one are adequately submissive, or when they have legitimate complaints, then punishment is merely an arrogant assertion of status. Probably the most typical situation in which this overstepping takes place is when people drink to excess.

For example, although my father-in-law, Toa, was on the whole a mild-mannered man, when he drank his need to assert dominance surfaced. In general all his drinking would inspire was song. He would roam about smiling and shouting. Shouting is significant in such an episode, as it represents a reversal of the command that children be silent.



To shout is symbolically connected to presuming above one's accorded status. When individuals speak loudly, Samoans say they are *fialeolagona*. *Fialeolagona* literally means to want to make your voice heard, but actually refers to someone who is presuming above his or her proper status. At any rate, Toa would shout, "I am Toa of Samoa." The word *toa* means a strong warrior, capable of beating another village in war.<sup>34</sup>

My mother-in-law, Tina, hated his drinking. However, in the Samoan hierarchy wives are inferior to husbands in rank. Like children, they are supposed to serve their husbands with demure obedience. The high chiefs wife is called *faletua*, which means back of the house. The back of the house is where those serving high-status persons remain. The talking chiefs wife is called *tausi*, meaning to take care, specifically to take care of the talking chief.

Tina, as a wife, had no right to verbally complain about Toa's intemperance. But Tina's only sibling was a younger brother and so she had been the authority in her household. Tina saw herself more as a titled lady than as a wife. Therefore, when Toa was inebriated, Tina compromised. It would, after all, have been undignified to *komumu* (grumble). Instead she prepared for him only scanty and uninteresting meals. Samoans have been known to cry at such a lack of *alofa*.

Contemplating one of these unappetizing dinners, Toa picked up a *taro* and hurled it at Tina, determined to put her in her place. Like some legendary baseball player, Tina caught it in mid-air and hurled it back, with considerably greater force and accuracy. Having been duly punished, Toa grew much less prone to assert his authority.

*Punishment and Titles.* My reader may protest at this point that dominance and submission are universal themes.<sup>35</sup> However, it is possible that, when child-rearing practices emphasize submission, these themes take a particularly prominent place in adult character. There is much support for this hypothesis in the voluminous ethnographic literature on Samoa.

Many ethnographers have commented upon the fact that the point of adult life in Samoa is to secure a title and that Samoans are preoccupied with politics and attaining political positions. Mead speaks of the importance of titles in Samoan psychology. She says that "Samoans find rank a never-failing source of interest" (Mead [1928] 1973:28). The boy's life she sees as directed toward attaining a title.<sup>36</sup> "A man rarely attains his first title before he is thirty, often not before he is forty. All the years between his entrance into the *Aumaga* and his entrance into

the *Fono* are years of striving. He cannot acquire a reputation and then rest upon it or another claimant to the same title will take advantage of his indolence and pass him in the race. . . . Only the lazy, the shiftless, the ambitionless fail to respond to this competition" (ibid.: 106).<sup>37</sup> Holmes says, "Rank and prestige constitute the focal point of Samoan culture, to which all other aspects of life are secondary in importance" (1987:122).

Titles, like political positions, ensure that the holder will be listened to and that others will hear and obey. In short it insures a position of dominance. In Samoa the *tulafale* (talking chief) is the archetype both of the successful politician and of the successful man, the latter being equated with the former. The Samoan preoccupation with titles indicates a need to hold a position of dominance. It, therefore, points to demands for frequent and dramatic submission in childhood, demands probably enforced through prevalent punishment.

This link, between punishment and the desire to hold titles, is exemplified by my Samoan father-in-law. In some respects Toa was atypical in the manner in which he raised his children. He almost never beat them. He was similarly anomalous in his feeling about titles. His *'aiga* holds a very old and honored title in American Samoa. They offered it to him and he declined, preferring the pleasures of private life to those of public office.

Interestingly, Mead also says that in the 1920s most men did not aspire to titles until they began to grey, and positively avoided them prior to this time ([1928] 1973:20-21). Aside from my eccentric father-in-law, Samoans today do not avoid titles. Those who are ambitious and capable secure them as early as possible.

The political dimension of titles is also clear in Samoa today. In Western Samoa only titled individuals can vote. In American Samoa the legislature consists of a house of lords and a house of commons. The upper house is composed of titled men, not elected candidates. In fact, although not in law, a high title is a prerequisite for holding any significant political position. A modern Samoan organizational theorist, Tusi Avengalio, has said that, without a title, an individual is likely to be ineffectual in Samoan organizations.

If there indeed is a link between the forced submission of the child and an appetite for titles, then Mead's observation would lend credence to the idea that punishment was less ubiquitous in the Samoa of the 1920s than it is in the Samoa that spawned the present generation. Perhaps *musu* was tolerated more gently then than now. Unfortunately the lack of appetite for titles that Mead reports is contradicted by the nine

stories told in *Coming of Age* about specific young men. The major pre-occupation of each man is his pathway toward a title (*ibid.* :30-32).

Almost seventy years ago, Mead meant to hand Samoa, or what it represented to her, over to Americans as a remedy for adolescent dol-drums and, perhaps in a larger sense, as a palliative for human aggression. Unfortunately, there is no dearth of aggression in Samoa, nor have Samoans found the key to the riddle of how to make the exigencies of social life suit the personal desires of the subject. We are shaped by our societies, but somehow we are never quite the right shape to fit the mold without scouring and chafing. And the chafing leaves its mark upon our characters.

### NOTES

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1. For confirmation on the definition of these words see Milner 1966 and Pratt [1862] 1977.

2. Mead's seminal work, and that of friends and colleagues like Sapir and Benedict, represent the genesis of culture and personality studies in anthropology (Mead 1972:214-216).

3. The most outstanding example of the pivotal importance of Freudian thought for anthropologists in the 1920s is, of course, Bronislaw Malinowski's *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (1927).

4. Freeman mentions Ogburn's importance in this regard, stating that Mead conducted her research in Samoa inspired by Ogburn's "doctrines." However, Freeman never mentions Ogburn's psychological leaning, only his methodological ones (Freeman 1983a:58, 301). In private correspondence with me (October 3, 1987), Freeman has disputed Ogburn's belief in psychoanalysis because Ogburn counseled, "Never look for a psychological explanation unless every effort to find a cultural one has been exhausted" (reference not supplied by Freeman). Freeman construes this sentence to mean that Ogburn "introduced his students to psychological theories only to reject them. . . ." This statement is in marked contrast to Mead's *own* comments that Ogburn treated Freudian theory with respect. The idea that one should look to culture before employing universalistic psychological theories to explain behavior implies an appropriate ethnographic sequence, not a rejection of psychological perspectives on behavior. Mead, who was a psychology major and "committed to psychology" both before and after she took Ogburn's class, would hardly have been sympathetic to such a rejection.

5. Mead characterizes the thought of these social theorists as follows: "The physical changes which are going on in the bodies of young boys and girls have their definite psychological accompaniments. . . . As your daughter's body changes from the body of a child to the body of a woman, so inevitably will her spirit change, and that stormily" (Mead [1928] 1973:ix).

6. When Mead went to Samoa in 1925 she had not, of course, read Erikson, but in some measure she anticipates him in her description of this phase.

7. Mead also took issue with some of Freud's minor ideas. For example, she rejected the nineteenth-century notion, to which Freud subscribed, that "primitives" were animistic and prelogical (Mead 1972: 166).

8. In this section I often use Mead's "Cultural Contexts of Puberty and Adolescence" (1959) to refer to her data in *Coming of Age*, because in this lecture Mead summarizes her Samoan findings. In his letter of October 3, 1987, Freeman objects to my extensive use of this paper as evidence of Mead's Freudian leanings because it was written late in her life. I also use her autobiography and the arguments that she actually offers us in *Coming of Age* itself. In any case, there is no reason to believe that she misremembers her early interest in Freudian theory or lies about it.

9. For a comment upon the questionable test that Freeman employs to contest this assertion see Holmes 1983:933. Freeman presents a counterargument in 1984b:400-405.

10. Actually the child was cared for by an older relative of its own generation, usually female. In the Samoan generational kinship system, cousins are referred to by the same words as brothers and sisters. Thus, in Samoan terms, all female relatives of one's own generation are "sisters." As I note later in this paper, occasionally, when no "sister" is available, the boy shoulders this responsibility instead.

This brother/sister category is not even entirely confined to one's own generation. Because Samoan families are so large, children span many years. In consequence, individuals who are, in terms of Western kinship calculation, uncles and aunts will sometimes be of the same age as, or even younger than, their nieces and nephews. Here the Samoan respect for age takes precedence over kinship calculation. It would be impolite to call an older relative son or daughter, so in such cases the individuals involved will merely regard one another as cousins in our terms, or as sisters and brothers in Samoan terms.

11. In Samoan a *tei* is a younger relative of one's own generation. I use the pronoun "he" for the younger child in this section for the sake of clarity and brevity.

12. For a discussion of her anticipation of these ideas see Mead 1959.

13. In the letter mentioned above, Freeman has contested my depiction of Mead as taken up with Freudian issues because of several indications that Boas was anti-Freudian. However, even if Boas objected to many Freudian concepts, this does not mean that Mead's ideas were a replica of his. All Freeman manages to provide as to Mead's actual thoughts on the subject is a letter of Mead's (August 30, 1924) in which she refers to "the unpleasant devices of the Electra and Oedipus notions." This is flimsy evidence for the belief that Mead was anti-Freudian herself, especially in light of all her later remarks on the subject.

Freeman also refers to a private conversation with Mead on November 10, 1964, in which Mead said she had no real or reliable knowledge of psychoanalysis when she arrived in Samoa. What Mead may have meant by this remark is impossible to decipher out of context, but clearly she did not mean that she had failed to study Freud. By her own pub-

lished report, she studied Freud's work in Ogburn's class. Further she tells us that she had "read widely in the psychoanalytic literature of the day." Are we then to assume this published statement is fallacious? Mead may not have been familiar with the fine points of analytic technique, but her familiarity with the larger Freudian concepts, such as the Oedipus complex and its effects on socialization, is something that she refers to in correspondence during the twenties, as Freeman himself points out.

In any case, my argument is as follows: (1) Mead was taken up with Freudian ideas in *Coming of Age* and (2) she argued with many of Freud's pivotal concepts, for example, the necessity of an Oedipus crisis. However, with the more fundamental Freudian perspective, that mental illness and psychological suffering in general had an etiology based in the social intolerance of biological impulses, and specifically sexual impulses, Mead wholeheartedly agreed. Nothing that Freeman has produced shows this is not the case.

14. For the inaccuracy of this portrait of Boas see Weiner 1983:911-912; Marcus 1983; and also McDowell 1984:99-139. See also Freeman 1984a:152-158 and 1983b:135-142.

15. Mead is far too synthetic in her general intellectual approach to reject behaviorism as a whole. Some behaviorist insights she saw as valid. For example, Mead compares anthropologists' discovery that human "nature" varies in relation to variant child-rearing practices to that of the behaviorists (Mead [1928] 1973:3). However, the theoretical thrust of her own work lies elsewhere.

16. Mead did her research on Ta'u, one of the three islands in the Manu'an group. These islands are located in the territory of American Samoa.

17. In *The Social Organization of Manu'a*, Mead places much greater weight on Samoan sensitivity to insult (1969:226) than she does in *Coming of Age*.

18. The version of Christianity first imported to Ta'u was of the hellfire-and-brimstone London Missionary Society version. Although it must be added that the first Christian teachers representing this group were from Rarotonga, not from Europe, which may have softened the LMS doctrines somewhat. See Weiner 1983.

19. In *Margaret Mead and Samoa* Freeman refers to Lorenz only once (Freeman 1983a:201); the reference is to the hereditary nature of behavior. The comparison between Freeman and Lorenz is my own. Freeman sees Lorenz as a biological determinist and himself as an interactionalist (Freeman 1971).

20. In private correspondence Freeman has referred me to this 1971 essay as a particularly clear statement of his position on aggression.

21. See further Ehrlich 1974.

22. See Leacock 1987:172-181 and Holmes 1987:89-102 for additional discussion of the social change that has taken place since 1925.

23. *Fa'aaloalo* is usually translated as respect, but it does not indicate a personal admiration for another individual. Rather it indicates a willingness to acknowledge the sovereignty of another through humble service. Therefore, I prefer the word fealty as a translation.

24. Most Samoan parents today grew up in a social universe that was little altered from that of earlier generations. Many of their parents do not speak English. Undoubtedly in some sense the older generation represents the society's "traditional" way of life and the

younger generation "modern" incursions. However, socialization has changed to such an extent over the past twenty years in Samoa that this distinction between the generations amounts to a strange if fascinating historical juxtaposition. Often the two generations have different personality structures, They speak more or less different languages, both literally, in the sense that the younger generation relies considerably more on English than their parents, and metaphorically, in the sense that their worldviews are far from overlapping.

25. See Mageo 1986.

26. In the October 3, 1987, letter mentioned above, Freeman objects to my analysis of Samoan culture through the examination of language. He states that such analysis is "not a scientifically sound approach, even though it be an approach much in vogue among some cultural anthropologists." Freeman prefers to study directly observed behavior. In face of this anti-linguistic approach, it is hard to credit Freeman with a serious consideration of culture, or with interactionalism. On what basis Freeman dismisses a major school of thought in modern anthropology he did not explain.

27. See Gerber (1975:3,190-195; 1985:131, 145-146,149-150) for additional descriptions of the significance of the word *alofa*. Here Gerber discusses the relation between *alofa* and social obligation.

28. See Pratt [1862] 1977:28.

29. Gerber, in her study of Samoan emotions, documents that a primary sign for parental love is beating (1975: 6).

30. In his fascinating article Cluny Macpherson describes *how* the *fa'a'aiga* system functions in modern Western Samoa (1985:258-261).

31. See also Gerber 1985:122 on rage in relation to the hierarchical order of Samoan society.

32. The hydraulic theory of aggression is Freudian. For a summary and critique of this view, see Aronson [1972] 1984: 192-203.

33. Shore associates aggression specifically with peer relations (1982: 198-210).

34. *Toa* is a very ancient word. Originally the *toa* was the strong arm of the high chief. See Kirch 1984:64.

35. Gregory Bateson argues that dominance/submission are universal themes, but that the social roles affiliated with each varies between cultures (1975:97-106).

36. See Shore 1982, chapters 4 and 6.

37. The *'aumāga* is the village's association of young, untitled men. The *fono* is a chiefly assembly.

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