PERFORMING SELVES: THE SEMIOTICS OF SELFHOOD IN SAMOAN DANCE

By

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of DIANNA MARY GEORGINA find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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Chair

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And of course my family, who have supported me as I chase my dreams, even when they mean surviving Category 5 cyclones on tiny rocks in the South Pacific.

PERFORMING SELVES: THE SEMIOTICS OF SELFHOOD

IN SAMOAN DANCE

Abstract

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This dissertation investigates three questions: 1) How valid is Erik Erikson's theory of adolescent identity formation for teens in American Samoa? 2) What role could traditional Samoan dance play in forming a sense of self that merges two opposing cultural concepts of self? 3) Can dance provide a venue for the semiotic representation of a merging of these construals of self?

While adolescence as a developmental period is not new to Samoa, teenagers in American Samoa are going through an adolescence that has become more similar to that experienced by American teens and less like the smooth and easy adolescence Mead described. Teens, according to Erik Erikson, are in a developmental period where they are asking themselves, "Who am I?" It is difficult to define self when one's traditional culture emphasizes harmonious interdependence and playing one's proper role in the hierarchy; meanwhile, the attractive, modern culture seen on television and in the movies emphasizes independence and individuality.

Not all teens were experiencing the kind of emotional turbulence that led others to self-destructive behaviors. Adolescent girls I spoke with were demonstrating resilience and an ability

to thrive emotionally. They have merged Western and Samoan cultural conceptions of self through traditional Samoan dance.

Adolescent girls in American Samoa are also challenging the social norms of the role of girls and women in dance and perhaps in society. They are semiotically merging opposing definitions of self and identity through dance, by inserting elements of individuality in a group activity. They are dancing again in the role of clown, and in what has been an all-male dance, the *'ailao*. By reasserting their roles as clowns and warriors, they are reclaiming a modern version of pre-contact traditional roles.

As American Samoa gradually changes with encroachment by the West, traditional Samoan dance also evolves. Not only is it absorbing elements of dance forms and styles from other Polynesian islands and adapting to pressures to be more appealing to non-Samoans, it is also changing to reflect the changes in conceptions of self influenced by globalization and the spread of Western ideas. It will be interesting to see how today's adolescent girls, when they become tomorrow's dance choreographers, modify traditional Samoan dance to reflect other changes—the seeds of which are being sown today.

This dissertation contributes to our understanding of adolescent identity formation in a postcolonial non-Western culture by examining the validity of Erik Erikson's theory in American Samoa. It contributes to theories of biculturalism by exploring the ways in which Samoan adolescent girls are using traditional Samoan dance in defining self in a two-culture world—a self that merges opposing cultural concepts of what it means to be a person. It also explores the role played by traditional Samoan dance in the creation and expression of this composite concept of self.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Richard and Dorothy Georgina,

who provided both emotional and financial support

and plenty of chocolate.

Chapter 1: Introduction

About this dissertation

This dissertation is a companion to the documentary video, “Siva! The Semiotics of Selfhood in Samoan Dance,” produced by the author, the sequence of which it loosely follows. The dissertation and video are based on ethnographic research conducted in American and independent Samoa in 2002 to 2004. This dissertation contributes to our understanding of adolescent identity formation in a postcolonial non-Western culture by examining the validity of Erik Erikson’s theory in American Samoa. It contributes to theories of biculturalism by exploring the ways in which Samoan adolescent girls are using traditional Samoan dance in defining self in a two-culture world—a self that merges opposing cultural concepts of what it means to be a person. It also explores the role played by traditional Samoan dance in the creation and expression of this composite concept of self. Ultimately, this dissertation will be developed into a study guide to accompany the documentary.

This dissertation includes quotes and commentary from the documentary, by experts and informants. Quotes from experts are cited as “Georgina 2007;” quotes from informants are cited as “Emily, age 12.”

Introduction

Adolescent storm and stress, an idea first considered formally by G. S. Hall (1911), was a focus of the nature-nurture argument during the early part of the 20th century: were storm and stress unavoidable parts of development—a biological inevitability—or was this phenomenon a cultural artifact? To prove adolescent storm and stress were neither natural nor inevitable, all

that was needed was the discovery of a single culture in which adolescents did not experience a turbulent transition into adulthood. Margaret Mead found this culture in Samoa.

> Is adolescence a period of mental and emotional distress for the growing girl as inevitably as teething is a period of misery for the small baby?...Following the Samoan girls through every aspect of their lives we have tried to answer this question, and we found throughout that we had to answer it in the negative. (Mead 2001:136)

The comparatively placid, smooth transition from childhood to adulthood that Mead wrote about in the 1920s, in her controversial book *Coming of Age in Samoa*, does not prevail there today. The period of adolescence was once a time when girls were relieved of the burden of caring for babies and boys could finish their tasks in a few hours a day (Mageo 1991a, Mead 2001). Eighty years later, while I was conducting my research in 2003-2004, Samoan teens faced serious problems with alcohol and drugs, tobacco, school violence and negative peer pressure. They were experiencing conflict at home with parents and elders, and conflict in school with peers and teachers. The clash of Western ideas with traditional culture was apparent in the stormy nature of adolescence: the Samoan islands had been experiencing the highest teen suicide rate in the Pacific.

> In Western Samoa, with a population of 160,000, suicide rates are 30 for every 100,000. About 80% of suicides are caused by drinking the weed killer paraquat (Zinn, 1995:311).

Increasing numbers of young people were escaping through drugs and alcohol, as attested to by unpublished data I had access to as a grant writer for the American Samoa Department of Human and Social Services. The Social Services Division handled 212 cases of court-mandated Drug and Alcohol (D&A) clients in Fiscal Year (FY) 2002. Of these, 177 had been convicted of driving under the influence; four had been convicted on drug charges, and 31were alcohol-related convictions. Ninety percent of those charged with the latter two offenses were between the ages of 14 and 27. DPS Records Division reported 161 alcohol-related and 12 drug-related arrests during FY 2002. In FY 2001, there were 33 suicides; 45% were females age 15 to 24. Poisoning by substance was the method most often used, at 81%. About half of these overdosed on drugs, while the other half ingested chemical and other noxious substances such as bleach, household cleaners or brake fluid. The 2001Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data compiled by the Centers for Disease Control (2001) indicated that, during the 30 days prior to the survey date, more than a third of all American Samoan students surveyed smoked cigarettes, 37.3%, compared to the U.S. national average of 28.5%. A third (29.1) said they drank alcohol, while more than 20% said they smoked marijuana. The national average for alcohol was 47.1% and marijuana was 23.9%. The student response rate was 92%. The lives of many Samoan adolescents are filled with storm and stress. I suspected the cause of this turbulence had less to do with occupational opportunities or the lack of them (cf. Holmes 1992) than with an ability to cope with the changes taking place with increased modernization, and the clash of ideas and beliefs.

It is difficult to define self when traditional culture emphasizes harmonious interdependence and playing one’s proper role in the hierarchy; meanwhile, the attractive, modern culture seen on television and in the movies emphasizes independence and individuality.

Teens, according to Erik Erikson, are in a developmental period where they are asking themselves, “Who am I?” How valid is Erikson’s theory of identity formation for teens in American Samoa? As this dissertation will show, not all teens were experiencing the kind of emotional turbulence that led others to self-destructive behaviors. In fact, the young people I spoke with seemed emotionally balanced and reasonably content. These particular girls were demonstrating resilience and an ability to thrive in a confusing world of American acquisitiveness and hip-hop music, together with *fa'alavelaves* (traditional Samoan exchange ceremonies) and Samoan traditional dance, and were carving an identity and sense of self out of the mix. These were also teens for whom Samoan traditional dance formed a significant part of their lives.

Because Samoan dance stresses conformity and strongly discourages individuality, it does not seem to be an obvious choice as the central point in these girls’ identity and sense of self. What role could it play in forming a sense of self that merges two opposing cultural concepts of self? Can dance provide a venue for the semiotic representation of a merging of these construals of self?

Growing Up in Samoa: Fostering an Interdependent Identity

While children are not the *tabula rasa* they were believed to be in previous centuries, they are generally agreed to be the product of their physical, social and familial environment. Child raising practices in Polynesia and other Pacific islands different are from those in the West, and produce different results.

The consensus among most writers is that Samoan child rearing practices, as part of their socialization into the Samoan social world, encourage group identity rather than individuality.

Very early in the child's life, these practices introduce children to the social hierarchy and culture of respect but also foster resistance to them (see, for example, Mageo 1998; Ritchie and Ritchie 1979).

Child raising practices throughout Polynesia encourage identity with and attachment to the extended family. Babies and young children often spend more time being held and played with by extended family members than with their own mothers.

> Much of [Polynesian babies'] waking time is spent in someone's arms, being cuddled, played with, and talked to. At family gatherings it is common practice for an infant to be passed from one to another; holding a baby is perceived as a privilege rather than a responsibility, so that age takes precedence. Usually it is the older women who monopolize a child, although over a period of time, almost everyone—even teenage boys who may come on "tough" at times—is apt to be given an opportunity to indulge in fondling, looking at, and pacifying an infant (Holmes 1970:40)

This period of indulgence is characteristically followed by one in which parents distance themselves from their children. The warmth and attention that surrounds young children is not normally sharply withdrawn (Ritchie and Ritchie 1979), although it is gradually transferred to the child's peer group. Once the baby is about six months old, and certainly after weaning, older siblings baby-sit and take care of them more than their mothers. "The chief nurse-maid is usually a child of six or seven who is not strong enough to lift a baby over six months old," Mead writes of Samoa. "By the time a child is six or seven she has all the essential avoidances well enough by heart to be trusted with the care of a younger child" (Mead 2001:20).

This practice has diminished, eroding the traditional manner of reinforcing the boundaries in the social hierarchy. Modernization and the growth of a consumer economy necessitate that most able-bodied adults hold paying jobs outside the home. Older children go to school. The growth of preschools and day care centers on American Samoa, some private and some government-funded, and the large number of Tongan baby sitters employed by Samoans, attest to this change. Thousands of dollars a year in grant money is awarded to government-sponsored day care centers to provide babysitting for Samoan children while their parents work and their siblings attend school. Before Westernization, the practice of older siblings functioning as caregivers for younger children encouraged the child's identity with his or her hierarchical age group. This new practice likely will have little effect on this identification, since children in day care are all about the same age; day care centers are located in villages, and the children generally play with the same age mates they would otherwise associate with outside of day care.

Once the child is weaned, parents suspend most physical and verbal demonstrations of affection (Mageo, 1998). It is believed that to continue to lavish too much love and care upon a child is bad for the child. My Samoan informants told me that, by the time the child is old enough to toddle around, he or she needs to be trained to obey his or her parents without question. Service is performed from the bottom up in the hierarchy, and is considered the primary way a person demonstrates *alofa*, or love, for their parents and those above them in the hierarchy.

Informants, (both parents and children) explain the child's service as a natural response to the thought that his parents fed and clothed him when he was a baby, and took care of him when he was sick. This is generally viewed as having been very difficult for the parents to do (Gerber, 1975).

Samoans were surprised to hear that in the United States, parents, especially the mother, cook breakfast and dinner for the whole family, including the children (Gerber 1975, Mageo 1991a). In Samoa, most homes have Western-style kitchens, and the children begin to cook for their parents as soon as they are tall enough to reach the stove. Samoans seem to hate to cook; my adolescent informants generally agreed that cooking is a necessary evil, and doing it for their parents is both a sacrifice and an act of love. There is a tendency to view it as a demeaning demonstration of subservience; those of higher status (an adult) never cooked if someone of lower status (a child or young person) was present to do it.

Children tend to protest parental distancing and resort to resisting behaviors such as tantrums. The emotional distancing of parents brings out other resistant behaviors like showing off, and enviousness of any children still getting attention (Mageo 1998). Another form of resistance is refusal to obey, *musu* in Samoan. Freeman (1983) describes *musu* as a reaction against being dominated. Children and adolescents, who are at the bottom of the age-grade hierarchy, are more likely to demonstrate *musu*. Resistance is usually countered with punishment.

> If a parental order is not promptly attended to, it is followed by a threat. If the threat does not produce obedience, the child is liable to be struck. Should the beaten child cry, his or her tears are treated as a reprehensible complaint against legitimate authority, and the beating will continue in earnest. Rather than reacting to the beating, children must demonstrate deference through a gestural articulation of their inferior status: sitting down, suppressing their emotions, and bowing their heads. If a child does so, the blows are likely to be softened (Mageo, 1998:65).

Stories of beatings and child abuse appear throughout the literature on Samoan and Polynesian child rearing and socialization practices (see, for example, Gerber 1985, Gerber 1975, Shore 1982). Ritchie and Ritchie suggest that perhaps this pattern of frequent and severe beatings, often an outlet for frustrated emotions, was not a traditional Polynesian practice.

> It may well be that children are exposed to greater risk where inappropriate standards of behavior are applied within a punitive framework of fundamentalist Christianity. There are many Polynesians who fall into this category. Throughout the Pacific the form of Christianity that was implanted tended more towards the evangelical and puritanical. We think it possible that child abuse as a pathology arises as much from that cultural tradition as from anything definably Polynesian (Ritchie and Ritchie 1989:129).

Physical punishment may bring about the desired results—submission and compliance—but it also has far-reaching consequences. As Mageo (1991:2) noted, “Punishment may make the child passive before the dictates of others, but the child also harbors suppressed desires to be in control. Being so often ‘one down’ creates a desire to be ‘one up.’” Mageo (1991b, 1988) notes that this desire is channeled into culturally permitted activities, such as vying for chiefly titles for males and ruling over the household for females. It is well documented that children who grow up in physically or emotionally abusive or violent households often become child- and spouse-abusing adults (see, for example, Verona and Sachs-Ericsson 2005). This is especially salient now, particularly in urban areas where Westernization and relocation away from traditional

villages (and moving to New Zealand or the United States, for example) are removing traditional outlets.

Theoretical Framework

While adolescence as a developmental period is not new to Samoa, teenagers in American Samoa are going through an adolescence that has become more similar to that experienced by American teens and less like the smooth and easy adolescence Mead described. It is unlikely that, eighty years ago, Western developmental theories would have been applicable to Samoan teens. Today, however, they do seem to be relevant.

Adolescent Psychological Development

Culture and biology interact to create the period of development called adolescence. While the adolescent storm and stress experienced by Western teens does not seem to be a global phenomenon, what is common to adolescents everywhere is that they are engaged in a process of physical and psychological development (Moshman, 1999). Biology produces physical and hormonal changes that bring about the physical maturity of the adolescent body; the manner of psychological development, however, differs among cultures. While there is a significant biological component to psychological development, there is also a strong cultural aspect.

Margaret Mead (2001) wrote that adolescence in Samoa was not a time of crisis; adolescents experienced a kind of peaceful moratorium between the constant errand running and chores of childhood and the responsibilities of adult life. She attributed the turbulence of Western adolescence to cultural factors. Psychologists today still agree with her assessment.

> We think of adolescence as a time of a lot of tension and conflict. But that again may not be a universal thing, and in fact there are cultures that fully expect a calm transition where there's not a huge influx of cultural influence and a sudden strive for individuation and separation away from the family (Psychologist Masha Gartstein *in* Georgina 2007[1]).

Whether or not Mead was right, Samoan adolescence certainly is turbulent today. The influx of cultural influence from the West has had a profound impact on most aspects of Samoan life, including the transition from childhood into adulthood. Western psychology is not always successfully applied to non-Western cultures, but the Western influence so profoundly affecting Samoan teens may have changed their psychological experience of adolescence. Childhood in American Samoa today is as much American as it is Samoan. Children go to American style schools from preschool to college, while their parents work outside the home, in the government or private sector. Children grow up wearing Western style clothing, watching American and Australian television, and playing with toys available to American children. Teens in American Samoa have the same college and career visions available to American teens, although many of these opportunities are out of their reach for financial and cultural reasons.

Erik Erikson's Theory of Adolescent Psychological Development

The Western psychologist Erik Erikson (1968) proposed that adolescence is the period that focuses on the search for identity. Identity is derived from a person's biological endowment, mental organization of experience, and culture, all of which give meaning, form and continuity to one's unique existence. He used the term "ego identity" to mean, not simply a sense of who

[1] Quote from the accompanying film, *Siva! The Semiotics of Selfhood in Samoan Dance*.

one is as a person, but “the awareness of the fact that there is a self-sameness and continuity to the ego's synthesizing methods and a continuity of one's meaning for others” (Erikson 1968:50).

As a psychosocial phenomenon, Erikson saw identity as rooted in the individual as well as the community and culture. *Identity formation* is the assimilation of identifications—the set of the child’s expectations of what he or she will be upon attaining adulthood, and the people whom he or she identifies with—into an integrated whole, a “new configuration, which, in turn, is dependent on the process by which a society…identifies the young individual, recognizing him [sic] as somebody who had to become the way he is, and who, being the way he is, is taken for granted” (Erikson 1968:159).

Erikson proposed and described successive stages of development from infancy to old age. The task assigned to each stage must be completed for successful maturational development. The application of Erikson’s theory cross-culturally is problematic, however (c.f., (Hershenson, 1967)(Ochse & Plug, 1986). While adolescence as a distinct developmental period exists in nearly all cultures, Erikson’s emphasis on adolescents’ search for an occupational identity cannot be applied to all societies:

> Such a concept of adolescence, grounded in the view that production is the engine driving social organization, is not helpful in understanding adolescence in preindustrial societies. In places where productive tasks are learned during childhood… [children] should have no need for social adolescence…. Nevertheless, anthropologists…found adolescence in such places as Samoa or the hill country of central India (Schlegel 1995:15).

While it may be argued that Erikson's developmental theory cannot be applied to adolescents of non-Western cultures without modification, the number of cultures that have not been affected by Western contact is small. Adolescence is a particularly significant idea exported from the West through movies and videos, to cultures that traditionally had different ideas about the transition from childhood to adulthood.

> The preindustrial world has practically disappeared, and with it have gone the earlier patterns of adolescent life. As nation-states expand their hegemony over formerly tribal peoples, they impose the changes that redirect the gender- and age-related behaviors of former times (Schlegel 1995:28).

The adolescent crisis, occurring in societies in which it did not formerly exist, was brought on by changes in a conception of self that emphasizes occupational identity. Erikson's premise of occupational identity as a feature of adolescent development is increasingly applicable to societies that identify social status and style of life with the individual's livelihood, at a time when "there are too many adolescents worldwide to fill existing occupational niches…. Occupational identity cannot develop if there is no attainable occupation with which to identify" (Schlegel 1995:30). Erikson's theories will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Self Theory

Biology, psychology and culture combine in creating a person's concept of self. Psychological concepts are those theories based on developmental changes, with the maturation

of the person's thought processes. Cultural concepts are those unique to and defined by the societies that embrace them.

Psychological Concepts of the Self

At its most basic level, "self" exists within the boundary between what is me and what is not-me. It is reflexivity—being aware of our own thoughts and experiences as distinctive from that of other people.

While the terms *self* and *identity* are often used interchangeably, most psychologists would place identity as an element of the self rather than its totality. **Identity** here answers the question, "what am I?" or "what is my role?" (Brinthaupt 2002; Buss 2001). It is a sense of who one is that gives a person the impression that his or her life makes sense, and a feeling of belonging to a family, community or ethnic group. Other elements of the self include body focus, the boundary where the body ends and the environment begins. Self-esteem, the evaluative component of the self, is the feeling of accomplishment, worthiness, and self appreciation. Self consciousness is awareness of one's inner self—one's thoughts and feelings—and also oneself as a social object. Boundaries are the hidden aspects of oneself, those things that aren't discussed and are kept private; for example, phobias that might be perceived by others as weaknesses. Boundaries are also the extension of the self toward others, whether the distinction between self and others is permeable or blurry—in the case of empathy, for example. There are also self-concepts and self-schemas, those imaginary selves that may never be realized; for example, a shy person might have fantasies in which he or she is more assertive.

William James (1983) was one of the earliest psychologists to write extensively about the self. He distinguished between the *I-self* and the *me-self*. The I-self is the knower, the cognitive

processor. The me-self represents the contents of the self: our feelings and evaluations about our bodies, our talents, and what we know about ourselves in general.

James divided the self into three components: the material self, the spiritual self and the social self. The material self consists of an individual's material possessions. He considered possessions to be a component of the self because they are sometimes considered by the individual to be extensions of the self, or symbolic of the individual. The spiritual self consists of thoughts and feelings about who we are, how we originated, and what our ultimate destiny is.

According to James, the social self refers to the various roles individuals play, depending on context and situation. Individuals can have many selves, one for each of the various persons they interact with, and for situations they may find themselves in.

Cultural Models of the Self

Cultural models of the self differ according to culture. In the West, for example, we tend to think of the self as the inner self—our inner thoughts and feelings, our motivations. We view this as our true or real self—constant and unchanging. We tend to think of the roles we play as a kind of mask or persona that we can assume or remove at will. The Western view of the individual is as an *egocentric* self; an independent, self-contained, autonomous entity. The *sociocentric* self is a sense of self that is derived from and defined by relationships and relating to others. The emphasis is on the role that each person plays, and the appropriate execution of that role. Markus and Kitayama (1991) referred to these different views of the self as *independent* and *interdependent*, respectively.

> The independent construal of the self further implies that persons see themselves as unique, promote their own goals, and seek self-expression. Persons with an

> interdependent construal of the self seek to belong and fit in, to promote others' goals, and to occupy their proper place (Berry, et al 2002:101-102).

Few societies, and few individuals within each society, are at one or the other pole; the egocentric – sociocentric dichotomy is more accurately considered a continuum, with cultures and individuals in those cultures falling somewhere within the range of possibilities (Mageo 1998). The Samoan self lies closer to the sociocentric end of the continuum, while the American self, with the exception of certain subcultures, lies closer to the egocentric end.

The independent self is conceived as autonomous, self contained, and separate from others. Inner attributes that make a person unique are also most significant in regulating behavior and are assumed by both actor and observer to accurately reflect the person. The legendary American frontiersman Daniel Boone could be considered an extreme example of the independent self.

The interdependent self is conceived of as part of a comprehensive social relationship. A person's behavior is determined to be "contingent on, and to a large extent, organized by what the actor perceives to be the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others in the relationship" (Markus and Kitayama 1991:227). This orientation places emphasis on anticipating and acting on the needs of a particular group of others. The goal is to play one's proper role, to "derive comfort from fitting in with others, in being a part of it, and in being sure of the sympathy of others" (Markus and Kitayama 2003:278). For Samoans, this group is the extended family first, then the village.

> In Samoa, you have to belong to a group to be anyone. The first thing people ask you is, "what family are you from? What village? What church?" Then you're a part of the group and you're expected to go along with the group. It's like being in the back of a pickup truck. Maybe you want to go this way, but the truck is going another way and you're expected to go with the truck (Samoan mental health worker, pers. comm.)

In Japan, an example of a sociocentric-tending culture, asserting one's own desires is not considered mature or authentic, but childish and immature (Kumagai 1981). Similarly, Samoans will indulge infants and respond to their every cry, up to the age of about six months. After that, parents will hesitate to pick up a crying baby. Parents believe that if they lavish too much attention on the child, he or she may become *matanana,* that is, inclined to plentiful tears, indicating that the child is spoiled. In reference to an adult, *matanana* means "boastful."

> This semantic range implies the baby's wailing comes to be regarded in the same light as adult boastfulness. Both are perceived as evincing a desire to call attention to oneself, rather than to take one's place quietly within the group. (Mageo 1998:49)

Similarly, Japanese students "typically do not question or challenge or interrupt because, as a student, one's role is to take in information from the professor, who is presumably an expert in the topic" (Markus and Kitayama 2003:278), a situation I also noted among my Korean and Chinese high school students while I was teaching high school on Tutuila in 2004. It was obvious that it was not simply a poor command of the English language that caused these students to sit quietly, heads bowed, feverishly taking notes in their native languages. My

Chinese students rarely made eye contact, unless directly addressed, and even then, only shyly. One Korean student, who was fluent in English, when asked, told me that it was improper to ask questions of the teacher. He said that students should sit up straight, listen carefully and respectfully, and take notes. His consternation at the disrespectful classroom behavior of the Samoan and American students was obvious.

Although conflicted for some individuals, particularly teens and young adults, the Samoan idea of self is reinforced and elucidated through cultural symbols, which Geertz referred to as “the material vehicles of thought.” Cultural symbols can be discovered through cultural patterns, the “ordered clusters of significant symbols” (Geertz [1974] 1984:363). The concept of self is a significant element of Samoan culture, and reoccurs through several cultural patterns, including dance, village layout (Shore 1982), and the determination of village and interpersonal boundaries (Lehman and Herdrich 2002).

Natural, Moral, Performance and Creative Models of the Self

Within cultural models, there are also natural models of the self—models about the way people are assumed to just naturally be, according to “human nature” (Mageo 1998). The natural models, however, don't always hold up in the real world. This is because people have both individual and social sides, and behave both with individual self interest and to forward the needs of the group, even in cultures that are close to one or the other end of the egocentric-sociocentric continuum. People don't always behave in line with cultural assumptions. According to Mageo,

> In response to this, culture members start saying, “Well, people should be that way, they really should be like that.” In response to these contradictions, you begin to get moral

> models of the self, models that include a "should." In more egocentric societies, people say everyone should stand on their own two feet. In Samoa, people say that everyone should stand at their post. And what this means is that they should play their established role in the hierarchy. This phrase refers to a *fale*, a Samoan house, where there the chiefs would sit at a post for a meeting. And the post was their role, their established place in the village (Georgina, 2007).

Mageo (1998) found that the Samoan conception of persons as role players generates a series of reversals and accommodations; in other words, Samoans' behaviors often are in direct contradiction to the expected behaviors. The dictum that children should play their appropriate role in the social order, that is, they should show respect to their elders, is countered by cheeky children who direct inappropriate language toward adults. Children are expected to show love for their parents by being obedient and doing their household tasks, but often they willfully try to avoid doing them. One teenage informant said,

> Because I'm the youngest, I try not doing my chores. I run away from doing my chores, and Mom calls me to do my chores, I run in my room and I sleep. Because I'm the lazy one in my family (Nu'umau, age 16).

Inner life—thoughts, feelings, motivations—is downplayed, a phenomenon Levy (1973) also found in Tahiti. The inner life, however, does still exist, and becomes a preoccupation: "the unsaid becomes the obsession of the system that at first neglects it" (Mageo 1998:7).

Performance models divide cultural life into formal and informal domains. In formal domains, everyone behaves they way they are supposed to. But in informal domains, especially in Samoa, people can behave disrespectfully; it's acceptable because they're only joking.

> In Samoa, a ceremony would be an example of a formal situation and entertainment would be an informal situation. In formal situations, everybody acts the way they should—which in Samoa means acting as if others had high status—but this way of acting becomes a kind of etiquette, and one you don't have to practice all the time. In informal situations, Samoan kids can show off instead of effacing themselves. For example, they are encouraged to perform on stage and even to joke in a way that would be disrespectful in other contexts (Mageo, in Georgina 2007).

The social world is not always easily carved up into domains. Creative models freely combine preexisting models of the self to address novel contingencies of real situations (Mageo 1998). Creative models are usually improvised, and often practiced but not discussed. They are cobbled together from cultural models to serve a current need, recognizing that existing cultural models do not reflect a necessary human or social reality.

The traditional Samoan sociocentric/interdependent self is defined by relationships. Shore's (1982) Samoan informants, in comparing their own to *palagi* (Caucasian) selves, said they take care of the relationships between people, while non-Samoans (mainly Americans) take care of themselves. Samoans see themselves as being acted upon by their culture and customs; their behavior is externally caused, while the behavior of Americans is internally motivated. People are defined by their connections to family, village, or church.

> [T]he Samoan concept of an identity consists of an identification of particular parts of an individual, and a relative weighing of those parts. Fundamental in any assessment of a person's makeup is an evaluation of the particular behavioral and social context in which the assessment is being made (Shore 1982:141).

The Samoan concept of self, one that focuses on roles and behaviors, and downplays inner thoughts and feelings, contrasts with the American concept of self that is individualistic and focuses on inner thoughts and feelings, with the emphasis on the inner motivation behind the behaviors and somewhat less emphasis on roles. Samoan teenagers are faced with developing a sense of self out of these two conflicting concepts of what it means to be a person.

Modern Western theories about adolescent development are unlikely to be applicable to teenagers in preindustrial societies, but modernization and Westernization, teens in American Samoa are experiencing adolescence very similarly to that of their American counterparts. In the next chapter, we take a closer look at Erikson's theory of self and adolescent psychological development, and its applicability to Samoan teens.

Chapter 2: Elements of the Self

It is often problematic to apply concepts of Western psychology to non-Western cultures; however, in the case of American Samoa, I suggest that the concepts of identity, autonomy, ego boundaries, subjectivity, emotions and body image can be applied in order to understand Samoan adolescents and their search for self in a multicultural environment. American Samoan teens have been profoundly influenced by Western culture through television, magazines, the internet, and an American-style education system. They are also experiencing psychological development similar to American adolescents. This chapter will examine aspects of a theory of adolescent development formulated by Western psychologist Erik Erikson, and its applicability to modern teenagers in American Samoa.

The self, as stated in the previous chapter, can be thought of as an overall sense of being that has continuity over time; a sense of the person as a whole. The self is multi-faceted and can be regarded as a collection of different elements. These elements interact with and influence each other; identity, for example, can be affected by body image, emotions, and other elements of self.

Identity

Identity answers the question, "What am I? What roles do I play?" The roles played in specific domains form an individual's identity, "the aspect of the self that is accessible and salient in a particular context, that interacts with the environment, and to which a person is committed" (Finkenauer et al., 2002:28).

The development of identity begins in infancy and very early childhood, when the awareness of the self-as-agent emerges. Children at this age sense the basic distinction between the "I" or private, subjective self and the "me" or self-as-known, public, objective self. They

develop the ability to differentiate self from others, and maintain a sense of self-permanence or conservation of self over time and place. By about 18 months of age, the child has acquired the initial aspects of self-awareness or self-consciousness.

The construction of a “verbal self” begins with the acquisition of verbal communication, usually around the age of two, when the child begins to use pronominal reference language. The self-as-object also emerges more fully, and the child begins to develop the self-evaluative emotions of pride, shame, envy and guilt.

During middle childhood, the child develops the ability to reason and take the perspective of others, and also develops social skills. He or she begins to deal with the realities of the public versus the private self, and actual versus ideal self. He or she also comes to terms with the different aspects of identity that are not consistent with each other, for example, the identity assumed when among peers and the identity assumed when among parents and other adults.

In adolescence, there is a shift in emphasis on a social exterior to the child’s psychological interior. The way the adolescent thinks about his or her self becomes increasingly complex and multidimensional as compared with the simplicity of the self of earlier childhood. Adolescents are more introspective and have the mental capacity to utilize higher-order reasoning about themselves. The adolescent experiences him or herself as a subjective psychological phenomenon.

While very young children do have a concept of themselves as persons, the identity formulated in adolescence is an advanced, sophisticated sort of self-conception—a *theory* of oneself (Moshman 1999), a cohesive and integrated collection of beliefs about the self.

> That is, an identity is a conception of the self that is structured in such a way as to enhance self-understanding. Thus, an identity is not just an attempt to describe one's typical behavior, but is an account of the core beliefs and purposes that one construes as explaining that behavior (Moshman 1999:79).

An adolescent may develop a theory of self that includes personality traits ("I'm a good girl") or talents, skills or abilities ("I'm a dancer") and the reasons why ("I'm a good girl because I obey my parents," "I'm a dancer because all the women in my family are dancers," "I'm a dancer because I want to preserve Samoan culture.") Theories of self are "stories we choose to tell about our lives… [that] one believes in and to which one is committed" (Moshman 1999: 81). These stories may be accurate or may represent a not-yet-attained ideal self. They may also include internalized criticisms. The girls I spoke with were crafting stories that included self judgment of desirable and undesirable characteristics,

> Do I like myself? Well, in some ways, I can't be, you know, *mean* to somebody. I can't. It's just the way that I am. But then, I'm very lazy, and the only time that I'm not lazy is when I want to do something, and so, at times I don't like myself but at times I do (Ko'olina, age 13).

> In dance practice, [choreographer] Kori is always telling us to be of *taupou* characteristics: to always be humble, like they dance, not too rough, graceful, and it's taught me to forgive like when you're in a situation where there's girls talking, haters, and they're trying to fight with you (Leslie, age 16).

The sensitive period for the development of identity is the adolescent years, according to Erikson, even though the outline of a person's identity may become more precise and acquire age-specific expressions throughout a person's life. Adolescent exploration of alternative identities and roles ideally results in a sense of individuality, a role in society, an experience of continuity across time, and a commitment to ideals (Moshman 1999).

In cultural construals of self, societies closer to the sociocentric pole on the egocentric-sociocentric continuum place more emphasis on social role, rather than a sense of uniqueness and individuality, emphasized in more egocentric societies. Sociocentric-tending societies also place more emphasis on identity in terms of appropriate execution of social roles than on the individual's personal desires. In all societies, however, the individual has both a personal sense of identity and a social sense of identity (Buss 2001).

Social identity

Social identity derives from the groups to which an individual belongs and the social roles he or she plays. Social, or collective, identity is a self interpretation that is focused on a socially-shared self-aspect. Roles originate in kinship, occupation, social groups, ethnicity, nationality, religion, and other groups. Kinship groups range from the nuclear family to the extended family, even the historic or ancestral family. An individual in the U.S. can be a grandparent, a parent, a child, a niece or nephew, uncle or aunt. Broader family units can be historic; connections to families who sailed to the New World on the *Mayflower*, for example, or to old European families who trace their history back hundreds of years.

Individuals also derive identity from the type of work they choose to do as adults. When getting to know each other in social settings, a frequent question people ask each other is, “what do you do for a living?”

Social groups like fraternities and sororities are also a source of identity. Other social groups include hobby groups like gamers and square dancers, and educational organizations like colleges. There are also social groups that are negatively regarded by society, street gangs and certain ethnic groups for example, that provide people with a sense of identity and engender a strong sense of belonging. “It is typically a stronger identity than the positive identity of those in the mainstream because they are continually being attacked” (Buss 2001:94).

Ethnicity can provide a positive or negative individual social identity, especially in oppressed minorities; a positive ethnic identity is one embraced by the individual, while a negative ethnic identity is rejected and perceived as negative by the individual. On the other hand, ethnicity can also engender a strong sense of group identity. In a predominantly White country like the United States, there is a much stronger group identity among Blacks, Asians, and Indians.

> [T]heir different physical characteristics make them immediately identifiable and therefore quickly labeled. Whenever they mix with the White majority, their ethnicity is brought home strongly. Second…attacks on a group lead to a circling of the wagons to defend the group against the attacks. This we-versus-them attitude strengthens group identity (Buss 2001:94).

Individuals also derive identity from their religious affiliation, the city, state, or country they reside in, their sexual orientation, or socially unacceptable identities such as hate groups.

Social identity can be confusing to young adolescents, who seek consistency and have not yet developed the capacity to reconcile their different roles and behaviors. According to developmental psychologist Kathleen Boyce Rogers,

> In early adolescence, we have these different kinds of selves. We have a sense of who am I as a sexual being, who am I as a child of parents, a family member, who am I as a community member. And even, who am I in terms of my ethnic self, if I am an adolescent of color. With all of those different selves, we have different kinds of behaviors. Adolescents, because they have abstract thinking, can be cognizant of the fact that I act one way with my family, I act a different way with my peers, and I act a different way at school. And for early adolescents, those differences can be uncomfortable. It makes them uncomfortable because it's incongruent. It's not consistent. Fortunately, by the time we reach later adolescence, most adolescents, from what we know of western society, have come to understand that it's OK to be different when you're in these different contexts. These identities, these different selves, have become integrated. That's what Erikson talks about as the *theory of self*, we have these selves and we're OK with them (Georgina 2007).

Social identity is the aspect of self most emphasized in traditional Samoan culture. Persons are defined by the roles they play, specifically within the relationships between themselves and others, rather than occupational roles. "The whole preoccupation is with the

individual as an actor, and the motivations peculiar to his psychology are left an unplumbed mystery," wrote Mead (2001:91). Shore (1982) describes Samoan selves as a conglomeration of multi-faceted social identities, roles that vary with situation and context.

> The Samoan concept of an identity consists of an identification of particular parts of an individual, and a relative weighing of those parts. Fundamental in any assessment of a person's makeup is an evaluation of the particular behavioral and social context in which the assessment is being made (Shore 1982:141).

The emphasis in American Samoa has been gradually shifting to include occupational roles, although duty to the family takes precedence over any personal goals or desires, even in terms of occupational choices. With the establishment of a community college on Tutuila in 1970, and the possibility of attending college in the U.S., the occupations available to Samoan adolescents and adults, while still limited, has broadened significantly in the past 30 years. Mead (2001) wrote that, in the 1920s, boys aspired to be house builders, fishermen, orators or wood carvers, but girls could only expect to marry. Today's teens can make career choices, attend the local community college or, if the family can afford it, or if the student gets a scholarship or other financial aid, go to college on the mainland. However, duty to the family comes first, and if they are needed back home, perhaps due to an emergency or some other family crisis, they must quit school, toss aside their dreams, and return to the island.

> [In American culture,] a young individual who has a choice between pursuing some life's dream or doing something that's in the best interest of the family, our expectation is of

> course they're going to fulfill their own ambitions and we would really question them if they didn't do that. We would want to make sure that they want to make this kind of sacrifice. I think people would be fairly concerned with that choice. Whereas, in other cultures the expectations are quite the opposite. The expectation is that whatever the family needs are, that you provide for them and then there's not even a thought to the personal sacrifice that might be involved in it. (Psychologist Masha Gartstein, *in* Georgina 2007)

Samoan adolescents, with increasing exposure to Western, particularly American, culture, are experiencing a conflict between what they would like to do as individuals and what Samoan culture and their families tell them they should do as family members. Traditional Samoan identities are based in social roles and hierarchy, and teens and young adults must still thrust aside their personal desires and act in service to their parents and elders.

Personal identity

Buss (2001) equates personal or individual identity with individuality, those aspects that make each person different from every other person. As mentioned previously, this facet of identity is downplayed in more sociocentric societies and emphasized in more individualistic societies. People in most societies, however, are "motivated to regard themselves as special and take pleasure in the feeling of uniqueness" (Buss 2001:100), to a larger or smaller degree.

The public side of personal identity derives from an individual's distinctive appearance. This includes physical characteristics such as the face, body, hairstyle and choice of clothing.

In Western cultures, choices are made in order to set the individual apart from others. The Samoan girls I spoke with expressed a desire to fit in, rather than appear distinctive. When asked, “do you ever try to be a little bit different from your friends,” responses were in the negative.

> No. I like to stay the same. I don’t want to stick out too much (Joanne, age 14)

> I don’t think I’m too much different from anyone else, I guess I’m probably louder and more outspoken, but that’s about it, to me (McRae, age 16).

The public side of personal identity also derives from personality traits like shyness or talkativeness, and talents, such as skill at math or art.

A person’s traits and characteristics are acknowledged in both egocentric and sociocentric societies. In egocentric societies, personal identity is emphasized, encouraged and lauded to varying extents. Ironically, marketing of mass-produced products in the U.S. emphasizes the ways in which certain fragrances, clothes and hairstyles can express a person’s unique identity. Certain colognes are said to be different on each person who wears them, and clothing is advertised to express a person’s unique style. Expensive cars purport to make a person stand out from the crowd.

In more sociocentric societies, these characteristics are downplayed. Uniqueness, although acknowledged, is not valued; an old Japanese proverb states “the nail that stands out gets pounded down” (Markus and Kitayama 1991:224). In Samoan culture, people are acknowledged to have particular personal qualities, called *‘uiga*. Individuals have characteristics or traits such as being ill-tempered (*fa’ali’i*), good humored (*tausua*), or generous (*loto alofa*).

Samoans are quick to pin such labels on people in the form of either accusations or compliments (Shore 1982). These characteristics are considered to be context-derived facets of a person, mobilized or brought to the fore in specific situations, just as each role that person plays is context-derived. A person who is ill-tempered among his friends might be generous or good humored when among members of his family.

> For Samoans, these traits are never used as summary terms to characterize or distinguish a person "in general." They are understood to be merely aspects of people, possessed in different degrees and combinations by different people. While different *'uiga* may differentiate people from one another, they are used in a way that suggests they are understood primarily as aspects of particular contexts rather than of particular types of people (Shore 1982:140).

Samoan personalities are "many-faceted gems," each facet derived from social role and context, and composed of many characteristics that maintain its "distinct sides," and a "denial of that integration which would render it without sides," as contrasted to the American concept of the person as a well-rounded, integrated sphere (Shore 1982:137).

Private personal identity derives from the emotions, body sensations and other private feelings that remain unshared. Individuals have a private self, aspects of which are unknown to others. Daydreams and fantasies are also a part of this private self, unexpressed verbally and only occasionally committed to writing in a personal diary. They are kept private in order to avoid embarrassment; they also help the individual to feel unique if he or she believes these daydreams and fantasies are singular and belong only to the dreamer, enhancing personal identity. For

Samoans, these private feelings are rarely, if ever, discussed or committed to paper. They form a part of the Samoan self that is virtually ignored, while discussion of its content is considered vulgar and bad manners.

Identity formation

Adolescence is a period of self-discovery when internal and external factors impact individuals' increasing awareness of who they are, what they believe in, where life is taking them, and how they fit into a complex society (Everall, et al. 2005). The healthy resolution of teens' exploration of the world and their relationships with others results in the establishment of a clear sense of personal identity that joins the past, present, and future into a strong and meaningful sense of self.

> One of the most fundamental questions that adolescents are asking is, "Who am I and where do I fit in the world?" As the world becomes more globalized with technology, those questions and the ability to answer those questions become more complex. According to Erickson, being able to answer those questions is the primary task of adolescence, and is necessary for the formation of the *theory of self*, or what we call *identity formation* (Psychologist Kathleen Boyce Rodgers, *in* Georgina 2007).

Throughout childhood, the individual has had many role models with whom he or she identifies. At adolescence, he or she must choose the most appropriate ones. This involves trying out new roles. According to Erikson (1968), as the adolescent identifies with adults and older peers, he or she tries on different identities based on the personality traits and skills of these

significant persons. The adolescent begins to explore occupational choices, religious and political beliefs, sex roles and sexuality. Some identities are kept, while others are discarded.

Children, during what Erikson described as a natural sequence of developmental tasks, progress through several stages. Childhood tasks involve *identification* and *introjection*: the incorporation of the characteristics of others—usually influential adults such as parents, aunts, uncles, and teachers—into the child's own personality.

Faced with physical growth, sexual maturation, and impending career choices, the task of adolescents is to integrate their prior experiences and characteristics into a stable identity. Adolescents, caught between the world of childhood and the world of adulthood, experience temporary instability and confusion as they struggle with alternatives and choices, what Erikson (1968) termed an "identity crisis." Erikson used the term "crisis" to mean a turning point rather than a period of profound or debilitating uncertainty. He argued that achieving a solid identity requires a period of psychosocial moratorium—a time when adolescents are not yet burdened with the obligations and responsibilities of adulthood that might restrict their pursuit of self-discovery. This allows them to revisit and resolve earlier crises.

> In their search for a new sense of continuity and sameness...some adolescents have to come to grips again with crises of earlier years before they can install lasting idols and ideals as guardians of final identity. They need, above all, a moratorium for the integration of the identity elements ascribed...to the childhood stages. (Erikson 1968:128)

The first of Erikson's stages, basic trust versus mistrust, occurs during the period of infancy through the first one or two years of life. Children at this stage have "an important need

for trust in oneself and others" (Erikson 1968:128). A child successfully completing this stage develops trust and security and a basic optimism. Unsuccessful completion results in insecurity and mistrust.

As adolescents, children look "most fervently for men [sic] and ideas to have *faith* in, which also means men [sic] and ideas in whose service it would seem worth while to prove oneself trustworthy" (Erikson 1968: 128-129). He called this desire *fidelity*, and "the search for something and somebody to be true to can be seen in a variety of pursuits more or less sanctioned by society" (Erikson 1968:235). In Samoan culture, loyalty to the family is of paramount importance, and is taught to children from an early age. The adolescent girls I spoke with found dance to be a socially sanctioned pursuit that connected them with family, but that also had meaning for them.

> I love dancing…because it makes me feel like I'm right at home with my family (Emily age 12).

> I love dancing. I love doing everything else; I love talking, writing and singing, but I think that dancing is one of the easy ways that I can express my feelings, you know, [instead of] doing all that other hard stuff (Ko'olina, age 13).

> I dance because I just love dancing, I just have a passion for it. It's like, um, chocolate. You need it. You just like to eat it. And that's how I am with dancing (Leslie, age 16).

Erikson's second psychosocial crisis, autonomy versus shame, occurs during early childhood, usually between about 18 months to 2 years and 3½ to 4 years of age. Ideally, the child emerges from this stage sure of himself, elated with his new-found control, and proud rather than ashamed. Autonomy is not, however, entirely synonymous with assured self-possession, initiative, and independence but, at least for children in the early part of this psychosocial crisis, includes stormy self-will, tantrums, stubbornness, and negativism.

> This stage…becomes decisive for the ratio between loving good will and hateful self-insistence, between cooperation and willfulness, and between self-restraint or meek compliance (Erikson 1968:109).

The child needs to develop a sense of self control without loss of self esteem; parental overcontrol can cause feelings of doubt and shame.

Mead noted that Samoan toddlers' primary caregivers were their older siblings, who were children themselves. Toddlers became overindulged little tyrants, demanding and receiving whatever they wanted, because if a child was noisy, or wandered out into the hot sun, it was the older caregiver child who was scolded or punished. The toddlers were prevented from becoming complete tyrants, however, because once they became old enough, they, too, were put in charge of their younger siblings and the roles shifted; the indulgence they received as toddlers they would have to repay as caregivers of their younger siblings.

Many toddlers in American Samoa today find themselves among their age peers in preschool, while their mothers work outside the home and their older siblings attend school. Although school has had a detrimental affect on most traditional Samoan childrearing practices

(Mead 2001), it does still encourage identification with the child's own age group, and it reinforces the barriers of the age-grade hierarchy.

Western adolescents revisiting this second stage now look for an opportunity to decide for themselves on the choice of a career or profession, while at the same time feeling "mortally afraid of being forced into activities in which he would feel exposed to ridicule or self-doubt... [H]e would rather act shamelessly…out of free choice, then be forced into activities which could be shameful in his own eyes or in those of his peers" (Erikson 1968:129).

Most of the Samoan girls interviewed had been placed in dance groups by their parents, usually at an early age. Although as small children they had no choice in the matter, as teenagers they are choosing to remain in dance groups, and deciding to like dance. It is unclear whether they would be allowed by their parents to permanently quit dancing.

> I started dancing because in the beginning my mom wanted me to get into the whole Polynesian thing because it was becoming popular, but I stayed in because I love the family environment, and I love learning new moves, and being able to keep in shape, because I don't get too much exercise outside of dance (McRae, age 16).

> I've never had a clue about why I started dancing when I was [three]. Whenever we had a performance when I was little, it seemed like I was the main person of the show. Come here and talk to me, I'm the bomb! And then when I started growing up, I started knowing and learning why I dance because it really shows who I am. My culture. Because everyone in my family knows how to dance. And I didn't want to be left out, so I started dancing (Nu'umau, age 16).

The third stage, initiative versus guilt, occurs during what Erikson calls the "play age," or the later preschool years, characterized by "an unlimited imagination as to what one might become." During this stage, ideally, children learn to imagine, to broaden their skills through active play, including fantasy; to cooperate with others; to lead as well as to follow. Less ideally, they are fearful and immobilized by guilt, they lurk on the fringes of groups, they continue to depend inordinately on adults, and are restricted both in the development of play skills and in imagination.

Children revisiting this third stage as adolescents must experiment with all the roles and identities that interest them, and try out their dreams. They must be willing to trust their peers and significant adults to allow them imaginative scope to their aspirations. They object "to all 'pedantic' limitations on [their] self-images and will be ready to settle by loud accusation all [their] guiltiness over the excessiveness of [their] ambition" (Erikson 1968:129).

Today, adolescents in American Samoa can try on the different roles that are available to them, to a limited extent. There are a number of occupations, for example, that are available in government and private industry, from administrative posts to cleaning fish in the canneries. They can attend the local community college, which is affordable, or colleges on the mainland U.S., but these options are only exercised with the family's approval and if finances allow. Most of the higher-paid government posts may be out of reach because they are assigned based on favors or family connections. Working at the canneries is not regarded highly, and many of those jobs are taken by foreign nationals, Samoans from independent Samoa or immigrants from Tonga. Few of the girls I spoke with had a particular career or occupation that they aspired to, although some expressed a desire to become dance teachers when they grew up.

> When I grow up I want to have a dance group to earn money for school and college. And I can teach them what I have learned when I was a little girl and from the teachers who taught me. I want to show my students and teach them how to dance Samoan dance (Adrian, age 12).

> I want to have my own dance group until I'm an old lady. I want to keep going and going, and never stop (Emily, age 12).

Samoan adolescents have a limited number of dreams and aspirations that lie within easy reach. While free to dream, the actual execution of those dreams can still be problematic, and depends on the family's willingness to allow free reign. The adolescent's primary duty remains to the family, and the family's needs still supersede those of the individual. This is a source of conflict between the teen and his or her parents. Many of the teens I spoke with remained ambivalent about their future. When asked how long she planned to dance, one informant said,

> As long as I want. Or maybe when I turn 18, I might go to college. I'm planning to dance until I finish high school, and then I'll stop. But I'll just stop coming to dance groups and all but I'll keep on dancing. Maybe I'll go to [college]. I don't know, yeah, I still want to dance. But I'm not sure how long (Nu'umau, age 16).

According to Erikson, the fourth psychosocial crisis, industry versus inferiority, begins during the "school age," and continues up to and sometimes including some of junior high school. Children at this stage learn to master the more formal skills of life, including relating

with peers according to rules, progressing from free play to play that may be elaborately structured by rules and may demand formal teamwork, such as baseball or soccer, and mastering school work. "The immediate contribution of the school age to a sense of identity can be expressed in the words, 'I am what I can learn to make work'" (Erikson 1968:127). Children who, because of their successive and successful resolutions of earlier psychosocial crises, are trusting, autonomous, and full of initiative, will learn to be industrious. However, children who are mistrusting will doubt the future. The shame- and guilt-filled child will experience defeat and inferiority.

Adolescents revisiting this fourth stage become preoccupied with the choice of an occupation. "[I]f the desire to make something work, and to make it work well, is the gain of the school age, then the choice of an occupation assumes a significance beyond the question of remuneration and status" (Erikson 1968:129). Erikson contended that Western adolescents would prefer to not work at all than to be forced into something that may be successful and promising, but is not something of their choosing and doesn't hold the "satisfaction of functioning with unique excellence" (Erikson 1968:129), that is, something new, interesting and uniquely theirs. Adolescents denied the opportunity of self expression resist "with the wild strength encountered in animals who are suddenly forced to defend their lives" (Erikson 1968:129). This may not be true, however, for Samoan adolescents. One of my adult informants mentioned, for example, that she had a cousin who worked for the Department of Education and was attempting to get the informant's daughter an office job in the department. The daughter had little say in the matter, and despite her protestations that she wished to attend college, the mother decided that the daughter would have to accept the position if it was offered to her. The status

inherent in the occupation is also important; few Samoan teens actually aspire to work in the cannery, as it is seen as a low-status job.

The final stage of adolescence, identity versus identity diffusion, occurs from about age 13 to about 20. Mature identity is a matter of having strong, self-conscious and self-chosen commitments in matters such as vocation, sexuality, religion and political ideology (Marcia 1993). *Identity diffusion* results when such choices remain unresolved. Adolescents who are identity-diffused maintain no strong commitments, and don't seek any. They live day by day, and go where life takes them. Adolescents who are *identity-foreclosed* have clear commitments internalized from their parents or other agents of cultural transmission. These commitments are not self-chosen, and no alternatives have been seriously considered.

During successful early adolescence, Erikson states, adolescents acquire self-certainty as opposed to self-consciousness and self-doubt. They experiment with different roles rather than adopting a socially negative identity like delinquency. Adolescents achieve their goals, rather than being paralyzed by feelings of inferiority. In later adolescence, clear sexual identity is established. Adolescents seek leadership and inspiration, and gradually develop a set of socially congruent and desirable ideals.

In traditional Samoan culture, persons could be considered by Western psychology to be somewhat *identity-diffused*. Mead described a "general casualness" to Samoan society, "where no one plays for very high stakes, no one pays very heavy prices, no one suffers for his convictions or fights to the death for special ends" (Mead 2001:137). I have also seen at least one clear instance of identity foreclosure, in which the adolescent, a 20 year old from western Samoa, had internalized his parents' ideas about religion, politics, and about who he should be and what he should do with his life.

Until recently, this aspect of Erikson's and Marcia's theory of identity formation would have had limited applicability to Samoan adolescents. Today, however, Samoan teens do seek leadership and inspiration, they desire to experiment with roles and they either succeed to a reasonably satisfying degree or they fail and become delinquent, sinking into socially negative behaviors like dropping out of school, smoking, drinking, and engaging in substance abuse.

There are those, however, who acquire self-certainty, who can achieve their goals and make commitments. Many of the girls I spoke with, even if they were unsure about career choices, were committed to Samoan dance, and had created an identity through it. They identified with Samoan dance as a part of their traditional culture; most expressed a desire to preserve and keep it alive, at least in their own lives. Some believed in dance almost as a sacred connection.

> [Samoan dance] is something, you can't take it for granted. It's something you have to be very careful with. I think it can be sacred at times, sacred, something you can't hide, you have to show it. If you know how to dance, don't be shy, be proud of it.
> *How is it sacred?*
> The *taupou* dance? The *taualuga*? When the *taupou* is doing the *taualuga,* presenting her dance to those in the audience, for instance, her family, you can't just do it just to do it. You're like, each and every move you do, has special meaning to it (Leslie, age 16).

> I think the first time I really got serious with [Samoan dance], I think [was] when I was about four or five. I was in the Leituli dance group, and then after that I kind of faded away, when I was in about third grade. When I was about eight, I joined *Siva Maia*, and I

> danced in that group for a couple of years, and then after that, I joined *Taupou Manaia* in my eighth grade year, I think it was, but I wasn't committed to practice. My mom always yells at me about not being committed to practice. So I stopped dancing in a dance group for a while, then I started again this year, my junior year, in the dance group (Kimberly, age 16).

For multicultural adolescents, or those living in a multicultural world, this stage also involves integrating their ethnic self into their identity; studies have suggested that a positive self-concept in ethic minorities "may be related to the extent to which [they] have come to an understanding and acceptance of their ethnicity" (Phinney 1990:508). These adolescents generally have four possibilities for integrating their ethnicity into their larger sense of self. The first is *assimilation*, trying to adopt the majority culture's norms and standards at the expense of those in one's own group. The second, *marginalization*, means living within the majority culture but feeling estranged. The third is *separation*, associating primarily with members of one's own culture and rejecting the majority culture. The last possibility is *biculturalism*, maintaining ties both to the majority culture and one's own ethnic culture. Biculturalism is an especially adaptive approach for many adolescents, retaining the norms of both the majority and minority cultures and selecting between them, depending on the circumstances (LaFrombois, et al, 1995).

The Samoan teens observed during fieldwork exhibited different styles and approaches to resolving the conflict between their ethnic self and the encroaching Western world. Many attempted assimilation; some male adolescents adopted a hip-hop style of dress; they could be seen wearing baggy pants that hung off their hips and exposed their undergarments, and spoke using the urban African-American slang they heard on television.

The adolescent girls I spoke with exhibited two distinctive styles of biculturalism. Both methods sought to maintain both Samoan traditions and attractive elements of American culture; however, they approached it from different directions. The full Samoan girls exhibited a more protective style of biculturalism, choosing to live in both worlds while preserving the older traditions, while the half Samoan girls wanted to fit in, and implemented a style seeking to adopt Samoan traditions and merge them with the American culture they had been fully exposed to.

The full Samoan girls, in their endeavor to preserve Samoan culture, saw dance as a way to contribute to this end.

> I think [dance] is [important]. Because nowadays a lot of us, like that preserving of our culture, it's like the sand on the shore washing away, it's gradually moving to that, so I think dancing really helps...preserve Samoan culture (Leslie, age 16).

> I feel very privileged to be dancing it. It really shows how much you care about your culture and your tradition. It expresses how you feel about where you come from and what you were raised with (Nu'umau, age 16).

Those who were born on the mainland U.S. and were only part Samoan expressed a need to fit in with or come to an understanding of their newly-adopted culture.

> To me, yeah, [dance is important] because I live here and so I have to learn it, the culture and everything (Joanne, age 14).

> I think dancing helps you get in touch with your cultural side. Because I'm half [Samoan], I think it takes a lot more… so… if you're half, you have to learn how to dance good. Because that's a way of identifying yourself as a Samoan. Because if you live here all your life I think it's a must to know how to dance Samoan (Kimberly, age 16).

> I think I became a dancer because, although I am half Samoan, I don't speak the language, but I figured that, if I learn how to dance, that could be how I do my part to keep my heritage alive (McRae, age 16).

Adults were observed coaching the girls on what to say, particularly in how the girls answered questions about their feelings toward Samoan culture in general and dance in particular; however, based on my informal discussions with them over several months, the comments they made, although colored by their need to please their parents, seemed sincere. The girls who commented on it desired to learn Samoan dance as a way of connecting with tradition and family.

Autonomy

There are a number of definitions of autonomy, but most hold in common the ideas of detachment from parents, personal agency, self-assertion, and self-reliance. Autonomy is an adolescent's individuation from parents and relinquishing dependence on them; a sense of self-reliance, a belief that one has control over one's own life, and subjective feelings of being able to make decisions without excessive social validation (Collins, et al, 1997). Healthy autonomy

does not mean a complete separation from parents and significant others, but should be a balance between independent, self-confident action and positive relationships with others (Zimmer-Gembeck and Collins, 2003). Adolescents' desire for personal autonomy, and parents' reluctance to relinquish authority and control, are among the main sources of conflict between adolescents and their parents (Darling, et al., 2005).

Autonomy, individuality, and personal freedom are more salient and valorized in the United States and in most Western industrialized societies than in non-western cultures. In non-Western cultures, particularly those with a more collectivist or interdependent inclination, autonomy is deemphasized or even discouraged.

> This notion of individuality and individuation is often a source of conflict for adolescents from collective cultures, or subcultures within the United States. Because those collective cultures stress family unity, family loyalty, over the autonomy or individualism, that is this broader kind of cultural understanding of autonomy. Therefore, these adolescents often feel caught in two worlds (Psychologist Masha Goldstein *in* Georgina 2007).

In the West, the expectation is that once children become adults, they will leave the parental home and establish one of their own. There are variations within the United States, in subcultures or even in individual families, in terms of the amount of separation that is expected or encouraged. Autonomy is not exclusively Western, nor irrelevant to non-industrialized cultures; rather, the process of autonomy development that is most adaptive, and the forms that autonomy takes, vary both between and within cultures (Zimmer-Gembeck and Collins, 2003).

Schlegel and Barry (1991), in a study using information from ethnographies of 186 preindustrial societies worldwide, found that the issue of autonomy or independence from the family does not enter the lives of the adolescents in their sample. Families in these societies maintain lifelong ties because family members need each other.

> Adolescent and young adult children depend on the help of parents and other kin especially when all are living together, and aging parents rely on older children for their very survival. Siblings and other relatives form the core of an individual's political and social support group and are expected to respond in time of need. Independence as we know it would be regarded as not only eccentric and egotistical, but also foolhardy beyond reason (Schlegel and Barry, 1991:45).

Autonomy in Samoan culture comes much later than in the U.S. In Samoan culture, children are raised to be obedient to their parents and to respect and obey people who are older than them, including older siblings and adults in the community. Arguments with parents or other older relatives are not allowed. Obedience and docility are sanctioned; behavioral autonomy is not encouraged. Many Samoan mothers stated that they felt their children should obey them no matter what the child's age – even well into adulthood. Most expressed surprise and dismay that American young adults leave home to follow their own path, and don't stay and take care of their parents.

In many Polynesian cultures, independent thought is not encouraged. Thomas (1996) found that a Tongan child could be punished for taking any personal initiative.

> Independence of action and thought is strongly discouraged from an early age, as when five-year-old Elenoa was scolded for bringing the washing in on her own initiative…Children are discouraged from acting on their own initiative and from being curious or critical, as well as being taught to be unquestioningly obedient (Thomas 1996: 97).

The teens I interviewed preferred to consult with their parents or grandparents before making important decisions. Sometimes the adults made decisions for their teenage children without asking the teen what he or she needed or wanted. This can happen even after the children are legally adults. Children are trained to be unquestioningly obedient, and to serve their parents and other adults, from the time they can understand commands. Most of the teenage dancers said their mother decided they would learn Samoan dance when the dancer was very young, as young as three.

> *How long have you been dancing?*
>
> Pretty much my whole life.
>
> *How old were you when you first started dancing?*
>
> I think the first time they threw on a tape and made me dance…probably when I was about three.
>
> *Who made you dance?*
>
> I think it was my mom. Mom was the first one to get me to dance (Kimberly, age 16).

In Samoa, there seems to be strong guilt and obligation attached to the delay of autonomy. Gerber (1975) found that adolescent and adult children felt they must pay parents back for early care, and that part of Samoans' obligation to their parents stems from the parents having given them life.

> Remaining with one's parents is usually expressed by the verb “mafuta,” which Pratt (1911) translates as “communion, association, dwelling together.” Most Samoan young people express a desire to “dwell together with” their parents. More is implied than residence; informants usually mean supporting their parents financially and working for them at home, as well. The obligation is associated with being given one's life (Gerber, 1975: 49).

Samoan parents strive to keep their children near them for as long as possible, an endeavor tied in with the young people’s obligatory obedience and service. Gerber observed,

> It is unclear exactly why parents like to keep their children so close to them. Undoubtedly, they prefer to have a large number of young people near them, to relieve them of work and to make their lives more secure.... [P]art of their motivation may be that they enjoy having a large crew of workers to whom they can give directions. (Gerber 1975:75)

One of my informants, with an air of genuine concern that I had no children, said, “Who is going to take care of you when you get old?” In many traditional societies, the family, especially

children and grandchildren, take care of elder adults. In societies in which children grow up and move away from home, older adults often are left to take care of themselves or are placed in retirement or nursing homes. There are few retirement homes or other group homes for the elderly on American Samoa.[2] I had once suggested the possibility of obtaining grant funding for elder care, to provide transportation to and from the medical center, and to help families provided for the elders in their care. This idea was rejected immediately. Informants told me it would be embarrassing to the family, and reflect very badly on them, if there were any suggestion that they could not or needed help caring for their elder family members.

According to Western psychology, when autonomy is delayed or inhibited, it results in an inability to make independent decisions or to form lasting, healthy relationships with others. One of the achievements associated with attaining autonomy is the development of a sense of self that is unique and distinctive from others. "A balance between independent, self-confident action and positive relationships with others appears to be optimal for psychological adjustment and development" (Zimmer-Gembeck and Collins, 2003:181).

Neither of these results, the positive nor the negative, are important in Samoan culture. Mead noted that attachments to most people are loose and slight, "the lesson is learned of not caring for one person greatly, not setting high hopes on any one relationship" (Mead 2001:138); the ability to make independent decisions, as noted above, is discouraged. Has the delaying of autonomy, therefore, had a detrimental effect on Samoan young adults? The teens that I met seemed to have little trouble forming peer relationships. Only a few said they had problems making or keeping friends, a fact that didn't seem to cause them much emotional pain.

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[2] Holmes (1992) reports an old age home in Tafuna village on Tutuila in 1987, *Fatu O Aiga*, run by the Catholic Church, but by the time of my fieldwork in 2002, it was dedicated primarily to counseling and child care services.

> Sometimes I don't hang around with the girls at school. I don't have many friends. At lunchtime I go eat on my own, by myself, or sometimes the other girls they'll walk with me but some of the time I go by myself. (Adrian, age 12)

The delay of autonomy is also imbedded in the respect system of the age-grade hierarchy. Until a person is considered fully an adult—traditionally, when a person was in their 30s or older—there were a significant number of people above them who could demand service and obedience of them. Autonomy is more likely as people age, and the number of people lower than them on the hierarchy from whom they can demand service and obedience grows, while the number of people who can demand service from them shrinks.

While the cross-cultural study of autonomy is still in its infancy, it is already clear that the frequently heard generalization that autonomy is irrelevant to psychological development in non-industrial cultures is misleading. It is more likely that there are different kinds and levels of autonomy, and the particular form it takes in each culture will influence the process of autonomy development to produce the one that is the most adaptive. "Cultural variations thus may be more a matter of when and how autonomy is evinced, rather than whether or not autonomy is relevant to human action and emotion" (Zimmer-Gembeck and Collins, 2003:194).

Self Boundaries

For the adolescent Samoan dancers interviewed, the role of the *taupou* and her special dance, the *taualuga*, hold an attractive mystique and provide the girls with an ostensibly attainable goal. While the central role this special dance was traditionally performed by the village princess, today, especially in commercial groups, the role is often awarded on a reward

basis or occasionally if the girl's family is hosting the performance. This is a tremendous honor for the young dancer. It places her not only in the spotlight, but temporarily on a point of power recognizable by most Samoans once only available to royalty. The *taualuga* is considered by Samoans to be the most important dance, depicting cultural symbols relevant to person, role, behavior and boundaries.

Self (ego) boundary is the boundary between what is me and what is not me. The private thoughts, feelings and sensations experienced by the individual are part of the self as knower, not shared with anyone else. The spatial self-boundary is the area around the body that is considered personal space. This also includes psychological extensions of the self, in which the individual identifies with others or shares experiences vicariously.

Boundaries of self, a phrase borrowed from family systems theory, is the experience of a flexible perimeter marking the distinction between the individual's personality—thoughts, feelings, and memories—and what exists outside that perimeter, within other people. It is the feeling of a psychological distinction between what the individual knows about him or herself versus what others know about them. The systemic-contextual model proposed by Polster (1983) describes the self boundary not as a barrier, but as a dialectical process of separation and inclusion that mediates a person's complex relationship with the world. This model, in contrast to the bounded circle model, is more useful in describing Samoan selves.

Barnhill (1979) describes a dichotomy of *individuation vs. enmeshment*. Individuation here describes the independent thought, feelings, and judgments of individual family members. Enmeshment refers to poorly delineated boundaries of self, an identity that is dependent on others, symbiosis with other family members, and shared ego fusion. In the West, enmeshment occurs within nuclear families, often between parents and children. People with poor boundaries,

who are enmeshed, are most comfortable when the people around them agree with them and are similar to them, and where differences between persons is slight or ignored. (Satir 1972).

Samoan boundaries are much different from boundaries in the West. Samoan boundaries are more permeable and negotiated. Individuality, as stated above, is not as important as it is in Western culture; relationships and interdependence are emphasized. Boundaries exhibit qualities of interdependence, in which each person has a clear, stable identity, and a healthy bond with the other. This bond occurs mainly among age-grade cohorts. Mageo (1998:43) refers to this as *corporate identity*, "a tendency to experience oneself as a member of a corporate body, rather than as an individual rigidly bounded by one's own skin." Because different cultures bound the self in different ways, they also have varying forms of boundary confusion, although all are wary of these confusions. Mageo writes that, for Samoans, porous boundaries between persons accurately reflect cultural conceptions of self and do not constitute confusion; boundary confusion is more accurately represented by porous boundaries between levels of the social hierarchy (Mageo 1998). Because of childrearing practices that encourage boundaries between generations, enmeshment between parents and children is very unlikely in Samoa.

Samoan self boundaries can be understood in their reflection in the Samoan conception of geographic boundaries.

THE VILLAGE IS LIKE A PERSON

The Samoan concept of self boundaries is echoed in geographic boundaries. Villages traditionally were arranged in a circular pattern, in which the chiefs' houses, the center of power, were at the center of the village. The center is also the area of the strongest control, with power, control and order weakening with distance from the center (Shore 1982). Status, in Samoa, is equated with power.

A point-field model of these boundaries was developed by anthropologist David Herdrich of the American Samoa Historic Preservation office.

> The idea of a point field is that rather than starting out with a bounded space, rather than defining a space like a box and then putting things inside of it, you start out with a point, and from that point a field radiates out, so you could think of it as a point with vectors radiating outward from it...With the point field concept, if you associate power with the initial point, as you get away from the point, the power of the field decreases. With the Samoan village, the most sacred part of the village is the center of the *malae.* And then the next highest status is the guest houses, and then the chiefs' houses, and the sleeping houses and the outhouses and pig sties, so essentially what the village models is this decreasing continuum of status. (Georgina 2007)

Herdrich's model expands on village orientation described by Shore (1982). Samoan spatial orientation is based on a dual distinction between seaward (*tai*), and inland, toward the bush (*uta*). Symbolically, he writes, "*i tai* suggests primarily the more populated and ordered arenas of Samoan life," the area of women's work, and with "the maintenance of decorous and controlled behavior under the gaze of a dense population and watchful chiefs" (Shore 1982:49). Toward the bush, *uta*, suggests areas populated by *aitu*, ghosts, rather than people. "To go *i uta* commonly suggests leaving a center of order and population, and thus leaving the area of the control of chiefs and village regulations" (Shore 1982:49). It is the area of heavy foods like taro and of danger, chaos, and lack of control. "To live in the bush is to live alone, out of reach and

control of society” (Shore 1982:49). People who choose to live on the outskirts of the village, close to the bush, are considered “crazy,” according to my informants.

In traditional Samoan villages, the central point is an open grassy area called the *malae*. The center of the *malae* is called the *mata*, or eye. In concentric circles of increasing distance from the center, are first the chiefs' guest houses, then the family sleeping houses, then the young men's sleeping houses, then the cook houses, and finally, at the furthest point from the center, are the *fale vao*, or bush houses—outhouses—and the pig sties. The center is the place of the most orderliness and cleanliness, and on the periphery is disorder and dirt. This center-periphery dichotomy can be seen in many aspects of Samoan life, including and especially, the *taualuga*. During the *taualuga*, at the center of the troupe dances the village princess (the *taupou*; it can also be the person present who holds the highest status) who represents order, law (the *taupou* is typically and traditionally the chief's daughter), beauty, cleanliness, and grace. On the periphery of the dance floor are the clowns, whose wild antics represent disorder, chaos, lawlessness and unseemliness. Between the *taupou* and the clowns, other members of the village dance, not to outshine the *taupou*, but as a kind of buffer between the clown and the *taupou*. This buffer seems to break down when the clown approaches the *taupou*; however, the clown only does this in order to throw himself on the ground in front of the *taupou* in a typically Samoan show of servitude and lowness of rank. The *taupou* is compelled to place one foot on his back, effectively demonstrating or signifying the imposition of control over chaos and disorder.

This also echoes the, or village council (*fono*), meetings during which village chiefs (*matai*s) sit at their assigned posts in the chief’s *fale* (Samoan style house), posts assigned by status within the hierarchy, and discuss village business. Only those of the highest social class—the *matai*s—are allowed inside the house to attend the meeting and to sit at a post. The untitled

men serve food, but are not attendees in the strict sense; their only role is to serve the *matais* but not take part in the discussions. Those *matai*s with lower ranked titles are not assigned posts to lean against. Outside the *fale*, on the periphery of the meeting, people may gather to listen. Those on the periphery are usually the people with the least power, and, as Shore describes, are ambivalent toward the *matai*s' power.

> [T]he attitude of those on the periphery, particularly young children and the youth, are not simple deference and passivity. Rather, a marked ambivalence is evident toward those at the centers of power and dignity, a passive-aggressive stance in which the boundaries separating those in the center from those on the periphery are constantly challenged, tested, and reaffirmed. This "boundary testing" is characteristic of Samoan social interactions (Shore 1982:51).

Most villages in American Samoa today are linear, built along roads. The main road often runs next to the *malae* (grassy area in the center of the village), as in Fagotogo, or right through it, as in Pav'ai'ai. There are still a few circular villages on Tutuila, including Pav'ai'ai, Aua, and Vailoatai. The village road has taken a role as the center of village attention, but in the larger villages near the center of the island, it has divided villages into halves. Increasing automobile traffic on the main roads, especially those villages on Highway 001, the main east-west artery joining Fagamalo on the northwest side of the island with Onenoa on the far northeast (there are no continuous paved roads running east to west on the north side of the island), has acted as a barrier between the halves of the villages it bisects. In the less busy areas on the periphery of the island (the two end villages, for example), this is not the case. The government road has become

an area of focus, with the households on either side of it forming the inner core; the circular pattern is suggested and a person's behavior when near the road is under the closest scrutiny and control (Shore 1982). As I filmed the chiefs' guest houses along the main road in Pav'ai'ai in 2004, for example, although I was in what is considered a public area and could legally film without specific permissions (according to American laws, which are valid in American Samoa), I was watched carefully by the adults who were out and about in the village and by Samoans passing by in their cars. Not all of this could be explained by the novelty of the video camera; most Samoans on this side of the island had heard about me by this time, and my camera was not large enough to attract attention. I was later told by an informant that it was more a matter of making sure I stayed out of trouble and trouble stayed away from me. In contrast to the adults, a group of teens and young people, who were repairing one of the chief's guest houses, called out to me cheerfully and asked me to take their picture.

The entire island of Tutuila has a center-periphery layout, the center being the Pago Pago-to-Utulei governmental center. Before the airport was built in Tafuna, this was also the single contact point with the outside world; the government corridor includes most of the west side of Pago Pago Bay, including the harbor, where all ships coming to the island must dock.

On the periphery are the back villages, especially those not connected to paved roads leading to the center. The smaller islands in the Manu'a group (where Mead worked) are today considered "bush" by my informants because of their inaccessibility.

Herdrich observed that, although most boundaries, when they exist in Samoa, are changeable and permeable, they often derive from power relationships.

> To the extent that there is a boundary in Samoa, if you have a boundary between points, it's relative to those two points and the power that they have. So if...point [A] is more powerful than point [B], then the boundary would be pushed closer to...point [B]. And if through time, point [B] gained more power, the boundary might shift back. Boundaries are not what I refer to as axiomatic, you don't start with them; rather, to the extent that there are boundaries, they are derived from these relationships and then imposed on the landscape (Georgina 2007).

Samoan ego boundaries reflect this point-field relationship. Western ego boundaries are more like the box with its contents, while Samoan boundaries are more like the point-field. Samoan ego boundaries are permeable, and shift and change depending on whether the person is interacting with someone above them or below them in the hierarchy, or is a family member or a coworker. David Herdrich described it this way:

> In Samoan, there's a concept called *va*. *Va* means the space between. And there are terms like *vailima*, which is the space between your fingers. There are Samoan terms that use *va*: they have a term for the space between coconut plants, the space between houses, the space between villages, the space between your toes, there's a whole set of individual lexical items that name the space between. Whereas in English, we don't do that, we don't have single lexical items for the spaces between, if we call it anything at all, we call it negative space. I think that derives from the point field idea. As soon as you have more than one point—you have a point here and a point here—there's a space between those two points. And what's important is the relationship between those two points. One of the

> interesting things about Samoan interactions is that if you and I are talking, like in a hallway or something, in the United States, people wouldn't think very much of walking in between us, whereas in Samoa, that is considered very rude, and so if there is no other option, no other way to go around behind them, and you have to go past people, you bow down a little bit and say *tulo* or "excuse me," because going right between people, interfering with that relationship and violating that space between two people, is considered rude (Georgina 2007).

I have also observed on occasion, in the grocery store, that if a Samoan adult needs to pass between a person and the products they are looking at, the Samoan will say *tulo* and bow a little as they pass. Perhaps it has to do with the intrusion or interruption.

Samoan ego boundaries, more permeable and negotiated than those in the West, reflect the emphasis on relationships and interdependence, where each person has a clear, stable identity, and a healthy bond with the other. More solid boundaries form between levels in the age grade hierarchy, which are not as permeable. These boundaries are reflected in village layout and the arrangement of the dance floor during the *taualuga*. Samoan girls aspire to dance the role of the *taupou* during the *taualuga*, which they view as an honor and a reward for hard work. It is a reward that allows them to cross a social boundary, if only for a few minutes, that they are otherwise unable to penetrate.

Subjectivity and Emotions

On American daytime television, characters say what they feel, argue when they think they are right, cry, laugh, express feelings and write their innermost thoughts in their diaries or

whisper them to friends over coffee or milk shakes. They express and act impulsively on their innermost desires. To viewers from other cultures, it must look like Americans do whatever they want, whenever they want, expressing innermost feelings and thoughts, without any thought or regard for the impact of their behavior on others. In western Fiji, Becker (2004) found that Fijian adolescent girls were modeling their identity and behavior on characters presented in television dramas.

In American culture, a person's inner life, thoughts, feelings and motivations, are highlighted and considered an important part of the self. In traditional Samoan culture, the inner life is downplayed in favor of external image and behaviors. Sia Figiel, a Samoan writer, questions the preoccupation with surface and image, which she likens to a tablecloth admired without knowing what kind of table was underneath:

> People see surfaces only, and that's all. They don't care to look under tables, under mats, or in a book, or bite a fruit. They like admiring these things, admiring the way things look on the outside. … This same principle is applicable to human beings… People prefer to see the tablecloths of other people, that is, how they look, how their bodies look, how their clothes look… People define other people as good or bad, clever or stupid, or clever or bad—depending on the surface only… in essence, their tablecloths (Figiel, 1999:17).

The Samoan girls I spoke with were handling this conflict in different ways, from an inability to answer questions about their inner life, to speaking freely about emotions and motivations.

In Western psychology, emotional changes, along with the physiological and psychological changes young people experience during adolescence, are considered to be part of the developmental process, and can contribute to the stress and upheaval experienced by some (cf. Rosenblum and Lewis 2003). The foundations of emotional life, laid long before adolescence, include emotions felt and the skills required to control and understand them. Children learn between the ages of 2 and 6, for example, that they and others have a subjective state, an inner life that colors what they feel and how they react emotionally. This knowledge becomes more sophisticated in later childhood and adolescence (Rosenblum and Lewis 2003).

Early in life, children learn *emotional dissemblance*—the realization that felt emotions need not necessarily be expressed (Rosenblum and Lewis 2003). Choices to control emotional expression become increasingly linked to the management of interpersonal relationships, especially to avoid punishment and other negative outcomes, to protect self-esteem, defend relationships, and to behave according to social rules and norms.

Emotions are not entirely physiological; they are also culturally patterned, sanctioned or suppressed (Mead 1928, Gerber 1985, 1975; Lutz 1981, Mageo 1998). Gerber (1985) noted, based on her work in Samoa, that some emotions may be completely undefined and unclassified by a culture. These cultural patterns of emotion become part of the cultural model of the self.

In the West, for example, we tend to think of the self as the inner self–our inner thoughts and feelings, our motivations. We view this as our true or real self –constant and unchanging. We tend to think of the roles we play as a kind of mask or persona that we can assume or remove at will. In Samoa, people are not at all concerned about inner motivations or intentions; the focus is on external behaviors. "The whole preoccupation is with the individual as an actor, and the motivations peculiar to his psychology are left an unplumbed mystery" (Mead 2001: 91). People

have both subjective and social experiences; some cultures emphasize subjectivity, others emphasize social performance or personas, seeing one or the other as being definitive of being a person (Mageo 1998, Markus and Kitayama 1991).

Loto, which translates literally as “depths,” as in the depths of the sea, is the Samoan word for thinking, feeling, and willing (Gerber 1975). These are all aspects of inner experience, which is an unqualified and unelaborated concept for Samoans (Mageo 1998). It is a part of the human psyche that is unfathomable and resistant to cultural patterning. The *loto* is a repository of the thoughts and feelings that arise spontaneously (Gerber 1985). Samoans say they can’t know what is in another person’s depths (Gerber 1975, 1985), and rarely pay attention to their own. Parents teach their children to ignore their inner life because it “stands in the way of docility and cooperativeness on the part of the child” (Mageo 1998:40), characteristics that are admired in Samoan children.

> [S]mall children should keep quiet, wake up early, obey, work hard and cheerfully, play with children of their own sex; young people should work industriously and skillfully, not be presuming, marry discreetly, be loyal to their relatives, not carry tales, nor be trouble makers; while adults should be wise, peaceable, serene, generous, anxious for the good prestige of the village and conduct their lives with all good form and decorum (Mead 2001:91).

Conflict can arise between what Gerber refers to as *basic affect*—an individual’s psychological and biological states—and the culturally constituted emotion system. As noted

above, some emotions, like calm and *alofa* (loving kindness) are acceptable and desirable, while others, especially anger, rage, and any other strong feeling, are not.

People want to be seen as good, as their culture defines it. In this way, acceptable emotions and their behavioral expression become a part of the self, particularly in terms of self image and self esteem.

> "Good" people tend to have socially approved feelings the individual expresses by selecting from a range of socially valuable behaviors. The emotion therefore reinforces important social values…A "good" child therefore works for his parents both to gain a reputation for moral behavior and as an outward sign of inwardly experienced alofa. The desire to express and experience the sense of bondedness is channeled into the performance of particular social obligations (Gerber 1985:151).

People like to think well of themselves, but this does not prevent them from experiencing socially unacceptable feelings. For example, Samoan teens have reported feeling angry toward their parents, usually over severe beatings (Gerber 1985), the means by which Samoan children are disciplined and punished most often. Mead (2001) noticed that girls were more likely to get beatings than boys; informants stated that their fathers beat them to demonstrate their love for them, although the reverse apparently was not felt to be true: a teen would not seek out a beating as a demonstration of love (Gerber 1975, 1985). Beatings are most often given when children disobey or refuse to serve their parents.

"Good" Samoan children serve and obey their parents as a demonstration of their love. This service includes most of the tasks around the house that children are physically capable of

doing, including cooking. Samoans were surprised to hear that in the United States, parents, especially the mother, cook breakfast and dinner for the whole family, including the children. In Samoa, the children cook for the parents as soon as they are old enough to do so, usually when they're tall enough to reach the stove. Samoans seem to hate to cook; my informants generally agreed that cooking was a necessary evil, and doing it for their parents was both a sacrifice and an act of love. There was a tendency to view it as a demeaning demonstration of subservience; those of higher status (an adult) never cooked if someone of lower status (a child or young person) was present to do it.

Refusal to obey, *musu*, is a reaction against being dominated, and is, therefore, especially common during childhood and adolescence, when people are at the bottom of the age-grade hierarchy (Freeman 1983:219). Resistance is countered with punishment.

> If a parental order is not promptly attended to, it is followed by a threat. If the threat does not produce obedience, the child is liable to be struck. Should the beaten child cry, his or her tears are treated as a reprehensible complaint against legitimate authority, and the beating will continue in earnest. Rather than reacting to the beating, children must demonstrate deference through a gestural articulation of their inferior status: sitting down, suppressing their emotions, and bowing their heads. If a child does so, the blows are likely to be softened. (Mageo 1998:65-66)

Stories of beatings and child abuse appear throughout the literature on Samoan and Polynesian child rearing and socialization practices (cf., Gerber 1975, 1985; Shore 1982; Thomas 2003).

Physical punishment may bring about the desired results—submission and compliance—but it also has far-reaching consequences. As Mageo (1991:3) noted, "Punishment may make the child passive before the dictates of others, but the child also harbors suppressed desires to be in control. Being so often 'one down' creates a desire to be 'one up.'" This desire is channeled into culturally permitted activities, such as vying for chiefly titles for males and ruling over the household for females. Although Western ideas of what constitutes child abuse and what is acceptable discipline are gradually being absorbed into Samoan child-rearing practices, research suggests that some individuals who are disciplined in ways that Western culture finds abusive will discipline their own children in similar ways.

> [O]ne-third of child victims grow up to continue a pattern of seriously inept, neglectful, or abusive rearing as parents; one-third do not. The other one-third remain vulnerable to the effects of social stress on the likelihood of their becoming abusive parents. Intrafamilial factors appear to be the cause of personally directed, as opposed to culturally condoned, child abuse (Oliver 1993:1315).

Children must accept their beatings without strong emotions such as crying, or reacting with anger; the only acceptable response is to sit down with eyes averted, in a submissive posture (Mageo 1998). The most frequent causes of beatings are disobedience and embarrassing the family. Disobedience is a lack of submissiveness, an unwillingness to be told what to do. The child must accept the beating without showing any outward signs of anger; the only proper response is humility. It is not unusual for a child to feel anger at parents who administer beatings that the child feels are excessive or unjustified. There is, however, no socially acceptable way of

expressing anger against one's parents (Gerber 1985). There are milder, less disruptive feelings into which a person can channel these intense feelings: *'augata*, laziness; *'o'ono*, suppressed anger; *fiu*, fed up; and *musu*, reluctance. "To the extent they are successful, they may be unaware of how deep their anger is. It is likely, however, that they will continue to experience residues of socially unacceptable rage which they are unable to express, and of which they may not be aware" (Gerber 1975:154). These residues find expression when the individual is away from the social controls that prevent their discharge, controls such as parents and village chiefs, and when the individual is drinking alcohol; anger and rage also can be directed toward social peers or underlings.

While Samoan ideas about feelings and emotions are changing, and now adults can talk about their feelings to some extent, it is still considered bad manners to do so publicly, and children are rarely, if ever, asked about them. I asked my full-Samoan[3] adolescent informants about feelings, especially questions that required how others might feel, such as "Is there something inside a person that makes them a good dancer?" I frequently received a startled expression, a long pause, and usually the answer, "I don't know." When asked how they themselves felt about dancing, some gave a similar response. A Samoan mental health worker explained their reaction as an expected response from someone who is rarely asked their opinion of anything.

> Adolescents don't know how to respond to the question, "how do you feel?" because all of their young lives they've been having someone tell them how they should feel, and now someone is asking them (pers. comm.).

[3] Half-Samoan girls, born on the mainland, had no difficulties discussing their emotions or how they thought others might feel.

Body Image

When asked if she liked herself, a Samoan informant, who was not obese by Samoan standards, replied

> I do like myself; it's just the way my body is. I need to lose some weight. When I dance I think I'm the fattest one in my dance group. I'm always thinking I'm too big. I try picturing myself skinny. I still can't get that. When I'm with my dance group, well, you know how skinny they are, how tall they are? I try comparing me to that person, but I still can't get that picture. I wish I was skinny! (Nu'umau, age 16).

Drawing on data from 186 societies outside of the industrial West including representatives of all major geographical groups and cultural types, Schlegel and Barry (1991) found that adolescents in most non-Western cultures are conscious of their appearance, taking time to bathe frequently and beautify themselves when their parents would rather they were helping with the work. Body dissatisfaction, however, is a recent phenomenon that began in Western culture and spread with globalization (Littlewood 2004, Becker 2004).

Samoans traditionally admire a soft, well-rounded body. Plump is beautiful. The thinness that is admired in American magazines, on the other hand, equates with poverty and illness. Well-padded bodies are healthy bodies. Adolescents, until recently, did not worry much about their weight.

> A Samoan male finds a young woman attractive who has a plump (but not fat) figure with firm, clear dark eyes with long lashes, full lips, good teeth, olive skin and graceful, well-proportioned hands (Holmes 1974:83)

Recent research has found that, as early as school entry, girls in the Western world appear to already live in a culture in which peers and the media transmit the thin ideal in a way that negatively influences the development of body image and self-esteem (Dohnt and Tiggemann, 2006). Media influence is blamed most often for negative body image, body dissatisfaction, and eating disorders (Posavac, et al, 1998; Monro and Huon, 2005; Dohnt and Tiggemann, 2006; Derenne and Beresin, 2006, Tiggeman and McGill, 2004); peer pressure, teasing and family also play a role in negative body image in teens, mainly as factors that increase vulnerability to media influence (Shroff and Thompson, 2006; Gerner and Wilson, 2005; Morrison, et al 2004; Davidson and McCabe, 2006).

The preoccupation and dissatisfaction with personal appearance and body size may appear to be a Western phenomenon, but recent research has shown that the impact of Western ideals of weight and body shape, as presented in the media, has reached beyond Western Europe and the U.S. Body dissatisfaction and associated eating disorders are affecting adolescents and young adults in places as diverse as China (Xie, et al, 2006), indigenous Australia (McCabe, et al, 2005), Croatia (Rukavina and Pokrajac-Bulian, 2006), and Mexico (Toro, et al, 2006). McDowell and Bond (2006) found the influence of Western ideals of weight and body shape, as evidenced in negative body image, in Malaysia and Samoa, while Becker (2004) found that, after the introduction of television to a rural community in Western Fiji, adolescent girls there began

to be preoccupied with weight, including purging behavior to control weight, and body disparagement.

In Samoa, before the advent of television, plump was beautiful, and signified a person's wealth and ability to care for one's family. For the first time, inhabitants of the island began to exhibit disordered eating (Becker, et al, 2002). The influence of television starts young: programs promote the thin ideal to children through animated cartoons in which characters are lean, carrying positive messages about being thin and negative messages about being overweight (Klein and Schiffman, 2005). Current mass media is ubiquitous and powerful, leading to increased body dissatisfaction among both men and women (Derenne and Beresin, 2006).

Adolescents in the West value and internalize the opinions of their peers in judging their appearance, which impacts body satisfaction and likelihood of engaging in disturbed eating (Schroff and Thompson 2006), and teen girls felt that weight affects their friendships (Gerner and Wilson 2005). Girls' views of themselves as unattractive are strongly associated with poor relationships with other girls, while boys are particularly concerned with opposite-sex interactions in terms of body image (Davison and McCabe, 2006).

In a culture like Samoa, in which group membership is a person's most important source of identity, being singled out for reasons that are difficult for the individual to control can cause emotional discomfort.

> I really want to look skinny! Out of all of the dance group girls, I think I'm the fattest one, and being the fattest one isn't nice. You have the biggest dress. You're either put in the back, or the back line (Nu'umau, age 16, in Georgina 2007).

Family also plays a role in creating negative body image and body dissatisfaction (Rukavina and Pokrajac-Bulian, 2006). A few of the younger Samoan mothers encouraged their daughters to diet, and criticized them if they were too heavy. Some adolescent dancers, who were already comparatively thin, were forced to wear girdles for performances. This behavior was criticized privately by older mothers and grandmothers, who felt that the girls who were criticized by their mothers as being fat were a healthy weight, and the girls put into girdles were too thin and looked sickly.

In a culture that once valued plumpness, the effect of Western media, especially television and magazines, has begun to create young women who worry about their weight and feel negatively about themselves because of their desire to meet impossible standards imposed from the outside.

Adolescent Egocentrism

The theory of adolescent egocentrism[4] refers to a lack of differentiation between the thoughts and perceptions of adolescents and those they perceive for others around them. This egocentrism gives rise to two mental constructs, the *imaginary audience* and the *personal fable* (Elkind 1967).

Imaginary (and Real) Audience

> Imaginary audience is the adolescent phenomenon of thinking that people are always looking at you and everybody is concerned with you and with what you are doing. (Psychologist Masha Goldstein, *in* Georgina 2007)

[4] This psychological concept is not to be confused with social egocentrism that refers to the focus on persons as actors in an individualistic society.

The concept of *imaginary audience* was first named and described by David Elkind (1967). Adolescents can think about what others might be thinking, but, because they are preoccupied with themselves due to the physiological changes they are undergoing, they assume that everyone is as concerned with their appearance and behavior as they are.

> The adolescent is continually constructing, or reacting to, an *imaginary audience.* It is an audience because the adolescent believes that he will be the focus of attention; and it is imaginary because, in actual social situations, this is not usually the case (unless he contrives to make it so) (Elkind 1967:1030).

Imaginary audience is an outgrowth of adolescent egocentrism. While each stage of life has its own form of egocentrism, adolescent egocentrism produces distorted perceptions exemplified in the imaginary audience. Adolescents' desire for privacy and reluctance to expose themselves is a reaction to "the feeling of being under the constant critical scrutiny of other people" (Elkind 1967:1030).

There is a twist to the concept of imaginary audience in Samoa. In Samoan culture, especially before the adoption of Western-style houses, the audience was a reality: the traditional Samoan *fale* had no walls. People were always watching each other and were very concerned with others' appearance but especially their behavior; this constant critical scrutiny is more a matter of social control than self-conscious concerns (Shore 1982). Mead (2001) wrote that a little girl might try to hide to get a moment's peace, but often an older sibling or cousin would find her and assign her chores or tasks to do.

> So closely is the daily life bound up with this universal 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 (Mead 2001:30-31)

The question could be: do teenagers in traditional Samoan villages, who grow up in houses with no walls, experience the adolescent egocentric phenomenon of imaginary audience, or experience it in the same way as Western teens? For Samoan adolescents, the audience is not completely imaginary.

> [A]ll of an individual's acts are public property… there is a very general cognizance on the part of the whole village of the activity of every single inhabitant. (Mead 2001:88)

In more traditional villages in Samoa, public knowledge of an individual's actions is necessary for the attribution of responsibility for them; therefore,

> it is not surprising that village life is organized in Samoa to keep behavior as public as possible…A striking feature of the Samoan village is the Samoan *fale* or house which has no walls and, except for blinds which may be lowered in case of rain or wind or strong sunlight, is open to public view. Life in such a *fale* is, even by communal standards of most Polynesian societies, strikingly public (Shore 1982:179)

Most of the houses on Tutuila and in the villages along the government roads on Tutuila and Upolu, Western Samoa, are Western-style, with walls. During the day, the windows and doors are kept open, presumably to catch the breeze, but also making most activities within the house visible to other villagers and passers-by. Any activity conducted outside of the house is still under constant scrutiny.

While the Samoan girls I spoke with discussed being observed and judged in terms of their dance performance, it was clear that many of them had internalized the real audience of family members and other adults, perhaps conflating it with an imaginary audience. Some could not distinguish between the two, and could not express exactly who was judging them, although the voice of judgment was clear.

> *So who is it that's comparing you?*
>
> I don't know...(long pause).
>
> *What do you think people say when they're comparing you to other dancers?*
>
> What do people say? Well, sometimes they say, oh, you gotta be like *her*, you gotta try better like *her* (Lydia, age 12).

The Samoan adolescent's characteristic imaginary audience may be exacerbated by an actual audience, the inner thoughts of whom are recognized to be present but cannot be read or known; "One cannot know what is in another's depths" (Gerber 1985:133).

For Western adolescents, egocentrism, including imaginary audience, is overcome through the gradual differentiation between the teen's own perceptions and the thoughts of others, and through a gradual integration of the feelings of others with his or her own emotions

(Elkind 1967). I suggest that the form of imaginary audience peculiar to sociocentric-tending societies does not always dissipate as the child matures, but often continues beyond it. "The unsaid becomes the obsession of the system that at first neglects it," and tendencies to hide or ignore the inner, subjective self cause people to generate "an intense and even obsessive relation to inner life" (Mageo 1998:7); the notion that one is unable to know or understand another person's thoughts and feelings (and therefore hear them expressed) would inhibit the adolescent's ability to weight them against his or her own thoughts and thereby modify his or her inner perceptions to better match those of the external world.

Wikan (1990) found in Bali, another sociocentric-tending society, an almost obsessive preoccupation with the inner thoughts and feelings of others, which are rarely discussed and therefore can't be known. A fear of the malevolence of others acted out through witchcraft, is one symptom of this preoccupation.

Perhaps in a society like Samoa, where the behavior of individuals is under constant observation and scrutiny, the imaginary audience of adolescent egocentrism, if present, is conflated with or exacerbated by the actual audience of village social life. In traditional Samoan society, the inner life is ignored and downplayed; I suggest that adolescent imaginary audience is present but not discussed, and augmented by an actual audience that constantly observes individuals throughout their lifespan.

Personal Fable

Adolescent egocentrism also produces the *personal fable*, a mental construct in which adolescents feel they are special and unique, and that no one else in the world is feeling the same special and unique feelings they are experiencing.

> This belief in personal uniqueness becomes a conviction that he will not die, that death will happen to others but not to him. This complex of beliefs in the uniqueness of his feelings and of his immortality might be called a *personal fable*, a story which he tells himself and which is not true (Elkind 1967:1031).

This sense of uniqueness is theorized to be part of the process of individuation and identity formation, particularly because adolescents are determining who they are, where they fit in the world, and what they will do with their lives (cf. Vartanian 2000). This seems plausible in an egocentric-tending society, but if this is a universal developmental pattern, how would it play out in sociocentric societies, where the emphasis is not on the individual, and identity is derived from relatedness and group affiliation?

Samoan teens also have limited opportunities to express uniqueness. Superiority in most activities is not encouraged; the ideal is to be as good as everyone else in the group, but not better. In Samoa, standing out from the crowd, or thinking you're better than everyone and therefore unique, is considered "showing off," and bad behavior. This idea is reinforced often; Korinna Chamberlin, choreographer of the commercial dance group *Taupou Manaia*, discouraged feelings of superiority in any of her students.

> Because you don't want to practice, that's why we're not together. You guys really need to come more often if you want to be together. You only come once in a blue moon and expect to dance the number. Now is that fair for everybody that's been coming every day? No. And I don't want you to have the attitude that you're good already. Nobody is

> good. None of you is even up there. You're all here to learn, you're all the same. OK? So don't think, 'Oh, I know that number already. I don't need to go because I'm good already.' No. (Georgina 2007).

Often parents will reinforce the idea.

> Sometimes I try to be better than everyone but that's not right. My dad said there's always someone better than me (Emily, age 12).

During interviews with Samoan teens, I found little evidence of personal fable, or of fantasies about being particularly special or unique. If they had such thoughts or fantasies, it is very unlikely they would have shared them with me or any other adult. Things that made them feel special were embedded in culturally sanctioned conduct; many expressed a desire to be good, to avoid peer pressure, and to obey their parents, behaviors they felt made them different from some of their friends.

> Well, sometimes my friends are just really smart, so I want to be just like them, because they're so cool, or happy all the time and stuff, so I want to be just like them. But sometimes if they're acting bad, then I try to stand out and be the good girl. It's very hard to do that, but I try... Because if you're going to follow their bad examples, it's like saying, if they're going to jump off a cliff, you're going to follow them. If you don't follow somebody else, be a blue balloon in a bunch of yellow balloons (Ko'olina, age 13).

> [The other kids] tell me to do this and this, but [sometimes] what they are trying to send me to do, I think is not good for them and especially for me, because I want to be a good girl.
>
> *What does it mean to be a "good girl"?*
>
> To keep the Ten Commandments, follow the rules, and obey your parents (Adrian, age 12).

> *When you're with your friends, do you ever do anything different from them?*
>
> I have friends who drink and smoke, but when they're drinking, I'll just have a soda. I don't join them because my parents forbid me to drink or smoke (Villie, age 20).

If Samoan teens have feelings of being special and unique, they are either not consciously aware of them or are unwilling to express them aloud. Those feelings would not be rewarded in Samoan society.

Although Erikson's developmental stages of identity formation would not have been relevant to Samoan teens during Mead's day, they are applicable today; many Samoan teens experience the crises of identity Erikson described for Western teens, in addition to the problems that arise from the clash of Western culture with traditional Samoan values and ideas. While this clash has been a stormy sea of conflict and anxiety for some Samoan teens, others are able to navigate through this tempest, combining elements of both Samoan and Western conceptions of self, a process discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Dance

This dissertation began with three questions. In the previous chapter, we addressed the applicability of Erikson's adolescent identity formation in American Samoa. In this chapter, we will examine the remaining two: 1) what role could traditional Samoan dance play in adolescent identity formation that merges two opposing cultural construals of self? And 2) can dance provide a venue for semiotic self representations? In this chapter, we'll look at the current forms of traditional Samoan dance as performed at public celebrations, and trace their roots back to earlier forms. First, however, we'll examine the role of dance in Samoan society.

Role of Dance

Traditional dance is one of the most beloved of Samoan art forms. It has changed and adapted through time, evolving and adopting elements from other Polynesian cultures and changing to appeal to Western audiences. While the practice of making *siapo* (barkcloth), mat weaving and woodcarving have diminished on American Samoa, dance is alive and well, and dance groups compete successfully with groups from Western Samoa. While all of these practices represent salient elements of Samoan culture, the survival of dance attests to its social utility. In addition to being a vessel of tradition and possibly an effective tourist attraction—cruise ships today, docking at Pago Pago, are treated to a dance performance—it also functions as a possible venue for exhibition, as reinforcement of cultural patterns, and for individual recognition and self expression for Samoan adolescents.

Showing off

Western individualism encourages people to succeed, and American culture in particular valorizes independence and non-conformity. In Samoa, however, standing out from the crowd is considered “showing off,” and bad behavior. A person must do as well as his or her equals, but not better. There are two main culturally sanctioned opportunities for showing off: traditional exchange ceremonies (*fa’alavelave*) and traditional dance.

Fa’alavelave take place as a part of church dedications, weddings between important families, funerals of chiefs, and other significant occasions. They involve the exchange of fine mats (usually purchased in western Samoa), food, bolts of fabric, and money. As each item is brought in, it is announced along with the name of the family that is giving it. Each family gains prestige based on the value of the item or items given. A *fa’alavelave* for the dedication of a new church building in Utulei, for example, took place over the course of three nights, and included countless fine mats, cans of corned beef, fabric, and the highlight of the last evening: three very large, cooked pigs. In an otherwise quiet recitation of items and family names, a large round of applause and cheering accompanied the announcement of the name of the family that donated the pigs.

Fa’lavelave can be both a source of prestige and a hardship for families who feel compelled to donate toward the extended family’s gifts. An older widow I worked with expressed great dismay after finding out that she personally would be required to donate about $600 toward a wedding in the family. It was probably about three weeks’ pay. Tradition and a desire to support the family and avoid embarrassment compelled her to make the donation, in spite of the hardship.

Showing off through dance is more frequent and perhaps less stressful than *fa’alavelave*.

> In more egocentric societies, people say everyone should stand on their own two feet. In Samoa, people say that everyone should stand at their post. What this means is that they should play their established role in the hierarchy. This phrase refers to a *fale*, a Samoan house, where the chiefs would sit at posts for a meeting. Their post represented their role, their established place, in the village (Anthropologist Jeannette Mageo *in* Georgina 2007).

Mead found in Samoa an attitude “definitely hostile to the development of individuality or the exercise of peculiar talents” (1928:485).

> Skill in house building means wealth and status…And with this goes the continual demand that he should not be too efficient, too outstanding, too precocious. He must never excel his fellows by more than a little. He must neither arouse their hatred nor the disapproval of his elders who are far readier to encourage and excuse the laggard than to condone precocity (Mead 2001:26).

Samoans compare one another to crabs in a bucket; those who excel or rise above the rest are quickly pulled down. The precocious child is held back with “a feeling of rigid intolerance toward precocity, youthful innovators, or short cuts to prestige. All of these crimes were summed up in the expression “*tautala lai titi*,” (talking above one’s age, or, less importantly, one’s status)” (Mead 1928:485).

Mead found an exception to this rule in dance, where a child could find an outlet for individual expression; those who were better dancers were thrust forward and awarded more opportunities to practice their unique style (Mead 2001). She saw this as contrary to the social order, and an outlet for frustrated desires to show off. Using dance, parents and other adult relatives may also show off vicariously through their children.

> On the dance floor the dreaded accusation "You are presuming above your age," is never heard…The relatives crow with delight over a precocity for which they would hide their heads in shame were it displayed in any other sphere…The parents and relatives distribute generous praise by way of emphasizing their children's superiority over the children of their neighbors or their visitors (Mead 2001:81-82).

Children in Samoa are socialized to identify with their age group in a way that encourages conformity and minimizes individual recognition (Mageo 1991a, 1998). The good child doesn't act on his or her initiative, and does not achieve above his or her level of the social hierarchy, or above others within that level. However, children take issue with the prohibition on individual recognition, and behave in ways designed to attract attention (Mageo 1991a:413). Mead thought that dance provided children with the opportunity to express individuality in a socially sanctioned venue.

> The significance of the dance in the education and socialization of Samoan children is two-fold. In the first place it effectively offsets the rigorous subordination in which children are habitually kept. Here the admonitions of the elders change from "Sit down

> and keep still!" to "Stand up and dance!" The children are actually the centre of the group instead of its barely tolerated fringes (Mead 2001:82).

Today, in formal dance groups, children are still encouraged to excel, but not in an individualistic way unless they are dancing the role of the *taupou*. They are expected to bring honor to their family by being the very best and performing the dance moves with accuracy, grace, and poise.

> Many girls are forced into dancing by their mothers, for the prestige. This is a very harsh culture. It's all about appearances, what's on the surface. The expectations are a tremendous burden (Samoan mental health worker, Pers. Comm.).

In Samoan culture, children work and act in service of their parents and other adults. This can also be extended to serving the parents' competitive proclivities. Although outsiders might find it shocking, it is not unusual to learn that, after a public performance, the child is sometimes beaten by her mother if the child's dancing did not meet the mother's expectations, if the child made an obvious mistake, or if another child outperformed her.

In formal dances, the dance is considered the most beautiful when all dancers move as one. The girl representing the *taupou*, traditionally the chief's daughter, is the only soloist, in a special dance called the *taualuga*. She is encouraged to excel in both style and poise. The other dancers support her, but don't outshine her.

The only time when standing out is acceptable is in dance competitions, and even these are group-oriented rather than individual. Samoan teens must represent their family well.

Although the girls I spoke with are not usually encouraged to stand out, in dance they are strongly pressured to excel. Many felt the sting of negative comparisons that usually came from an adult relative. Parents compete with each other to have the child who is the best dancer.

> *When you're dancing, do you ever feel like you're being compared to the other dancers?*
>
> Sometimes, yeah.
>
> *How does that make you feel?*
>
> Sometimes I just try to ignore it, but sometimes, it kinda, y'know, yeah, it gets to me.
>
> *Why do you feel like it gets to you?*
>
> I don't know. Sometimes when…I don't know, like when other girls are better than me, then I kind of, you know, feel different and everything (Lydia, age 12).

> I know from experience when you're sitting in a crowd, people are always thinking, "watch that person, look at what she's doing." So you know everybody's got to be comparing you. But it's another thing you've got to keep out of your head. It's all about focus.
>
> *How does that make you feel, when people compare you?*
>
> You get used to it, but at first it drives you crazy. But you have to get used to it, otherwise it'll throw you off (Kimberly, age 16).

The girls obtain little personal satisfaction from this kind of individual display when it seems to them that the primary benefit is to the adult and not to the dancer, especially when they are forced to compete with girls who are younger and therefore lower on the social hierarchy.

> When you look at the younger girls, and [adults say], "do it like her, watch, watch!" You look at her, she's doing the moves (Leslie makes an angry face, scratches her cheek, makes a gesture like punching) (Leslie, age 16).

While dance may be one of only a few occasions when children are encouraged to excel (school work being another), the girls are compelled to do so as another act of service to their parents and family.

Reinforcement of cultural patterns

Shore (1982), in his discussion of social contexts and dance styles, sees dance as not simply a form of antistructure and a means of expressing frustrated desires to show off, but as having a role in reinforcing certain distinctive cultural patterns, particularly the behavioral styles appropriate for specific contexts.

> Instead of an outlet for a child's unintegrated impulses and feelings…the dance in Samoa may be profitably understood as an important arena where those feelings and impulses are structured and where appropriation of style to context is learned and reinforced (Shore 1982:258).

On the dance floor, epitomized during the *taupou*'s dance called the *taualuga*, the chief's daughter dances gracefully while the clowns (traditionally the talking chiefs or *tulafale*) perform "expressive, uninhibited, and relatively unconstrained" dances on the periphery (Shore

1982:258). The dichotomy between *siva* (graceful, proper dances) and *'aiuli* (clowning), and between center and periphery, are distinctions that, according to Shore, have important associations with social control. The more wild and uncontrolled the periphery, the more graceful and ordered the center appears by contrast. The dance floor becomes a microcosm of the village layout, with civilization, control and power at the center.

Shore (1982:141) described the Samoan self as a "many-faceted gem," with each facet as a social face, role or behavior activated at the appropriate time; an important lesson of childhood is the behavior appropriate for each context and situation (Mead 2001:82). Traditional Samoan dance is not simply a venue for self expression, but is a signifying system of cultural construals of self—the place to learn or be reminded of which face to put forward in a given situation.

Carnivale, Mana, and the Logic of Dreams

Young women and girls traditionally have low status and power in Samoa. As young people, they must be unprotestingly obedient to those older than them. Both males and females alike harbor desires to dominate, desires that are funneled into socially acceptable forms; men can aspire and work toward *matai* titles, while women can rule over the household. Teenage girls are often in charge of the household, and can give orders to their younger siblings (Mageo 1991a), but that is usually the limit of their power. Dance provides them with the means to achieve personal satisfaction, and perhaps the occasional opportunity to be "one up" and feel a little more powerful.

Traditional Samoan dance is a reflection of the society that creates and performs it, and of the role of the individuals who participate in the dance and the society. The changing forms of dance reflect the changing roles of individuals, and also the changing definitions of self within

that society. The pattern of ideals and norms valued within Samoan culture are expressed in village layout (Lehman and Herdrich 2002), the arrangement of the dance floor (Shore 1982), and the role of the individual within the social hierarchy (Shore 1982, Mageo 1998).

Samoan dance is a group activity that stresses conformity and downplays individuality. With the exception of the *taualuga*, the formal dance that showcases the grace of the *taupou*, dances are performed in synchrony; dances are considered the most beautiful when all performers move as one. While men and women often perform different movements during the same dance, the men's and women's movements are synchronized. In Samoan society, the ideal Samoan also performs (behaves) synchronously with other members of the group, and derives his or her sense of self from the group. One must *teu le va*, decorate the space between oneself and others, in order to create harmony between persons and within the community. Conformity in dance and in social life are valued and admired.

As society shapes the individual into its own image, so, too, the body becomes an image of society, the canvas upon which cultural elements are worked out and exhibited (Douglas 1970). As an art form specifically expressed through the body, dance is a performative expression of social roles and selfhood. Dance is essentially about the body.

> Dance is an art performed by individuals or groups of human beings, in which the human body is the instrument and movement is the medium. The movement is stylized, and the entire dance work is characterized by form and structure (Kraus 1966:13).

Certain cultural themes are expressed through rites of bodily manipulation (Douglas 1970). The ways in which the body is viewed and treated in society reflect the rules and values

inscribed in the social order. In Douglas' view, the social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived. Body control, she writes, is an expression of social control. The more socially constrained a society, the more emphasis is given to bodily constraint.

> [The] social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived. The physical experience of the body, always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society. There is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experience [physical and social] so that each reinforces the categories of the other. As a result of this interaction the body itself is a highly restricted medium of expression (Douglas 1970:65).

The control of bodies on the dance floor reflects Samoan views of society and the roles of individuals within it: their place in the social hierarchy, based on rank, age, family status, gender, and other factors.

As stated earlier, Samoan villages traditionally were laid out in a circle; the physical or virtual center of the village was the *mata*, the "eye," which was the physical center of the *malae*, the green space at the center of the village around which the chief's guest houses were built. The *mata* is the locus of power and control; effectiveness and intensity of power and control diminish with distance from this center. The point-field system described by Lehman and Herdrich (2002) that places power and control at the center, diminishing with distance, is tied to the concepts of *mana* and *tapu*.

Two kinds of power existed traditionally in Polynesia, referred to in Samoa as *mana* and *pule*. *Mana* is chiefly power, held by the high chiefs (*ali'i*) and expressed through images of

fecundity, fertility and potency, a power tied to the powers of the gods; "either directly or indirectly, *mana* is linked to generative potency, to the sources of organic creation" (Shore 1989:138); "a …chief is…considered to be able through his relations with his ancestors and gods to control natural fertility, health, and economic conditions" (Firth 1939:490). *Pule* is political power, held by the *tulafale*, the orators who speak for the high chiefs.

This power, coming as it does from the gods or spirits, can be dangerous, and therefore must be bound or contained (Georgina 2000). *Mana* is linked with the concepts of *tapu* and *noa*, "alternative conditions of *mana*" (Shore 1989:148). *Tapu* is associated with order, purity, containment and perfection of form. *Noa* is associated with chaos, freedom, unconstraint, and lack of form. "[*Noa*] suggests action that is unguided, without purpose or destination" (Shore 1989:150), such as everyday life, where things happen informally, casually, and haphazardly. In the village center, the *mata* of the *malae*, *tapu* is strongest (especially on ceremonial occasions) and *mana* is bound by it into the service of humans. Far from the center, in the bush, *tapu* is weakest and *noa* prevails. In the bush, *mana* is unbound, evidenced by the fertile lushness and wildness of the jungle. *Tapu*, however, has a binding effect on *mana*. "To be *tapu* was to be empowered, but it was also to be immobilized—literally and figuratively tied up" (Shore 1989:154). The most sacred people, those with the most *mana*, exhibit the most stasis, particularly high chiefs and *taupou*s. I suggest that, following the Western psychologist C.G. Jung (1980 [1959]), Samoan villages can be interpreted as mandalas, circular symbols of the psyche. The eye, or *mata,* at center of the *malae,* represents a kind of central point within the psyche, to which everything is related, by which everything is arranged, and which is itself a source of energy. According to Jung, the energy of the center is a kind of compulsion toward

wholeness. The center is not the ego, but the self: this central, organizing point, and everything peripheral to it belongs to the self, the paired opposites that make up the totality (1980 [1959]).

Mana and *pule* were held not only by *ali'i* and *tulafale*; in pre-contact Samoa, brothers held political power (*pule*) while sisters held sacred power (*mana*) (Mageo 1998:137). A brother could inherit a *matai* (chiefly) title and therefore have active, political power; the sister held sacred power to curse her brother should he displease her. A female informant told me that she was able to bring her errant brother back in line by threatening to curse him, using her sisterly *mana*; the worst and most common curse being sterility—"I threatened to curse him so that he would have no children," she said—although it was believed that illness could also be caused by a sisterly curse. The sister's *mana* is equated with the control of fertility. In pre-contact Samoa, this provided a balance of power between sisters and brothers: the sister's *mana* came from the gods, *aitu*, while the brother's *pule* had human and social origins. Both a sister and an *aitu* could use their *mana* to curse a person with sterility or bring sickness upon (or possess, in the case of the spirits of deceased persons) a person who displeased them. Sisters were sacred, the exemplification of femaleness; a woman remained a sister until she married, at which time she lost her sacred status by becoming sexually active and therefore a source of fertility that needed to be externally controlled. A high-ranking sister, the village *taupou* being the most prominent, was to remain a virgin until her marriage, usually to an equally high or higher ranking chief or chief's son, her imposed virginity a means of binding and controlling her *mana*.

> The association of the honored status of woman-as-sister in western Polynesia with artificial restriction of reproduction…constitutes a social and cosmological redirection of

her fertility and an implicit recognition of its power and potential danger (Shore 1989:162).

The concepts of *mana*, *tapu* and *pule* are embodied and performed on the dance floor. Gracefulness, control, and restriction of movement are equated with the dignity and high status of contained *mana*, while movement is associated with lower status and a relative lack of *mana* (Shore 1982). In western Polynesian dance, the torso is upright, shoulders are stationary, and the emphasis is on hand and arm motifs. Within these conventions, movements vary with gender. Men's movements are often more energetic while women's are more graceful (Kaeppler 1998).

In Samoan dance, the women's dances are significantly more subdued (controlled) than the men's. Men's dances are boisterous and energetic, and standing dances, such as the *'ailao*, often involve the feet leaving the floor or at least the use of vertical as well as horizontal space. Women's feet rarely leave the floor, with limited use of vertical space (mainly stooping and standing). The *taupou*, during the *taualuga*, does not lift her feet, even when she moves horizontally across the dance plane; her feet shuffle across the floor. The *taupou* occupies the center of the dance floor, the place of greatest control and power, with her retinue of supporters dancing around her or sitting behind her, swaying with the music and clapping, humming or singing. Clowns perform on the periphery.

The *taualuga* epitomizes the artistic expression of the social order (Shore 1982:259). It is not surprising then, that the village *taupou*, an adolescent or young adult and the most sacred sister, dances in place of the *ali'i* (high chief) during the *taualuga*;[5] both hold sacred power, *mana.* The *tulafale* (talking chief) often performs in the clown role ('*aiuli*), dancing wildly in

[5] A high-status chief, his son, *manaia*, or daughter, *taupou*, can dance the *taualuga*, but today it is mostly adolescent girls who dance this role.

counterpoint to the *taupou*'s dignity and grace, and throwing himself on the ground in front of her (an expression of subservience and respect), for her to place her foot on his back, symbolic of the control of *mana* over *pule*, and order over chaos.

During the *taualuga*, it is only the clown who energetically uses the vertical as well as the horizontal plane.[6] He plays the fool—representing lack of control—to the *taupou*'s regality, representing dignity, power, control and the social order. The clown is always in his place, however, either on the periphery where the wild things are, or under the foot of the *taupou*. Clowns are liminal beings with deliberately uninhibited, contradictory and conflicting characteristics and behavior. In Samoan comic theater, called *Faleaitu*, or "spirit house," the performers are absolved of any transgressions because they are understood to be like *aitu*, "spirits," and their liminality places them in a different category from ordinary people (Shore 1978), empowering their discourse on socially untouchable topics.

> [A] clown is concerned always with something which is not quite proper; with something embarrassing, astonishing, shocking, but not too much so. This fact appears to be a constant at all times and in all places. A clown holds the licentious thing in his hands, psychologically speaking; he is objective at the same time that he has a most intimate and thoroughgoing relationship with the tabooed thing (Charles 1945:32)

Comic theater allows the expression of hostile, angry or frustrated feelings toward people and institutions that normally cannot be expressed, and is a safe and institutionalized venue for breaking respect restrictions (Mageo 1996b; Shore 1978; Sinavaiana 1992a). Often, the star of

[6] The *taupou* stoops and stands, but in a slow, graceful posture, in contrast to the clown's jumping, falling and rolling.

the clown show is a male transvestite, a liminal figure who is (and yet is not) a "girl," that is, having sister status—with all the roles and behaviors that go with being a sister, except that they are sexually active (usually ascribed to "wives"). In old Samoa, girls (who are also sisters) could flirt and flaunt, and led the festivities and the bawdy dancing of the joking nights. Missionary ideas changed and idealized the role of girls. Christian girls came to sustain their family honor through a demeanor that was, in many respects, passive and unassertive. This created a conflict between a Samoan-Christian conscience that demanded consistent dignity and restraint and a more assertive and sexual dimension of their association with showing off and luring behaviors, which had at one time been the rule at entertainments. Girls obtained privileged status and no longer lead the bawdy dancing. This fell to transvestites (Mageo 1998; Mageo 1996a; Mageo 1992).

Comedies publicly express collective concerns in a manner not possible in any other traditional medium. Tensions inherent in hierarchical relations can be aired publicly through clowning, and grievances are thereby conveyed in a non-threatening manner to authority figures. These tensions are traditionally denied direct expression and resolution by a powerful cultural sanction prescribing deference to authority. Social criticism therefore must seek expression elsewhere, and it finds that expression in satire and comedy, cloaking protest with humor (Sinavaiana 1992a; Sinavaiana 1992b). Performing to entertain, diffuse tension, provide catharsis, and criticize through satire, parody or reversing norms, clowns communicate physical, moral and spiritual ideals (Shore 1978). Ritual clowns are an integral part of formal dance, often as a kind of master of ceremonies, while secular clowns are spontaneous and can be any individual (Hereniko 1999). I observed both types of clowning at the Festival of Samoan Arts in

Fagotogo in 2003.[7] Spontaneous clowning by audience members erupted during an extended intermission; ritual clowns performed on the periphery during the *taualuga*. Polynesian clowns traditionally represented the spirits, and through that representation, clowns are granted license to invert the social order and ridicule and mock chiefs (Hereniko 1999; Shore 1972); clowns share some of the spirits' unbound *mana*.

Aitu, spirits, are uncontrolled and outside of the social hierarchy; Samoans do not wander into the woods alone for fear of being attacked or possessed by the *aitu* who live there. Stair (1897) mentions that *aitu* are thought to inhabit or frequent certain meadows, trees, bushes or rock formations; Stair himself reports a series unpleasant encounters that the locals attributed to mischievous spirits. An informant told me that, when he was a child, there was a specific area along the shortcut path he and his friends took to get home from school that was thought to be the special place for an *aitu*; they would run fast along this part of the path because every time they used it, the *aitu* would throw stones at them. My first night on Tutuila, I stayed at the Rainmaker Hotel in Utulei, once a famous Polynesian architectural beauty but now falling into decay. The phone in my room rang several times over the course of the night, but there was never anyone on the other end, and no one knew I was staying there that night. The following day, I was told by a prominent Samoan that the hotel is haunted; "It was probably just the *aitu* saying hello," he said. The Samoan word *aitu*, according to Pratt, translates as "a spirit" or "a god." With the adoption of Christianity, the old Samoan gods were relegated to the world of ghosts and nature spirits, *aitu* (Mageo 1998, Holmes 1974), so an *aitu* could be either; as gods, *aitu* have *mana*, which can be dangerous when uncontrolled. The association of clowns with spirits is an assignment of both to a liminality that places them beyond the social order, allowing

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[7] These clowns appear in the documentary video, *Siva! The Semiotics of Selfhood in Samoan Dance.*

both to challenge status and social norms and to behave in ways that are not otherwise permissible. This association also gives clowns *mana* that is not restricted by *tapu*.

Semiotics of Self: Making New Meanings

The Samoan teens I interviewed were subtly reinventing Samoan dance and rewriting their own self narratives in ways that combined both Samoan and Western conceptions of self. The individuality they are induced to repress seeks an outlet. For these girls, justaposed between two worlds and two conflicting ideas of selfhood, and desiring to be a part of both, the answer is to merge them through invention. Not all of the girls inserted elements of individuality into their dance moves, but those who did—mainly the younger ones—said they did it for just that reason.

> *While you're dancing, do you ever try to do something just a little bit different, even though you're not supposed to?*
>
> Sometimes I try to add some fancier moves, but I know that sometimes I might get in trouble so I try not to.
>
> *What sorts of things do you try to do?*
>
> I don't know, just like, doing a little bit more of the fancier things, like, if there's a nice move, I'll try to make it more … prettier.
>
> *Why do you do that?*
>
> Mainly just to be different sometimes. (Lydia, age 12)

Kristeva (1986) wrote that new stories about the self originate in and are invented through a confrontation between hegemony and the disordered contradictions of unthinkable

unconscious content that has been repressed; in the Samoan case, what parents demand versus what girls desire. The process of invention inevitably challenges the existing signifying systems (Parsons 2002), and, as we will see, dance itself as a signifying system is subtly changing. The invention of semiotic self-representations as individualized dance movements is a process of making new meanings and creating new discourses on self. Through their usually surreptitious nonconformity, girls' kinesic expressions are a challenge to the text of conformity and playing one's proper role in the hierarchy. These girls are formulating and reformulating their sense of identity and subjectivity, writing a new story of being young and both Samoan and American. These new stories about being female and an adolescent today, as we will see in a moment, and may be contributing to a gradual re-ordering of girls' and women's roles.

PARODY AND POETIC DISCOURSE

The adolescent girls' surreptitious expressions of individuality in Samoan dance function similarly to Kristeva's (1980) carnival and poetic discourse. *Faleaitu* is parody, rather than carnival. Parody, according to Kristeva, is the law (social norms, order, authority) anticipating (and creating) its own transgression, and, while important as catharsis and in maintaining balance, is neither subversive nor threatening to the law (the *Faleaitu* is socially sanctioned; it would not be permitted if it were threatening to the social order). Kristeva writes that carnival and poetic discourse are subversive, challenging most social norms, including God, order, social law, and authority. Carnival, as a form of poetic discourse, is a different, subtle, but more serious challenge; not a part of the law or a reversal of it, it transgresses social codes.

> By adopting a dream logic, [poetic discourse] transgresses rules of linguistic code and social morality as well...In fact, this "transgression" of linguistic, logical, and social

> codes within the carnivalesque only exists and succeeds, of course, because it accepts another law...We should particularly emphasize this specificity of dialog as transgression giving itself a law so as to...distinguish it from...parodic literature...[which] operates according to a principle of law anticipating its own transgression (Kristeva 1980:70-71; emphasis in original).

Clowning as parody functions to maintain balance within a society, and thereby serves that society. It is "the law anticipating its own transgression" in order to maintain that balance and provide stasis. Carnival as Kristeva interprets it, on the other hand, does the opposite: it upsets the balance, breaks the rules in unexpected ways, and promotes social change.

Poetic logic, which is analogous to the logic of dreams, prevails in carnivalesque and poetic discourse; symbolic relationships and analogy take precedence. While the language of carnival is poetic speech, that of dance is gesture. By adopting a dream logic, both transgress the rules: the former, of language; the latter of behavioral codes and social mores. Poetic/dream logic breaks through social censorship in the same way the dream slips past the censor. This dream logic of gesture is a kind of intertextuality, the transposition of one or more systems of signs into another (Kristeva 1980:15). Kristeva sees the novel, a specific signifying system, as the result of the redistribution of several different sign systems. In this sense, the kinesic signs are intertextual, embodying the expression of the repressed but somewhat preconscious self, as both a conscious (symbolic) act and an unconscious (semiotic) impulse.

I suggest it also represents the reclaiming of *mana*, in particular women's sacred power —as a symbol—that had been devalued and stripped away. The adoption of missionary ideals and modernization changed the status of women's power. My informant said that, although she

did not believe in its efficacy, she threatened to curse her brother anyway; what mattered to her was that her brother feared her curse. Shore (1982) has noted that the word *pule* has replaced *mana* almost completely, and the word *mana* is used almost exclusively in relation to God. "The word *pule* has become the word for power in general, and in fact covers the distinction between sacred and secular power once common in Samoa" (Shore 1982:248). Conducting the *poula*, or "joking night," for visiting parties was once a duty of the women of the village, who led the dancing but also the clowning. The power behind clowns came from their association with spirits, and spirits were the ultimate source of *mana*. Joking nights were gradually eliminated, their joking aspect transformed into comedy sketches performed by men or male transvestites (Sinavaiana 1992; also see Mageo 1992, 1996), although on informal occasions, at weddings, for example, the older women adopt the role of secular clown in an impromptu manner (Hereniko 1999). This effectively disconnected women from the source of the spiritual *mana* attributed to them, which I suggest symbolized the stripping from them much of their social power.

Recently, an increasing number of girls and women are performing as the dance clowns who lead dance and vocal groups during performances at special occasions such as Flag Day. Perhaps this also is a sign of this challenge to male and female roles. Korina Chamberlin, choreographer of *Taupou Manaia Dance Productions*, created a dance for her all-girls dance group that paid tribute to the Samoan clown. It was the only performance that departed from the dancers' usual grace and dignity, and may be a reflection of the changes taking place in dance and in Samoan ideas of selfhood. Some of the girls said they found this departure from their usual dignity uncomfortable at first.

> Sometimes I feel embarrassed when we do funny dances, like the one we were learning today. I felt embarrassed and then when I looked at this other girl, she was doing it very funny and I kept laughing and I tried to act like her, to be funny. Sometimes I like being funny (Emily, age 12).

Samoan Dances

In pre-contact Samoa, dances were performed when visitors arrived from another village, and after ceremonies such as the marriages of chiefs. They were divided into day dances, *ao siva*, and night dances, *poula*. Day dances were synchronized, graceful and dignified. They typically followed the ceremonies of the day. Turner (1884) compared the day dances to "dress-balls of other countries." Stair describes the *ao siva* as "much less objectionable than the *po-ula*. This dance was practiced exclusively by the higher ranks, and, unlike most of the other dances, consisted of a variety of graceful movements and gestures" (1897:134).

Night dances took place after ceremonies, to provided entertainment for the visitors from other villages. Night dances, especially their finale, attracted negative attention from the missionaries, who found them too lascivious and fought to eradicate them. "[T]hey appear at last more like a lot of demons let loose from below," wrote Churchward (1887).

The *poula* began with the singing of the spirit song, which announced the beginning of the performance. The singing and dancing was accompanied by the beating of mats rolled around bamboo and beaten either with the fingers or with sticks. The first half of the evening's entertainment, all done by torchlight, consisted of stately dances performed sitting or standing.

Sitting dances, led by the village princess or taupou, began the program. According to Kramer, about ten individuals sat in a line, singing. The taupou approached from another house,

and sat between them with an even number of dancers on either side of her. When the singing stopped, the mat beating, called *ta le siva*, started, accompanied by hand movements but never singing. This dance was usually short, and was followed by a synchronized slap dance, accompanied by clapping. The sitting dances continued until a chief rose up and said, "*taualuga, tu i luga*" announcing the beginning of the standing dances.

The standing dances culminate in the chiefs' dance. Although described but unnamed by Stair (1884), this concluding dance was probably the *taualuga* ("top of the house"), or a dance ancestral to it. The *taualuga* is described by Moyle as "a standing dance focused on an individual of high rank, which typically ended an evening's performance" (Moyle 1988:209).

Then the participants "passed the fire," and the torches were moved to the opposite side of the *fale* for the visitors to take their turn (Kramer 1995). "And so the fire is taken to the other round part [of the *fale*]. Then those people dance again. It is again taken back over; this is called 'doing the night' (Kramer 1995:377).

The second half of the performance began with mimetic theater and dance. First only the *taupou* danced, then the others joined her. While her movements were stately and graceful, others around her clowned, according to Kramer:

> Sometimes one of them imitates a lame or limping person and is soon surrounded by laughing dancers, sometimes fish spearing by torch light, the *lamalamata*, is acted out, one dancer seeking to pierce with a stick a coconut leaf tossed at him, while the others surround the fish and chase it from time to time leaping high in the air as though afraid of it (1995: 370).

The dancers imitated creatures and everyday activities, but social superiors as well (Mageo 1998). Moyle writes that the mimetic dances were sung alternately, first the hosts, then the visitors. If the evening's performance wasn't going to proceed any further, the dance concluded with two *taualugas*, one by each group, in which the taupou danced flanked by only the high-ranking chiefs of her village.

If the proceedings were going to continue, the mimetic dancing was followed by the *sa'e*, the exhibitionist dances. First the girls, then the women and the old women each in turn entered the house and danced naked, using taunting language toward the men. After they were finished, the men came in, attempting to cover themselves with a leaf or scrap of cloth, which, after some teasing by the women, they threw off. The *sa'e* featured grotesque facial expressions and posturing indicative of its joking character, and the outrageous banter revealed its humorous nature (Mageo 1998). During the *sa'e*, the old women led the bawdy dancing.

The performance ended with the spirit frenzy, '*ale'aleaitu*, before which everyone but the young people departed. They would "tear the eye off the spirit," shedding their clothes. The tempo was faster and the dancing more frenzied as the night progressed. The *'ale'aleaitu* provided an occasion for elopement, as couples ran off together into the night (Mageo 1998). In Samoan villages, the *mata*, or eye of the *malae* was the center and locus of control. If the eye is a trope for control, tearing the eye off the spirit is perhaps a trope for the removal of control (*tapu*) on *mana* (which is given by spirits), and allowing not only chaos and license but the release of generative power, as the couples slipped off into the bush.

Order of the dances

Kramer (1995) describes the order of the dances he observed at the end of the nineteenth century as follows:

1. "Ula," the first dance, is performed seated and accompanied by singing. About ten dancers, male and female, taking their seats in a row, behind them a chorus of women and children who sing and beat the rhythm with their hands (Kramer 1995:367-368).
2. A song without dancing, while the *taupou* approaches from another house in which she was adorned with a head ornament, necklaces and chains, well anointed and clothed in a brown mat or maybe wearing only a *titi* (leaf skirt) (Kramer 1995:368). She sits down in the middle, with five dancers on each side.
3. "Ta le siva." Today called *sasa*, this is a synchronized seated dance (although parts may be executed while standing), accompanied by the pate drums but never by singing. Kramer describes movements that may or may not be imitative of daily activities, the actions upon which modern *sasa*s are based.
4. *Taupou* begins a song, which the chorus joins, accompanied by slapping the mats. The song increases in pace accompanied by faster movements that are focused on the swaying of the body and graceful hand movements (Kramer 1995), probably a seated *ma'ulu'ulu*. The seated dances continue until one of the chiefs calls for "*taualuga, tu i luga*," which Moyle (1988) translates as "a standing dance, stand up."
5. *Taupou* rises and the rest of the dancers follow. Standing dances are mimetic, with the dancers imitating crabs, turtles, and other animals.
6. Dances become increasingly unrestrained as the evening progresses.
7. "Sa'e." All clothing is cast off and the old women dance wildly in the nude.

Buck (MS 1927-8, in Moyle 1988) describes the structure of *poula* dances as: 1) a *fa'ataupati* (a men's slap dance), followed by 2) mimetic dances; the dances were not erotic up to this point. The mimetic dances were followed by the sa'e and finally the *'ale'aleaitu*.

The wild dances that the missionaries objected to the most strongly are now obsolete, although informants reported to Mageo (1998) and Shore (1978) that they had seen the *poula* in the early-to-mid twentieth century. It had moved out of the village and into the bush.

Moyle and Mageo agree that while the *poula* was banned, night dances underwent permutations that made them acceptable to the missionaries. They survive in what constitutes the most popular dance forms, the *siva* and the *ma'ulu'ulu*. They may have been created to fill the cultural gap left when the night dances were banned by 19th century missionaries.

MA'ULU'ULU

Samoan choreographer Sai Stevens (pers. comm.) describes the *ma'ulu'ulu* as "a dance with a song, guitar, ukulele, or other instruments, either sitting or standing." Stevens composes dances accompanied by traditional Samoan songs performed live. These synchronized dances, which can be performed sitting or standing, are characterized by graceful foot and hand movements; historically, they may have featured a *taupou* soloist (Moyle 1988). Most of the graceful dances performed by commercial groups are of the *ma'ulu'ulu* tradition, and are performed standing. It seems that today "*ma'ulu'ulu*" describes standing and sitting dances performed with a vocal accompaniment, sometimes to traditional Samoan songs sung live, as Stevens choreographs to, and sometimes to prerecorded modern Samoan songs, as choreographed by Korinna Chamberlin.

Pratt (1878) is the first to mention the *ma'ulu'ulu*, which he describes as "a kind of night-dance recently introduced." Kramer (1995) describes them as "dances in which boys and girls dance together." The ma'ulu'ulu dance was divided into three sections, the *sasa*, *laulau siva*, and *ma'ulu'ulu* proper (Buck 1927, in Moyle 1988: 227).

The *sasa* was the beginning of the dance, described as a salutation, in which various motions were performed in synchrony, including slapping the thighs, clapping the hands, and ending in a quick right hand salute. The dancers sang while dancing. Today, the word *sasa* describes a dance performed either sitting or standing (or combinations of each) to the beat of the *pate* (wooden slit drums) only, without vocal accompaniment. Motions mimic daily activities such as shelling coconuts and paddling canoes.

During the *laulau siva,* dancers sit still and sing.

Next, Moyle (1988) describes the *ma'ulu'ulu* proper, which is a "continuation of the united posture movements of the *sasa* and in parts may be a repetition of the *sasa* movements continued at a greater length." The dancers sang while performing the movements.

Versions of the *ma'ulu'ulu* were performed at the 2003 Flag Day Ceremonies and during the Samoan Festival of Arts in November 2003, mainly by church and village groups. The sequences of dancing and singing generally follow Moyle's description, sometimes with additional dances inserted, but keeping the spirit of the *ma'ulu'ulu*. The performance of the Catholic Youth Group from Malaeloa given at the Festival of Arts, followed the sequence:

1. Men's and women's standing dance (*siva*-like, as described by Moyle (1988); referred to as *siva* by my informants)
2. Standing dance with clubs (men) and stamping tubes (women) (*ailao*)

3. Graceful standing dance, accompanied by drums (another *siva*)

4. Standing *sasa*

5. Sitting, singing (*laulau siva*)

6. *Taualuga*

There are frequent deviations and permutations, especially in competitions and performances aimed at foreign or mixed audiences, and much creative license is utilized in choreographing dances designed to be entertaining. A dance entered in the "freestyle" part of the Tuila Festival competition in 2003 called "Greased Lightning" featured dancers dressed in hip-hop style clothing and included a red wheelbarrow as a prop, for example. On these occasions, the various dances seem to follow no particular order within the program, with the exception that the *taualuga* is always last. For example, the order of *Tafa Tasi o Samoa* 's dances during their performances at the International Fire Knife Dance Competition in 2003 were:

1. Drumming on the wooden slit drum, *pate*
2. Blowing the conch shell, *pu*
3. Men's and women's sitting *ma'ulu'ulu* —"Mauga Ole Atu Olo"
4. *Sasa*
5. Men's and women's standing *ma'ulu'ulu* —"Tau Sagi Mai Manue"

At the same show, *Taupou Manaia* performed these dances:

1. "Nafanua" (Samoan war goddess) knife dance, '*ailao*
2. Younger girls' standing *siva*
3. Older girls' knife dance ('*ailao*) with *taualuga*-like movements and costumes
4. *Taualuga* proper

THE ‘AILAO AND SIVA SATE

The *‘ailao* is usually a men’s dance; Moyle states it is of Uvean origin, where paddles are used instead of clubs or knives (1988). The *‘ailao* probably traces its origins to the flourishes of wooden clubs common following victory in war, and dances with weapons featured in food-homage presentations (*ta’alolo*) (Moyle 1988). This dance is performed without vocal accompaniment, with drumming on the *pate* or other drums. In the Uvean *kailao*, the dancers divide into two groups, which face and then approach each other, rhythmically twirling clubs (Mayer 1998). Mayer describes two *kailaos*, the *kailao hele* and *kailao afi*. In the *kailao hele*, a machete is used instead of a club or pole, accompanied by guitars and sometimes repetitive songs. The *kailao afi* is performed at night, twirling a baton with one or two ends lit with fire. The popular fire knife dance, performed mostly in cabarets and originally meant for a non-Samoan audience, is based on the *‘ailao*. Chief Letuli claimed to have invented the fire knife dance, although it appears to be a combination of the two types of *kailao*.

The dance performed by *Taupou Manaia* called “Nafanua” is an *‘ailao* performed with machete-like Samoan knives called *nifo ofi*. The dance celebrates the Samoan war goddess Nafanua, who, according to legend, nearly single-handedly defeated the enemies from the east (some versions say she drove out the Tongans) who were “as numerous as the grains of sand on the beach” (Anonymous 1987). It is similar to the *kailao afi* described above for Uvea. In this case, the young women, wearing *tuiga* headdresses and fine mats decorated with red feathers, formed two rows of six dancers, rhythmically twirling and tossing real Samoan *ofi* (as opposed to harmless props), performing mock battles, the *ofi* clattering as they connected. While as exciting and powerful as any of the men’s dances, it was performed with graceful movements. Although the *‘ailao* is traditionally performed by men, young women are now dancing with knives in both

Taupou Manaia and *Tafa Tasi o Samoa*. The latter group also performs a group fire knife dance by both young men and young women.

Kramer (1995) describes dances held during the great food offerings, *ta'aloalo*, that he witnessed in 1898 that sound remarkably like the "Nafanua" dance performed more than 100 years later by the adolescent girls of *Taupou Manaia*.

> [A]t such public homage renderings each village marches along in a 'crowd' of several hundred people and places huge amounts of prepared food at the feet of the title chief. Several sons and daughters of chiefs adorned with head ornaments and fine mats always dance ahead of such a crowd. With war clubs in their hands they race ahead of the procession, stop suddenly, throw the clubs or knives in the air, catch them cleverly often behind their backs and juggle them passing them under their arms and legs, in short perform all sorts of skillful manoeuvres (Kramer 1995:377).

Similar to the *'ailao*, Moyle (1988) describes the *sake*, another dance that originated Uvea as the *eke*. It is a standing dance during which male dancers hold sticks and beat them against the sticks of other dancers. It is usually performed to a specific song. I did not witness a publicly performed *sake*, although I saw stick dances at the Teuila Festival and the Festival of Samoan Arts. The Uvean *eke* has its origins in the disappearance of Chief Ma'atu Ngongo while fishing in 1832; a group of about 40 men traveled to neighboring islands searching for him and singing a song lamenting his disappearance. During the *eke*, two lines of men faced each other and performed swift movements of the sticks, striking sticks held by other dancers and performing movements and turns (Moyle 1988:228).

The stick dances I saw were performed to recorded Polynesian music with strong, fast drumbeats. They may have been based on the *siva sate* described by Kramer (1995:379): "For this dance each one of the dancers holds a stick as tall as a man (on Tutuila a knife) with which movements are carried out resembling a bayonet skirmish."

SIVA

Today, *siva* is used to refer to dance in general, and specifically the graceful standing dances presented during most public performances. They may be based on the graceful standing dances of the *ao siva*, the day dances that received missionary approval, although Moyle (1998) sees their derivation from the *ula* dances—the graceful dances of the *poula*. The Samoan *ula* emphasized beauty of movement, but its modern equivalent is described by Moyle as a "standing performance by, in most cases, one or more girls, non-coordinated movements, and a sung accompaniment provided by a separate group of people" (Moyle 1988:232). *Siva* dances are performed with sung accompaniment today, either by live performers or with recorded music, but the movements are synchronized and graceful, not at all individualistic and non-coordinated, as Moyle describes. Clowns performed the only individualistic, non-coordinated movements I witnessed.

THE SASA

Moyle (1988) lists the *sasa* as the opening dance of the *ma'ulu'ulu*, although today it can be performed outside of that sequence. It is described as a salutation involving "clapping the hands, striking the thighs alternatively and nowadays finishing with a quick right hand salute. The actions are very quickly done and various combinations may be used to form this brief introduction. The dancers sing while performing" (Moyle 1988:227). The *sasas* I witnessed

were performed to the beat of the *pate* drums and without vocal accompaniment, except for short exclamations and a shout at the end. Modern *sasas* are a variety of seated mimetic dance that depict actions of everyday life. Kramer refers to this dance as a "slap dance," but today what he describes is called *fa'ataupati*, the men's slap dance, which is distinct from the *sasa*. Today's *sasa* may be derived from the mimetic dances of the *poula*, during which dancers gathered bunches of bananas, harvested coconuts, raced canoes, grated coconut meat, and other actions. During the *poula*, mimetic dances performed in a group were not synchronized, but today's *sasa* dancers gain bragging rights by performing complex actions in perfect synchrony.

The *sasa* imported into Uvea in the twentieth century was split into two genres, *sasa fakalologo*, "silent *sasa*," is a subgenre that is probably closer to the imported form, according to Mayer (1998). The *sasa* can also be performed with singing, and the Uvean versions of the dance can portray song narratives, kava drinking, soccer games, and other themes.

FA'ATAUPATI

The *fa'ataupati* is a very popular synchronized standing dance performed by men. It has a similar appeal to the *sasa* in that very swift, complex movements are done in perfect synchrony. Also known as the "slap dance," the name translates as "to provoke *pati*-type clapping" (Moyle 1988:225). The performances are usually brief, rarely lasting more than about two minutes, and involve rhythmically slapping various parts of the body, including chest, thighs, and other parts of the body. Moyle estimates that its introduction is recent, as there is no mention of this visually exciting dance in the nineteenth century literature, although Kramer describes a slap dance in detail, which he observed in the late nineteenth century

> the right arm halfway extended forward, at the same time turning the cupped hand inward and upward, then one slap on the thigh with the cupped hand; the same on the left side; the same simultaneously on both sides; extending the right arm forward, palm down, the left hand in the same position close to the shoulder area, simultaneous turning palms up twice; the same, left; extending both hands to the right, twice turning of palms from below inward and up; the same left; both fists on top of each other on the right knee, turned twice towards each other as though they held a vertical stick; the same, left (Kramer 1995:369).

Kramer doesn't mention whether this slap dance was performed by men, women, or both, but from his description we can infer that it was a mixed group.

TAUALUGA

The final dance in a period of entertainment is always the *taualuga*. In the center of the dance floor, a high ranking person, usually the *taupou*, dances gracefully, surrounded by small group of people who either also dance gracefully or sit and sway in time with the music. The *taupou* appears in dance costume, usually made either of *siapo* (bark cloth) or a fine mat, and wearing the *tuiga* headdress of human hair dyed a light brown, shells and feathers. It can also be danced by a senior *ali'i*, who would also wear special clothes. Moyle suggests a recent origin in the modification of the *poula* into the *fiafia* (a modified version of the informal part of the night dances, featuring comedy sketches) and the *siva*. Stair's (1897) description sounds like a *taualuga*, which he witnessed presumably before the *poula* had been completely transformed:

> The last set dance was performed by a single individual, who might be either a woman of rank or a chief, the performance being introduced by two of the dancer's attendants. None but skilled dancers ventured to exhibit in this manner, as the slightest blunder or failure was the occasion of lasting reproach, alike in joke or song (1897:133-134).

Today, in commercial dance groups in particular, the *taupou* is chosen based on her talents; only the best dancers are chosen to be the *taupou*. The girls perceive being chosen to dance as the *taupou* in the *taualuga* as a reward for hard work, coming to practice, and performing well.

> I always try to encourage [the other girls], but sometimes people don't encourage me. I feel like I shouldn't dance any more…Then I was *taupou* once; that made me happy. I was on the cruise ship and lots of people were watching (Emily, age 12).

Occasionally a girl will be chosen as *taupou* for a performance because a close relative holds an important position in the hosting organization. For the performance at the Star Kist cannery 40th anniversary celebration, for example, a young girl was chosen because her father was a controller for the cannery.

Chapter 4: Conclusions

At the beginning of this dissertation, I intended to answer two questions: what role could traditional Samoan dance play in forming a sense of self that merges two opposing cultural conceptions of self? And, can dance provide a venue for the semiotic representation of a merging of these construals of self? I also examined Erikson's theory of adolescent identity formation and its applicability to modern Samoan teenagers.

Teenagers in American Samoa are experiencing an adolescence that is more turbulent than Mead described in the 1920. With modernization, many of the social structures are no longer in place that would allow teens the moratorium Erikson proposed was needed for them to formulate a satisfactory identity. Teens are also exposed to elements of Western culture, especially through television, movies and magazines, that contrast with Samoan traditional mores. Among these are elements of self that traditionally caused little internal conflict for most Samoan adolescents: identity, body image, autonomy, ego boundaries, and subjectivity and emotions. While it is obvious that modern Samoan teens are experiencing confusion and turmoil, some of them are creating ways of coping, using traditional Samoan dance as the fulcrum on which to balance a bicultural identity.

Cross culturally, self is a psychological construct consisting of self awareness and a feeling of continuity of identity over time. Cultural models of the self vary on a continuum between egocentric/independent and sociocentric/interdependent poles. The Western self tends toward the egocentric pole while the Samoan self tends toward the sociocentric pole.

Samoan culture is group oriented. The needs of the family override the needs of the individual. Children are socialized to identify with their peer group and to obey those older than them, especially parents and other adults. A person must always maintain his or her proper place

in the social hierarchy. The Samoan self is not one of inner feelings and motivations, but of outward behaviors, and performance of the most appropriate behavior for a given situation.

The Samoan concept of self, one that focuses on roles and behaviors, and downplays inner thoughts and feelings, contrasts with the American concept of self that is individualistic and focuses on inner thoughts and feelings, with the emphasis on the inner motivation behind the behaviors and somewhat less emphasis on roles. Samoan teenagers are faced with developing a sense of self out of these two conflicting concepts of what it means to be a person.

I have argued that adolescent girls in American Samoa have merged these cultural conceptions of self through traditional Samoan dance. At a time in their lives when these girls are formulating a sense of self, they are presented with conflicting ideas of what it means to be a person. The Western, more egocentric conception of the independent self and the Samoan, more sociocentric conception of the interdependent self fuel the conflict between teenagers' own desires for autonomy and individuality and their parents' desires for their children. Although not all of the teenagers facing this dilemma are able to cope with the conflict, the girls I met seemed to be not only coping, but thriving.

The cross-cultural applicability of the Erikson's theory of adolescent identity development may be debated (see, for example, Schlegel 1995); however, most aspects are applicable to American Samoan teens today. Exposure to Western ideas began in the 19th century and has intensified in the last 30 years with an increase in Western media on the islands. The cable television station transmits American and Australian programs; of the two radio stations on the island, one broadcasts only American popular music in English (the other plays Samoan music almost exclusively); and the movie theater shows American movies. Many teenagers, especially boys, have adopted the hip-hop style and speak urban African-American slang; teens

gather to eat burgers in McDonald's or pizza at Pizza Hut. The American lifestyle portrayed on television programs and in movies is attractive to many Samoan teens.

Samoan traditions are also still practiced on the island; some, like the traditional exchange ceremonies called *fa'alavelave*s, are considered a hardship by those who can't afford the obligatory donations; others, especially traditional dance, are loved and enjoyed. Both offer culturally sanctioned opportunities to show off. The most important dance is the *taualuga*, the *taupou*'s dance. The girls interviewed expressed a desire to be chosen to dance the *taupou* part. While it can be argued that being in the spotlight—in all traditional Samoan dances, the *taupou* is the only soloist—holds a strong attraction for the girls, the concept of the *taupou* and all she represents—regality, grace, beauty, power—are also important, evidenced by the glowing terms in which the girls spoke of this position. The *taupou* role is something to aspire to.

Central to Erikson's theory of identity formation is the idea that adolescents need to try out different roles, especially in terms of career, work, and adult life; to be free to dream and have aspirations. In traditional Samoan culture, it is expected that a person will do what is best for his or her family, whether that is to take a job in the fish cannery or find some other kind of work close to home after high school graduation. Many of the teens I spoke with expressed a desire to go to college. Some will attend the island's community college, while others may attend on the mainland. Some will not be able to make this decision for themselves; adult members of their extended family may find jobs for them on the island, usually in government but sometimes in the private sector, that the adolescents will be obligated to accept.

Autonomy is another source of conflict for Samoan adolescents. Defined as individuation from parents and a sense of personal agency, autonomy comes later in life in sociocentric-tending societies than in egocentric-tending societies. Most of my informants said their parents

or adult female relative made them dance and take dance at an early age, as young as three. As they entered later adolescence, the girls said they now chose to dance. In this way, they felt some autonomy about dance. A few of the girls also said their parents allowed them to drop out of dance class, but the girls felt pressured to rejoin by parents and other significant adults.

Samoan ego boundaries are also different from those considered healthy by Western psychology. Interpersonal boundaries are more important than personal boundaries; maintaining harmonious relationships is of overriding concern. Reflected in village layout and the layout of the dance floor during the *taupou*'s dance, the *taualuga*, the most important boundaries are between levels of the social hierarchy (Mageo 1998) and between order and chaos (Shore 1982).

The expression of strong emotions is discouraged, much as it was in traditional Samoa. I noticed a difference in ability or willingness to assess personal feelings between full Samoan girls who were raised on Tutuila or in western Samoa, and girls who were half Samoan and/or were born on the mainland U.S. The full Samoan girls were unable to answer questions about personal feelings, while the half Samoan girls had no problem discussing and describing them. The control of emotions, whether felt and understood or ignored, is learned from an early age, and reinforced in dance, especially during the *taualuga*, during which the *taupou* dances with a faint smile as a sign of dignity and grace. Girls are taught to be graceful and calm like *taupou*s in their everyday lives.

Traditionally, the beautiful Samoan woman is slightly plump; beauty ideals today, however, are influenced by Western media that depict unrealistically thin women. This weight is probably unattainable for Samoan women, based on available diet. One adult choreographer told me she did not dance any longer because she felt she was too fat. Some of the dancers, as well,

strive to be thin—sometimes encouraged by their mothers, sometimes personally motivated toward this unattainable ideal.

While I found no evidence of Elkin's personal fable, his concept of imaginary audience appeared to be relevant. The constant observation present in old Samoa, where houses had no walls and everyone always knew what their neighbors were doing, contributed toward social control (Shore 1982). Today, most Samoans live in Western-style houses, but the scrutiny remains, comparable to living in a small town in the U.S. When dancing, the girls felt critical eyes on them, knew they were being compared to the other dancers, and felt the judgment of peers and adults even when they were not certain they were actually being watched. It was a source of discomfort for most of them, although the older girls had devised ways of coping. The girls' identity as dancers—a good dancer, a poor dancer, as good as another girl—was informed by the comments of critically observing adults.

Dance, according to Shore (1982), reinforces the social order, but the girls I spoke with are making new meanings by their subtle gestural noncompliance. The girls' surreptitious gestures, however, are comparable to the poetic language of carnival, described by Kristeva (1984), that is neither parody nor the "law" of the social order, but is more dangerous because it can create social change. Additionally, while the concepts of *mana* (spiritual power) and *pule* (political power) may no longer hold the relevance they once did for Samoans, the girls may be subtly contributing to the regaining of their old *mana*—women's spiritual power—by reclaiming their role as ritual clowns.

The public dances extant on Tutuila developed out of older dances witnessed in the late 19th century and described by Kramer (1995). Church and village groups perform a mix of traditional dances, including *siva*, *ma'ulu'ulu*, and men's dances performed to either live or

recorded music. Commercial choreographers are emphasizing the graceful *ma'ulu'ulu* dances and *siva*. Tafa Tasi O Samoa, the more traditional of the dance groups, performs this dance to old Samoan songs performed live. They also perform the *sasa* and the *ailao* (knife dance, sometimes with fire). Taupou Manaia Dance Productions performs newly choreographed standing dances based primarily on the *siva*. Older girls dance an interpretation of the *ailao* knife dance, called *Nafanua* after the Old Samoan War Goddess. Both groups perform the *taualuga*, the dance that epitomizes traditional Samoan dance, and demonstrates dichotomies important in Samoan culture—control/chaos, center/periphery, stasis/movement, *mana*/*pule*.

Adolescent girls in American Samoa are challenging the social norms not only of cultural construals of self, but of the role of girls and women in dance and perhaps in society. They are semiotically merging opposing definitions of self and identity through dance, by surreptitiously inserting elements of individuality in a group activity. They are dancing again in the role of clown, and in what was once an all-male dance, the *'ailao*. By reasserting their roles as clowns and warriors, they are reclaiming a modern version of a pre-contact traditional power and role.

As American Samoa gradually changes with encroachment by the West, traditional Samoan dance also evolves. Not only is it absorbing elements of dance forms and styles from other Polynesian islands and adapting to pressures to be more appealing to non-Samoans, it is also changing to reflect the changes in conceptions of self influenced by globalization and the spread of Western ideas. Old dances become extinct or are modified, and new dances are created. It will be interesting to see how today's adolescent girls, when they become tomorrow's dance choreographers, modify traditional Samoan dance to reflect other changes—the seeds of which are being sown today.

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Appendix A

Script
Siva! The Semiotics of Selfhood in Samoan Dance

Siva! The Semiotics of Selfhood in Samoan Dance

Dianna M. Georgina

Key: "VO" = Voice Over (narration)

Time	*Audio/Video*	*Dialog/Description*
00:00-00:30	*Various clips*	*Teaser* "Who am I supposed to be?" That's a common question for adolescents. But it's a question that Samoan teens eighty years ago probably didn't think about. Teens today, however, feel pulled in two directions: in the Samoan way, you are a cog in a larger wheel; in the American way, you are an individual. This is no easy conflict to resolve. How do teenagers on these South Pacific islands cope with the search for self while living in two conflicting cultures?
OPENING SEQUENCE: "How dancing makes me feel."		
	OPENING GRAPHIC	Siva! The Semiotics of Selfhood in Samoan Dance A film by Dianna M. Georgina
	Leslie Leslie dancing	LESLIE: I think dancing is fun
	Emily Emily dancing	EMILY: And I love dancing
	Ko'olina Ko'olina dancing	KO'OLINA: It makes me feel alive.
	Kimberly Kimberly dancing	KIMBERLY: I feel like I'm floating on a cloud.
	Adrian Adrian dancing	ADRIAN: It's to feel happy and joy, all those things
	Nu'umau Nu'umau dancing	NU'UMAU: It makes me feel happy. It's da bomb, I really like dancing.
	Quick clips of dancing	
	TITLE	*"Crossroads: Part 1"*
	DMG talking	DMGVO: Teenagers in American Samoa are at a crossroad. It's a crossroad where two cultures meet, and where childhood meets adulthood. It is at this crossroad where they are forming a sense of self.
	Samoan teens	The psychologist Erik Erikson said adolescence is the period that focuses on the search for identity. If culture is the matrix in which these teens live, and the culture itself is a confusing amalgam of Polynesian and Western elements, sometimes in conflict, what effect will this have on teenagers' search for identity?
	Samoan teens	DMGVO: Contact with the West has profoundly influenced Samoan teenagers' development of self. Like their Western counterparts, they are now dealing with developmental issues like autonomy, boundaries, and role experimentation, things Samoan teens 100 years ago had never heard of.

	Today, they find themselves pulled in two directions: On the one hand is the Samoan way, and on the other is the American way. This internal conflict can often be heard in the contradictions teens express when talking about developmental issues.
Kathleen Boyce Rodgers	KBR: Well, one of the most fundamental questions that they are asking is who am I and where do I fit in the world? And as the world becomes more globalized with technology, that question and the ability to answer that question becomes more complex. According to Erickson, being able to answer those questions is the primary task of adolescence. And it's necessary for the formation of what we call the Theory of Self. Or that identity formation.
TITLE	*PART 2: Role of Dance in Teenagers' self-concept*
Clips of Samoan dancing	DMGVO: Dance is the premier art form in Samoan culture. It's an essential part of every celebration, from family gatherings to national holidays.
Snapshots of Western art	In Western culture, we tend to think of dance, or any other kind of art, as a form of self-expression. You can look at the art and see into the personality of the artist.
Synchronized Samoan dance	Self-expression is not usually considered an element of traditional Samoan dance; dancers are performers of synchronized movements choreographed and practiced, to be executed exactly as written.
Girls at rehearsal	Because Samoan traditional dance stresses conformity and downplays individuality, we might not expect it to play a significant role in adolescents' self-concepts.
Leslie	DMGVO: Why did you become a dancer?
Clip of Leslie dancing Leslie	LC: I felt I needed to know, I felt I needed to go more and find out about dancing and my Samoan culture.... Because I'm Samoan, and because Samoan society and culture is of my life, because Samoan, Samoan, it's of my life, I think It's I don't think, I think I'd be a different person if I didn't know how to dance. If I didn't dance.
Taupou Manaia girls dancing	DMGVO: Leslie is a member of a large, commercial dance group called Taupou Manaia, led by choreographer Korina Chamberlin, and based in Tafuna village. This is one of several groups that are still active on the island of Tutuila. The girls in Taupou Manaia compete in dance competitions and perform at a variety of social gatherings.
TTOS fire knife dance	Tafa Tasi O Samoa is a smaller group, based at the Museum of Art in Fagotogo. They use live music exclusively, and choreographer Sai Stevens does not charge for dance lessons, two facts that set Tafa Tasi

	O Samoa apart from the island's other commercial groups. There are also non-commercial dance groups, including church and family groups that perform at church and family functions.
TITLE	*PART 3: Western Self vs. Samoan Self*
Images of Americans	DMGVO: Cultural models of the self differ. In the West, for example, we tend to think of the self as the inner self–our inner thoughts and feelings, our motivations. We view this as our true or real self – constant and unchanging. We tend to think of the roles we play as a kind of mask or persona that we can assume or remove at will. The Western concept of the self is quite different from the Samoan idea of what it means to be a person.
Images of Samoans (church dedication)	In Samoa, people are not at all concerned about inner motivations or intentions; the focus is on external behaviors and on representing the family well. Embarrassing the family is more reprehensible than any motivations that may have caused it.
Images of parents and dancers	Music under
Images of people	DMGVO: Each culture develops a model of the self; some emphasize individuality, while others are more group-oriented.
Jeannette Mageo	JM: In all cultures, I think, there's a natural model—a model about the way people are assumed to just naturally be. Those models vary on an egocentric-sociocentric continuum. Egocentric means people see themselves and others as individuals; sociocentric means people see themselves and others as group members. To say there is a continuum means emphasis on these views shades and varies. Natural models constitute assumptions about being a person that are conveyed to developing children and structured into their experience in many ways. For example, in the US we hold babies facing towards us; traditionally in Samoa the baby was carried around by many family members and tended to be held facing outward toward other group members. The natural model of the self in Samoa is that people are group members and you can see how this way of caring for a child would make them aware of themselves as part of a group. This natural model is clear in your dance troupes. A lot of the dancing is synchronous rather than individual—the girls are just supposed to play their role in a larger group rather than stand out. Further, they often don't dance in response to their own individual preferences but in deference to elders, who may not even ask them if they want to dance but may just cart them off to a dance school or group. Whatever the natural model, human beings always have both individual and social sides and, therefore, people get information that contradicts

	their natural model and come to realize that, maybe, people don't always behave in line with cultural assumptions. In response to this, culture members start saying, "Well, people should be that way, they really should be like that." In response to these contradictions, you begin to get moral models of the self, models that include a "should." In more egocentric societies, people say everyone should stand on their own two feet. In Samoa, people say that everyone should stand at their post. And what this means is that they should play their established role in the hierarchy. This phrase refers to a fale, a Samoan house, where there the chiefs would sit at a post for a meeting. And the post was their role, their established place, in the village.
Images of kids	DMGVO: It can be confusing to know just which role, which behavior, to play in a given situation.
Kathleen Boyce Rodgers	KBR: In early adolescence, we have these different kinds of selves. We have a sense of who am I as a sexual being, Who am I as a child of parents, a family member. Who am I as a community member. These are all kind of different identities. And even, who am I in terms of my ethnic self, if I am an adolescent of color. And with all of those different selves, we have different kinds of behaviors. And because they're more aware of themselves and they're more aware of this abstract thinking, one of the things that they can do is they can be cognizant of the fact that I act one way with my family, I act a different way with my peers, and I act a different way at school. And for early adolescents, those differences can be uncomfortable. that makes them uncomfortable because it's incongruent. It's not consistent across. Fortunately, by the time we reach later adolescence, 18, 19, 20 years old, most adolescents, from what we know of western society, have come to understand that it's OK to be different when you're in these different contexts. And at that point, what happens is that the identities, these different selves, have become integrated. And that's what Erickson talks about as the theory of self, we have these selves and we're OK with them.
TITLE	*PART 4: Standing out vs. Standing at your post*
Images of American teens	DMGVO: Western individualism encourages people to succeed, and American culture in particular valorizes independence and non-conformity. In Samoa, however, standing out from the crowd is considered "showing off," and bad behavior. A person must do as well as his or her equals, but not better.
Images of Samoan formal dance	In formal dances, the dance is considered the most beautiful when all dancers move as one. Most of the young dancers I spoke with echoed the idea that being different and standing out were unacceptable, but there appeared to be some conflict about what they know they should do and what they would like to do. A number of them sometimes

	inserted elements of individuality into their performances, and faced the consequences later.
LESLIE	DMGVO: Do you ever try to do anything a little different? LESLIE: No. Like, to stand out, just myself? No. If I were dancing individually, yeah, but it's important if you are dancing as a group, you want to look uniform because that's the key, look uniform, your smile, and just your attitude about the dance, and if you did, that would be kind of like, [face] you're greedy or something. Like your selfish [makes face like snob with nose in air] I'm dancing I look bad. But yeah, uniform is a key thing, is one of the key things in dancing …
McRAE	MCRAE: Actually, no, because when one person is out of line, it affects the whole, and what you really what to do is to be in unison, no matter… if someone makes a mistake, then they're doing something differently, but if someone's trying to look better than everyone else, then they ruin the whole point of being a dance group. So no, I try not to make myself stand out.
KIMBERLY	KIMBERLY: On purpose?…Well, we're not supposed to. But I think it's always good to put in an extra smile.
LYDIA	LYDIA: Sometimes I try to add some fancier moves, but I know that I might get in trouble so I try not to.
EMILY	EMILY: Yes, just to impress somebody. I want to impress people of how I dance. I try to make it more fancier.
Taualuga	DMGVO: The girl representing the taupou, traditionally the chief's daughter, is the only soloist, in a special dance called the taualuga. She is encouraged to excel in both style and poise. The other dancers support her, but don't outshine her. The only time when standing out is acceptable is in dance competitions, and even these are group-oriented rather than individual.
JM Clip of Teuila festival adult performers Children competing at festival	JM: Samoan moral models, then, say that you shouldn't stand out—you should stand inconspicuously at your post. But people everywhere have more individual and more social dimensions. So, they are expected to control aspects of themselves that are incongruent with their culture's natural models and moral models. In Samoa you are not supposed to call attention to yourself but to blend in. Moral models generate moral discourse—that is people talking about what people should and should not do. And one of the things that people discover when they engage in moral discourse is that most people don't do what they should quite a lot of the time. Cultures also accommodate this lack of conformity in performance models. Performance models divide situations into formal and

	informal. In Samoa, a ceremony would be an example of a formal situation and entertainment would be an informal situation. In formal situations, everybody's acts the way they should—which in Samoa means acting as if others had high status—but this way of acting becomes a kind of etiquette, and one you don't have to practice all the time. In informal situations, Samoa kids can show off instead of effacing themselves. For example, they are encouraged to perform on stage and even to joke in a way that would be disrespectful in other contexts.
Clip of Penina Tausala (PT)	DMGVO: There is a lot of intra-island competition among dance groups on Tutuila. Most of the girls I spoke with say this competition, and the inevitable comparisons, spur them on to be better dancers.
Leslie Clips of TM and PT	LESLIE: To tell you the truth, at times there's like, you feel kind of jealous, it's not just me, a lot of the girls feel like this, like, different dance groups? For instance Taupou Manaia and Penina Tausala, when we watch them dance, it's like, comparing, compare, are we better, are we doing, are we doing the move as good, do we smile, are we doing everything like them? But the first stage is jealousy, you kinda get jealous, and then afterwards, it pushes you. So it's half and half, good and bad.
Clip of the girls rehearsing	DMGVO: The dance group Taupou Manaia competes annually in an important, intra-island competition – the Teuila festival of Samoan Arts in Apia, in Independent Samoa. Some of the best dancers from all over the Samoan islands compete to earn the title of the best Samoan dance group. Taupou Manaia is the only group from American Samoa. The competition is tough and the girls prepare and rehearse for months before the event.
Kori talking to the girls at practice	KC giving dance instruction at practice
Clips from the funeral Funeral out/transition to	DMGVO: The girls usually have a number of performances in which to try out their some of their new moves in front of a crowd before the big competition in Apia. However, the sudden death of Governor Tauese P. F. Sunia in March 2003 caused the cancellation of the National Flag Day Holiday performances, usually held on April 17. Other events were postponed until July 4th.. It would have been improper to hold celebrations while the country is in mourning.
Charlie Tuna balloon Star Kist backstage	DMGVO: In August, Taupou Manaia performed at the 40th anniversary celebration of Star Kist, one of two canneries on the island that together employ about a third of the territory's work force.
Backstage at Starkist	DMGVO: Parents, especially mothers, are involved in preparing the girls for the performance.
Nafanua dance at	DMGVO: Samoan teens must represent their family well. Although the

Starkist	girls are not usually encouraged to stand out, in dance they are strongly pressured to excel. Many felt the sting of negative comparisons that usually came from an adult relative. Parents compete with each other to have the child who is the best dancer.
Lydia	DMGVO: When you're dancing, do you ever feel like you're being compared to the other dancers? LYDIA: Sometimes, yeah. DMGVO: How does that make you feel? LYDIA: Sometimes I just try to ignore it, but sometimes, it kinda, y'know, yeah, it gets to me. DMGVO: Why do you feel like it gets to you? LYDIA: I don't know. Sometimes when …. (Shrugs) [She looks like she is about to cry.] I don't know, like when other girls are like better than me, then I kind of, you know, feel different and everything.
Kimberly	KIMBERLY: Yeah. Because I know from experience when you're sitting in a crowd, people are always thinking, watch that person, look at what she's doing, So you know everybody's gotta be comparing you. But it's another thing you've gotta keep out of your head. It's all about focus. DMGVO: How does that make you feel, when people compare you? KIMBERLY: You get used to it, but at first it drives you crazy. But you have to get used to it, otherwise it'll throw you off.
NU'UMAU	NU'U: Sometimes it's always my mom who is comparing me to my little cousin, Tofi. Cause you know how she… we dance together. Ever since we were little. My mom compares me to her. "Oh, why don't you dance like Tofi, why don't you bend like her, why don't you…" you know, that kind of stuff. But I'm glad my mom is pushing me and how she compares me, it makes me try to do more better than that person she's comparing me to. DMGVO: How does it make you feel when she's comparing you like that? NU'U: Sometimes you feel like they're downing on you, like, they don't, they can't really accept you for who you are, but I think my mom's just doing that to try to make me a better dancer, a better person. Yeah.
Clips of audience	DMGVO: The teens say they feel they are being judged by adult

and judges at Teuila	observers. They feel critical eyes on them whether or not they know who the observer is, or whether they are actually being observed and judged.
KBR	KBR: Because adolescents can think at a higher level, a more abstract level, then when they were younger, one of the things they can do is they can begin to critique self, but now they can think about how others think about them. It's as if the others in their community - parents, peers - are the sort of looking glass, the mirror, to evaluate themselves and to see who am I? How am I? Where am I fitting in the world? We call that self, that, reflected appraisal. And then the person is thinking, “well, I think this person is thinking this of me.” And then I incorporate that into who I think I, how I think of myself. With that ability to think, though, there come distortions. Those distorted views of who I think I'm supposed to be like, versus who I want to be—there's the contrast, and that's really the process of figuring out, who am I? That answering those questions.
Lydia	DMGVO: So who is it that’s comparing you? LYDIA: I don’t know... DMGVO: What do you think people say when they’re comparing you to other dancers? LYDIA: What do people say? Well, sometimes they say, oh, you gotta be like her, you gotta try better like her.
TITLE	*PART 5: Autonomy*
Cougs	KBR VO: The dominant cultural paradigm of western society is that adolescence is a time for autonomy and individuation. That's kind of this cultural belief that we have. What we really know is that adolescents still need the closeness of parents. But there is this emphasis in Western society for individualism.
KBR	Autonomy refers to an individual's ability to think independently from their family members, to be able to act independently from their family members, and to be able to have emotions that are independent from family members. And indeed, in the united states, we see this, we see a gradual movement of adolescents into behaviors that are independent from families, you see it in early adolescence, late adolescence, they spend more time with their peers and less time with their family. It doesn't mean that they're less close. But there's an expectation and an understanding that that's a pretty normative behavior.
More Cougs	DMGVO: In Western psychology, when autonomy is delayed or inhibited, it results in an inability to make independent decisions or to form lasting, healthy relationships with others.

	One of the achievements associated with attaining autonomy is the development of a sense of self that is unique and distinctive from others.
Synchronized dances	DMGVO: In Samoan culture, however, autonomy is not encouraged. Cross cultural studies of autonomy indicate that in more-collective societies like Samoa, autonomy comes much later in life than in the West.
KBR	KBR: This notion of individuality and individuation is often a source of conflict, however, for adolescents from collective cultures, or subcultures within the united states. Because those collective cultures stress family unity, family loyalty, over the autonomy or individualism. That this broader kind of cultural understanding that autonomy is. So these adolescents often feel caught in two worlds.
Samoan children and adults	DMGVO: Many Samoan mothers told me that they felt their children should obey them no matter what the child's age – even well into adulthood. And most expressed surprise and dismay that American young adults leave home to follow their own path, and don't stay and take care of their parents.
Adrian at rehearsal	DMGVO: Has the delaying of autonomy had a detrimental effect on Samoan young adults? The teens that I met seemed to have little trouble forming peer relationships. Only a few said had problems making or keeping friends.
Adrian	ADRIAN: Sometimes I don't hang around with the girls at school. I don't have many friends, at lunchtime I go eat on my own, by myself, y'know, or sometimes the other girls they'll walk with me but some of the time I go by myself.
Samoan teens	DMGVO: The teens I talked to, did however prefer to consult with their parents or grandparents before making important decisions. Sometimes the adults made decisions for their teenage children without asking the teen what he or she needs or wants. This happens even after the children are legally adults. For example, most of the teenage dancers said their mother decided they would learn Samoan dance when the dancer was very young.
Lydia	DMGVO: How old were you when you first started learning how to dance? LYDIA: Five. DMGVO: And you're 12 now. You said you don't remember why you started?

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>LYDIA: No. I just knew that my mom, like, put me in a dance group.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Joanne</td><td>JOANNE: My mom put me in it when I was little, and so I really liked how they danced and so I wanted to learn.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Leslie</td><td>LESLIE: I think I was about…five. Yeah, around that age, five, because of a lot of influence from my Mom.</td></tr>
<tr><td>KBR</td><td>...for adolescents of color, one's ethnic identity can be particularly salient. Especially when they feel pulled by this idea of being autonomous and being an individual versus having loyalty and how does one be autonomous and still be connected with their family if they have a family that comes form a collective culture.</td></tr>
<tr><td>TITLE</td><td>PART 6: Boundaries</td></tr>
<tr><td>Clips from Samoa depicting different boundaries</td><td>DMGVO: Self-boundary is the sense of what is me and what is not me. It's the experience of a flexible perimeter marking the distinction between my personality—my thoughts, feelings, and memories—and what exists outside that perimeter, within other people. It is the feeling of a psychological distinction between what I know about myself versus what others know about me.

Boundaries in the West are much different from Samoan boundaries.</td></tr>
<tr><td>KBR</td><td>KBR: There are many different sorts of boundaries. There are emotional boundaries, there are physical boundaries, and boundaries essentially are rules that are communicated both directly and indirectly, in societies. For example, there are boundaries that determine what is appropriate how close one gets physically, physical proximity, with the family or with others outside of the family. And these boundaries, when they are more explicit and when they are more clear, it makes it easier for us to know what we're supposed to do and what we're not supposed to do, and for adolescents who are asking these questions of who am I and how am I supposed to act, when I want to fit in, but maybe that's different than what my parents are telling me to do. Then, those boundaries, when they're ambiguous, can create more stress. Because the rules are not clear of how am I supposed to behave, who am I supposed to be then.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Clips of woven mats at church dedication

David Herdrich</td><td>DMGVO: Cultures are an intertextual fabric; each of a culture's core beliefs, values and orientations forms a thread in a tapestry. Important concepts are reflected in a number of different cultural components. The Samoan concept of personal boundaries is echoed in a model of geographic boundaries. This model was developed by anthropologist David Herdrich of the American Samoa Historic Preservation office.</td></tr>
<tr><td>DH</td><td>DH: “The idea of a point field is basically that rather than starting out with a bounded space, so rather than defining a space like a box and then putting things inside of it, you start out with a point, and from that point a field radiates out, so you could think of it as a point with vectors</td></tr>
</table>

	radiating outward from it.”
Animation graphic depicting village layout	DMGVO: In Samoan villages the central point is an open grassy area called the Malae. And the center of the Malae is called the Mata, or eye. DHVO: First you start with the eye of the malae, then you have the guest houses, and they go around, and then you have the chief’s houses, and they go around, then you have the sleeping houses, and they go around, and then you have the outhouses and the pig sties and they go around the village.
David	DH: To the extent that there is a boundary in Samoan, if you have a boundary between points, it’s relative to those two points and the power that they have. So if this point is more powerful than this point, then the boundary would be pushed closer to this point. And if through time, this point gained more power, the boundary might shift back. Boundaries are not what I refer to as axiomatic, you don’t start with them, rather they’re, to the extent that there are boundaries, they are derived from these relationships and then imposed on the landscape.
Clips of Matuu malae wall	DMGVO: The Samoan concept of diffused, indistinct boundaries contrasts with the Western idea of a bounded box. Samoan teenagers must negotiate between traditional concepts of self-boundaries and those introduced from the West.
TITLE	*PART 7: Adolescent crisis in Samoa: a rough transition for some*
Image of Mead	DMGVO: Anthropologist Margaret Mead wrote in the 1920s that adolescence in Samoa was no time of crisis, but represented a gradual maturing of interests.
Masha Gartstein	MG: ...We think of adolescence as a time of a lot of tension and conflict. But that again may not be a universal thing, And in fact there may be cultures that fully expect a calm transition where there’s not this huge influx of cultural influence in this all of a sudden strive for individuation and separation away from the family.
Samoan landscapes	DMGVO: Whether or not Mead was right, Samoan adolescence certainly is turbulent today. The influx of cultural influence from the West has had a profound impact on most aspects of Samoan life, including the transition from childhood into adulthood.
18th Century Ships LaPerouse	DMGVO: Contact with Western culture began more than 200 years ago, when the first European ships appeared in Samoan waters. Jacob Roggeveen was the first European to see the islands, during a sail-by in 1722. 65 years later, LaPerouse received a far from warm welcome – and because of it, the Samoans got a bad reputation for unfriendliness, and were left alone for about 50 years.
John Williams portrait	DMGVO: Western influence over these Polynesian islands intensified beginning in 1830 with the arrival of John Williams of the London

Samoans at church Samoan clothes	Missionary Society. Missionaries had a profound effect on the Samoan people and culture, changing their way of life in significant ways--ceasing all work on Sundays, mandatory church attendance, the adoption of western-style clothes that covered the body, and restrictions on the dances they were allowed to perform.
JM	JM: The historical development that is most significant in Samoa, as it is in so many places around the world, is colonialization and missionization. Missionization changed the dance a great deal. Long ago, village celebrations would start with a ceremony, later followed by parties that were called joking nights. Ceremonies were the most formal situation and at the joking night, dance would begin in a formal way. Then there would be a lot of joking, much of which was joking through dancing, like some of the dancing in this film. The dance would slowly get wilder and wilder, and in a sense it would be very personally expressive. Many marriages began on these occasions.
Still image of Samoan girl in costume	JMVO: With missionization, during the late 19th and early 20th century, joking nights migrated to the margins of the village, and then went outside the village and into the bush. But sometime right around and after world war two these really wild parties in the bush become increasingly rare.
Still image of Samoan girl in costume	JMVO: OK. With missionization, that became inappropriate. That became not something people were supposed to do. And so at first joking nights and the behavior that went with them, migrated to the margins of the village, ultimately it went outside the village and into the bush. But sometime after world war two, or right around and after world war two, I think you get a cessation of these really wild parties in the bush.
WWII Stills	DMGVO: World War II brought the next consequential contact, this time from the United States military. American Samoa's main island of Tutuila was used as a base for training and exercises during the war, and from 1940 to 1945 at times there were more military personnel than Samoans on the island
Clip of Cruise Ship	DMGVO: More recently, the opening of an international airport and the arrival of cruise ships has increased the amount of tourism on the island, although tourism isn't well developed in American Samoa. Contact with the west through electronic communication has had a strong impact on Samoan culture, and especially the island's teenagers.
Clip of girls with gameboys Clip from Samoa Day	DMGVO: Today, adolescents in American Samoa have Gameboys, cable TV and cell phones. Satellite links bring the internet into their schools. Television and movies in particular bring the world of the West into their lives in significant ways. Teens try to imitate the hip-hop stars they see on MTV. My Samoan high school students had the “bling bling,” wished they had “benjamins,” and wrote gangster-like

	graffiti on their notebooks.
Teens	DMGVO: A stable sense of self provides adolescents with a sense of meaning and purpose. The development of a stable identity is a long process that starts when young adolescents experiment with different roles and opportunities. It concludes when they can synthesize a variety of roles and form a self that can provide them with a sense of comfortableness with who and what they are.
Masha G	MG: ...it depends on the circumstances and will involve thinking how in conflict the two cultures are with each other and what roles are acceptable and reasonable and not acceptable. And then there may not be this kind of difficulty trying to negotiate the two and being exposed to both. It also depends on how flexible and tolerant the two cultures are. If they're more tolerant there will be less stress in trying to negotiate the two.
Men's dance at Teuila, with women in the background, clapping	DMGVO: How much role experimentation does Samoan culture allow? For teenagers, not much, but more than they had during Mead's time. Mead wrote that, while boys aspired to be house builders, fishermen, orators or wood carvers, girls could only expect to marry.
Clips of Cyclone Heta	Today's teens can make career choices, attend the local community college or, if the family can afford it, go to college on the mainland. However, duty to the family comes first, and if they are needed back home, perhaps due to an emergency or some family crisis, they must quit school, toss aside their dreams, and return to the island.
Men's dance	MG: A young individual who has a choice between pursuing some life's dream or doing something that's in the best interest of the family, You know, our expectation is of course they're going to fulfill their own ambitions and we would really question them If they didn't do that. We would want to make sure that they want to make this kind of sacrifice. I think people would be fairly concerned with that choice. Whereas in other cultures the expectations are quite the opposite. The expectation is that whatever the family needs are, that you provide for them And then there's not even a thought to the personal sacrifice that might be involved in it...
Graphic with stats	DMGVO: And it is tough for many Samoan teens. The teen suicide rate in the Samoas is reported to be among the highest in the Pacific. What Mead had described as fun, placid years have become more turbulent. *The 2001 Youth Risk Behavior Survey*, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control, found that 30% of American Samoa's high school students said they seriously considered suicide in the previous 12 months. 20% said they attempted suicide, and 6% needed a doctor's care after the attempt.
Graphic with Stats	DMGVO: In 2001 alone, there were 33 suicides; 45% were females age

	15 to 24, according to a Department of Public Safety report. Poisoning by substance was the method most often used. About half overdosed on drugs, while the rest ingested chemical and other noxious substances like bleach, household cleaners or brake fluid. The reasons why these young people took their own lives, if known, were not recorded or are not a matter of public record.
Masha G	MG: its difficult to look very far ahead typically and so kids can find themselves in the midst of these very sharp conflicts, these conflicts that carry with them these very intense emotions. I think one of the things it's very hard for them to see is that it will it will pass; they don't really see themselves moving beyond that phase of their life the way that adults might and of course that makes everything so much more dire, things just so much more challenging than in that moment.
TTOS rehearsal	DMGVO: The option of children escaping family disputes in the traditional Samoan way of leaving the home of their biological parent and moving in with the cousins is no longer an easy method of conflict resolution. DMGVO: Although they face receiving a severe beating when their parents find them, children and teens can and do run away from home. Almost three quarters of the clients served at the island's shelter in 2003 were teens. Most of them said they ran away because they were having problems with their parents. Running away and suicide are not the only forms of escape.
Graphic of Stats	DMGVO: The Youth Risk Behavior Survey also found that more than a third of all American Samoan high school students smoked cigarettes. A third said they drank alcohol, while more than 20% said they smoked marijuana. About a fifth of them reported beginning substance use before age 13. The Department of Public Safety reported in 2003 that juvenile delinquency was on the rise. Statistics indicated an increase in felonies with juvenile involvement, especially possession of controlled substances.
TITLE	*PART 8: Subjectivity and Emotions*
Still of Mead	DMGVO: Margaret Mead wrote that "The whole preoccupation is with the individual as an actor, and the motivations peculiar to his psychology are left an unplumbed mystery."
TM rehearsals	While today the Samoan attitude toward the inner depths is changing, and increasingly people can talk about their feelings and motivations, emotional subjectivity is still downplayed to the extent that it may be difficult for some Samoans to answer questions about inner thoughts and feelings.

Joanne	DMGVO: Do you think there's anything from within that makes a person a good dancer? JOANNE: I don't know. [long pause] I don't know.
Lelinda	LELINDA: Long pause, "yes."
TITLE	*PART 9: Body Image*
Chubby, happy Samoans Skinny American teens	DMGVO: The body is another source of conflict that adolescents in Samoa share with their American counterparts, but with a twist. Physical ideals — what is the perfect body and what is considered physically beautiful – are two of the contradictory elements of this convergence of cultures. The Samoans traditionally admire a soft, well-rounded body. Plump is beautiful. The thinness that is admired in American magazines, on the other hand, equates with poverty, and illness. Well-padded bodies are healthy bodies.
Nu'umau Shot of Nu'umau's body	DMGVO: Do you like yourself? NU'U: [Laughs] I do, it's just the way my body is. I need to lose some weight. My mom was the one who was always pushing me to dance. I'm grateful for that. But when I dance I think I'm the fattest one in my dance group. I just need to work on how I look this way. If there's anything you could change about yourself, what would it be? NU'U: My body. I really want to look skinny! Out of all of the dance group girls, I think I'm the fattest one, and being the fattest one isn't nice. You have the biggest dress. You're either put in the back, the back line, but that's the only thing I want to change. DMGVO: Where did you get the idea that you were too big? NU'U: I'm always thinking I'm too big. I try picturing myself skinny. I still can't get that. When I'm with my dance group, well, you know how skinny they are, how tall they are, I try comparing me to that person, but I still can't get that picture. I wish I was skinny! [laugh] Yeah but...
TITLE	*Part 10: A winning performance and the pressure to be perfect*
TM rehearsals	DMGVO: Teenagers are asking themselves, who am I supposed to be? Are they persons with an individual identity, or must they represent the group well, to avoid embarrassing the family? The Star Kist anniversary performance was the last one before the big competition in Apia, for the Taupou Manaia girls. The Teuila Festival of Samoan Arts is held annually on the first weekend of September.
Preparations for the	DMGVO: The afternoon before the performance is spend in more

performance in Apia	rehearsals
Performance	(Near End) Taupou Manaia placed second in the competition. Second place, however, is not always good enough.
After-performance feast at Kori's parents' house	Kori: Come on, Dianna, Get something to eat Alu: By the time you put the camera down, the food will be all gone.
Images of mistakes	DMGVO: The dancers are aware that their parents will be disappointed or angry if their performance is not perfect. The girls said they felt shame and embarrassment when they made a mistake. Girls on how they react to mistakes
Chaos after the performance	DMGVO: When a child fails to perform to the parent's expectations, often they are physically punished. Although the girls' performance was nearly flawless, and was good enough to earn them second place, an informant told me that intervention was necessary afterwards, to prevent a parent from beating her child.
TITLE	*PART 11: Houses without walls and moral discourse*
Images of old Samoan houses Clips of guest houses on the malae	DMGVO: Anthropologist Bradd Shore writes that houses with no walls performed several functions, including contributing to social control, a fact which some of his informants recognized. In traditional Samoan houses, which have no walls, people *are* always looking at you and are concerned with what you are doing. Although today, Samoans in more urban areas of the island live in Western-style houses, traditional style houses do still exist, particularly as village chiefs' "guest houses" and are readily visible on the malae.
JM	JM: Today there is resurgence in Samoan dance. While there used to be dance exchanges between villages at joking nights, now there are lots of dance competitions. But you can still see the old dichotomy between formal dancing and joking dancing. And you can see new changes as well. In old Samoa at Joking nights girls led the wild chorographic joking but during Christian times girls came to dance in a formal way at least in public settings like the virginal village princess. All choreographic joking shifted onto boys. Today in some dancing, girls are beginning to take jesting roles in dance as well.
Clowns' spontaneous eruptions at Festival of Arts	DMGVO: Formal and informal contexts can be seen on different occasions. Clowning is a part of the official celebrations that take place during national holidays, and also occurs spontaneously on other occasions.
Rehearsals	DMGVO: Clowning can also be premeditated. Taupou Manaia choreographer Kori Chamberlin created a dance that includes a tribute to the Samoan clown. At first, some of the girls were embarrassed by the choreographed silliness. Their formal, synchronized movements and regal grace were discarded in favor of whimsy. But their discomfort

	didn't last.
Emily	EMILY: Sometimes I feel embarrassed when we do funny dances, the one we were learning today. I felt embarrassed and then when I looked at this other girl, she was doing it very funny and I kept laughing and I tried to act like her, to be funny. Sometimes I like being funny.
Emily dancing	Emily wowing the crowd at Teo and Alo
TITLE	*Part 12: Becoming a self*
KBR	KBR: One of the things that research indicates is that for adolescents of color, particularly in the united states, is that integrating their ethnic identity with their other selves is particularly important for them to be able to negotiate the expectations of their own ethnic culture and the broader society.
Girls rehearsing	DMGVO: Adolescents in American Samoa are developing a sense of self in a two-culture world in which each culture has a sharply different concept of what it means to be a self. They are caught in the middle of a conflict between individuality and group identity. Samoan traditional dance stresses conformity and downplays individuality, and therefore we might not expect it to inform the self concepts of adolescents who are navigating a bi-cultural world. However, dance plays a meaningful role in these girls' lives and their thoughts about who they are.
Ko'olina	DMGVO: Is dance important? KO'OLINA: Well, it's not as important as school work, so, well, sometimes my school work goes down if I, if I, focus too much on dancing, so I try to, like, y'know, put dance aside for a little bit and focus on my work, but other than that, dance is pretty important.
Nu'umau	NU'UMAU: Yes. To me I think dancing is. It really expresses your feeling and how you think and act toward other people, showing your emotion by dancing, the way you do your actions really, that's why I think it's really important, dancing.
Leslie	LESLIE: I think it is. Because nowadays a lot of us, like that, preserving of our culture, it's like the sand on the shore washing away, it's gradually moving to that, so I think dancing really helps...preserve Samoan culture.
Black dresses in the rain	DMGVO: They may face beatings if they fail to perform, but that does not seem to be the only reason why they dance. The girls' dedication to dance and their determination to see it through was demonstrated at the Teuila festival. It isn't unusual for performances to go on during a sudden shower, but the Taupou Manaia girls not only smiled through a downpour, they actually enjoyed the experience.
Afterwards	Girls talking about how fun it was.
	DMGVO: Many have come to understand that the investment in time

	and energy makes them more than simply good dancers. It helps them to identify themselves as dancers, as Samoans and as Americans, and they have integrated the ideals behind Samoan dance into their sense of self and who they are becoming.
Leslie	LESLIE: In dance practice, Kori, she's always telling us to be of taupou characteristics. To always be humble, like they dance, not too rough, graceful and it's taught me to forgive like if you're in a situation where there's girls talking, haters, and they're trying to fight with you, I think it's helped me because when I dance I'm really calm and I think things through, and it helps me to just be relaxed and that helps. Samoan dancing, it helps you become a better person, that's how I feel it helps both at home, spiritually, physically, and in school and everyday tasks.
Clips of dancing at Arts Festival	DMGVO: Samoan adolescents are developing a sense of self while at a crossroad where two cultures meet and where childhood meets adulthood. Not all Samoan teens are able to reconcile the conflicting models of selfhood of both cultures at a time when they are cognitively and emotionally vulnerable, and the teen suicide rate may be a reflection of the feeling of hopelessness that can accompany this conflict. Some teens, however, are finding ways to not only cope, but to thrive. Many of the girls I spoke with embrace both Samoan and American cultures. They have incorporated Samoanness and Americanness into the ideas they have about themselves and who they are. Some have even merged elements of individuality into what should be a group project, like traditional dance, thereby feeling both Samoan and American. They seem to have adopted the most useful elements of both.
Closing Sequence	Various clips from interviews
Closing Credits	A film in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology From Washington State University Dianna M. Georgina, Ph.D. Producer, writer, director, photographer Dianna M. Georgina Post-production Library of Congress Still Photos

Washington State University
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American Samoa Historic Preservation Office
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"Pate Pate," “Lakilua,” “Sapasui,” and “Te Hiva,” by Te Vaka
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